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# GAUGING THE OPINION OF MEN ON MARITAL RAPE IN DELHI USING VOX POP AS A TOOL

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**Abstract:** Marital Rape is an unquestionable reality in India. The National Health Family Survey in 2005-06 published a report that explicitly mentioned figures of sexual violence, faced by married women from their husbands. More than 60,000 women were surveyed, a mean average of 10.4% of married women across different age groups, confided about sexual violence/harassment inflicted by their husbands. Rural women faced more violence (11.2%) than urban women (7.3%). According to a 2018 National Family Health Survey, more than 80 percent of married women who have experienced sexual violence named their current spouse as the perpetrator. In a 2014 survey of more than 9,200 men across seven Indian states, one-third admitted to having forced a sexual act on their wives.

Such incidents occur every day. The patriarchal notion continues to occupy the mindset of our society, even after six decades of us being a republic nation. The emancipation of women hasn't yet been completely achieved in independent India. Marital rape is still a widespread problem in India. It is thus important to understand the perceptions and opinions of public on this grave problem.

The vox pop is a tool used in many forms of media to provide a snapshot of public opinion. A vox pop is the 'Voice of the People'. They are made up of many responses to the same question. Vox pops are a quick and easy way to gauge public opinion on an issue. A 'vox pop' is an interview with members of the public to gather opinions on different issues. Vox pop allows participants to explore the ideas and opinions of others in a fun, active and engaging manner.

A study was conducted to know the opinion of men in Delhi-NCR about marital rape. Vox Pop audio interviews were used as a tool for data collection in the seven zones of Delhi. Sampling was done based on age and socio-economic status. The questions for vox pop interview scheduled were designed to encourage reflection on public opinions about marital rape. The original approved interview schedule composed of five compulsory question topics for each participant, and a number of additional optional questions depending on requirements regarding how talkative each participant was. Selected participants were encouraged to share their opinions about marital rape, its prevalence and need for law. The 'vox pop' audio interviews were used to produce a short DVD of participants' views. A total of 84 members of the public completed the Vox Pop interviews. The vox pop audio interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. Each vox pop audio interview was examined and the key opinions raised within it noted.

The study concludes that Vox pop audio interviews are an effective and powerful tool to gauge opinions of men about prevalence of marital rape in an informed and developing metropolitan city of Delhi. It uses the participatory approach and provides scope to analyse level of negligence of this sensitive topic in our patriarchal society.

**Keywords:** Interview, Marital Rape, Public Opinion, Vox Pop.

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**Introduction:** Rape is one of the most abhorrent crimes against a woman. It is one of the most violent crimes on the earth. Marital rape can be defined as any unwanted sexual intercourse or penetration (vaginal, anal, or oral) obtained by force, threat of force, or when the wife does not consent. One of the very peculiar implications of the narrow and restricted definition of rape is that it cannot be committed

against a particular set of women – a married woman cannot be raped by her own husband. The social problem of marital rape is prevalent in our society for ages, though silence has been maintained around it. Marital rape is an exemption to the offence of rape. These kinds of rapes are predominantly more complex due to their personal and delicate nature. Despite all of the laws to safeguard and uplift women, marital rape is the worst and the most appalling wrong which takes place within the four walls. It is considered to be the vilest crime as it is being done by a person whom the woman trusts and loves, and this betrayal is extremely hard for her to deal with and is more traumatic. Still, despite of all amendments, legislations and law commissions, this heinous crime is unable to gain recognition as a crime.

Marital rape can be defined as any unwanted sexual intercourse or penetration (vaginal, anal, or oral) obtained by force, threat of force, or when the wife does not consent. One of the very peculiar implications of the narrow and restricted definition of rape is that it cannot be committed against a particular set of women – a married woman cannot be raped by her own husband. Equality Survey revealed that one in five has forced their wives or partner to have sex. The United Nations published a report that stipulated that 69% of Indian women believe that occasional violence was justified, for instance when a meal hasn't been prepared in time or when sex has been refused. Further statistical research reveals that 9 to 15% of married women are subjected to rape by their husbands, a staggering and sobering statistic. Marital rape is a common but it is only un-reported crime. A study conducted by the Joint Women Programme, an NGO found that one out of seven married women had been raped by their husband at least once. They frequently do not report these rapes because the law does not support them.

The term 'Vox-Pop' comes from the Latin phrase vox populi, meaning "voice of the people". The Vox-Pop is a tool used in many forms of media to provide a snapshot of public opinion. Random subjects are asked to give their views on a particular topic and their responses are presented to the viewer/reader as a reflection of popular opinion. For Vox-Pops, the interviewer approaches people "in the street" and asks them simple questions about the topic. These interviews investigate public opinion towards widely known topics and are commonly used for research. A distinct feature of Vox-Pop is the setting for where the interviews take place. Using Vox Pops for research purposes to gather feedback, in the moment, from the right respondents. By setting up in locations where your target demographic is likely to be found, recruitment, production, turnaround times and costs are kept to a minimum.

**Methodology:** The study aims to assess the effectiveness of participatory Vox-Pop videos for creating awareness as well as gauging the perspective of men of India patriarchal society about prevalence of marital rape in Delhi and the need for a law to curb the same.

### Objectives

1. To explore men's understanding and perspectives of the vulnerabilities of the other gender of the society due to prevalence of marital rape in Delhi.
2. To develop an intervention to impart knowledge about this sensitive issue.
3. To examine the effectiveness of participatory Vox-Pop videos in creating awareness about the issue.
4. To identify the need of the law to curb this problem.

**Locale of the Study and Selection of Sample:** Delhi has been divided into seven zones on the basis of the geographical location of the 70 constituencies given in the DDA list; these are North, South, West, East, Central, and North-East and North-West zones respectively. In order to assess the knowledge level and opinion of urban men, 15 men were selected from each of these seven zones. The selection of sample from all the seven areas of National Capital territory will ensure fair representation of urban men of Delhi.

**Sample Size:** A sample of 15 men were selected from each zone of Delhi. The sample size was  $7 \times 15 = 105$  men. But only 84 participants completed the Vox Pop interviews.

**Sampling:** Sampling was done based on age and socio-economic status. 15 men from each zone of Delhi were selected and were further divided into three age groups i.e. 18 to 30 years, 31 to 50 years and 51 and above. They were also categorized based on socio economic status i.e. low income group, middle income group and high income group.

**Tools:** Vox Pop audio interviews were used as a tool for data collection in the seven zones of Delhi. A total of 84 Vox-Pop audio interviews were collected.

**Procedure:** A list of questions was prepared for conducting Vox-Pop interview to encourage reflection on public opinions about marital rape. The original approved interview schedule composed of five compulsory question topics for each participant, and a number of additional optional questions depending on requirements regarding how talkative each participant was. Selected participants were encouraged to share their opinions about marital rape, its prevalence and need for law. The 'Vox-Pop' audio interviews were used to produce a short DVD of participants' views. The Vox-Pop audio interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Each Vox-Pop audio interview was examined and the key opinions raised within it were noted.

**Results and Discussions:** A total of 84 Vox-Pop were collected for their evaluation. Through a rigorous interview and evaluation process, it was found that 100% of the Vox-Pops were able to clearly capture the public opinion on marital rape. It was also found that most of the participants were initially hesitant to discuss about the topic. But due to flexibility of the tool and ease the participants felt comfortable after first two questions and they were also able to share their opinion effectively on the difficult and sensitive issue like marital rape.

On the scale of awareness, 84% of the participants were aware about the term. Only 60% of the respondents were able to clearly articulate the term with its proper explanation, 24% were bit confused in the terms rape and marital rape, while 16% of them said that there is no such concept because marriage is a partnership for sharing all types of needs. Only 22% of the respondents accepted that in today's time the other gender is facing this problem. 78% of the respondents believe that marital rape is a foreign concept and it is not prevalent in Indian society. Most of them said that according to Indian values marriage is an amalgamation of two bodies and two lives. The two partners share all types of needs and it is the responsibility of both to fulfill the same with or without the individual will. They also said that due to globalization the Indian values and system is getting adulterated due to western culture and only because of media exposure these concepts are seeping into the young minds due to which there is a constant increase in the crime rate especially against women.

60% of them had an opinion that may this concept is more prevalent in rural areas as the females are less aware and have no voice in family and society hence easily became the victim. But in all the metropolitan cities the women are equally empowered and have voice, while only about 10% accepted that marital rape is prevalent even in well aware and educated population of our country. The remaining 30% were having a mixed opinion. The opinions of respondents varied when they were asked about the reasons behind marital rape. Majority of the participants said that inability of the two partners to fulfill the needs results into marital rapes. The other reason behind this was the increased exposure of media impacted the mind of viewers specially women as they are the frequent viewers and hence develop this concept in their mind which in turn resulted in the problems in married life. In the end they conclude their opinions with the statement that because the female partners don't fulfill the husband's need, they tend to visit prostitutes or which may also results in increased incidents of rapes and divorce in the society.

Only 30% of the respondents felt that there should a need of law to curb this problem from the society while the other 70% denied from it as they had an opinion that it is a matter of husband and wife and there is no need for society to pitch in.

**Conclusion:** The study concludes that Vox pop audio interviews are an effective and powerful tool to gauge opinions of men about prevalence of marital rape in an informed and developing metropolitan

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city of Delhi. It uses the participatory approach and provides scope to analyse level of negligence of this sensitive topic in our patriarchal society.

Women safety is one branch of gender inequality. Diverse communication strategies have been designed and implemented to end or prevent diverse types of crime against women and young girls. Some have brought positive results. Others have shown less positive results. The study indicates that participatory communication should foster gender equality and help to overcome some of the barriers responsible for gender inequality in terms of women safety since it facilitates both individual and societal level changes, acquainted of the local context and esteeming a multiplicity of communication approaches.

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