

# VOYAGING BEYOND TABOOS: FUTURISTIC MEDIA DYNAMICS IN UNEARTHING MARITAL RAPE'S SOCIETAL RIPPLES

## Abstract

In the ever-evolving landscape of social change, media emerges as a potent force that navigates the contours of societal norms. This chapter delves into the profound role of media in unveiling hidden manifestations of patriarchy, focusing its lens on the enigmatic realm of marital rape. Situated within the context of the book's theme - "Futuristic Trends in Social Science" - this exploration sheds light on the intricate interplay between media and social transformation.

Drawing from historical contexts and cultural intricacies, this study illuminates the obscured corridors of marital rape, an issue long shrouded in silence due to prevailing taboos. Media's dynamic prowess is palpable in its capacity to defy conventional narratives, spotlighting sensitive topics through diverse platforms. Through investigative journalism, evocative documentaries, and resonant advocacy campaigns, the media bridges the chasm between ignorance and awareness.

The chapter transcends mere analysis, delving into the tangible impact of media in redefining cultural perceptions, shaping familial dialogues, and awakening the collective consciousness to the urgency of addressing marital rape. It navigates the rocky terrain of ethical representation, acknowledging the media's role as both a catalyst for change and a potential source of controversy.

As the media strides boldly into uncharted territories, it becomes a beacon of change, igniting conversations that dismantle

## Author

**Gunjan Sachdeva**

Research Scholar

Ph. D in Journalism and Mass

Communication

Manav Rachna International Institute of  
Research and Studies

Faridabad, India.

gunjansachdeva1539@gmail.com

patriarchal fortresses. This chapter gives readers a brief overview of the study's main points while illuminating the mutually beneficial link between media's creative distribution and the disruption of societal development.

**Keywords:** Marital rape, Media, Narratives, Awareness, Futuristic Trends, Patriarchy

## I. INTRODUCTION

A problem that has long been hidden from the penetrating eyes of justice and compassion is at the centre of society's growth (Mandhani, 2015). A once-ignored problem, marital rape has recently become a major issue, in part due to the media's active involvement in society. While the dangers of intimate relationships were kept secret, the media's unwavering voice has broken the silence and shed light on the dark areas of this terrifying reality (Manson et al., 1996).

The United States, a country famed for its pursuit of freedom and equality, became entangled in a legal maze that allowed the heinous practice of marital rape to continue. This severe injustice was made possible by an antiquated rule that originated in 17th-century England (Ferro et al., 2008). The English Chief Justice, Sir William Hale, upheld the idea that a husband could not be found guilty of raping his legitimate wife. The Hale concept, which held that a married woman's consent was irrevocably sealed, permeated the legal framework of the American colonies. Under these historical restraints, the whole idea of rape in a marriage was suppressed as legal giants like Blackstone solidified the notion that females lost their independence upon marriage and instead became the property of their husbands (Gelles, 1997).

This abominable dogma wasn't contested until the Women's Movement in the 1970s. With their bold demand for equality, the feminist crusaders of this era brought marital rape into the public eye. The intimidating Laura X used her position among them as a sign of progress (Jeffords & Thomas, 1982). Because of her efforts, the Judy Hartwell murder trial case had an impact well beyond the courtroom and challenged the idea of irreversible consent. The 1978 John Rideout case was a turning point for X because it was the first time in American history that a man was charged for raping his wife. Although X's efforts in Oregon did not result in a legal triumph, they had an impact in California, where marital rape was ultimately made a crime (Kelly & Shiels, 1988).

The global reverberations of the 2012 Delhi gang rape exposed the horrifying reality of sexual abuse. But despite this shock, a startling paradox became apparent: just 1% of the victims dared to disclose these crimes, a sign of the persistent structural impediments (Mehrotra, 2022).

The media worked as a mirror and a catalyst in India, where cultural standards are frequently braided with patriarchal threads (Mrinal, 2017). The finding that just 10% of married women who experienced sexual assault from their spouses came out was a sobering reminder of the long-standing hurdles. Only 9% of females in the population are adolescent girls, yet they account for 24% of recorded rape occurrences. These unsettling data highlighted young women's vulnerability and the tenebrous nexus (Nigam, 2015).

The function of the media will continue to act as a catalyst for societal change in the not-too-distant future. The media will continue to be an agitator, persistently revealing disturbing realities and stirring important dialogues, as Patel (2019) emphasized. The impact of rising public indignation and changing narratives will become increasingly evident as time goes on, demonstrating how the media can spark significant societal change. In the years to come, it will reveal deeply rooted concerns, testing cultural norms, and stimulating debates

that were formerly seen as taboo, much as the situation in India, when media attention brought demons to light (Cody, 2022).

The massive influence of media on societal evolution remains unwavering at the dawn of a futuristic civilization. It reveals untold stories, revives fragmented voices, and gives survivors the confidence to come forward (Dar & Shaigrejri, 2022). Despite these developments, everyone must accept that the conflict still exists. The horror of marital rape continues to stalk the havens of families, and societal transformation is yet not complete. Here, the media takes on the role of a steadfast sentinel, its watchfulness serving as a beacon of accountability and calling for reform at the highest levels of government (Tavora & Machado, 2022). People can only see a future in which the dawn of justice, equality, and compassion prevails over the persistent darkness of marital rape, revealing a way toward a genuinely equitable society, via this never-ending guardianship (Mehrotra, 2022.)

The objective of this study is to assess the pivotal role played by the media in generating awareness about critical issues such as marital rape, emancipation, economic disparities, access to health, and the concealed manifestations of patriarchy. The study also aims to examine the societal reactions influenced by culture and family dynamics, underscore the urgency of addressing marital rape, and analyze the allocation of women's time in the context of these multifaceted concerns.

**1. Unveiling Shadows: Media's Crusade Against Marital Rape:** Media professionals who cover delicate topics like rape, especially the persistent problem of marital rape, have a crucial civic obligation (Gul & Schuster, 2020). Even while sensationalised stories could get more attention, journalists have a duty to provide material truthfully, free of any false rape myths. Media professionals must mould public opinion by highlighting the fact that lurid events like stranger rapes or the presentation of dishonest "victims" are uncommon anomalies. Instead, the emphasis should be on dispelling the myth that victims are deceitful by focusing light on more frequent instances of rape in familiar settings (Jeffords & Thomas, 1982).

By clearing up misconceptions, media professionals are in a unique position to bring about constructive change. It is imperative that they have a solid grasp of the myths surrounding rape and the dangers of blaming both the criminal and the victim equally while reporting on rape cases. Harmful preconceptions shouldn't be maintained at the price of "fair and balanced" reporting (Maxwell et al., 2022).

This obligation extends to the legal sector as well. Legal systems must reexamine the material that may be used in rape cases, eliminating elements that help spread rape myths like looking into the victim's sexual background. Eliminating these practices will advance the judicial system's efforts to guarantee fair justice (Kasuma, et al., 2022).

In the future, the importance of the media in the struggle against marital rape cannot be stressed. Even while change may appear to come gradually, innovative steps can open the door to a better future (Mrinal, 2017). Media organisations ought to value their ability to influence cultural norms and views. Media may disrupt the established quo by carefully choosing the crimes they cover and how they show them. We may create a culture that genuinely understands the subtleties of this issue in the future when the media

is unafraid to unmask the shadows thrown by marital rape and disclose the facts within (Mehrotra, 2022).

In this evolving narrative, media outlets would weave stories that empower survivors of marital rape, highlighting their strength and agency as they seek justice (Kelly, & Shiels, 1988). By steering clear of sensationalism and embracing responsible journalism, the media can play a transformative role in reshaping cultural attitudes, erasing stigma, and encouraging survivors to speak out. As the media continues on this path of enlightenment, society will be better equipped to recognize the true gravity of marital rape and collectively support the necessary changes to ensure a safer and more just world for all (Patel, 2019).

- 2. Beyond the Screen: Culture, Family, and Shifting Paradigms:** Millions of women and girls continue to suffer from sexual violence, underscoring the urgent need to bolster healthcare and criminal justice systems for victim support (Prakarsha & Yulia, 2022). To reshape societal norms, a proactive strategy involves engaging men and boys in conversations about respectful relationships, consent, and equality. This paradigm shift should encompass premarital counselling, promoting healthy sexual relationships, and the criminalization of marital rape. Prioritizing the safety of young girls and eradicating child marriage must underpin efforts against sexual violence. Comprehensive national and local surveillance mechanisms are vital for a better grasp of the issue and its reduction (Rana & Guleria, 2022).

In the midst of these difficulties, the media may be a transforming force for progress. As we look to the future, media outlets have the power to debunk rape myths that have been ingrained in cultural, religious, and legal institutions (Randall et al., 2017). The media may influence attitudinal changes by highlighting survivor experiences, encouraging positive images of powerful women, and questioning conventional narratives. The media may change perceptions of law enforcement, supporting more equitable treatment of victims by boosting voices against victim-blaming and fostering empathy. In the end, society will be guided towards a more sympathetic, egalitarian, and secure reality by adaptive power (Rumney, 1999).

- 3. "Ticking Clocks: Women's Time, Media, and the Path to Empowerment":** A colourful picture of the potential for media to have a positive influence is painted by exploring the complex dance between women, time, and media. When we look into the not-too-distant future, we see a tapestry where the dreams of women, fueled by the media's transforming power, weave harmoniously with the rhythmic pulse of ticking clocks (Sumalla et al., 2023).

As time goes on, media platforms develop into vibrant spaces that promote the stories and voices of women (Ryan, 1995). A communal path towards empowerment is accelerated by the internet age, which turns into a refuge where tales that were formerly obscured or marginalised find a loving atmosphere. In the approaching period, the media shifts from reflecting progress to acting as a catalyst, encouraging women to remove barriers, shatter glass ceilings, and retake control over time (Singh, 2022).

Media crafts a variety of information with artistic refinement, from immersive documentaries to interactive social campaigns, serving as a conduit for change. Authentic depictions of diverse identities and experiences honour them, generating a sense of belonging and inspiring future generations. The media's role changes from that of an impartial bystander to that of a proactive ally, building resilience and empowering women to negotiate their complex life paths (Theses & Anne, 2008).

Women's time, media, and empowerment combine to create a harmonic tune that resonates with the relentless spirit of development at this pivotal moment in history. By accepting this future, a world is created where clock hands no longer represent restriction but rather signify an ongoing journey towards a dawn that is more dazzling and just (Sumalla et al., 2023).

## II. CONCLUSION

In summation, this chapter has explored the significant influence of media as a change-catalyst in addressing the problem of marital rape and its social ramifications. The media has emerged as a dynamic force capable of breaking the hush surrounding this deeply ingrained issue by negotiating the complicated terrain of societal standards and cultural sensitivities. Media has smashed the boundaries of taboo and ignorance via investigative journalism, documentaries, and advocacy campaigns, igniting vital debates that challenge patriarchal norms.

The possibility of having a transformational influence still exists in the constantly changing media ecosystem. The media will continue to play a crucial role in highlighting important topics like marital rape in the future. It has the power to both reveal unspoken facts and launch important discussions. However, ethical concerns must direct us as we travel this unpredictable terrain, assuring responsible reporting and limiting harm. In the end, our shared destiny will be shaped by the symbiotic link between media innovation and societal advancement.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Apoorva, M. (2015, July 12). Delhi High Court refuses to entertain PIL seeking criminalization of Marital Rape. Live law. In.
- [2] Chihnitha, K. M. (2021). Judicial interpretation of “consent” in rape Cases in Indian courts and application in marital rape cases. *VNU Journal of Science: Legal Studies*, 37(2). <https://doi.org/10.25073/2588-1167/vnuls.4342>
- [3] Cody, L. F. (2022). Marriage is no protection for crime: Coverture, sex, and marital rape in eighteenth-century England. *Journal of British Studies*, 61(4), 809–834. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jbr.2022.118>
- [4] Dar, S. A., & Shairgojri, A. A. (2022). Role of women in good governance. *Journal of Sosial Science*, 3(4), 648–655. <https://doi.org/10.46799/jss.v3i4.360>
- [5] Fernandes Távora, M., & Amaral Machado, B. (2022). Marital rape: Hidden female narratives. *Crítica Penal y Poder*, (23). <https://doi.org/10.1344/cpyp.2022.23.40458>
- [6] Ferro, C., Cermele, J., & Saltzman, A. (2008). Current perceptions of marital rape: Some good and not-so-good news. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 23(6), 764–779. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260507313947>
- [7] Gelles, R. J. (1977). Power, sex, and violence: The case of marital rape. *Family Coordinator*, 26(4). <https://doi.org/10.2307/581754>
- [8] Gul, P., & Schuster, I. (2020). Judgments of marital rape as a function of honor culture, masculine reputation threat, and observer gender: A cross-cultural comparison between Turkey, Germany, and the UK. *Aggressive Behavior*, 46(4), 341–353. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ab.21893>

- [9] Jeffords, C. R., & Thomas, R. (1982). Demographic variations in attitudes towards marital rape immunity. In dull source. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 44(3).
- [10] Kasuma, I., Azhara, F., Ilfa, A., & Farhana, S. A. (2022). Another Second Chance: Rehabilitation of marital rape offender for the victim's recovery. *Indonesian Journal of Socio-Legal Studies*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.54828/ijsls.2021v1n2.4>
- [11] Kelly, D., & Shiels, R. S. (1988). Marital rape in Scots law. In *Journal of the Forensic Science Society* (Vol. 28, Issue 4, pp. 253–258), 28(4), 253–258. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0015-7368\(88\)72843-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0015-7368(88)72843-1)
- [12] Manson, C., Byrd, G., & Rohling, J. (1996). To have and to hold perceptions of marital rape. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 410–424.
- [13] Maxwell, L., Khan, Z., & Yount, K. M. (2022). Do laws promoting gender equity and freedom from violence benefit the most vulnerable? A multilevel analysis of women's and adolescent girls' experiences in 15 low- and-middle-income countries. *Health Policy and Planning*, 37(1), 33–44. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czab127>
- [14] Mehrotra, A. (2022). Marital rape in India: Need FOR criminalization. *Indian Journal of Criminology*, 50(1).
- [15] Mrinal, S. (2017, September 6). Marital rape\_The government isn't criminalising it for all the wrong reasons. Print.
- [16] Nigam, S. (2015). The social and legal paradox relating to marital rape in India: Addressing structural inequalities. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2613447>
- [17] Patel, K. (2019). The Gap in marital rape law in India: Advocating for criminalization and social change NOTE The Gap IN MARITAL RAPE LAW IN India: ADVOCATING FOR CRIMINALIZATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE. In *Fordham International Law Journal*, 42(5). <http://pinkdomblog.com/>.
- [18] Prakarsa, A., & Yulia, R. (2022). Examining victim precipitation in determining a suspect (A case study of marital rape that ended in death). *Lambung Mangkurat Law Journal*, 7(1), 59–73. <https://doi.org/10.32801/lamlaj.v7i1.307>
- [19] Press Trust of India. (2018, April 3). Marital rape should be made illegal, observes Gujarat High Court – India Today. *India Today*.
- [20] Rana, M., & Guleria, V. (2022). Examining the impact of restorative Justice On “marital rape”. <http://journalppw.com>. In *India: A human rights approach. Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 2022(8) (pp. 10511–10517).
- [21] Randall, M., Koshan, J., & Nyaundi, P. (2017). Introduction: Marital rape and law reform: A comparative analysis of the right to say no. In *The right to say No : Marital Rape and Law Reform in Canada. Kenya and Malawi*. Hart Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781782258636.ch-001>
- [22] Rumney, P. N. S. (1999). When Rape Isn't Rape: Court of Appeal Sentencing Practice in Cases of Marital and Relationship Rape. *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, 19(2), 243–270. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ojls/19.2.243>
- [23] Ryan, R. M. (1995). American Bar Foundation the sex right: A legal history of the marital rape exemption. In source. *Law and Social Inquiry*, 20(4), 941–1001. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-4469.1995.tb00697.x>
- [24] Singh, V. P. (2022). Judicial approaches to the criminalisation of marital rape. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 29(1), 10–32. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09715215211056791>
- [25] Sumalla, J. M. T., Seseña, P. R., Arràez, L. A., & Aizpitarte, A. (2023). How criminal is it to rape a partner according to the justice system? Analysis of sentences in Spain (2015–2022). *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10610-023-09537-x>
- [26] Theses, C., & Anne Bazhaw, M. (2008). For Better or for Worse? Media Coverage of Marital Rape in the Rideout trial. *Melissa Anne Bazhaw, 1978*. <https://doi.org/10.57709/1061301>