

# ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDE OF WOMEN SEEKING INDUCED ABORTION TOWARDS MEDICAL TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY

by

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## Introduction

In spite of strong condemnation by religious bodies, many Government and medical personalities, the termination of pregnancy is most widely used method of birth control throughout the world. It is being practiced as far back as history is recorded either with legal or social sanction or otherwise.

Since the liberalisation of abortion law in 1972, lacs of termination of pregnancies have been done in India, but little work has been done on the factors which led the woman to seek abortion and their attitude towards termination of pregnancy.

This study was conducted with the aim to analyse the attitude of the woman seeking abortion towards termination of pregnancy.

## Material and Methods

The present study included 300 women admitted for medical termination of pregnancy at S.P. Medical College and A.G. Hospitals, Bikaner (Rajasthan).

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A proforma was made and filled for each patient to cover the various aspects of the attitude of the abortion seekers towards medical termination of pregnancy (M.T.P.).

1. Attitude of women towards legalisation of abortion—this included—bad, neutral, good and very good.

2. Assuming that abortion is permissible on whom should the decision rest—doctor, women, women's husband or combined.

3. Idea of woman towards the period of gestation at which fertilized egg has right to life.

A. At the moment of conception.

B. Not until 3 months.

C. Not until live birth.

4. Attitude of woman regarding further pregnancy—yes or no.

5. Various situations in which women are in favour of law permitting abortion.

## Discussion

Enquiring 300 abortion seekers regarding their attitude towards legalisation of abortion, the response was good and very good in 86.67% of the women, it was bad in only 3.33% of the women, they felt it a sin, while 10% were neutral. Khambatta *et al* (1975) in their series observed that 36.4% were of the good opinion and the

opinion of 22.2% was not good, while rest were neutral Table I.

TABLE I  
Attitude of Women Towards Legalisation of Abortion

S. No.	Attitude	No. of cases	Percentage
1.	Bad	10	3.33
2.	Neutral	30	10.00
3.	Good	160	53.34
4.	Very good	100	33.33

In the present series, it was found that the response to the questionnaire was good in the age group of 14-30 years, while Khambatta *et al* (1974) reported that it was the 20-35 years age group who answered the questionnaire as good.

It was very clear that the decision mainly depended upon the husband (35.33%) and in 38% of the cases the decision was combined, while in 10% of the cases it was decided by women themselves and the decision of doctor was taken only in 16.67% of the cases. It indicates that in Hindu society husband is the dominating person in the family, hence the decision maker Table II.

TABLE II  
The Decision for M.T.P.

S. No.	Idea of the women	No. of cases	Percentage
1.	Doctor's decision	50	16.67
2.	Woman decision	30	10.00
3.	Woman's husband	106	35.33
4.	Combined	114	38.00

Regarding period of gestation at which fertilised egg has a right to life like human

being, 3.3% of the abortion seekers said that abortion should never be done as life is there just after the conception. In contrast to this, Khambatta *et al* (1975) reported 26.87% of women were in favour of life in fertilized egg at the time of conception.

87.3% women of the present series were not in favour of termination of pregnancy after 3 months of gestation. They thought that pregnancy has life, like human being, after 3 months of gestation. This is roughly in consonance with the (72.6%) finding of Khambatta *et al* (1975). An attempt was made to see if religion was affecting the approach to abortion. 90.33% of Hindus said that it should be done within 3 months. Khambatta *et al* (1975) reported 97% of Hindus were in favour of getting termination done within 3 months. Rest 9.34% of the women felt that life was not there till the birth, these were mainly, illiterate and unaware about risk and complications involved Table III.

TABLE III  
Period of Gestation at Which Fertilized Egg has a Right to Life

S. No.	Period of gestation	No. of cases	Percentage
1.	At the moment of conception	10	3.33
2.	Not until 3 months	262	87.33
3.	Not until live birth	28	9.34

Describing about the attitude of women towards pregnancy, 44.33% were in favour while 55.66% were not in favour of further pregnancy, because most of the abortion seekers had completed their family of 2 or 3 children Table IV.



TABLE IV  
Attitude of Women Regarding Further  
Pregnancy

S. No.	Desire for more children	No. of cases	Percentage
1.	Yes	133	44.34
2.	No	167	55.66

In certain situations, 100% of women were in favour of law permitting abortion, like if woman's life is in danger due to pregnancy, her physical or mental health may be seriously impaired, pregnancy due to rape or incest and pregnancy in mentally retarded women. Frank *et al* (1969) reported that 80% of women agreed for abortion if ones life was en-

dangered. Khambatta *et al* (1975) analysed that 60% of respondents were infavour of termination the pregnancy would endanger their physical or mental health Table V.

52% of the women agreed that pregnancy should be terminated if the woman is sole supporter of school going children. 54.3 of the women were infavour of terminated if they were pregnant for the sixth time Table VI.

In the present study, 66.66% of women would prefer to have abortion privately if a safe method existed.

Analysing the educational status, Khambatta *et al* (1975) found that 75% of

TABLE V  
Situation Under Which Women are in Favour of Laws Permitting Abortion

S. No.	Situations	Yes		No	
		No.	%	No.	%
1.	If woman's life in danger	300	100	—	—
2.	If her physical and mental health seriously impaired	300	100	—	—
3.	Pregnancy from rape or incest at any age	300	100	—	—
4.	Pregnancy in working mother who is the sole support of school age children	156	52	144	48.00
5.	A mother of 5 school going children pregnant again and family income low	164	54.67	136	45.33
6.	Pregnancy in one who is seriously mentally retarded	300	100	—	—
7.	If a safe method exists will she prefer to abort herself	200	66.67	100	33.33
8.	The doctor should have right to refuse abortion	88	29.33	212	70.67

TABLE VI  
Cause of Premiscuity in Teenagers

S. No.	Reason	Yes	Percentage
1.	Exposure to movies	150	50.00
2.	Early dating and late night	20	6.67
3.	Innocence and ignorance	200	66.67
4.	Lack of home training	150	50.00
5.	Current literature	120	40.00

the illiterate women undergoing termination felt that doctor should have the right to refuse an abortion as compared to 57% of the educated women. In the present series 70.6% of the women felt that the doctor should not have a right to refuse an abortion.

50% of the respondents felt that exposure to movies was responsible for some unwanted pregnancies. 66.6% of the women thought that it was ignorance and innocence towards the knowledge of sex, 50% felt that it is the lack of home training by parents, specially the mother failed to educate their daughters. 40% of these respondents blamed that the current cheap literature and film magazines were responsible for such episodes. 6.6% of respondents felt that it is early dating and

late arrival at home during night were responsible for permissiveness Table VI.

It is felt therefore that to prevent such unwanted pregnancies in unmarried girl, certain measures like censorship of the film, banning of cheap literature and sex education in school should be taken.

We should not allow to take undue advantage of the liberalization in "Abortion Bill" to seek abortion so that the lives of the women may not be put in danger.

#### References

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