



Feminist Consciousness To Prevent Marital Rape Victimization of Women During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Marital rape is one of the sexual violence against women (wives). The study's focus was to analyze the relationship between rape in marriage and women's awareness during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research method uses library research that is representative and relevant to the research object. Regarding the feminist consciousness, many women do not realize that women end up helpless and fight when they are not good, including experiencing marital rape. The problem is the case not recorded, and the victim does not receive protection and their rights. The feminist consciousness of women can open women's eyes that there is sexual violence against women through marital rape. Furthermore, women can be aware of these cases, especially so as not to experience the same thing, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Then, women are empowered and protected from marital rape.

Keywords: rape in marriage; feminist consciousness; victimization; covid-19 pandemic

Introduction

During the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a spike in cases of violence against wives. Based on CATAHU 2021, violence against wives reached 3,221 points or 50% of all claims in the realm of Domestic Violence (KDRT). Domestic Violence is every action against someone, especially women, which results in misery or suffering physically, sexually, psychologically, and neglect of the household is a threat to commit acts, coercion, or confiscation independence unlawfully within the scope of the family (Undang Undang Nomor 23 Tahun 2004 Tentang Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga, 2014). The violence against the wife includes four forms, namely economic, physical, psychic and sexual. Sexual violence also reached 30% (1938 cases) of all cases, only a difference of 1% from physical violence. Sexual violence is of various types, and one of them is *marital rape* that rarely gets attention, escapes the news and recording.

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Marital rape or rape in marriage is violence in coercion to engage in sexual activity without considering the partner's condition. Rape in marriage can occur in the broad context of physical violence, power relations in marriage and relative groups, and social and institutional inequalities (Yllö, Kersti and Torres, 2013, p. 197). National Commission on the Elimination of Violence against Women explain some of type marital rape (Komnas Perempuan, 2021). It happens when the husband is forcing the wife to have sex while menstruating. The husband is forcing the wife to insert objects into her vagina. Husband moved to have a threesome. Husband forced to have sex after the wife has just given birth, husband forced for oral sex, anal sex to bleeding, and so forth.

Marital rape usually includes domestic violence (KDRT), such as twisting the victim's right and left hands to be unable to move, grabbing, dragging the wife to cause death. However, women (victims) of rape in marriage are generally reluctant to report the incident, unaware that they are victims. Meanwhile, rape in marriage very rarely gets attention among the public. The weakness of the wife's position in the family and society is one of the causes. The most factor of wife weakness in family and society is patriarchy culture. Criminologist views domestic violence as work with overlays of patriarchy (Andrus, 2020). It put wife not equal in family and community. So, the wife becomes a lower class and vulnerable people.

In other words, rape in marriage support by a social class in society or the public who assume that men have autonomous rights in the family. In marital rape, men feel entitled to do anything to women. Most men consider marriage to be the official legitimacy of its power over women (Center, n.d.).

Although there is a sexual negotiation room for women as a form of resistance and self-protection from marital rape, some women still get marital rape (Andayani & Hidayat, 2019, p. 65). Thus, we understand that women can prevent marital rape as victims. Then, of course, in addition to prevention, women victims of *marital rape* also need protection and support to rise from the event or incident. Because sexual relations in the household violate a wife's rights because sex is also the wife's right, sexual activity based on coercion (rape) causes pleasure, on the one hand, namely the husband but pain both physical and psychic for the wife. Of course, this violates a woman's right to her body.

In connection with the case, criminologists have conducted research related to rape in marriage. Some have raised the killing of wives in the context of domestic violence (Susanti, 2018). Women murder as a measure of saving themselves from marital rape (Susanti, 2018).

Then there is discussing the perception of marital rape and the effects of such coercion (Robinson, 2017). Based on Robinson's research, rape in marriage has a relationship with the perception of victim consciousness. Then, the reporting of rape in marriage can improve law enforcement for perpetrators and improve victims' services.

The study entitled "*Marital rape; A Myth or Fact*" found that society does not take marital rape seriously (Sarfraz, 2017, p. 20). This because there is no valid or available data about it. It is exacerbated by the unavailability of data from victims, making it difficult for researchers to conduct studies and solve it.

In terms of the law, there is the vagueness of juridical construction in marital rape, which aggravates female marital rape victims' condition (Tongat & Anggraeny, 2017). Marital rape is not a single criminal act. Marital rape is a criminal act like other sexual abuse. The prevalence of marital rape remains but not supported by adequate reporting (Troshynski & Dirks, 2016, p. 2). Then, there is no fair victim service system or scientifically researched. Therefore, that further research on the services of marital rape victims (Troshynski & Dirks, 2016, p. 3).

As the previous studies above have not discussed the pattern of rape prevention in marriage, this study will offer a perspective to be a force for women to protect themselves from similar cases. The theoretical framework in this study is victimization and *feminist consciousness obtained* through library research. Researchers use relevant, credible and representative data and sources with research objects.

Marital Rape in Indonesia

Rifka Annisa *Women's Crisis Center* in the Masculinity Survey recorded that 75.7 per cent of men (husbands) in Jakarta feel entitled to rape their wives (Rofiah, 2017, p. 8). From an ideal perspective, where intercourse of marital rape should occur by mutual consent. Otherwise, there is a risk of *marital rape* or rape in marriage to women (wives).

Marital rape is a sexual relationship in a marital bond that takes place without mutual consent. The word occurs in the victim's condition consciously or unconsciously, accompanied by threats of physical violence or not, as long as it happens without mutual consent and inflicts physical, psychic and other injuries to the victim (Rofiah, 2017, p. 8).

Cases of marital rape against wives or women were also detected by the Komnas Perempuan in the annual records (CATAHU) 2019, 2020 and 2021. Marital rape in

2018 recorded 195 cases, in 2018 as many as 100 cases and in 2017 as many as 57 points. Komnas Perempuan stated that the decline in the case report does not represent the actual circumstances. Some victim's stories not reported could be due to pandemic conditions that make services limited to complaints (Komnas Perempuan, 2021).

Thus, there is a *dark number* that not reported in the case of rape in marriage. It becomes even more vital when the researcher briefly interviewed one of the victims of marital rape who did not report his issue to law enforcement or victim protection agencies. Finally, she prefers divorce as a form of problem-solving because experiencing marital rape also gets physical violence. However, in the reason for divorce, there is no mention of marital rape.

Recently there have been cases that are part of *marital rape*. A husband is reportedly willing to sell his wife to another man for economic reasons. Fatally this woman didn't realize she was a victim. This woman sold to do a *threesome*, which is part of *marital rape* for only 600 thousand rupiahs (Zainuddin, 2021).

Marital *rape* cases do vary, sometimes even until the victim dies. Marital rape reported in various institutions related to women's protection, such as the Rifka Annisa *Women's Crisis Center*, which vigorously researches violence against women.

Victimization of Women in Marital Rape

Fattah calls victimization a subjective individual experience related to culture (Fattah, 2000, p. 29). *Meanwhile, the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime* calls victimization a victimhood process that causes physical, emotional, financial, psychological and social suffering (*Canada, 2015, p. 1*). Criminologists explain victimization has two polar: relationship polar or social structure and psychiatric (Meliala, 2017, p. 505). The author emphasizes such victimization on the victim's psychiatric condemnation.

As for the psychological distress, the victim suffers from psychological *pain* such as depression, trauma to regular stress (Meliala, 2017, p. 505). Therefore, the author emphasizes the process of psychological distress experienced by marital *rape* victims before, during and after the incident. However, it is undeniable that *marital rape* also brings other effects physically.

Women often feel exhausted from being forced to fulfil their husband's lusts and, with a tired body, still forced to give sex to the husband without *consent* or mutual agreement. Victimization in women victims of *marital rape* is increasingly becoming when they cannot

get physical *healing* or *trauma healing*. Moreover, not all women victims of *marital rape* realize that she is the victim. Some women stuck in social construction.

As a result, she did not realize herself as a victim, but more than that, the impact made him even more blamed. Or in other words, precisely often obtained is *victim-blaming*. It is also what ultimately makes the victim more psychologically suffering.

Victims who are supposed to get *victim defending* or defence instead blamed. If so, *double victimization* is common. Victims continue to be blamed and do not break out of *marital rape* traps due to social structures that make women sexual objects.

Making women a sexual object then *expands the marital rape* space as one of sexual harassment in women. Harassment in various cases is recognized to provide a disturbance in the emotional aspects of the victim's mind, such as an internalization obsession for self-loathing and disgust in oneself (Rinker, 2019, p. 237). As a result, self-esteem becomes low, and one cannot carry out activities or responsibilities as it should (Rinker, 2019, p. 237)

Not to mention if the victim *marital rape* report to the authorities. Instead of being protected, most ridiculed because of not all belief in *marital rape* in marriage. In general, it has been living in social construction that the wife must serve the wife.

Moreover, in the context of specific religions or beliefs, it is precisely the evidence to master the wife's body at will. The verses of scripture are cut into pieces so that they become misinterpreted according to the heart's wishes. Wrong interpretation did solely legalize *marital rape* on the wife.

Women (wives) who are generally religious are finally trapped and finally unable to resist the coercion of intercourse from their husbands. Instead of fighting back, get caught up in the wrong understanding. If it does not serve the husband's biological needs, blame himself as a disobedient wife to the husband.

But it is not entirely true. However, the reality that often occurs in society is so. Women also trapped in *suffering* due to high psychological pressure to please the husband. Until finally, the woman forgets to be happy and has a love for herself. What happened to the marital rape victim is consistent with Leah E. Daigle's statement in her book *Victimology The Essentials. Chapter 3*. It said that victimization could drive the root of the change in the way the victim views himself. In other words, victims experience psychological distress in the form of depression, decreased self-esteem and anxiety (Daigle, 2013, p. 70).

Feminist Consciousness

Feminist consciousness is the consciousness of victimization (Bartky Lee, 2012, p. 15). Or in Indonesian, it is interpreted that feminist consciousness is an awareness of victimization. In other words, when a woman has a feminist consciousness, she recognizes the potential external forces responsible for the treatment of women and the system that leads to the coercion and suppression of sex roles. No longer immersed in inequality belongs to the husband and wife relationship is pure and straightforward lamentations, without consciousness (Bartky Lee, 2012, p. 14)

The feminist consciousness that the author refers to here is more skewed in the feminist view of radical culture. Therefore, it views sexuality as one that supports the presence of oppression in women. The author uses thoughts from Rosemarie Tong's book on sexuality in the feminist study of radical culture. One interesting statement is that feminists should reject any sexual practice that supports or normalizes male sexual violence (Tong, 2018, p. 66). Because women often made sexual objects by men.

Concerning feminist consciousness, feminist women need to gain control over their sexuality without being overpowered by the man who married her though. Because the ideal sexual relationship is between full consent, emotional equality and not participating in polarized roles, in other words, feminist consciousness skewed towards the feminist perspective of radical culture feminist believes. They believe that the heterosexuality of patriarchy must destroy for women to be fully alive (Tong, 2018, p. 67)

Whereas in *marital rape conditions*, where the woman (wife) as the victim often does not realize that she is the victim or there has been victimization. In connection with this, it is necessary to build feminist awareness in every woman not to experience inequality, including in husband and wife relationships that require mutual agreement. Women who are potential victims of *marital rape* need to save themselves.

Then, of course, public awareness that husband and wife's intimate relationship with coercion or *marital rape* of women is a crime. However, victims often experience an inability to tell what happened (Bartky Lee, 2012, p. 15). There has long been victimization in women (wives) *marital rape victims*. Women have been colonized by strangers or other human beings, being in the mirror of patriarchal culture in husband and wife relationships.

Women are only sexual objects for men and societies that uphold the principle of patriarchy. As a result, women often caught up in false consciousness due to the patriarchal

tenets' construction in their daily lives as wives. Women are no longer treated as beloved wives but are considered sexual objective (Bartky Lee, 2012, p. 35). The husband or man should be able to restrain himself so that there is no *marital rape*. Or at least male supremacy should be lowered and pay attention to the woman's condition (wife). Women victims of *marital rape* are physically hurt and psychic because of their physicality, often compared to other women.

Therefore, when a woman has a feminist consciousness, she will have an attitude to prevent and save herself when *marital rape* occurs. Feminist consciousness does not develop all at once. Still, it goes through development stages, growing from the dialectical relationship between people's change and experience. Women at different levels of consciousness may respond to situations differently with more significant similarities in the group.

Feminist consciousness is a pervasive force in women's structuring, which suggests an expectation of socializing many people to support equality in areas such as role sex and race relations. But the sad thing is that not all have that feminist consciousness. Some women caught up in *toxic relationships* in marriages with life partners (men) with high *poisonous masculinity*. As a result, it strengthens the expression in women in various forms, including *marital rape*.

Covid-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic began with the first case in Wuhan, China, in November 2019. In Indonesia, at first, did not experience similar issues even considered immune to Covid-19. However, in the end, we also experienced the Covid-19 pandemic and fought to overcome it, as happened in various other parts of the world. During the Covid-19 pandemic, we forced to stay at home more to limit the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

Although it is good in glasses to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus from staying at home only, it has a risk of violence against women. WHO notes the presence of Covid-19 exacerbates the risk of women experiencing violence. Women experience stress, social network disorders and protection, and reduced access to protection services from agencies and other *support systems*; the risk of intercourse due to staying at home and partner violence increases because women are in abusive relationships (WHO, 2020b, p. 2). Thus, we realize that the Covid-19 pandemic can increase domestic violence against women (Nanthini & Nair, 2020, p. 10)

In connection with this, of course, women also have the potential to experience *marital rape*. Especially considering this is a sensitive case that is rarely discussed and left tightly closed. The potential is even more substantial if women are in a toxic *relationship* or abusive *relationship* that is realized or not. If that recognized that women need others' help break away from the bonds and traps of *marital rape* in marriage, especially if women have not realized it will undoubtedly become more complex.

Clearly, who explained that *the stay at the home policy* could increase the frequency of sex requests from couples. Women are at risk of sexual coercion (WHO, 2020a, p. 2). Of course, in harmony and closely related to *marital rape* as a form of oppression of sex without mutual consent

Marital Rape Connectedness, Victimization and Feminist Awareness during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Although during the pandemic covid-19 *marital rape* case, reporting decreased to 57 women compared to 2019, which reached 100 cases, it certainly can not represent the field's actual cases. There is a possibility of *dark numbers* or dark lifts from *marital rape* crimes. Of course, in this case, it needs to be distinguished between the reporting and factual figures experienced by women every day as wives.

Komnas Perempuan stated in CATAHU 2021 that the decrease in *marital rape* reports is related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The family environment victims have difficulty reporting events and accessing services due to large-scale social restrictions (Komnas Perempuan, 2021). They conclude victimization or *marital rape* is highly likely but only unreported. Women in a patriarchal culture increasingly squeezed amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

In connection with this, Daly states women cannot thrive as long as they are victims of victimization (victim morality) (Tong, 2018, p. 59). Daly argues that women cannot 'survive' as long as they remain in patriarchy. Therefore, Daly provides examples of victimization in women such as rape, alteration of thought and destruction of the body in various ways, including religious or religious evidence.

Victimization *marital rape* speaks the process before and after that is closely related to the impact directly on the victim in physical and psychic and the surrounding people. In looking at *marital rape* cases in these women, the authors have a radical victimological perspective. Therefore, it sees victimization as a form of male oppression towards women.

The male's oppression of women in *marital rape* is evident when he controls the female body as a sex object. Meanwhile, women have no power to fight back. Instead of fighting back, *marital rape* can be a recurring moment of *crime* in women. It happens double *victimization*, *multiple victimization*, *repeat victimization* or *series victimization*.

It experiences by women who are powerless to escape from the husband's trap. Injustice continues experienced, especially if it is not realized. *Marital rape* is then considered an ordeal or test of marriage from God. The woman continued to defend her household despite her body riddled with injuries. Further aggravates especially women with certain beliefs where the divorce should not be the solution.

Although there is mediation to mediate *marital rape*, it often does not come to fruition. During the marriage, women have the potential to experience unwanted *marital rape*. In this case, the author does not want to advocate divorce to save women from *marital rape*. However, encouraging women to have a complete awareness of the dangers of *marital rape* in marriage.

Then able to speak out to get justice in intercourse husband and wife, at least began to dare to say no when tired of serving the husband's request in having sex. They have a feminist consciousness that women are entitled to be protected and sexual must based on mutual agreement or consent. Have a feminist consciousness not to allow herself or others to get caught up in oppression. Feminist consciousness is not self-built but grouped with other women.

Women can build this feminist consciousness by being together with other women. But, of course, it all begins with the firm determination of every woman concerned to realize *herself-worth*. When *marital rape* is about to happen amid all the limitations, dare to do all means that are not contrary to the law to save herself.

Women with feminist consciousness will be brave to proclaim affirmative consent to sex. Because, unless a woman affirmative consents to sex, all parties should understand her to have withheld consent, rendering the sex nonconsensual and therefore rape (West, 2016, p. 199). Feminist consciousness leaves women's eyes open that she has a right to her body. Of course, it is out of context that his body belongs to God. That's not what it means to be, but women with feminist consciousness can protect themselves. She loved her body by not letting her get hurt or traumatized by *marital rape*.

Then, of course, it's not just about preventing injured bodies or other intimate organs from *marital rape*. Women can also prevent suffering or *suffering* from *spousal rape* or

marital rape victimization, directly affecting their psychological state. Women with feminist consciousness don't want to get caught up in the *victimization trap* by both husbands and social constructs to unfriendly regulations to women.

Women with feminist awareness during the Covid-19 pandemic are finally women with the courage to resist amid all their vulnerability to *marital rape* treatment from husbands. Women who dare to seek protection from spousal rape violence or marital rape. Women who, despite needing men but do not depend on their happiness on men.

Conclusion

Women are not sexual objects; women are human beings who are equal to men and have the right to protect their bodies from all forms of violence as a manifestation of their self-worth. However, in practice, women are often used as objects of sexuality by men. Rape is not only experienced by unmarried women but also women in marriage.

Husbands who are supposed to protect and love women as he loves himself and his own body injure women both physically and psychologically. However, not all reports of cases of sexual violence against women continue until now. One of them is marital rape or rape in marriage which is rarely or missed from the news and records.

Despite the low reporting rate, this problem still needs to be watched out for to prevent so that women do not experience it. Because when women enter into marriage, there is the possibility of marital rape. Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, most people or families stayed at home to avoid the spread and increase of pandemic cases.

Women in marriages in the victimization of the marital rapes are generally unaware that they are victims. Social construction makes it legal as if the husband has the right to control the wife's entire body. Marriage is a sex purchase transaction by the husband.

However, women still have the right to their bodies. Husband and wife relations should not be carried out carelessly without the consent of one of the parties. Alternatively, in other words, mutual agreement or consent is required to do this.

Therefore, during the Covid-19 pandemic, need to give feminist consciousness so that their eyes and minds are open, they both physically and psychologically have the right to be protected. Women have the right to refuse any sexual relations that could potentially injure them. Women have the right to be free from the marital rape trap. Feminist consciousness will bring women to identifies perceived oppressors and vehicles of social change (Swank & Fahs, 2017, p. 3).

With feminist consciousness, women will be able to reject and recover from women who have already experienced marital rapes. Of course, the solution is not the only separation from husbands but can be started with the courage of women to refuse. Then, of course, look for protection and support systems such as families, activists and related institutions.

Thus, the victimization of marital rape is no longer a scourge for women. Finally, women can enjoy physical and psychological freedom. They are not going through suffering or suffering that he should not be feeling. Being a woman with a feminist consciousness dares to say, reject and save herself from various types of oppression, including marital rape.

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