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## WEDLOCK OR AUTHORIZATION TO COMMIT RAPE: ADDRESSING THE GAP IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND GENDER EQUALITY

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### **ABSTRACT**

The term "marital rape," which refers to non-consensual sexual relations within a marriage, is still divisive throughout the world. Marriage is essential to the social and personal growth of both men and women which is the foundation of humanity. Although there are numerous national and international laws protecting women, rape is still not seen as a severe offence in married relationships. One of these concepts that society as a whole finds difficult to grasp is marital rape. The crime of rape highlights the shortcomings of the institutions of society that were put in place to give people greater security. These organisations have occasionally not only failed to defend people against such egregious violations of their privacy and autonomy, but they have actually supported these abuses by giving them legal legitimacy or failing to delegitimize them. Because marital rapes occur in a private setting and are therefore immune to public intervention, states have frequently either given them legal protection or declined to make them illegal. Marital rape, also known as intramarriage rape is a worldwide issue. It is contended that not only is it more common than rapes perpetrated by strangers or former partners outside of marriage, but it also has equally devastating consequences for the victims. The situation has not much improved in India, where marital rape is still not illegal. Despite the fact that several countries have made it a crime to rape within a marriage or removed exemptions for it. This Paper will try to examine the history of how marital rape came to be seen as lawful, its ubiquity both internationally and in Indian society, the impact it has on victims, and the flaws in the Indian legal system. This Paper seeks to emphasise the significance of bridging the gap between gender equality and criminal justice for a more just and equitable society through in-depth analysis and recommendations. Using both descriptive and comparative studies, this paper aims to shed light on women's rights and address the issue of marital rape that affects women in their day to day lives.

### **KEYWORDS**

Marital Rape, violation of Rights, Violence against Women, Indian Legislature

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Non-consensual sexual relations within a marriage, or marital rape, is still a hotly contested topic in society. It calls into question gender equality, the violation of someone's physical autonomy, and the function of criminal justice systems in dealing with these kinds of transgressions. India, a multiethnic country with a complicated social structure, faces considerable obstacles in dealing with this problem. Although it is not specifically illegal in India, some see marital rape as a continuation of the conventional view of marriage as an unbreakable agreement giving one spouse unlimited access to the other<sup>2</sup>. This viewpoint, however, ignores the significance of bodily autonomy and consent within the institution of marriage.

India's lack of explicit legislation making marital rape a crime has drawn criticism since it calls into doubt the country's commitment to gender equality and justice. The Indian Penal Code (IPC), which came into effect in 1860, does not specifically list marital rape as a crime. The IPC defines rape in Section 375, but it also contains an exception that states that a man having sex with his wife who is not younger than 15 is not committing rape<sup>3</sup>. This exemption, which has its roots in patriarchal ideas, feeds the false belief that consent is taken for granted in married relationships. In recent times, there has been an examination of the legal framework in India concerning marital rape. Legal professors, human rights organizations, and advocacy groups have all emphasized the necessity of legal reforms to remedy this serious violation of human rights. But tackling the problem of marital rape requires a sophisticated grasp of the social context, viewpoints from the criminal justice system, and comparable worldwide strategies.

### **Conceptualization of Marital Rape**

Sexual actions performed on one spouse without their free will and voluntary consent are known as marital rape<sup>4</sup>. It is crucial to remember that consent is a necessary component of all sexual relationships, including those that occur within the limits associated with marriage. Continuous, enthusiastic, and freely offered consent is required, signifying a mutually

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<sup>2</sup>Indira Jaising, Marital Rape in India: An Exploration of Legislative and Judicial Initiatives, 12 J. Gender, Soc'y & L. 315, 322 (2004)

<sup>3</sup> Indian Penal Code, 1860, § 375, No. 45, Acts of Parliament, 1860 (India).

<sup>4</sup> Alok Prasanna Kumar, Marital Rape: A New Offense in the Indian Penal Code, 29 Nat'l L. Sch. India Rev. 51, 52 (2017).

understood willingness to participate in sexual activity. This idea is broken by marital rape, which disregards a person's autonomy, physical integrity, and right to refuse.

The idea of marital rape has historically received less attention because of cultural conventions and preconceived ideas about marriage<sup>5</sup>. In the past, marriage was frequently viewed as an unbreakable agreement that gave the husband the right to have sex with his spouse without getting her permission. This comprehension sustained the notion that having sex with one's spouse was a fundamental feature of being married.

Modern viewpoints acknowledge that marriage does not, however, entail an unrestricted entitlement to sexual access. Marital rape laws are designed to challenge the idea that consent is always assumed in a married relationship and to highlight the significance of consent as a necessary component of any sexual connection, regardless of a partner's marital status. Concerns have been raised about India's lack of specific laws making marital rape a crime. Marital rape is not specifically recognized as a crime under the 1860 Indian Penal Code (IPC).<sup>6</sup> The IPC's Section 375 defines rape, but it also contains an exception that says a man having sex with his wife as long as they are both at least 15 years old does not commit rape. This exception is a reflection of a patriarchal mindset that upholds the notion that consent is assumed in married relationships.<sup>7</sup>

Nonetheless, the conventional viewpoints have been called into question as the conceptual understanding of marital rape has changed widely. Marital rape is recognized as a violation of human rights by international legal treaties including the Istanbul Convention and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). These tools highlight the need for laws and regulations that specifically make marital rape illegal in order to guarantee gender parity and the preservation of individual liberty within the context of marriage.<sup>8</sup> Regardless of marital status, consent is an essential element of sexual encounters, as acknowledged by the conceptual understanding of marital rape. Marital rape laws seek to upend patriarchal structures, question established conventions, and give survivors legal protection and acknowledgment. Societies can work toward promoting consent and bodily autonomy in marriage by recognizing their value.

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<sup>5</sup> 5 Katie Smith, Marital Rape: Consent, Marriage, and Social Change in Global Context, 30 COLUM. J. GENDER & L. 101, 104 (2015)

<sup>6</sup> Indian Penal Code, 1860, § 375, No. 45, Acts of Parliament, 1860 (India)

<sup>7</sup> Laura Oram et al., An Exploration of the Concept of Marital Rape and its Relation to the Sexual Autonomy of Women, 6 GENDER VIOLENCE & VICTIMIZATION 261, 263 (2011)

<sup>8</sup> 8 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, art. 16, opened for signature Mar. 1, 1980, 1249

### **India's Legal Structure**

In India, the legal framework pertaining to marital rape is essential for resolving, preventing, and advancing gender equality as well as individual rights violations. This section looks at the laws that are currently in place and how they address marital rape in the Indian legal system.

The Indian Penal Code (IPC), which was passed in 1860<sup>9</sup>, is the main piece of legislation that deals with sexual offences in India. Rape is defined as the penetration of a woman's vagina against her will, without her agreement, or in specific predetermined conditions by Section 375 of the IPC. Nonetheless, Section 375(2) of the IPC contains an exception that says a man's sexual relations with his wife, who is at least 15 years old, do not constitute rape<sup>10</sup>. This exception ignores the importance of permission as a necessary component of any sexual interaction and upholds the notion of implied consent inside the institution of marriage.

It has been argued that the exception in Section 375(2) of the IPC undermines married women's agency<sup>11</sup> and bodily autonomy while upholding patriarchal norms. It ignores the idea that consent ought to be free, ongoing, and explicit in all sexual relationships—including those that take place inside the context of marriage. Concern has been raised about the lack of specific laws in India that make marital rape a crime. It's crucial to remember, nevertheless, that non-consensual sexual actions in marriage can be addressed by using specific IPC rules. In cases when the acts constitute cruelty, cases of sexual abuse within marriage may be prosecuted under Section 498A of the IPC, which deals with cruelty by a husband or his relatives<sup>12</sup>. In addition, instances of non-consensual sexual actions within same-sex marriages have been handled by Section 377 of the IPC, which criminalised consensual same-sex sexual acts until it was decriminalised in 2018.

Indian courts have also been crucial in interpreting and enforcing the country's current laws pertaining to marital rape. The judiciary has emphasised the significance of consent in matrimonial relationships and the possibility that non-consensual sexual actions may violate the IPC<sup>13</sup>. Legal remedies and the protection of married women's rights have been the goals of judicial interpretations in cases of sexual abuse in marriages. It is crucial to recognise,

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<sup>9</sup> Indian Penal Code, 1860, § 375, No. 45, Acts of Parliament, 1860 (India)

<sup>10</sup> Indian Penal Code, 1860, § 375(2), No. 45, Acts of Parliament, 1860 (India)

<sup>11</sup> Shilpi Jain, *The Marital Rape Exception: An Analysis in the Indian Context*, 2 *Asian J. Leg. Stud.* 11, 13 (2014).

<sup>12</sup> Indian Penal Code, 1860, § 498A, No. 45, Acts of Parliament, 1860 (India).

<sup>13</sup> *Independent Thought v. Union of India*, (2017) 10 SCC 800

nonetheless, that the lack of explicit laws making marital rape a crime makes it difficult to handle and prosecute such situations. The absence of clear legal acknowledgement may be a factor in underreporting, social stigma, and challenges in assembling proof and establishing non-consensual conduct in marriages.

There have been requests in recent years for legislative changes that would make marital rape in India a crime. These appeals draw attention to the necessity of providing survivors of marital rape with legal acknowledgment, protection, and remedies. Marital rape should be made illegal in order to advance gender equality, individual autonomy, and the ability of any person to refuse sexual engagement, regardless of their marital status.

### **Gender Balance and Marital Rape**

Concerns about gender equality and the defence of women's rights inside the institution of marriage are brought up by the problem of marital rape. The intersectionality of gender, power relations, and the effect of marital rape on gender equality are all examined in this section. Traditional gender roles and unequal power dynamics that have long predominated in civilizations are at the core of marital rape. It is a reflection of women's historical subjugation and the belief that their bodies belong to their husbands. The goal of laws against marital rape is to undermine these patriarchal systems by acknowledging that consent is an essential component of all sexual encounters, regardless of a person's marital status.<sup>14</sup>

Marital rape ignores the agency and autonomy of women's bodies, which serves to maintain and sustain gender inequity. It perpetuates the idea that women's permission is not required outside of marriage and denies them the ability to manage their own bodies. The social norm that women should adhere to traditional gender roles and put their husbands' needs and wants first is reinforced when women's sexual autonomy is denied to them in marriage.

To achieve gender equality, marital rape must be acknowledged as a violation of women's rights. It recognises that women must be allowed to refuse sexual activity, even when it involves marriage, and that their consent must be freely offered and respected. By making marital rape a crime, cultures demonstrate their commitment to gender equality.

An examination through comparison with other legal systems highlights the need of acknowledging marital rape as a breach of human rights and an obstacle to gender parity.

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<sup>14</sup> Katie Smith, Marital Rape: Consent, Marriage, and Social Change in Global Context, 30 COLUM. J. GENDER & L. 101, 105 (2015)

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), among other international documents, highlights the importance of In marriage, consent, physical integrity, and non discrimination<sup>15</sup>. They demand legislative changes that would make marital rape illegal and offer extensive support networks for victims.

Marital rape must be addressed with a multimodal strategy that includes awareness campaigns, legislative changes, and initiatives to change cultural norms and attitudes. In order to achieve gender equality, marital rape must be recognised by law and made a crime. In addition, education, advocacy, and support services are essential for encouraging consent, dismantling gender norms, and empowering survivors. The denial of women's rights in marriage and gender inequality are intrinsically linked to marital rape. To achieve gender equality, it is important to acknowledge and criminalise marital rape as a violation of women's rights. By questioning established power structures, encouraging consent, and offering assistance to those who have experienced trauma, societies can work to establish a more just and equitable environment for everyone.

### **Perspectives on Criminal Justice**

Regarding and handling incidents of marital rape, the criminal justice system is essential. The viewpoints of the criminal justice system are examined in this part, along with issues with investigation, prosecution, and societal prejudices. For law enforcement organisations, looking into and prosecuting incidents of marital rape presents special difficulties. In contrast to other types of sexual assault or stranger rape, marital rape frequently takes place in private settings, making it challenging to obtain witnesses. The lack of visible injuries or eyewitnesses makes the procedure of These difficulties may lead to poor conviction rates and underreporting, which would continue to give perpetrators of marital rape a sense of impunity. The way the criminal justice system handles incidents of marital rape is also influenced by societal prejudices and assumptions about marriage and sexual assault.<sup>16</sup> Victim-blaming mindsets and the idea that having sex is a natural right in marriage might cause doubt, incredulity, or victim-shaming when it comes to inquiries and court cases. It

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<sup>15</sup> 6 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, art. 16, opened for signature Mar. 1, 1980, 1249 U.N.T.S. 13.

<sup>16</sup> Tania Sourdin, Responding to Sexual Assault in the Criminal Justice System: A Comparative Study, 35 MELB. U. L. REV. 124, 127 (2011).

may be difficult for survivors to get justice, have their stories acknowledged, and be taken seriously.<sup>17</sup>

The judiciary has a critical role in combating rape in marriage. The legal system is shaped by judicial interpretations and decisions, which also establish precedents for cases to come. Indian courts have recognised in recent years the value of consent in marriages and the fact that non-consensual sexual actions may be illegal in certain jurisdictions. For example, the Supreme Court of India ruled in *Independent Thought v. Union of India* that having sex with a minor wife would be considered rape under the Indian Penal Code<sup>18</sup>. A rising acknowledgement of married women's rights is reflected in these judicial interventions, which also offer channels for legal recourse. Still, the criminal justice system's prejudices and misunderstandings can obstruct prompt and efficient handling of instances involving marital rape. To ensure fair and just outcomes, it is imperative to educate law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and courts on the intricacies of marital rape and the significance of consent. The way that the criminal justice system handles incidents of marital rape can be enhanced by training initiatives and policies that tackle these problems.

Comparative viewpoints and global experiences provide insightful information about how to handle marital rape in the criminal justice system. Several nations, including Sweden, Norway, and the United Kingdom, have made marital rape a crime and taken steps to strengthen victim assistance programmes and strengthen legal responses. Gaining insight from these experiences will help India's criminal justice system become more efficient and guide future reforms.

In conclusion, handling cases of marital rape presents particular difficulties for the criminal justice system. Ensuring justice for survivors and holding criminals accountable requires overcoming barriers in the investigation, prosecution, and societal biases. A successful reaction to marital rape can be achieved by implementing training programmes, sensitising criminal justice actors, and learning from overseas experiences.

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<sup>17</sup> Sheetal Sharma, *The Challenge of Marital Rape Prosecution: Victim-Blaming, Impunity, and Systemic Barriers*, 7 WASH. U. GLOBAL

<sup>18</sup> *Independent Thought v. Union of India*, (2017) 10 SCC 800



### **Cultural and Societal Aspects**

Social and cultural factors have a big impact on how marital rape is recognised and dealt with. This section looks at the social and cultural factors that influence survivors and the larger conversation around marital rape by influencing attitudes, beliefs, and responses.

Marital rape is perceived differently depending on the beliefs and conventions surrounding marriage. The idea that having access to sexual activity is a fundamental right is frequently influenced by traditional gender norms and expectations. This view perpetuates the idea that ladies must satiate their husbands' sexual cravings regardless of their own inclinations or consent<sup>19</sup>. These kinds of cultural perceptions have the potential to normalise non-consensual sex in married relationships.

Reactions to marital rape are also greatly influenced by cultural variables. Attitudes towards gender dynamics, marriage, and sexuality can be influenced by cultural customs, religious beliefs, and social taboos. Cultural norms may place a higher priority on sustaining marital harmony, honouring the family, or fulfilling society expectations than on defending the rights and autonomy of the individual. Certain cultural variables, such the fear of shame, rejection, or pressure from family and society to keep quiet, can put survivors of marital rape at a disadvantage.<sup>20</sup>

In many countries, the dowry issue might make responding to marital rape more difficult. Power disparities in marriages are a result of dower-related violence and the idea that wives are property, which makes it more difficult for survivors to come forward and pursue justice.

Social opinions towards marital rape are also influenced by popular culture and media portrayals of the crime. The way that women are portrayed as weak, subservient, and lacking in sexual agency can perpetuate negative stereotypes and support traditional gender roles. Representations in the media that minimise or normalise extramarital sex might erode the awareness of and reaction to marital rape. On the other hand, respectful media portrayal and coverage can be extremely important for increasing awareness, questioning social norms, and providing support for survivors.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> O Ratna Kapur, *Subversive Sites: Feminist Engagements with Law in India*, 9 INT'L J.L. POL. & FAM. 339, 341 (1995)

<sup>20</sup> Anuja Agrawal, *Marital Rape: Time to Remove the Exception*, 26 ASIAN J. WOMEN'S STUD. 1, 2 (2020)

<sup>21</sup> Ranjita Mohanty & Meenal Mohanty, *Marital Rape: Understanding the Silence*, 8 J. GENDER STUD. 63, 67 (1999)

Consideration of these societal and cultural variables is necessary when addressing marital rape. It is crucial to spread knowledge about consent, individual liberty, and the value of wholesome relationships in the context of marriage.

Campaigns for education and awareness can aid in dispelling myths, advancing gender parity, and fostering frank discussions about consent and sexuality. Initiating dialogues with religious and community leaders can help address cultural norms and encourage civil and cooperative relationships. Cultural and sociological changes must be part of the fight against marital rape. This entails questioning established gender norms, advocating for gender parity, and enabling women to stand up for their rights in marriage.

The tools and assistance survivors need to deal with the legal and social ramifications of marital rape can be obtained from community-based support networks, counselling services, and legal aid organisations. Social and cultural contexts have a big impact on how people view marital rape and how they react to it. A comprehensive strategy that questions established gender norms, raises awareness, and encourages societal and cultural change is needed to address these concerns. It is feasible to establish an atmosphere that supports survivors, opposes marital rape, and preserves the values of consent, autonomy, and gender equality by changing society attitudes and cultural norms.

### **Comparative Analysis and International Views**

One nation that has made notable progress in addressing marital rape is Sweden. Sweden was the first nation in history to outlaw marital rape in 1965<sup>24</sup>. Regardless of marital status, the Swedish legal system recognises that engaging in sexual activity without both parties' express consent is rape. This method rejects the idea that marriage entails assent to sexual behaviour automatically and recognises the significance of consent.

Norway was among the first countries to criminalise marital rape, having passed its initial laws in 1971<sup>22</sup>. The legal framework in Norway places a strong emphasis on the value of consent in marriage and acknowledges that non-consensual sexual acts even those between spouses can be considered rape.

With the passage of the Sexual Offences Act in the UK in 1991<sup>23</sup>, marital rape became a crime. With the recognition that consent in marriages must be freely provided, the Act

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<sup>22</sup> Lov om straff 20. mai 2005 nr. 28 (straffeloven) [Nor.], as amended.

<sup>23</sup> Sexual Offences Act, 2003, c. 42 (UK).

specifically eliminated the marital exception. The UK framework assigns responsibility for ensuring consent is present at all times to individuals, acknowledging the importance of consent as a fundamental component of sexual relationships.

While marital rape is illegal in some places, there may be different legal requirements or standards of proof than for other types of rape. These differences may affect survivors' rights and the simplicity of prosecution.

In order to give survivors more comprehensive protection, comparative analysis can be used to identify best practices and areas where legal reforms might be strengthened. While some nations have made marital rape a crime, others are still working to identify and solve this problem. Some nation's legal systems may still allow for marital exclusions or may not specifically make marital rape a crime. A critical evaluation of these countries is made possible by comparative analysis, which also serves as a foundation for the argument for legislative changes that would safeguard survivors and advance gender equality. International tools are also very important in determining how people react to rape in marriage. Eliminating gender-based violence, including marital rape, is emphasised by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)<sup>24</sup>. Comprehensive legal reforms, victim support services, and awareness efforts to dispel stereotypes and social norms are all demanded under CEDAW. Comprehensive legal reforms, victim support services, and awareness efforts to dispel stereotypes and social norms are all demanded under CEDAW. Conducting comparative analysis and analysing international views facilitates a thorough comprehension of diverse legal systems, societal attitudes, and responses to marital rape. It makes it easier to find the gaps, difficulties, and best practices that should guide legislative changes and the creation of all-encompassing support networks for victims. In order to effectively handle marital rape, comparative analysis and international views are crucial. Some countries, including Sweden, Norway, and the UK, have made marital rape illegal because they understand how important consent is in married relationships. Differences in survivor support networks, legal strategies, and evidentiary standards are brought to light through comparative study. International agreements like CEDAW offer guidelines and demand all-out efforts to counter

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<sup>24</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, art. 16, opened for signature Mar. 1, 1980, 1249 U.N.T.S. 13

### **Possible Changes and the Future Direction**

In order to effectively address marital rape, broad changes and a proactive strategy for advancing gender equality, safeguarding survivors, and guaranteeing successful legal responses are needed. This section looks at possible changes and provides a path forward for building a society that is just and equal.

1. Legal Reforms: In order to make marital rape a crime and give survivors the required legal safeguards, legislative measures are essential. Eliminating marital exemptions, emphasising consent as the foundation of sexual interactions, and guaranteeing that marital rape is treated equally with other types of sexual assault should be the main goals of reforms. Alongside these reforms, there should be measures that make it easier to report, investigate, and prosecute incidents of marital rape while also taking into consideration the particular difficulties that arise in these situations.

2. Awareness and Education: Increasing public knowledge of marital rape and advocating for thorough sex education are essential steps in addressing this problem. Consent, wholesome relationships, gender equality, and the understanding that marital rape is a violation of human rights should all be highlighted in educational initiatives<sup>29</sup>. Targeted awareness programmes should target the stigma attached to reporting and talking about marital rape, as well as negative cultural attitudes and stereotypes.

3. Support Services: It's critical to set up extensive support networks for victims of marital rape. Accessible hotlines, counselling, medical assistance, legal aid, and shelters should all be part of these services. Survivors must have the freedom to ask for assistance and support without worrying about shame or reprisals<sup>30</sup>. In order to provide comprehensive support systems, cooperation between governmental and non-governmental organisations is essential.

4. Sensitization of Criminal Justice Actors: To improve law enforcement officers', prosecutors', and judges' comprehension of marital rape, consent, and survivor-centered methods, training programmes and sensitization initiatives should be put in place<sup>31</sup>. In order to ensure that survivors are treated fairly and justly throughout the judicial process, victim-blaming attitudes and biases should be opposed as part of sensitization campaigns.

5. International Cooperation: At the international level, cooperation and the sharing of best practices can aid in the creation of all-encompassing responses to marital rape. Participating in international initiatives, exchanging experiences, and studying other countries that have

dealt with marital rape effectively can help enhance legal frameworks and guide policy changes. In addition, international collaboration is essential for advancing gender equality and the rights of survivors.

### **Conclusion**

Marital rape is a serious problem that needs to be addressed immediately and comprehensively. The idea of marital rape, the Indian legal system, the value of gender equality, perspectives on criminal justice, social and cultural aspects, global viewpoints, and possible reforms have all been covered in this research paper. Understanding these many facets will help us create a plan for dealing with and ending marital rape in India.

An examination of India's legal system demonstrates the shortcomings and difficulties in identifying and dealing with cases of marital rape. The fact that there isn't a particular rule that makes marital rape illegal and that marital exemptions are still in place highlight how urgently legal reforms are needed. Justice must be served by classifying marital rape as a crime and offering survivors the necessary legal protections. Gender equality is becoming an essential component of the anti-marital rape campaign. Preventing and treating marital rape requires dismantling gender stereotypes, questioning conventional gender norms, and fostering equitable power dynamics within relationships. Initiatives in the legal, social, and cultural spheres that try to stop this kind of violence should be centred on gender equality. One of the most important aspects of responding to marital rape is the criminal justice system. Improving survivors' access to justice requires ensuring survivor-centered approaches, eliminating systemic biases, and raising the awareness of criminal justice players. While holding offenders accountable, efforts should be directed towards offering survivors support, safety, and compensation. Views and reactions to marital rape are greatly influenced by societal and cultural variables. To change public perceptions and remove the stigma attached to reporting and talking about marital rape, it is imperative to question established conventions, raise awareness, and involve religious and community leaders.

Comparative study and international viewpoints offer important insights into how marital rape is addressed around the world.

Policy and legal advancements in India can benefit from knowledge gained from countries that have effectively enacted reforms and criminalised marital rape. Collaboration and international cooperation can help advance survivor rights advocacy and knowledge exchange on a worldwide level.

In summary, combating marital rape necessitates a thorough and multifaceted strategy. Legal changes, public awareness campaigns, assistance programmes, education of those involved in the criminal justice system, global collaboration, and research are essential elements of the plan of action for stopping marital rape in India. By putting these policies into practice, we can work to create a society that defies all types of violence, respects gender equality, and guarantees justice for those who have experienced marital rape.