

Between consent and conjugality: Deconstructing the legal and social barriers to the criminalization of Marital Rape in Contemporary India

Ms. Pooja Narayan¹, and **Prof. (Dr.) Harbansh Dixit**²

¹ Research Scholar, College of Law and Legal Studies, Teerthanker Mahaveer University, Moradabad
Email: pooja.narayan2104@gmail.com

² Dean, College of Law and Legal Studies, Teerthanker Mahaveer University, Moradabad
Email: harbanshdixit@gmail.com

Abstract---Marital rape the act of non-consensual sexual intercourse between spouses remains one of the most conspicuous legal blind spots in contemporary Indian jurisprudence. Despite constitutional guarantees of equality, dignity, and personal liberty under Articles 14, 15, and 21, India continues to extend criminal immunity to husbands who sexually coerce their wives, a position entrenched through Exception 2 of Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, and its legislative successor, Exception 2 to Section 63 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. This paper undertakes a comprehensive examination of the legal, constitutional, social, and institutional barriers that have persistently obstructed the criminalization of marital rape in India. Drawing upon constitutional jurisprudence, judicial decisions, legislative history, comparative international law, and sociological analysis, the paper argues that the marital rape exception (MRE) is constitutionally indefensible, socially regressive, and incompatible with India's obligations under international human rights law. The paper further contends that the continued existence of the MRE represents not merely a legislative oversight but a deliberate institutional choice rooted in patriarchal constructions of marriage, conjugal rights, and female sexuality.

Keywords---Marital rape, Exception 2, Section 375 IPC, Section 63 BNS, conjugal immunity, consent, Article 14, Article 21, sexual autonomy, constitutional validity.

How to Cite:

Narayan, P., & Dixit, H. (2026). Between consent and conjugality: Deconstructing the legal and social barriers to the criminalization of Marital Rape in Contemporary India. *The International Tax Journal*, 53(3), 1088–1095. Retrieved from <https://internationaltaxjournal.online/index.php/itj/article/view/631>

The International tax journal ISSN: 0097-7314 E-ISSN: 3066-2370 © 2026

ITJ is open access and licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

Submitted: 27 March 2026 | Revised: 18 April 2026 | Accepted: 09 May 2026

1088

I. Introduction

The legal imagination of marriage in India has, for well over a century, operated on an assumption that has proven extraordinarily resistant to reform: that matrimony constitutes an irrevocable and permanent covenant of sexual consent by the wife. This assumption rooted in the common law doctrine articulated by Sir Matthew Hale in seventeenth-century England, which held that a wife "hath given up herself in this kind unto her husband, which she cannot retract" was uncritically transplanted into the Indian Penal Code, 1860, by the colonial legislature and has survived successive waves of criminal law reform with remarkable tenacity. Today, even as India has modernized its rape laws through the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, and further through the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, the marital rape exception remains stubbornly intact.

The subject sits at an uncomfortable intersection of law, culture, and politics. On one side lies the constitutional promise of equality and bodily autonomy; on the other, deeply entrenched sociocultural norms that treat marriage as a domain immune to legal scrutiny. The result is a legal paradox in which the same act non-consensual sexual intercourse is punished as a grave crime when perpetrated by a stranger but immunized when perpetrated by a husband. This paradox is not accidental; it is the product of deliberate legislative choices, judicial ambivalence, and institutional resistance that this paper seeks to critically examine.

The question of marital rape has gained renewed urgency in light of the split verdict delivered by the Delhi High Court in May 2022, the Supreme Court's ongoing consideration of the constitutional challenge to the MRE, and the government's formal opposition to criminalization. Against this backdrop, the present paper argues that the arguments advanced in defense of the MRE protection of the institution of marriage, availability of alternative remedies, fear of misuse, and socio-cultural sensitivities cannot withstand rigorous constitutional scrutiny. The paper is organized into seven substantive sections: historical and legislative background; constitutional analysis; judicial trajectory; sociological dimensions; international comparative framework; critique of anti-criminalization arguments; and a concluding argument for reform.

II. Historical and Legislative Background

The marital rape exception in Indian law traces its intellectual lineage directly to the writings of Sir Matthew Hale, Chief Justice of England, who in his posthumously published *Historia Placitorum Coronae* (1736) articulated the infamous "implied consent" doctrine. This doctrine held that a wife, by virtue of the marriage contract, had given irrevocable consent to sexual intercourse with her husband and could not retract such consent during the subsistence of the marriage. This position was never the subject of any judicial decision in England but was treated as settled common law and became the foundation upon which colonial criminal codes were constructed. When Thomas Babington Macaulay and the First Law Commission drafted what became the Indian Penal Code, 1860, the implied consent doctrine was incorporated as Exception 2 to Section 375, which provided that "sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under fifteen years of age, is not rape." The choice of age fifteen which was itself lower than the then-prevailing age of consent for unmarried women reflected the colonial legislature's comfortable alignment with a patriarchal construction of marriage that treated the wife's body as conjugal property. Independent India, despite adopting a transformative Constitution premised on equality and non-discrimination, retained the marital rape exception without meaningful debate. Various Law Commission Reports over the decades acknowledged the anomaly but stopped short of recommending criminalization, often citing the need to protect the "sanctity of marriage" and warning of potential misuse of such provisions. The 172nd Report of the Law Commission (2000), while recommending reforms to rape laws, explicitly declined to recommend criminalization of marital rape, expressing concern about the social consequences of such a step.

A significant, if partial, reform came through the Supreme Court's decision in *Independent Thought v. Union of India* (2017), where the Court read down Exception 2 to Section 375 to the extent that it applied to minor wives between fifteen and eighteen years of age, holding that a husband who sexually coerces his minor wife could not claim the protection of the exception. However, the Court carefully refrained from pronouncing upon the marital rape exception as it applies to adult wives, framing the issue narrowly in terms of child marriage and child rights rather than as a broader pronouncement on consent within marriage. When the Indian Parliament replaced the IPC with the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, there was considerable anticipation that the new code would use the opportunity to delete or substantially modify the marital rape exception. These expectations were disappointed. Section 63 of the BNS replicates the structure of the old Section 375 almost verbatim, with Exception 2 now reading: "Sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under eighteen years of age, is not rape." The sole modification was the upward revision of the wife's age from fifteen to eighteen years a change necessitated by the *Independent Thought* decision but the fundamental architecture of conjugal immunity remained undisturbed. Scholars and legal commentators have rightly characterized the BNS as a missed legislative opportunity for gender justice.

III. Constitutional Infirmities of the Marital Rape Exception

Article 14 of the Constitution of India guarantees to every person equality before the law and equal protection of the laws. The Supreme Court has, over decades, developed a robust jurisprudence around Article 14, holding that legislative classifications must satisfy a two-pronged test: the classification must be founded on an intelligible differentia, and there must be a rational nexus between the differentia and the object sought to be achieved by the legislation. The marital rape exception creates a classification between married and unmarried women for the purposes of protection from sexual violence. A married woman who is sexually coerced by her husband cannot invoke Section 376 of the IPC or Section 64 of the BNS, while an unmarried woman victim of the same act receives the full protection of the law. This classification fails both prongs of the Article 14 test. The differentia marital status has no rational nexus with the object of the rape law, which is to protect bodily integrity and punish non-consensual sexual intercourse. The fact of marriage does not transform non-consensual sexual intercourse into consensual intercourse, nor does it diminish the harm, trauma, or violation experienced by the victim. As Justice Rajiv Shakdher of the Delhi High Court observed in the 2022 split verdict, the MRE "with one stroke deprives nearly one-half of the population of equal protection of the laws."

The Supreme Court's expansive interpretation of Article 21 has been one of the most significant jurisprudential developments in post-independence India. The right to life protected under Article 21 has been held to include not merely physical existence but the right to live with dignity, the right to health, the right to bodily integrity, and, significantly, the right to sexual autonomy. In *Navej Singh Johar v. Union of India* (2018), the Supreme Court while decriminalizing consensual same-sex relations between adults emphasized that sexual autonomy the right of an individual to make choices about their own body and sexuality is a fundamental component of the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21. The marital rape exception directly and fundamentally violates the sexual autonomy of married women. By denying a married woman the legal right to refuse sexual intercourse with her husband, the exception reduces her from a rights-bearing individual to an object of conjugal entitlement. The right to say "no" which lies at the very heart of the concept of sexual autonomy is extinguished by the operation of law the moment a woman enters into matrimony. This is constitutionally untenable. As Justice Shakdher observed in the Delhi High Court judgment, marriage does not confer upon a husband an "unfettered right to sex" without consent, and a legal provision predicated upon the denial of consent cannot be saved by appeals to the institution of marriage. Article 15(1) of the Constitution prohibits the State from discriminating against any citizen on grounds only of sex. The marital rape exception operates as a discrimination based on sex: it is a provision that exclusively burdens women (as the class of persons who are excluded from legal protection) on the basis of their sex and marital status. The BNS's Exception 2 to Section 63, by creating a category of women wives over eighteen years of age

who are structurally excluded from the protection of rape law, entrenches a form of sex-based discrimination that is constitutionally prohibited. The exception treats married women as a lesser category of persons, reinforcing the historically patriarchal notion that marriage diminishes a woman's individuality and her constitutional rights.

IV. Judicial Trajectory: From Ambivalence to Division

The Indian judiciary's engagement with marital rape has been characterized by a combination of bold constitutional pronouncements on the abstract principles of dignity and autonomy, and a marked reluctance to apply those principles to the specific context of the marital rape exception. In *Bodhisattwa Gautam v. Subhra Chakraborty* (1996), the Supreme Court observed that "rape is a crime against basic human rights and a violation of the victim's most cherished of fundamental rights, namely, the right to life enshrined under Article 21." Yet, these stirring observations about the nature of rape as a rights violation were never extended to the context of marital rape, reflecting the judiciary's discomfort with questioning the legal sanctity of marriage. The Supreme Court's decision in *Independent Thought v. Union of India* (2017) marked the first significant judicial inroad into the territory of the marital rape exception, albeit in a carefully circumscribed manner. The Court read down Exception 2 to Section 375 IPC to exclude minor wives between the ages of fifteen and eighteen from the ambit of conjugal immunity, holding that the distinction between married and unmarried minor girls for the purposes of sexual violence protection was arbitrary, irrational, and violative of Articles 14, 15, and 21. The Court's reasoning was grounded in the rights of the child and the pernicious consequences of child marriage, and it explicitly refrained from commenting upon the marital rape exception as it applies to adult wives. While the judgment was an important step forward, its limited scope also signaled the judiciary's reluctance to confront the broader constitutional questions raised by the MRE. The most significant judicial engagement with the marital rape exception in recent times was the split verdict delivered by the Delhi High Court in May 2022, in the case arising from petitions filed by RIT Foundation and other parties. Justice Rajiv Shakdher held that the marital rape exception was unconstitutional, finding that it violated Articles 14, 15, 19(1)(a), and 21 of the Constitution. He reasoned that the MRE treats the consent of a married woman as legally irrelevant, creates an irrational and unconstitutional classification between married and unmarried women, and deprives married women of their fundamental right to bodily integrity and sexual autonomy. In a memorable observation, Justice Shakdher noted: "Women in most parts of the world are treated as individuals, free to enter into contracts in their own right but when it comes to sexual communion with their husbands, their consent counts for nothing."

Justice C. Hari Shankar, on the other hand, upheld the constitutionality of the exception, reasoning that the question of criminalization of marital rape was a complex social and moral question that ought to be resolved by the legislature rather than the judiciary. He maintained that the exception served to protect the institution of marriage and that criminalizing marital rape could have unintended social consequences. The divergence between the two learned judges encapsulates the deeper tension between constitutional rights-based reasoning and institutional deference to legislative wisdom that lies at the heart of the marital rape debate. Following the split verdict of the Delhi High Court, the matter has been carried in appeal to the Supreme Court, where a Constitution Bench is presently examining the constitutional validity of Exception 2 to Section 63 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. The Supreme Court's decision, when rendered, will be among the most consequential in the history of Indian gender jurisprudence, with implications for millions of married women across the country.

V. Sociological Dimensions: Culture, Patriarchy, and the Silenced Victim

One of the most persistent sociological barriers to the criminalization of marital rape in India is the deeply embedded cultural construction of marriage as a "sacred institution" a bond that transcends individual rights and creates obligations that are fundamentally different from, and in many ways superior to, the constitutional protections that govern interpersonal relations between strangers. In this

cultural framework, marriage is not merely a legal contract but a sacramental union that dissolves the individuality of the wife into the conjugal household. The introduction of criminal law into the marital bedroom is perceived as a desecration of this sacred space and an assault on the foundational social institution of the family. This cultural construction of marriage as immune from legal scrutiny is not unique to India it has historical parallels in Western legal traditions as well but it has proven particularly resistant to reform in the Indian context because of its reinforcement by religious personal laws, community norms, and the powerful social stigma attached to marital discord. Women who report sexual violence within marriage are frequently not merely disbelieved but actively blamed, ostracized, and subjected to familial and community pressure to withdraw complaints. The social cost of speaking out against a husband's sexual coercion is often calculated by survivors to be greater than the cost of enduring the abuse in silence, which accounts for the pervasive underreporting of marital sexual violence in India. At a deeper structural level, the persistence of the marital rape exception reflects the gender inequalities that continue to shape Indian society. Indian society has historically provided limited autonomy to women, often treating them as the property of their spouses. This "property paradigm" the notion that a wife's body belongs to her husband is not merely a cultural attitude but finds its legal expression in the marital rape exception itself, which in effect confers upon the husband a proprietary right over the wife's sexuality. The exception institutionalizes the subordination of women within marriage and sends a powerful normative message that a wife's consent to sexual intercourse is legally irrelevant. The psychological consequences of this normative framework for survivors of marital rape are profound and well-documented. Research indicates strong associations between marital rape and adverse mental health outcomes, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The inability to talk about the abuse or seek legal redress exacerbates these mental health consequences, trapping survivors in cycles of violence and silence. The "victim-blaming game" is a characteristic feature of India's social response to marital rape. Survivors of marital sexual violence are frequently told that they must have provoked the assault, that they should have resisted more forcefully, or that the abuse is a private matter to be resolved within the family rather than through the legal system. These social attitudes find their echo in some of the legal arguments advanced against criminalization, which suggest that wives might misuse rape laws to harass or "destabilize" their husbands. The "misuse" argument, which is invoked with remarkable frequency in the Indian legislative and judicial debate on marital rape, is itself a manifestation of deep-seated gender biases that treat the false accuser as a greater social concern than the actual survivor.

VI. International Comparative Framework

The global legal landscape on marital rape has undergone a dramatic transformation over the past half century. The common law's implied consent doctrine, which was once the prevailing rule in virtually all common law jurisdictions, has been almost universally repudiated. The United Kingdom criminalized marital rape through the landmark decision of the House of Lords in *R v. R* (1992), where the Court held that the implied consent doctrine was a "legal fiction" that had never had any factual basis and was incompatible with the right of a wife to the same protection of the law as any other woman. The United States followed through a combination of judicial decisions and legislative reforms, with all fifty states having criminalized marital rape by 1993. South Africa, Canada, Australia, and most European nations have similarly abolished conjugal immunity. At the international level, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), to which India is a signatory, obligates State parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations. The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993) explicitly recognizes marital rape as a form of violence against women that States are obligated to address. India's continued maintenance of the marital rape exception places it in uncomfortable company with a dwindling minority of nations that have not yet recognized marital rape as a crime. The experience of jurisdictions that have criminalized marital rape offers instructive lessons for India's reform process. South Africa's Sexual Offences Act, 2007, criminalizes marital rape without distinguishing between spousal and non-spousal perpetrators, providing a clean legislative model. Nepal

criminalized marital rape in 2006, demonstrating that even societies with significant cultural similarities to India have been able to enact reform. The concern that criminalization would "destabilize" the institution of marriage has not been borne out by the experience of these jurisdictions; research from countries that have criminalized marital rape does not support the claim that criminal law reform has had adverse effects on marriage as a social institution.

VII. Critique of Anti-Criminalization Arguments

The most frequently invoked argument against criminalizing marital rape is that it would undermine the institution of marriage. The Ministry of Home Affairs, in its formal response to the Supreme Court petitions, contended that designating marital rape as a crime would "severely impact the conjugal relationship" and have profound implications for the institution of marriage. This argument rests on a fundamental category error: it conflates the institution of marriage with the specific practice of non-consensual sexual intercourse within marriage. The protection of marriage as a social institution cannot logically require the legal immunity of sexual violence; on the contrary, a marriage premised upon coercion and the denial of consent is antithetical to the constitutional values of dignity, equality, and mutual respect upon which a just and sustainable marital institution must rest. A second line of argument against criminalization holds that married women who are sexually coerced by their husbands are not without legal recourse, given the availability of remedies under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, Section 354 of the IPC (now Section 74 of the BNS), and Section 498A. This argument is factually weak and normatively untenable. The Domestic Violence Act provides civil remedies protection orders, residence orders, and maintenance orders but does not treat marital sexual violence as a criminal offence attracting punishment. Section 354, which covers sexual assault, does not carry the same penal consequences as rape under Section 376. The argument that civil remedies are an adequate substitute for criminal justice reveals a troubling double standard: non-marital rape is treated as a crime warranting criminal prosecution and imprisonment, while the equally violating act of marital rape is treated as a domestic matter warranting only civil relief.

The fear that criminalizing marital rape would lead to widespread false complaints by wives seeking to harass their husbands or obtain tactical advantages in matrimonial litigation is frequently cited as a reason for legislative inaction. This argument, however, is not supported by evidence from jurisdictions where marital rape has been criminalized these jurisdictions have not seen a wave of false complaints. Moreover, the argument applies with equal force to all criminal offences involving intimate partners; the possibility of false complaints is not ordinarily treated as a sufficient reason to decriminalize sexual violence. The misuse argument, in its application to marital rape, betrays a structural bias that prioritizes the hypothetical male accused over the actual female survivor. Justice C. Hari Shankar's position in the Delhi High Court split verdict that the question of marital rape criminalization is a matter for the legislature and not for the judiciary reflects a principled concern about the appropriate institutional roles of courts and parliaments in a democracy. There is legitimate force to the argument that complex social questions with significant policy implications should be resolved through democratic deliberation rather than judicial fiat. However, this argument has less persuasive weight when the issue is one of constitutional rights. The judiciary's role under the Indian Constitution is precisely to protect fundamental rights from legislative abrogation, and where a statute violates Articles 14, 15, or 21, the courts have both the authority and the duty to strike it down regardless of legislative inaction.

VIII. The Path Forward: Towards a Rights-Centred Reform

The criminalization of marital rape in India requires a coordinated response across three domains: legislative reform, judicial clarification, and social transformation. At the legislative level, Parliament must delete Exception 2 to Section 63 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. The Law Commission of India should be directed to examine this question afresh, with a specific mandate to recommend the appropriate framing of marital rape as an offence, the appropriate sentencing framework, and the

consequential changes required in matrimonial and personal laws. The 172nd Report of the Law Commission, which declined to recommend criminalization, should be revisited in light of the significant evolution in constitutional jurisprudence, social norms, and international law since its publication. At the judicial level, the Supreme Court's decision on the constitutional challenge to Section 63 of the BNS presents an opportunity to lay down a definitive and principled ruling. The Court should hold that Exception 2 to Section 63 is unconstitutional as violating Articles 14, 15, and 21, and should direct Parliament to legislate accordingly within a stipulated time frame. The Court's existing jurisprudence on sexual autonomy, bodily integrity, and the rights of women provides a more than adequate constitutional foundation for such a ruling. At the social level, meaningful reform requires investment in legal literacy, gender-sensitive policing, judicial training, and support infrastructure for survivors of marital sexual violence. The experience of other jurisdictions suggests that legal reform alone, without accompanying social change, is insufficient to address the problem of marital rape in its full dimensions. Sensitization programmes for law enforcement, mandatory training for judicial officers on gender-based violence, and the strengthening of one-stop crisis centres for survivors are essential complements to legislative and judicial reform.

IX. Conclusion

The marital rape exception represents a profound constitutional anomaly a provision that is simultaneously a relic of colonial misogyny, a violation of fundamental rights, and a symbol of the Indian state's continuing ambivalence about the rights of women within the institution of marriage. The arguments advanced in defence of the exception the protection of marriage, the availability of alternative remedies, the risk of misuse, and the primacy of legislative competence cannot withstand rigorous constitutional analysis. Each of these arguments, when examined carefully, reveals itself to be either factually weak, normatively untenable, or inconsistent with the Constitution's transformative vision of equality and dignity. The central insight that this paper has sought to establish is that consent is not extinguished by conjugality. A woman does not, by entering into marriage, surrender her right to bodily autonomy or her capacity to withhold consent to sexual intercourse. This is not a radical or culturally alien proposition; it is the logical implication of the constitutional commitments to equality, dignity, and personal liberty that India has held for over seven decades. The time for treating it as a live legal question has long passed. The marital rape exception must be abolished. Until it is, the promise of constitutional equality for Indian women will remain, in this crucial respect, an unfulfilled aspiration a gap between the text of the Constitution and the lived reality of millions of women for whom the bedroom remains, in law, a space beyond rights.

References

1. Indian Penal Code, 1860, Section 375, Exception 2.
2. Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, Section 63, Exception 2.
3. Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.
4. Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013.
5. *Independent Thought v. Union of India*, (2017) 10 SCC 800.
6. *RIT Foundation v. Union of India*, Delhi High Court, Split Verdict, 11 May 2022 (Justice Rajiv Shakdher and Justice C. Hari Shankar).
7. *Hrishikesh Saboo v. State of Karnataka*, Challenge to Marital Rape Exception, Supreme Court (pending).
8. *Navej Singh Johar v. Union of India*, (2018) 10 SCC 1.
9. *Bodhisattva Gautam v. Subbra Chakraborty*, (1996) 1 SCC 490.
10. *R v. R*, 1 AC 599 (House of Lords, UK).
11. Law Commission of India, 172nd Report on Review of Rape Laws (2000).
12. Justice J.S. Verma Committee Report on Amendments to Criminal Law (2013).

13. United Nations, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, GA Res. 48/104, 20 December 1993.
14. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979.
15. Hale, Sir Matthew, *Historia Placitorum Coronae* (1736), Vol. 1, p. 629.
16. Drishti IAS, "Marital Rape in India" (February 2025), available at <https://www.drishtias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/marital-rape-in-india-2>.
17. Pandya, Archana and Sharma, Radhika, "Marital Rape: A Non-criminalized Crime in India," *Harvard Human Rights Journal* (2019), available at <https://journals.law.harvard.edu/hrj/2019/01/marital-rape-a-non-criminalized-crime-in-india/>.
18. Bhatt, Priti, "Criminalisation of Marital Rape in India," Manupatra (2020), available at <https://docs.manupatra.in>.
19. CNN, "Marital Rape is Still Not Outlawed in India," 11 October 2024, available at <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/10/11/india/indian-government-marital-rape-intl-hnk>.
20. Rostrum Legal, "Criminalising Marital Rape in India and Its Legal Aspects" (April 2023), available at <https://www.rostrumlegal.com>.
21. Indian Journal of Law and Legal Research, "The Persistence of Patriarchy: A Critical Analysis of the Marital Rape Exception in Section 63 of the BNS" (November 2025), available at <https://www.ijllr.com>.
22. Indian Journal of Law and Legal Review (IJLR), "Marital Rape Exception under Section 63 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita," 6(1) IJLR 988 (2026), available at <https://ijlr.iledu.in>.
23. Oxford Human Rights Hub, "Reflections on Delhi High Court's Split Verdict on Marital Rape" (May 2022), available at <https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk>.
24. PMC/NIH, Decker, Michele R. et al., "Marital Rape and Its Impact on the Mental Health of Women in India," *PLOS Global Public Health* (June 2022), available at <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10021972/>.
25. SC Observer, "Challenge to the Marital Rape Exception," available at <https://www.scobserver.in>.
26. Indian Legal Wing, "Marital Rape under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023: A Missed Opportunity for Gender Justice" (November 2025), available at <https://www.indianlegalwing.com>.
27. Rostrum Legal, "Legal Framework against Marital Rape in India," iLeaders Blog (October 2017), available at <https://blog.ipleaders.in>.
28. Delhi University Law Centre, "Independent Thought v. Union of India: A Critical Comment," available at <https://lc2.du.ac.in/DATA/19.pdf>.