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## **A Study To Assess The Knowledge and Attitudes regarding Legal Aspect of Abortion among female college students at selected Colleges in Indore**

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### **Introduction**

World Health Organization (WHO) defines abortion as the termination of pregnancy by the removal or expulsion of conceptus tissues from the uterus before the 28th week of gestation for developing countries and 20 weeks for developed countries. Abortion can be induced, or it can happen on its own. Legalizing abortion is a hotly debated issue among health policymakers around the world because illegal abortions have high mortality and morbidity rates. England, for example, bases some of its abortion laws on the idea that abortion is a medical necessity that must be addressed. A pregnant woman may only be subjected to this in order to prevent any harm to her body or mind.

For example, if pregnancy is not safe for the health of the mother or her child, if there are physical and mental disabilities, and if the mother is underage and unprepared for childbirth. Abortion can usually be obtained on the basis of a woman's statement alone, but many Indian women are still unsure of their rights and unsure of how to avoid unwanted pregnancies. Women are still going to unsafe abortion services because of a lack of knowledge of their legal rights, a negative attitude, a lack of safe abortion services, and sociocultural pressures. Indian authorities have made tremendous progress since the adoption of the revised penal code. In spite of the progress that has been made, women, particularly young girls, are still faced with barriers to accessing safe abortion services.

Women's knowledge of abortion law is critical because it affects their ability to obtain legal abortions. The percentage of women who are aware of the law's position on abortion is a good way to gauge how many women have access to reliable information about the procedure. Young people need to be aware of the country's abortion laws in order to make significant progress toward safe abortion access. Since young women are particularly vulnerable to unsafe abortion practices, increased knowledge and awareness of abortion legalisation has empowered them to seek safe abortion care. The general public's awareness and attitude toward these laws are critical for their implementation. No matter how much we scoured the literature, there is no study in our area that provides us with baseline data. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine college students in Indore's knowledge and attitudes regarding the legalisation of abortion.

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### **Methodology**

A cross-sectional study of female students in a few Indore Colleges was carried out on the basis of an institution. Each year was divided into three sections and the total number of students in each section was counted using a stratified sampling method based on year. Each section was then given an equal share of the total sample size, based on the percentage of female students in that section. Finally, a simple random method was used to select the study participants from each section. Using a sample size of 100 subjects was determined. After the study participants were given an orientation, the data was collected using the prepared self-administered questionnaires. Health care workers donned gowns to help facilitate informed consent because the study's topic is sensitive and the majority of participants are young. They explained the study's purpose, the contents of each questionnaire, the right to participate or not participate, and the right to withdraw at any time, and they secured oral consent before distributing the questionnaire to each participant. Data collectors visited some study participants in their homes, where they explained the study's purpose and obtained their parents' or guardians' consent. SPSS version 21.0 was used to analyse the data, which was cleaned, edited, coded and entered into SPSS. When looking for connections between the main variables, we used a Chi-square test. The study population was described in relation to relevant variables using frequencies, proportions, and summary statistics.

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## Results

About (55 percent) of those who took part in the survey had heard of abortion before. According to participants, (6.6%) of them stated that abortion is a lack of menstruation, while (6.6%) stated that abortion is the expulsion of an embryo at an early stage in pregnancy. Of the (55 percent) and (39.5 percent) respondents who knew about the complications of unsafe abortion, bleeding and infertility were the two most common serious complications. Nearly half of the respondents, (47.5 percent), were aware of the existence of an abortion law in India, while the rest were unaware. Among the participants, only (13 percent) correctly identified all circumstances in which abortion is permissible; the other half (16 percent) were considered to be fairly knowledgeable about the law (Figure 3). More than half of the participants (46 percent) learned about the Indian abortion law from the media, while the other half (47percent) learned about it from school . More than half of the participants (60%) who were aware of the circumstances under which abortion is permitted in India stated that it is permitted if the pregnant mother's age is less than 18 years, (13.9%) of them stated that abortion is permitted when the pregnancy is a risk to the mother or foetus or both, and (15.5%) of the participants stated that it is permitted if the pregnancy is after rape or incest.

In terms of attitudes, students (44 percent) oppose legal abortion services, while only students (32 percent) support them. For the most part, religion and cultural differences were to blame for their disagreements . Abortion is viewed as a sin by 46 percent of the study participants, and the majority (67 percent) believe that a woman must get permission from her partner in order to have an abortion. Pregnancy termination is the preferred option for (11 percent), while (88) of the study participants plan to deliver the baby as a natural birth. Sixty-seven percent of those surveyed plan to talk about their relationships with their partners or parents. The majority of respondents (64.2%) had a negative attitude toward the issue of legalising abortion, while (32 percent) had a positive attitude toward it.

21% of participants agree that legal abortion should be permitted in cases where there is an immediate threat to the mother's health, 35% agree that it should be permitted if there is a foetal abnormality, 28% agree that it should be permitted when the mother is mentally or physically impaired, and 36% agree that it should be permitted if the pregnancy is a result of rape or incest. According to the survey results, out of 37.1percent of respondents had a positive outlook, while the remaining respondents had a pessimistic outlook.

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## Conclusion

In India, abortion is legal, and a large number of participants are unaware of this fact and have anti-abortion views. Religion and culture influenced the public's opposition to abortion legalisation. Only a few students who had unwanted pregnancies had access to legal (safe) abortion services, according to the study. Because of this, each stakeholder's awareness creation strategy is crucial.

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