

Attitudes towards Marital Rape: A Cross-Cultural Study between Young Adults in the United Kingdom and India

Melba Kuriakose^{1*}

ABSTRACT

The research in the area of marital rape remains limited even though the topic has generated an increased identification in past two decades. This research project aimed to examine the attitudes towards marital rape among young adults (age ranging from 18-29) of two different countries (the United Kingdom and India). The aim of this study was analysed by using voluntary survey method: Bristol Online Survey (BOS) for external participants and Sona, an online system for recruiting psychology undergraduates of Coventry University. The study investigated attitudes of young adults (n=145; 76 males and 69 females) by adopting online questionnaire and vignette (Rape Supportive Attributions and Victim Blame Attributions). The results indicated that, participants irrespective of their gender, race, marital status or socio-economic status reported to endorse false rape myth to a minimal level and is normally sympathetic towards rape victims. It was also found that males in U.K rationalize the scenario of rape as they regard marital rape as an accidental act from the part of perpetrator. However, findings of this research may provide some important insight to the implication of polices to prevent marital rape and assist victims. The study also warrants future research on general population, various nations and may also assist to modify the law and order of Indian Judiciary System where marital rape is not considered as a crime in the country.

Keywords: *Marital rape; offender; Rape Supportive Attributions; Victim Blame attributions; attitudes of young adults; attitudes towards marital rape*

Marital rape is considered as an enduring widespread issue for women throughout the globe (Russell, 1990). Marital rape is defined as any undesirable or forceful sexual penetration (vaginal, oral or anal) by victim's husband or ex-partner without the consent of wife (Bergen, 1996; Pagelow, 1984). Estrich (1987) stated two forms of rape in legal system: "real rape" and "simple rape". Rape those are committed by any unknown person to the victim is known as "real rape" (e.g. stranger rape), which usually associates with any means of weapon and as a consequence, results in certain injuries to victim. Rape those are committed by any known person to the victim is known as "simple rape" (e.g. marital rape). Feminist theory defines marital rape as a method of social dominance and control over women by men (Johnson, 1995).

¹ Associate Consultant Psychologist at Zinnov Management Consultancy, Bangalore, India

*[Responding Author](#)

Received: January 12, 2019; Revision Received: February 8, 2019; Accepted: February 15, 2019

Attitudes towards Marital Rape: A Cross-Cultural Study between Young Adults in the United Kingdom and India

Studies indicate that, 10-14% of every married or cohabiting women have experienced at least one attempt of marital rape by their husband or ex-partner (Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985; Russell, 1990). It was also identified that, among every married or cohabiting women, marital rape was reported four times more than that of stranger rape (Russell, 1990). The legal system often displays silence to the victims of rape because, rape has been reported as the most minimal crime among all violent assaults (Sheffield, 1994). Moreover, the relationship between the convict and victim is a major determinant as whether a victim reports an assault (Weingourt, 1985). Studies show that, marital rape is less likely recorded as a 'rape' than stranger or acquaintance rape (Kirkwood & Cecil, 2000) or considered as a serious crime (Monson, Byrd, & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 1996; Monson et al., 2000). This could be because, majority of the victims of marital rape are unable to recognise themselves as 'victims' due to the convictions of "wifely obligation", "victim blame" and "social disgrace" associated with marital rape (Basile, 2002; Hanneke, Shields & Mc Call, 1986). Additionally, majority of the victims of marital rape are more possibly to be blamed than the offender (Monson et al., 1996; Monson et al., 2,000). Moreover, the marital status can likewise influence the level of rape myths. Ewoldt, Monson, & Langhinrichsen-Rohling (2000) examined that people are unlikely to support rape myths when the husband and wife in the outlined rape scenario is separated or legally divorced.

Nevertheless, there is an inconsistency in the support of rape myths, and socio-demographic variables are identified with contrasts in perception about marital rape. Investigating the differences in the perception of rape among males and females, regardless of the relationship between victim and offender, has been an extensive field of research. Previous studies have examined that males and females are likely to have different attitudes towards rape (Barnett, Quackenbush, Sinisi, Wegman, & Otney, 2001; Blumberg & Lester, 1991; Nagel, Matsuo, McIntyre, & Morrison, 2005), and males expressing stronger support of rape myths than females. Auster and Leone (2001) identified that females are more probably than males to perceive that, marital rape is similar as that of rape in any other victim-convict relationships. Additionally, other studies found that males are more possibly to blame victim of marital rape and demonstrates a higher level of rape myths than females (Ewoldt et al., 2000; Monson et al., 1996).

Moreover, age of the participant has also been identified as an indicator of individual's perception about rape with different outcomes. Some studies have examined that, young adults are more probably to endorse different aspects of rape myths than older respondents (Blumberg & Lester, 1991). Furthermore, other studies have found that, young adults are more compassionate towards rape victims and are less possibly to blame them than older respondents (Kalra, Wood, Demarais, Verberg, & Senn, 1998; Nagel et al., 2005).

However, this research project is a semi replication of the study "Current Perceptions of Marital Rape: Some Good and Not-So-Good News" (Ferro, Cermele & Saltzman, 2008). The study examined the perceptions of marital rape among male and female undergraduate students in a college and male and female graduates (alumni) of the same college. The study results found that, majority of the participants expressed a low level of endorsement for various aspects of rape myth and some myths were more likely supported by the participants than other rape myths. It was also found that, undergraduate participants were more likely to support for marital rape than acquaintance rape. The present study have adopted a semi-replication of the study "Current Perceptions of Marital Rape: Some Good and Not-So-Good News" (Ferro, Cermele & Saltzman, 2008) because, the study results provide an insight into

Attitudes towards Marital Rape: A Cross-Cultural Study between Young Adults in the United Kingdom and India

an emerging issue 'marital rape' in the society. Even though, researchers have analysed the difference in attitudes of young adults towards marital rape, they have not investigated variations in the attitudes of people across different socio-cultural groups. However, the methods (Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, vignettes, Rape- Supportive Attributions Scale and Sex-Role Stereotypical Victim Blame Attribution Scale) adopted by researchers (Ferro, Cermele & Saltzman, 2008) were appropriate for the present study as this research project aims to examine the attitudes towards marital rape among young adults of two different countries (United Kingdom and India). Moreover, marital rape is an emerging issue in both countries and that it is essential to examine people's attitudes towards it to gain a better understanding of how victims of this crime are perceived as that would have an impact on them by reporting and seeking help. Furthermore, in India it isn't a crime, so by this research it would be relevant to examine Indian people's attitudes towards victims of marital rape. Moreover, this study will also examine if there are differences between gender, ethnicity and economic status.

Marital Rape in the United Kingdom (U.K)

In U.K, marital rape was categorized as a criminal offense in October 1991 (The Times Law Report, 24 October, 1991). Statistics reports that, approximately 85,000 women are raped every year in England and Wales, which accounts almost 11 rapes every hour (Office for National Statistics, 2013). In U.K, majority of women do not have access to any rape crisis center (Map of Gaps, 2007). Among all forms of sexual violence, women (2.7%) were more possibly than men (0.7%) to report intimate violence than men (Crime Survey for England, 2015). It was also found that, women aged between 16-19 years (12.6%) and 20-24 years (8.9%) were more possibly to be reported as victims of marital rape when compared to women aged between 55-59 years (5.4%) (Crime Survey for England, 2015). Additionally, the report in the year 2014 indicates that, 6.8% of women experienced partner violence than stranger abuse (Crime Survey for England, 2015).

Marital Rape in India

Despite the fact that majority of the developed countries have castigated marital rape, surprisingly in India, there is no law to safeguard married women against marital rape. According to the Indian Penal Code (Act No.375, 1860), marital rape is not considered as a crime in the country. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 states, "Sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under fifteen years of age, is not rape". However, Home Affairs minister Haribhai Chaudhary had stated "marital rape is not categorized as an offense in India due to various reasons such as high illiteracy rate, outrageous religious convictions, and the traditional concept of marriage (CNN, 9 March, 2005).

As of the year 2013, approximately 27,515,391 women aged between 40-49 years have reported serious sexual assault in India (Sexual Violence and Rape in India, 2014). It was also reported that, 2,522,817 of the rape victims were aged between 15-19 years old (Sexual Violence and Rape in India, 2014). The reports indicate that there has been a substantial increase of rape from the year 2001-2002 (Sexual Violence and Rape in India, 2014). It was also reported that approximately 1% of rapes are legally registered in case files (Sexual Violence and Rape in India, 2014). Furthermore, it was found that, women are 40% more possibly to experience marital rape than stranger abuse (Sexual Violence and Rape in India, 2014).

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The sample consists of 145 young adults (76 male and 69 female) from U.K and India with a mean age of 24 and an age ranging from 18-29. Among the participants, 82 were from India and 63 were from UK. The majority of participants were Asians (48.3%) and the remainder of the sample consisted of young adults from a variety of different ethnicities; including white (39.8%), mixed/multiple (6.4%), black (4.3%) and other (1.2%).

Measures

The study is a semi replication of the study “Current Perceptions of Marital Rape: Some Good and Not-So-Good News” (Ferro, Cermele & Saltzman, 2008). This study employs the use of questionnaire from the version of Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999; McMahon & Farmer, 2011). The vignettes used in the study are been adopted from “Current Perceptions of Marital Rape: Some Good and Not-So-Good News” (Ferro, Cermele & Saltzman, 2008).

Vignettes

The vignettes adopted in the study were similar to the vignettes utilized by Monson et al. (2000). The vignettes were utilized to examine the attitudes of young adults towards rape victim and offender. Two vignettes are portrayed in a rape scenario and one was varied from another in their depiction of victim-convict relationship (see Appendix). In two scenarios, responses of participants were marked in a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (minimal) to 7 (extreme).

Attitude Scale

The updated version of Illusions Rape Myth Acceptance (IRMA) was adopted to examine respondents' attitudes towards rape myths. IRMA scale consists of 22 items that yields a general appraisal of rape myth acceptance along with three subscales: “It Wasn't Really Rape”, which evaluates what conditions must be met for respondents to consider the scenario as rape; “He Didn't Mean To”, which evaluates the level of blame attributed to the convict; and “Rape Is a Deviant Event”, which evaluates respondents convictions about different nature of rape and offender (see Appendix). The participants' responses were marked in a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not agree) to 7(very much agree). Previous utilization of IRMA scale has demonstrated that, the subscales are highly correlated with general rape myth acceptance (Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999).

Procedure

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Coventry University Ethics Committee. The study adopted voluntary survey method: Bristol Online Survey (BOS) for external participants and ‘Sona’, an online system for recruiting psychology undergraduates of Coventry University. The participants of the study include young adults from U.K and India. Additionally, the link to BOS survey was provided to participants through Facebook. The participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire (Illusions Rape Myth Acceptance) and vignette, which took approximately 15-20 minutes in total and were awarded course credits for taking part in the research.

RESULTS

Participant’s attitudes towards rape

The study examined attitudes of young adults towards rape by adopting three subscales of Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA). The three subscales are “It Wasn’t Really Rape”, “He Didn’t Mean To”, “Rape Is a Deviant Event”. The results indicated that, reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s α) range from 0.73 to 0.74. It was also found that, the overall support of rape myths on each of the scale recorded was low ($M=1.45$ to 2.73). Nevertheless, a sequence of paired samples t -test shows that the reports of the rape were not uniformly in a low degree. Moreover, comparisons of subscale from IRMA reported that assumption about rape where it is regarded as an unintentional event from the part of offender were marked significantly higher than the assumption about rape where it is regarded as a deviant event, $t(126)= 14.08, p= 0.000$; or the scenario cannot be assumed as a real rape, $t(126)=14.17, p= 0.000$; the assumption that rape is a deviant event was also supported strongly than the assumption that scenario cannot be considered as a real rape, $t(126)=3.05, p=0.003$. Additionally, means (M) standard deviations (SD) and reliability coefficients of attitudes towards rape for each subscale of IRMA is reported in Table 1(see Table1).

Table1. Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD) and Reliability Coefficients (Cronbach’s α) of participants attitudes towards rape assessed by Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMAS)

Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach’s α
Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMAS)			
“It wasn’t Really Rape” ^a	1.45	0.64	0.74
“He Didn’t Mean To” ^a	2.73	1.07	0.76
“Rape Is a Deviant Event” ^a	1.62	0.51	0.73

a. Means for the subscales of IRMA are significantly different at $p < .003$.

Attitudes towards marital rape and effects on, participant gender, country, race/ethnicity and socio-economic status on rape myth support

A sequence of univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was utilized on each rape myth scale of vignette on marital rape, participant gender, country, race/ethnicity and socio-economic status on rape myth support. The results indicate that, there were no significant interactions (p value >0.05). Means (M), standard deviations (SD) and reliability coefficients (Cronbach’s α) of participants attitudes towards rape assessed by Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMAS) are shown in table 3 (see Table 3).

Attitudes towards Marital Rape: A Cross-Cultural Study between Young Adults in the United Kingdom and India

Table 3. Means (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) of attitudes of young adults towards marital rape accessed by vignette, participant gender, country, ethnicity/race and socio-economic status.

	Really Supportive		“Victim Blame”		“It wasn’t Really Rape”		“He Didn’t Mean To”		“Rape Is a Deviant Event”	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Marital rape scenario (vignette)	3.05 ^a	1.21	1.58	0.72	1.41	0.59	3.10	1.16	1.59	0.55
Participant gender	2.57	1.16	1.62	0.63	1.38	0.61	2.80*	1.13	1.54*	0.50
Female	2.37	1.27	1.52	0.68	1.56	0.72	3.05*	1.16	1.75*	0.59
Male										
Country	2.53	1.13	1.65	0.66	1.43	0.53	3.21*	1.04	1.71*	0.52
U.K	2.41	1.22	1.47	0.53	1.47	0.85	2.29*	0.97	1.44*	0.51
India										
Race/ Ethnicity	Really Supportive		“Victim Blame”		“It wasn’t Really Rape”		“He Didn’t Mean To”		“Rape Is a Deviant Event”	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Asian	2.45	1.19	1.51	0.61	1.44	0.65	2.78	1.10	1.47*	0.49
White	2.52	1.22	1.58	0.51	1.52	0.67	2.21	1.02	1.68*	0.52
Mixed/ Multiple	2.34	1.17	1.56	0.55	1.40	0.72	3.03	0.96	1.73	0.55
Black	2.47	1.28	1.45	0.67	1.43	0.58	2.71	1.11	1.52	0.53
Others	2.22	1.24	1.60	0.58	1.56	0.57	2.68	1.05	1.57	0.58
Socio-Economic Status	2.46	1.21	1.55	0.62	1.41	0.62	2.89*	1.13	1.70*	0.59
High	2.44	1.14	1.53	0.54	1.45	0.59	2.47	1.02	1.55	0.55
Medium	2.51	1.13	1.62	0.66	1.52	0.63	2.16*	0.95	1.69	0.51
Low										

a. Means are significantly different at $p < .03$.

Attitudes reported using vignettes

It was found that respondents who read the vignette portraying a scenario of marital rape were significantly more possibly to support false assumptions regarding rape in marriage than the attitudes reported in the general rape myths ($M=3.05$ vs. $M=1.93$).

Participant gender

The result indicated that, there was a significant effect in the participant gender for “Rape Is a Deviant Event” subscale of IRMA i.e. $F(1,123)=7.90$, $p=0.005$, and the “He Didn’t Mean To” scale $F(1,123)=6.02$, $p=0.026$. It was also found that, the male participants strongly assume rape as a deviant event than that of female participants (1.75 vs. 1.54) and also males consider that the scenario of rape is an accidental incident committed by the offender (3.05 vs. 2.80).

Country of participant

The results indicated that, there was a significant effect of the participant country on “Rape Is a Deviant Event” subscale of IRMA i.e. $F(1,123)=9.24$, $p=0.003$ and the “He Didn’t Mean

Attitudes towards Marital Rape: A Cross-Cultural Study between Young Adults in the United Kingdom and India

To” scale, $F(1,123)=21.59, p=0.000$. Participants from U.K reported significantly higher assumption to consider rape as a deviant event than those of participants from India (1.7 vs. 1.44) and the respondents from U.K also consider that, the scenario of rape is an unintentional incident committed by the perpetrator (3.21 vs. 2.29).

Race/ Ethnicity of participant

The results indicated that, there is a significant effect of race/ ethnicity of the participant on “Rape Is a Deviant Event” subscale of IRMA i.e. $F(1,123)= 7.81, p= 0.005$. It was also found that, participants belong to white race were reported significantly higher rate ($M=1.68$) than Asians ($M=1.47$) to consider rape as a deviant event.

Socio-economic status

The results indicated that, there was a significant effect of participant socio-economic status for the “He Didn’t Mean To” subscale of IRMA i.e. $F(1,123)= 8.37, P=0.03$. It was also found that participants from high socio-economic status strongly assume that, the scenario of rape is unintentional from the part of offender than that of the attitudes of participants from low economic status (2.89 vs. 2.16).

DISCUSSION

Analysis of the study results formulated three major themes (Victim Offender Relationship, Gender of the participant and Cultural difference). Additionally, there are some subthemes identified in major themes which are represented in table.1 (see Table 2)

Table 2. Dominant themes and subthemes

Dominant themes	Associated sub-themes
Victim Offender Relationship	Lack of knowledge to consider ‘rape’ in marital rape
Gender of the participant	Gender norms Victims fear about social stigma and blame
Cultural difference	Country Race/ Ethnicity, Socio-Economic Status Marital rape defined in legal system

The results of this research examined that, attitudes of young adults towards marital rape are predominantly more realistic than were anticipated. The results also indicate that, participants irrespective of their country, reported to endorse false rape myth to a minimal level and are normally sympathetic towards rape victims. Additionally, it was also found that, participants rationalize the rape scenario as an unintentional or accidental incident, which arise from the part of offender. This could be due to the ‘framework’ adopted in the IRMA questionnaire as “accidental rape” may tends to consider marital rape as a less serious offense.

Victim Offender Relationship

The results analyzed that, victim convict relationship had impact on the participants’ level of endorsement about false rape myth, even though the participants do not attribute blame towards victim. Additionally, from the result it was found that, participants reported to have a strong endorsement of rape myth that read the vignette about marital rape than that of general rape myth. However, this finding of the study support the notion that, victim-convict relationship affects people’s level of support for rape myths (Basile, 2002; Kirkwood &

Attitudes towards Marital Rape: A Cross-Cultural Study between Young Adults in the United Kingdom and India

Cecil, 2001; Monson et al., 1996; Monson et al., 2000). Even though, the overall attitudes of young adults reported a lower level of endorsement on rape myths, participant's perception varies in the scenario of marital rape where they expect a high level of intimacy between couples and hence majority of participants were unable to distinguish whether or not a "rape" occurs between married couples (Russell, 1998). However, the study results are not in line with the previous research which suggests that, people tends to blame victim than that of offenders in scenarios where offender and victim are married couples or living together (Monson et al., 1996; Monson et al., 2000). Moreover, the participants from both the countries reported a relatively minimal amount of blame to the victim irrespective of the victim's relationship with the offender.

Gender of the participant

It was hypothesized that, there would be a significant difference between males and females on attitudes towards marital rape and, male are more possibly to support rape myth and blame victims than that of female participants. On the contrary to the assumption, the study results reported that, there were no significant differences on the attitudes towards marital rape in basis of gender of the participant. Previous studies report that, males are more likely to endorse rape myths and perceive rape differently than females (Barnett et al., 2001; Blumberg & Lester, 1991; Nagel et al., 2005). However, the current study results do not support the notion that, male participants are more likely to support rape myths and blame victim than female. Moreover, rape affects females unevenly and the society have shaped with certain norms and rape is considered as a culture, where masculine control over women is accepted, the fear concerning sexual violence is far more prominent for women than men (Mc Caughay, 1997). This consistent fear about sexual harassment alters the perception of women about daily lives and accounts more difficulty for female respondents to support rape myths such as the conviction that, women who regularly visits bar in night are more likely to be raped by men.

As indicated by Mc Caughay (1997), in spite the fact that men recognize that a women wearing a short shirt or visiting bar at night is not an encouragement to rape, but they consider it as an invitation to have sex with victim. Study shows that, males are hesitant to consider any sexual activity without consent as 'rape' because they assume that, women express in a such a manner which appear to be sexually alluring (Mc Caughay, 1997). Additionally, this finding recommends that, male respondents are more possible than female respondents to forgive perpetrator for "overlooking" regardless of whether female is urged to have sexual relation. Despite the fact that males and females varies in the level of endorsement towards rape myths, surprisingly the results of the present study yield no differences between gender of participants in account of marital rape. This finding of the study is not in line with the previous research which suggests that, male respondents are more possibly to blame victims of marital rape and demonstrate a strong level of endorsement for false assumptions regarding rape (Ewoldt et al., 2000; Monson et al., 1996).

Cultural difference

It was hypothesized that, the cultural differences among participants from U.K and India attributes various perceptions towards marital rape. The study results indicate that, participants from U.K are more likely to consider rape as a deviant event than those of participants from India. There are not much research explored to analyze a cross cultural variation in the attitude of participants towards marital rape. However, one of the study examined the attitudes towards "coercive" and "non coercive" sexual conduct among Asian

Attitudes towards Marital Rape: A Cross-Cultural Study between Young Adults in the United Kingdom and India

and Non-Asian University students (Kennedy & Gorzalka, 2002). The study results analyzed that, Asian students reported relatively a minimal level of attitudes towards sexual behavior. The present study is in support with the previous study reports (Kennedy & Gorzalka, 2002). However, participants in U.K consider rape in marriage as a deviant event. This could be because, the law in U.K penalized marital rape as a serious offense. On the contrary, In India, marital rape is not categorized as an offense unless the woman is below fifteenyears old (Indian Penal Code, Act No.375, 1860).

From the study, it was also found that participants from 'white' ethnic background consider rape as a deviant event where as 'Asians' consider rape as a less deviant act. This could be the reason that, majority of the participants from U.K was identified with 'White' as ethnic background whereas participants from India was identified with 'Asian' as ethnic background.

However, from the study results, it was also interested to find that participants from high-socio economic background have reported to rationalize the act of the offender to a high level than that of participants from low economic status. By analyzing the socio-demographic variables of the participant, it was found that majority of the participants who marked as low socio- economic status are Indians and those who marked a high socio-economic status was British. Furthermore, participants in U.K tend to rationalize the offender and consider the rape scenario as an accidental act from the offender due to the reason that they consider marital rape as an offense, which is less serious (Monson, Byrd, & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 1996; Monson et al., 2000). However, this study revealed that, cultural variations exist among young adults in the attitudes towards marital rape. This finding is in line with the previous studies (Chan, 1990; Hong et al., 1994; Meston et al; 1998).

Limitations of the Present Study, Implications and Recommendations for Future Research

The present study have some limitations which need to be addressed for further future studies. The study adopted voluntary survey method, so there was not much information about the participant that, whether or not the participant is a victim of any kind of sexual abuse. It is important to identify whether or not participant experience a history of rape because it affects the respondent's perceptions about rape. One of the previous study suggest that current or previous victims of rape are two times more possibly to assume that marital rape occurs than that of non-victims (Basile, 2002). So, in future research, if the method of data collection includes the utilization of any qualitative approach such as interview can help to analyze this issue. Additionally, the number of participants in the study was 145, which is comparatively less in number to generalize the result into a greater populace. However, due to the time constrain and as the study adopts voluntary sampling method, participants were not forcefully asked to complete the survey and moreover participants were also able to withdraw from the study if required.

Additionally, majority of the participants in U.K were students from Coventry University whereas participants from India where from South part of the country. So, the participants of cross-cultural study between young adults in India and U.K were limited to certain geographic areas of respective countries. If participants were recruited on a random sampling method, then in future research it may be useful to analyze variations in attitudes across various sample of population. Another limitation was that, the study was restricted to only young adults in U.K and India. However, in future, if participants are recruited from various

Attitudes towards Marital Rape: A Cross-Cultural Study between Young Adults in the United Kingdom and India

age levels and different cultural background, it may help to analyze various across different age groups and culture.

Although the methods (IRMA and vignette) used to analyze attitudes of young adults were useful, participants may manipulate their responses to account for socially desirable answers to different questions. Furthermore, there are often variations between an individual's attitude and behavior. For instance, a low support of rape myths by a participant cannot account for his/her behavior towards offender or victims. However, this research may provide some important insight to the implication of polices to prevent marital rape and assist victims. The study also warrants future research on general population, various nations and may also assist to modify the law and order of Indian Judiciary System where marital rape is not considered as a crime in the country.

CONCLUSIONS

This research project was aimed to examine the attitudes towards marital rape among young adults of two different countries (United Kingdom and India). In summation, participants' support of rape myth was comparatively low, proposing that social perceptions about rape might be moving forward in the appropriate directions. Nevertheless, the present study supports the previous research findings that the relationship between convict and victim along with demographic qualities of the respondents pursue to be determining factors that influence the perceptions of individual about rape, victims and offenders. Moreover, despite the fact that attitudes have directed in a more constructive direction for offenders and victims of rape, the rates of reported sexual assault marked a higher rate, proposing that there is a variation in at least some of the individual's between their attitudes and behavior. Future research must be investigated to examine the factors associated with maintenance and improvement of rape myths and how these can assist female victims of sexual violence.

REFERENCE

- Barnett, M. A., Quackenbush, S. W., Sinisi, C. S., Wegman, C. M., & Otney, K. L. (2001). Factors affecting reactions to a rape victim. *Journal of Psychology, 126*(26), 609-620.
- Basile, K. C. (2002). Attitudes toward wife rape: Effects of social background and victim status. *Violence and Victims, 17*(5), 341-354.
- Bergen, R. K. (2006). Marital rape: New research and directions. The National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women. Retrieved August 15, 2017, from http://new.vawnet.org/Assoc_Files_VAWnet/AR_MaritalRapeRevised.pdf.
- Blumberg, M. L., & Lester, D. (1991). High school and college students' attitudes toward rape. *Adolescence, 26*(103), 727-730.
- Catalano, S.M. (2005). Bureau of Justice Statistics National Crime Victimization Survey: Criminal Victimization, 2004. Retrieved October August 15, 2017, from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cv04.pdf>.
- Estrich, S. (1987). *Real rape: How the legal system victimizes women who say no.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ewoldt, C. E., Monson, C. M., & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, J. (2000). Attributions about rape in a continuum of dissolving marital relationships. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 15*, 1175-1182.
- Felson, R. B. (2006). Is violence against women about women or about violence? *Contexts, 5*(2), 21-25.
- Ferro, C., Cermele, J., & Saltzman, A. (2008). Current Perceptions of Marital Rape. *Journal Of Interpersonal Violence, 23*(6), 764-779.

Attitudes towards Marital Rape: A Cross-Cultural Study between Young Adults in the United Kingdom and India

- Finkelhor, D., & Yllö, K. (1985). *License to rape: Sexual abuse of wives*. New York: Free Press.
- Frese, B., Moya, M., & Megias, J. L. (2004). Social perception of rape: How rape myth acceptance modulates the influence of situational factors. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 19*, 143-161.
- Jeffords, C. R., & Dull, R. T. (1982). Demographic variations in attitudes toward marital rape immunity. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 44*(3), 755-762.
- Kalra, M., Wood, E., Demarais, S., Verberg, N., & Senn, C. Y. (1998). Exploring negative dating experiences and beliefs about rape among younger and older women. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 27*(2), 145-153.
- Kirkwood, M. K., & Cecil, D. K. (2001). Marital rape: A student assessment of rape laws and the marital exemption. *Violence Against Women, 7*, 1235-1253.
- Kolmar, W. K., & Bartkowski, F. (2005). *Feminist theory: A reader* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- McCaughey, M. (1997). *Real knockouts: The physical feminism of women's self defense*. New York: New York University Press.
- Monson, C. M., Byrd, G. R., & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, J. (1996). To have and to hold: Perceptions of marital rape. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 11*, 410-424.
- Monson, C. M., Langhinrichsen-Rohling, J., & Binderup, T. (2000). Does "no" really mean "no" after you say "yes"? Attributions about date and marital rape. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 15*, 1156-1174.
- Pagelow, M. D. (1981). *Woman-battering: Victims and their experiences*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Payne, D. L., Lonsway, K. A., & Fitzgerald, L. F. (1999). Rape myth acceptance: Exploration of its structure and its measurement using the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale. *Journal of Research in Personality, 33*, 251-261.
- Russell, D. E. H. (1998). Wife rape and the law. In M. E. Odem & J. Clay-Warner (Eds.), *Confronting rape and sexual assault* (pp. 71-81). Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources.
- Sheffield, C. J. (1994). Sexual terrorism. In J. Freeman (Ed.), *Women: A feminist perspective* (pp. 110-127). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.
- Shields, N. M., Resick, P. A., & Hanneke, C. R. (1990). Victims of marital rape. In R. T. Ammerman & M. Hersen (Eds.), *Treatment of family violence* (pp. 165-182). New York: Wiley.
- Shields, N., & Hanneke, C. (1983). Battered wives' reactions to marital rape. In D. Finkelhor, R. J. Gelles, G. T. Hotaling, & M. A. Straus (Eds.), *The dark side of families: Current family violence research*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Weingourt, R. (1985). Wife rape: Barriers to identification and treatment. *American Journal of Psychotherapy, 39*, 187-192.

Appendix

MATERIALS UTILIZED FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999)

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements below by selecting the corresponding number.

- 1=Strongly Disagree
- 2=Moderately Disagree
- 3=Slightly Disagree
- 4=Uncertain
- 5=Slightly Agree
- 6=Moderately Agree
- 7=Strongly Agree

1. If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. Although most women wouldn't admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a real "turn on".

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. If a woman is willing to "make out" with a guy, then it's no big deal if he goes a little further and has sex.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. Many women secretly desire to be raped.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. Many rapists are not caught by the police.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say that it was rape.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. Men from nice middle-class homes almost never rape.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. All women should have access to self-defence classes.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Attitudes towards Marital Rape: A Cross-Cultural Study between Young Adults in the United Kingdom and India

10. It is usually only women who dress suggestively that are raped.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. If the rapist doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it rape.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. Rape is unlikely to happen in the woman's own familiar neighbourhood.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. Women tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. A lot of women lead a man on and then they cry rape.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. It is preferable that a female police officer conducts the questioning when a woman reports a rape.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. A woman who "teases" men deserves anything that might happen.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. When women are raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was ambiguous.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

18. Men don't usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

19. A woman who dresses in skimpy clothes should not be surprised if a man tried to force her to have sex.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

20. Rape happens when a man's sex drive gets out of control.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

INSTRUCTIONS: *Read the scenario below and then answer each of the questions to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement using the scale given to you. Finally, answer the questions provided at the end of the statements before exiting the survey.*

The vignette read as follows:

Julie was returning to her apartment from the laundry room. With her arms full of laundry and a box of detergent, she was attempting to get her keys to open her apartment door. Dan, her husband was walking towards the door and offered to hold the laundry while she got the door open. She gave him the laundry and proceeded to open the door. As she went into their apartment, Dan followed her inside to the living room with the laundry. Julie thanked Dan for his assistance and began to talk about how

Attitudes towards Marital Rape: A Cross-Cultural Study between Young Adults in the United Kingdom and India

many things she had taken care of that day and started to walk him to the door. While she was talking they reached the door, Dan began to make sexual advances towards her. Julie resisted the advances persistently and asked him to stop. Dan continued with his sexual advances, and managed to get himself on top of her and have sexual intercourse with her.

Instructions:

Read the following scenario and answer the questions that follow. Assign each question with a number from 1(minimal) to 7 (extreme).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minimal						Extreme

Rape-Supportive Attributions Scale (RAPE-SUPPORT)

- (1) How violent do you feel this situation was?
- (2) How psychologically damaged do you feel "Julie" will be from this experience?
- (3) To what degree were "Dan's" actions a violation of "Julie's" rights?
- (4) How certain are you that this incident would be considered rape?

Sex-Role Stereotypical Victim Blame Attributions Scale (BLAME)

- (1) How much control did "Julie" have in this situation?
- (2) How much did "Julie" enjoy this situation?
- (3) How obligated was "Julie" to engage in sexual relations in this case?
- (4) How interested was "Julie" in having sexual relations

Acknowledgements

The authors profoundly appreciate all the people who have successfully contributed in ensuring this paper is in place. Their contributions are acknowledged however their names cannot be able to be mentioned.

Conflict of Interest

The authors colorfully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

How to cite this article: Melba Kuriakose (2019). Attitudes towards Marital Rape: A Cross-Cultural Study between Young Adults in the United Kingdom and India. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 7(1), 308-321, DIP:18.01.036/20190701, DOI:10.25215/0701.036