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**PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS  
INVOLVED WITH MARITAL RAPE**- Parnika Choudhary<sup>1</sup>**• Introduction to Marital Rape**

Marital rape, the act of non-consensual sexual intercourse between spouses, has profound physical and psychological implications for survivors. Despite increasing recognition of its existence and impact, marital rape remains a highly underreported and often misunderstood form of sexual violence. Understanding the physical and psychological consequences of marital rape is essential for supporting survivors and raising awareness about this serious issue. This discussion explores the physical and psychological implications of marital rape, shedding light on the challenges faced by survivors and the importance of addressing this form of abuse. Non-consensual sexual relations with one's spouse is known as marital rape. In the Indian context, forced sexual acts, such as vaginal penetration, are classified as marital rape if the victim's wife is under fifteen years old. One of the forms of violence that is least addressed and most privatized in marriage relationships is sexual violence. While rape committed outside of marriage is illegal in India, rape committed within a marriage is often accepted as socially acceptable.

The full cost of sexual domestic abuse is hidden by the underreporting of intimate partner violence (IPV). In India, marital relationships account for most sexual

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assault cases, while only roughly 10% of victims report their spouses' sexual abuse. This shows that the dearth of study on the psychological effects of spousal sexual abuse has been exacerbated by the inaccurate reporting of marital rape, undermining understanding of the true burden of sexual assault in Indian society. In addition, women who experience physical, emotional, or psychological forms of IPV in addition to spousal sexual abuse frequently hold a disproportionately high exposure and mental health risk. In India, rape within the context of marriage is widely ignored in therapeutic practice, scientific study, and public health surveillance, despite evidence of the detrimental impact of such acts on victims' mental and emotional well-being.

Marital rape, a form of sexual violence where a spouse forces sexual acts without the other spouse's consent, can have severe physical and psychological consequences. Despite being illegal in many countries, it often goes unreported and unrecognized. Understanding the implications of marital rape is crucial for supporting survivors and advocating for their rights. This discussion will delve into the physical and psychological implications of marital rape, highlighting the need for awareness and support for those affected.

Rape, a heinous act of sexual violence, has devastating implications on its victims, encompassing physical, psychological, and emotional dimensions. Survivors often face a myriad of challenges that can significantly impact their well-being and quality of life. Understanding these implications is crucial for providing adequate support and care for survivors. This discussion explores the implications of rape on victims, shedding light on the profound effects of this traumatic experience.

- **Sexual abuse in Couple's relationship**

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Since ancient times, there has been sexual abuse, and it still occurs in many communities today. Most of the time, women who experience sexual abuse in a relationship are afraid to disclose the abuse to their loved ones or close friends for fear of being misinterpreted or misjudged. Any attempt at or actual imposition of sexual contact without the victim's consent is referred to as "sexual abuse". This involves attacking a victim's private areas, forcing a victim to have sex after being physically assaulted, rape that occurs in a married relationship, and abusing a victim in a dehumanizing manner. In addition, it involves forcing a victim to use the Internet, have sex with someone else, or pose for graphic pictures. Disparaging comments about the victim are often the first signs of sexual assault, which are then followed by awkward physical contact and other insults either before or after sexual engagement. Women frequently suffer from rape in silence, which is a testimony to social conventions that view intimate relationships as exclusively a man's domain where he is the one making decisions. Some ways that sexual violence can appear are as follows:

- carrying on a sexual relationship when the victim is not entirely conscious; - the victim suffers physical harm during a sexual encounter or has his genitalia injured, including using items or weapons in the intravaginal, oral, or anal regions.
- making the victim engage in intimate relationships without providing protection from STDs or unintended pregnancy; - disparaging a woman's sexuality and calling her names that are derogatory in reference to her capacity for intimate connections. Physical, sexual, and psychological impacts follow from mental and emotional abuse as well as physical assault in cases of sexual abuse. In times of hopelessness and despair, victims of marital rape may turn to abusing alcohol- containing beverages or substances with hallucinogenic effects to

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temporarily forget the humiliation and suffering they endure in their relationships. The victimization of women and the categorization of "marital rapists". The perpetrators' lack of guilt is what makes rape unique. The literature categorizes sexual attackers into two groups: compulsive rapists and battering rapists, who exclusively employ force to achieve their goals. Physically aggressive rapists cause their partners as much embarrassment as possible by verbally and nonsexual abusing them. Anger outbursts that are out of control result in victims of this kind of abuse. According to Canadian writers M. Manson and Langhinrichsen Rohling, "episodic abuse can result in extremely violent acts." The author Russell, DE, 1990 offers another categorization of marital rapists, distinguishing between three types of rapists: men who rape their wives after having consensual sex, men who coerce their wives into having intimate relations, and men who resort to rape when their wives reject their approaches. The American author claims that there are a variety of causes for this kind of behavior, ranging from the maintenance of sadomasochistic gestures in sexual practices to the exercise of power. Married men's behavior can be tailored, particularly when the primary issues being addressed are intrapersonal (sexual dysfunctions) and interpersonal (social disorders).

- **Legal status of marital rape**

The way that marital rape is understood and treated within the Indian legal system varies and frequently depends on judicial judgments. The exemption clause in Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) states that "sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under 15 years of age, is not rape." This section deals with rape. As a result, the age of the wife determines the legal position on marital rape, creating a convoluted web of responsibility and

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protection. The Indian Penal Code's Section 376 describes the penalties for rape, which include a fine and a minimum sentence of 7 years in jail, which is renewable to life, or a maximum term of 10 years in jail.

However, the sentence is lowered to up to two years in prison, a fine, or both if the victim is the husband's own wife and is not younger than twelve. This discrepancy calls attention to the alarming lack of legal protections for women over the age of 15, which runs counter to accepted human rights norms.

The following are the provisions of the Indian Penal Code regarding marital rape:

The offence of raping a wife who is between the ages of 12 and 15 is punishable by up to two years in prison, a fine, or both. Rape of a wife under the age of twelve is penalized by a fine and a minimum sentence of seven years in jail, with the possibility of a life sentence. Rape of a wife who has been granted a judicial separation is punishable by a fine and a maximum 2-year prison sentence. Rape of a wife above 15 years of age is not punishable under the law.

Marital rape was acknowledged as a type of domestic abuse in 2005 with the passage of the Protection of Women from Domestic Abuse Act. With the help of this Act, women can now file for a formal divorce from an abusive spouse and pursue legal remedies for marital rape. Unfortunately, the measures put in place to safeguard victims of marital rape are inadequate and do not adequately address the seriousness of the problem.

The main issue is that, although a woman can claim her rights to life and freedom, in a married relationship she is not granted the same authority over her own body. To rectify this disparity, the definition of rape under Section 375 of the IPC needs to be reexamined. Currently, women could defend themselves against these kind of situations through the provisions of Section 498-A of the IPC concerning cruelty.

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## Types of Marital rape

- **Battering rape:** This type of marital rape involves women experiencing both physical and sexual violence in the relationship in a variety of ways. For example, the victim may be physically abused during the sexual abuse, or the rape may occur after a physically abusive episode in which the husband wants to make up and forces his wife to have sex against her will. Most victims fall into one of these two categories.
- **Force only rape:** In this type of marital rape, husbands use only the necessary amount of force to pressurize their wives; in such cases, battering may not be a characteristic, but women who refuse sexual relations are typically subjected to such assaults.
- **Obsessive Rape:** In obsessive rape, assaults involve vicious torture and/or perverse sexual acts and are most commonly fierce in form. This type has also been categorized as sadistic rape.

## Social issues related to marital Rape.

The term "marital rape" is contentious because it confuses marriage as socially acceptable sex with rape, which is generally seen as a sexual offense. Women are less likely to disclose sexual assaults by their spouses because they do not view such incidents as rape (in contrast to those committed by strangers or acquaintances). There are several common misconceptions regarding women and sex, such as the idea that they prefer forced sex and that they mean "yes" when they say "no" to it. In Indian culture, a wife is expected to have sex with her husband, and males are encouraged to do so by both mainstream and pornographic media. And it gives them the impression that a woman's objection should always be disregarded. In Indian society, the victim-blaming game is very prevalent. But also deceive women into thinking that they could have "sent the

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wrong signals," holding them responsible for unwelcome sex. The idea that women who choose not to have sex against their choice are "bad wives" is widely held in Indian society.

### **Different forms of coercion in a husband-wife relationship and facilitation of marital rape: -**

- When a woman confronts her husband with non-violent threats, interpersonal coercion takes place. Instances of interpersonal coercion include spouses who mistreat their children, threaten to withhold money, or establish a connection. Such threats are especially prevalent in relationships where a woman's dependence and helplessness weaken her negotiating position because of their coercive nature. But the sex that follows cannot be regarded as rape if the threats are unrelated to any physical force.
- The essence of rape, on the other hand, is physical coercion, either real or threatened. Physical threats can take many forms, from overt threats to kill a woman for disobeying to subtly threatening to harm her if she persists in her refusal to comply. In situations where a husband has previously abused his partner, the implicit threats carry weight. When physical force is really used, it can range from holding a larger, stronger woman down to seriously hurting her.
- Social pressure to have married sex is institutionalized in our society and absorbed by people. Such coercion does not fit under a usable definition of rape, even though it can be harmful and demeaning, particularly when combined with other kinds of male entitlement.

### **The Effects of Marital Rape on a Woman's Mental Health**

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Unfortunately, one of the most ignored crimes that many women experiences is marital rape. Throughout the nation, there are numerous instances of marital rape that go unreported and unacknowledged. It has long been a taboo subject, and because so many people brush it off, awareness of it is not as widespread. A few years ago, because women were viewed as men's property or things, many countries refused to recognize marital rape as a crime. Because it was committed by a person who the victim was legally bound to rather than a stranger, marital rape was also viewed as "less of a crime."

### **Psychological implications of marital rape**

The psychological implications of marital rape can be profound and long-lasting. Victims of marital rape may experience a range of emotional and psychological effects, including:

- **Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** Marital rape can cause severe trauma like that experienced by victims of other forms of sexual assault. This trauma can lead to symptoms of PTSD, such as flashbacks, nightmares, and severe anxiety.
- **Depression and Anxiety:** Victims of marital rape may experience depression, anxiety, and feelings of helplessness or worthlessness. These feelings can be exacerbated by the betrayal of trust inherent in marital rape.
- **Low Self-Esteem:** Victims of marital rape may struggle with feelings of shame, guilt, and low self-esteem. They may blame themselves for the abuse or feel that they are not worthy of love and respect.
- **Sexual Dysfunction:** Marital rape can lead to sexual dysfunction, including a loss of interest in sex, difficulty becoming aroused, and pain during

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intercourse. These issues can further strain the victim's relationship with their spouse.

- **Distrust and Relationship Issues:** Marital rape can damage the trust between partners and lead to significant relationship issues. Victims may find it difficult to trust their spouse or to engage in intimate relationships in the future.
- **Social Isolation:** Victims of marital rape may withdraw from social activities and relationships out of fear, shame, or a desire to keep the abuse secret. This can lead to social isolation and further exacerbate feelings of loneliness and depression.
- **Substance Abuse:** Some victims may turn to drugs or alcohol to cope with the emotional pain of marital rape. This can lead to substance abuse issues and further complicate their mental health.

It's important for victims of marital rape to seek support from trained professionals, such as therapists or counselors, who can help them process their experiences and develop coping strategies.

### **Physical implications of marital rape**

Marital rape can have serious physical implications for victims, including:

- **Physical Injury:** The physical force involved in marital rape can cause a range of injuries, including bruises, lacerations, and internal injuries. In some cases, the injuries can be severe enough to require medical attention.
- **Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs):** Marital rape can increase the risk of contracting STIs, especially if the perpetrator is engaging in high-risk sexual behaviors. Victims may be at risk of STIs such as HIV, herpes, gonorrhea, and chlamydia.

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- **Pregnancy:** Marital rape can result in pregnancy, which can have significant implications for the victim's health and well-being. Victims may face difficult decisions about whether to carry the pregnancy to term and may require access to reproductive health services.
- **Chronic Pain:** Victims of marital rape may experience chronic pain, especially if they have sustained injuries during the assault. Chronic pain can have a significant impact on a person's quality of life and may require ongoing medical treatment.
- **Gynecological Issues:** Marital rape can lead to a range of gynecological issues, including vaginal tearing, pelvic pain, and menstrual irregularities. These issues can be painful and may require medical intervention.
- **Sleep Disturbances:** Victims of marital rape may experience sleep disturbances, including nightmares and insomnia, because of the trauma they have experienced. Sleep disturbances can further impact their physical health and well-being.

It's important for victims of marital rape to seek medical attention following an assault to address any physical injuries and to receive appropriate care and support.

### **Consequences/Effects of Marital Rape**

The signs and symptoms of marital rape are all excruciating and unpleasant. Those included: clinical depression; fear; anxiety and restlessness; lack of confidence; low self-esteem; and excessive self-hatred. The following consequences should be carefully considered, even though the reservations might not be entirely accurate. An individual who has experienced marital rape

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possesses many resources to assist her in pursuing justice. What a victim of marital rape must deal with in the absence of legal protection.

- **Psycho-social consequences of marital rape**

Rape is a highly complicated event that highlights several issues facing modern society. Outside the realm of violence, rape has its own conception, which is held

by the perpetrator, who is a byproduct of the culture in which he lives. Because they can identify with many of the rapist's behaviors, family members, friends, and even some segments of the public tend to minimize the image and effects of violence committed by the married aggressor. This phenomenon contributes to the creation of a "rape culture". Marital rape is a particularly dangerous offense that, by its very nature, undermines a person's right to protection of their psychic and mental health as well as their sexual freedom. It not only leaves physical wounds but also leaves a profound mental wound that is muddled by the strain of insatiable body cravings and is unaware of the aggressor. For women who are victims, this harm results from helplessness and humiliation in addition to the severity of the physical abuse they have experienced. The fact that the victim of rape experiences a devaluation and that her self-esteem is severely damaged—a feeling that is shared by others around her—greatly amplifies the repercussions. The victim's experience of personal degeneration becomes a barrier that keeps her from acting to leave the abusive relationship.

From a psychological perspective, victims of marital rape experience severe effects to their self-image. These effects include anxiety related to sexual activity and partners, which can sometimes lead to mental illness that necessitates medication and psychiatric monitoring, such as panic attacks, neurosis, and

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depression (post-traumatic stress disorder). A woman's capacity for personal relationships is ridiculed in conjunction with physical and psychological assault during non-consensual sexual encounters.

- Physical trauma to the anal and vaginal regions, such as cuts, bruises, and other wounds that might not heal if medical attention is delayed. Depression, shock, anxiety, and optimal productivity. In the absence of support, women may turn to suicide, endangering their ability to fulfill their parenting duties if they have children.
- Gynecological consequences include miscarriage (when a woman becomes pregnant without her knowledge or consent), stillbirth, bladder infections, STDs, and so on once more. These medical complications are brought on by coerced sexual acts in a marriage with the clear knowledge that there are no legal protections, meaning that women are more likely to suffer from physical and psychological harm and must deal with the fallout. This is a classic case of contemporary exploitation and a clear illustration of the three waves of feminism's disastrous outcomes, especially in India.
- Some long-term effects for which there is no social, legal, or governmental support include low self-esteem, eating problems, sleeplessness, sexual dysfunction, and so forth. If this keeps up, a sizable section of the populace will remain dissatisfied, and no amount of government action or policies to empower them will work because, as we've seen, the issue starts behind closed doors.
- Numerous studies show that the effects on the psyche of marital rape victims are sometimes so great that they can reach the stage where they consider themselves the only guilty party for the violent behavior of the husband, they consider to be the cause of certain behaviors that they attract

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upon themselves, the cause of their misfortune, of the partner's curses, all the more so as the verbal "dirt" (insults, swearing language) thrown by the partner amplifies their guilt.

### **Marital Rape in India**

Sometimes so great that they can reach the stage where they consider themselves the only. Guilty party for the violent behavior of the husband, they consider to be the cause of certain behaviours that they attract upon themselves, the cause of their misfortune, of the partner's curses, all the more so as the verbal "dirt" (insults, swearing language) thrown by the partner amplifies their guilt "The time will come when men will accept women as equals in national councils as well as by the fireside. The ultimate union of the sexes and flawless camaraderie that will lead to the greatest advancement of the species won't exist until then.

In India, women have never been valued and their status is still below what it ought to be. Because women in India have traditionally been viewed as inferior to men, the nation has evolved male-chauvinist ideals. Criminal atrocities against women in India include forced prostitution, sexual harassment, domestic abuse, and rape. There are many crimes against women, of which this is only a tiny portion. Hindu texts state that a man cannot perfectly conduct any religious rite without the assistance of his wife. A wife must participate in all religious ceremonies. So, wives are referred to as "Ardhangani." They should be assigned major roles on an equal footing with males. When a woman does not give her agreement for sexual activity between a man and a woman who are legally recognized as husband and wife, it is referred to as marital rape. The right to legally consummate a marriage is conferred upon a husband and wife at marriage. A man and a woman are socially allowed to have children through marriage,

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which implies that they have the right to engage in sexual activities. Marriage is a stable partnership. It is not acceptable for a man to force sex on his wife because he is married. Sexual relations are a right that must be freely chosen and is not his wife's responsibility. The wife should not be forced to have sex by her husband; instead, she should be free to reject. In India, the legal system still does not consider marital rape to be a crime. The Kerala High Court upheld marital rape as a valid reason for filing for divorce on August 6, 2021. Marital rape, sometimes referred to as spousal rape or inmate partner rape, is when one spouse commits rape against the other. The Indian Penal Code, 1860 defines rape as having sexual relations with a woman against her will or without her consent. This term is found in Section 375. It is also considered rape if the woman's consent is acquired through coercion or by creating fear of serious injury or death. Rape also occurs when a guy deceitfully convinces a woman that he is her spouse and engages in sexual activity with her. It would also be considered sexual intercourse if a man engages in it with a woman who is incapable of giving consent because of her unsoundness. Even if the girl gave her consent, having sex with her if she is less than sixteen would still be considered rape. The Indian Penal Code's Section 375, which addresses rape, has an exception clause that states, "Sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under 15 years of age, is not rape."

A specific kind of domestic abuse is marital rape. Because it is an act of coercive and violent control, it occasionally involves financial abuse, social abuse, emotional abuse, mental abuse, physical violence, and the exploitation of masculine privilege. Effects of Marital Rape: For women, the effects of Marital

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Rape are more severe and permanent because the perpetrator is often their spouse, with whom they had anticipated a lifetime of bliss. Two categories exist:

- Physical repercussions: Private organ damage, bruising, torn muscles, cuts, exhaustion, fractures, and other injuries are among the physical effects of marital rape. In addition to rape, women who experience physical abuse also experience severe consequences such as blacked eyes, fractured bones, and wounds from any kind of instrument used during sexual assault.

Due to marital rape, women also experience miscarriages, infections, infertility, and an increased risk of HIV and other diseases.

- Psychological effects: It is impossible to adequately describe the trauma a woman experiences after being raped by her own husband on multiple occasions.

The short-term psychological impacts include shock, fear, worry, suicide thoughts, and other things. These psychological effects are significantly harsher than the physical ones. "Protection of life and personal liberty" is stated in Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. The right to live with personal liberty and dignity is protected by the article, but if a woman is coerced into having sex with her husband, her right to exercise that liberty is called into question, and her dignity is compromised. This privilege granted to all women is violated by the Indian Penal Code's Section 375 exemption. Marital rape can only be viewed in the current context as rape that is legal and does not require the woman's consent. It is imperative that the Indian legal system enact legislation that criminalizes marital rape in order to protect women's dignity.

- **Conclusion**

The connection of two individuals who respect each other mutually is called marriage. Educating boys and men to consider women as valuable participants in

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life, in the development of society, and the realization of peace, according to the United Nations, rights. To do this, marital rape must be covered by the law and society must be educated about it starting in elementary school. One of the most horrible types of sexual assault that may happen in a family is marital rape. Because of the nature of the activity and the related problems of relationship secrecy, internalization of patriarchal dominance, and most of the time, economic dependency, the women victims do not come out with their sufferings. Due to the patriarchal attitude, the law has ignored the horrible pain that abused women endure, and it does not even consider marital rape to be a crime or offer any kind of punishment in these situations. Rape happens in many kinds of marriages, regardless of age, social status, race, or ethnicity. The fact that marital rape is still taboo in modern society is a result of false beliefs that limit rape to unmarried relationships. Even though marital rape has been around since antiquity, its numerous social, political, and legal ramifications make it a very challenging subject to address.

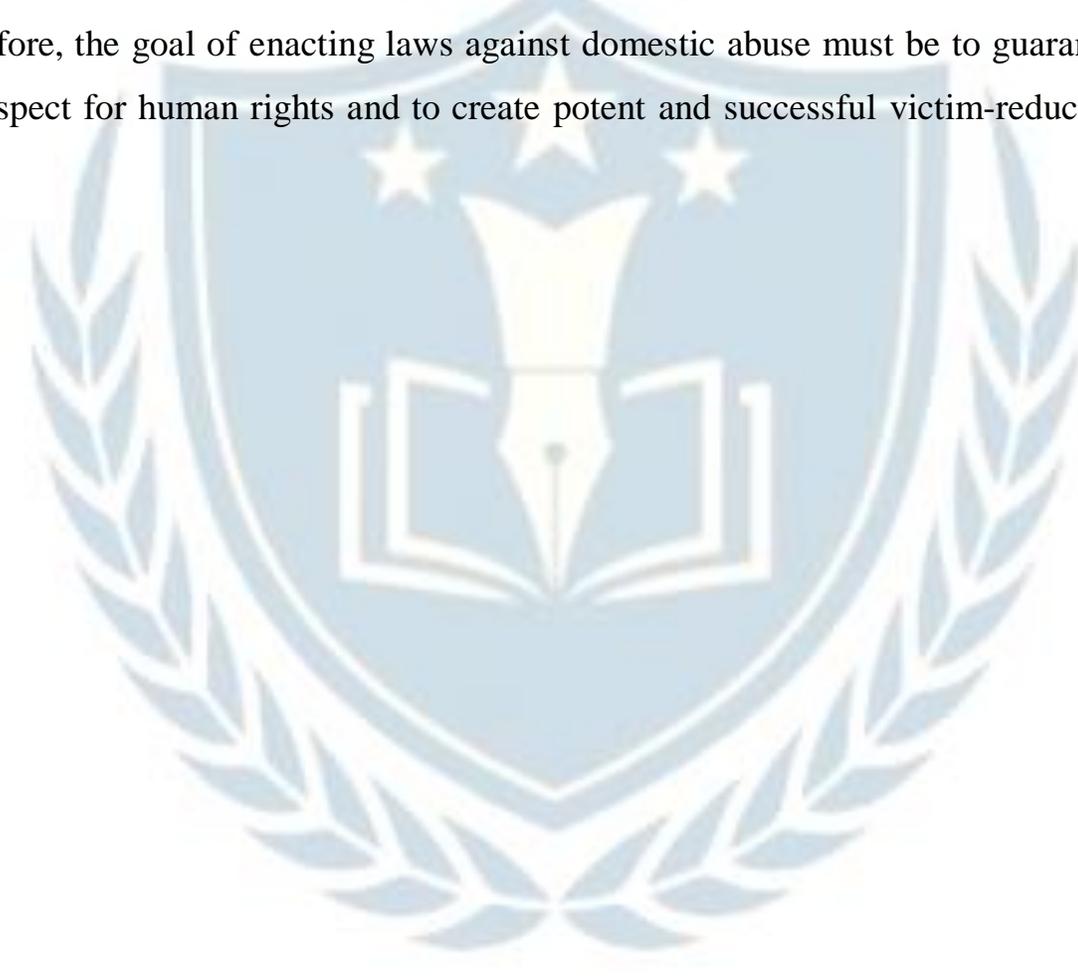
Marital rape occurred in traditional homes because of the man's position of superiority, which was characterized by authority and control, and which held that the wife had to respond to his advances regardless of the setting in which the sexual act was performed. Men were indifferent to the consequences of unwelcome sexual activity, while women were ignorant of the abuse. Men still seek to be superior, frequently discounting the behaviors of their life partners, even though women are now autonomous, and society has changed over the past several decades. Women's accomplishments frequently fall short of men's expectations, which can cause arguments inside the relationship and eventually turn into violent behaviors like unwanted sex, physical abuse, and verbal abuse. The effects of marital rape are particularly complicated; the victims' psyches are

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severely damaged, and they may exhibit anxiety, panic attacks, melancholy, a tendency to isolate themselves, or even make suicide threats. When a woman lacks sexual desire, a male may turn to physical violence to satiate his desires for physical gratification at any costs. Adopting strict legislative measures to combat marital rape is imperative, given the consequences and impacts of this occurrence on both the cohesion of the family and society at large.

Therefore, the goal of enacting laws against domestic abuse must be to guarantee the respect for human rights and to create potent and successful victim-reduction plans.



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