

**Perceptions about Abortion in the Context of Class and Religion in Hyderabad**

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**Under the guidance of**

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**A project report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in Women's Studies**



**School of Gender Studies**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Ananya Sarkar, hereby declare that this dissertation titled '**Perceptions about Abortion in the Context of Class and Religion in Hyderabad**', is the outcome of my own study.

This study was undertaken under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Sunayana Swain, School of Gender Studies at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad. It has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or certificate of this Institute or any other institute or university. I have duly acknowledged all the sources used by me in the preparation of this dissertation.

Date: 24th March, 2020

Ananya Sarkar

## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify the dissertation titled '**Perceptions about Abortion in the Context of Religion and Class in Hyderabad**' is the record of the original work done by Ananya Sarkar under my guidance. The results of this research presented in this dissertation have not previously formed the basis for the award of the degree, diploma or certificate of this or any other university.

March 24th, 2020

Dr. Sunayana Swain

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation is the outcome of qualitative data collected from the field study conducted on two sample groups; sample size 1: 12 upper middle women aged 21- 38 and belonging to four distinct religions and sample size 2: Men of God from the four distinct religions, namely Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Christianity from different parts of Hyderabad through the help of surveys and focused group discussion to address the comparative analysis between ideas the women hold, and the ideas that the religious representatives hold about abortion and how do they justify their interpretations, and how are women base their decisions on it. It discerns the the social practices, ideas around religion and class struggle and societal narrative that engenders the essentialist views of the society on abortion, which in turn forces women to capitulate agency of their own bodies and fight shy of abortions because of the essentialist views of the society.

***Keywords:*** *abortion, pro abortion rights, class, caste, culture, religion*



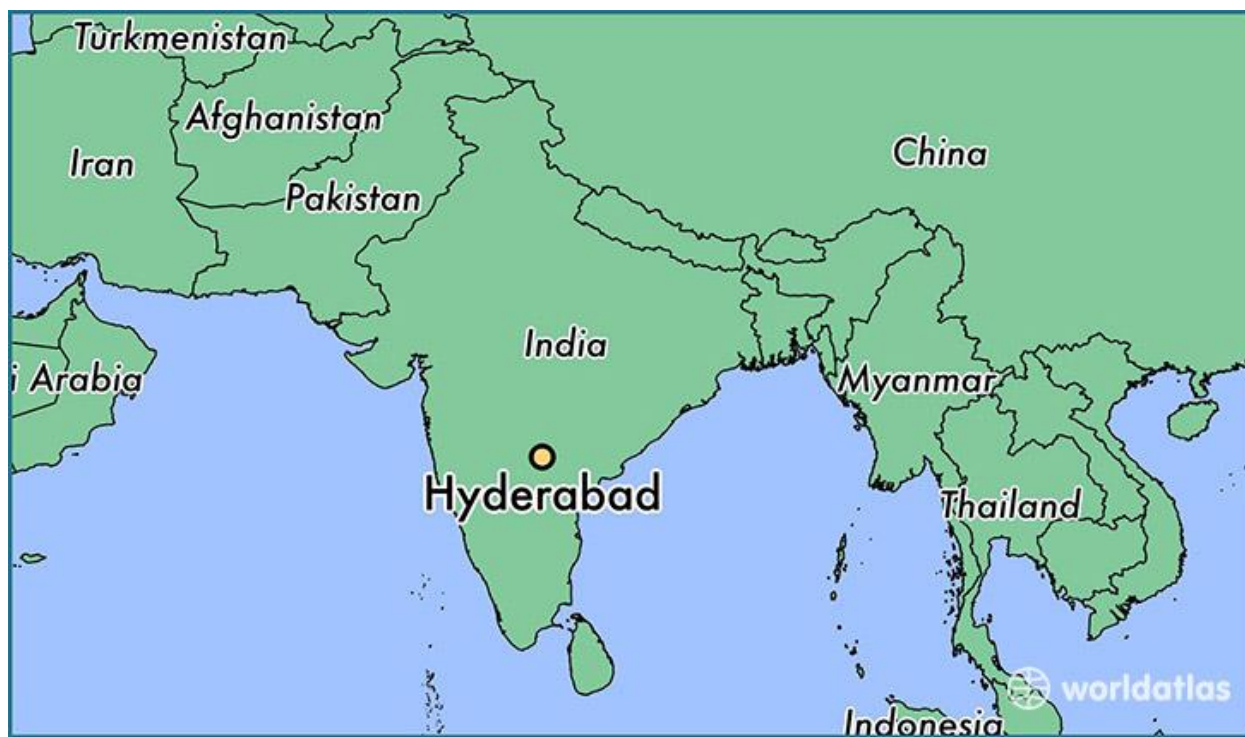


Image 1: Map of India, representing Hyderabad, the capital of Telengana which is also the research site in this study.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Abortion has been understood within the intersections of practise followed in society, religion and class, and secondly from the perspective of facts and figures as produced by agencies and laws and acts that govern abortion. A woman's reproductive health is compromised under the various intersections of religion, and practices followed. Women go through a lot of physical, psychological and mental trauma due to abortion being governed by these various intersections. The statistics, laws and acts are witness to how oppressive is the system of abortion when seen within the framework of practise, religion and class. It is appalling that in a country a woman cannot individually take the decision for her abortion. The decisions taken by her immediate family is the only kind of advice she can seek. These opinions by immediate family are shaped by the prejudice of class and culture as believed by the society.

This research will re-examine and combine the existing body of literature, published on abortion in India. Over the past decade, some significant policy developments have resulted in improved accessibility, convenience and safety of induced abortion services; these include amended regulations expanding services to primary health centres, the endorsement of medical abortion for terminating early pregnancies, and the advocacy of manual vacuum objective as the preferred method for early surgical abortion, as suggested by Susheela Singh, in her article 'Making Abortion Services Accessible in the Wake of Legal Reforms: A Framework and Six Case Studies'. (Singh, 2012) Even though such multifaceted provisions exist, their impacts have diminished due to hindrance faced in implementation of those provisions. For instance, the extension of abortion services into lower-level income groups has been uneven, as a consequence of which many districts are left with few public facilities that provide the services. Studies by the World Bank, named 'The Impact of Universal Coverage Schemes in the Developing World: A Review of the Existing Evidence' reveals that many of the largest, least developed states are inexplicably underserved by certified facilities. (Giedion et al, 2013) There is paucity in the data that documents the occurrence of complications among women having illegal or unsafe abortions and how religion and class can play a role in the same. Such complications seem to have decreased over the past decade, but inadequate knowledge and meagre access to safe and legal services results in many women adopting for abortion make at least one failed attempt before

they terminate their pregnancy. Some of these endeavours lead to detrimental health consequences for women.

This bias extends more to women who have their status as single or their identification is not understood in association with a man. Young and unmarried women are predominantly susceptible to poor sexual and reproductive health in general, and they have especially poor access to safe abortion services, which leads to impediments in acquiring services and increases their dependence on unsafe providers.

In the next section, the research talks about how abortion has been described in the religious texts and the impact it has on women who are going to undertake an abortion.

### **1.1 Knowledge Production on Abortion as Defined in Books of Religious Significance**

The world is progressing at an extremely rapid pace in all spheres such as science, technology and society. Despite such advances, religion remains a dominant force in influencing existing attitude on issues such as the beginning and end of life, especially those associated with the act of abortion. The prime objective of this section is to gain a better understanding of how four of the world's major religious traditions (Roman Catholic, Islamic, Hindu and Sikh) address the issue of abortion. (Basinger, 2015) As customary for the Catholic Church, it provides counseling to women who have been impaired ethically and psychologically by the act of abortion. It has helped them to deal with the scenario and make their peace with the Almighty (Paul, 1995). Historically, the Church has constantly resisted the act of abortion throughout instabilities in scientific and religious outlook as to when a new individual is borne (Jones, 2004). According to the Catholic understanding, an individual is impure spiritually yet a bodily organism: although the soul is directly formed by the almighty God, the soul is considered the body's 'life principle'. This entails that any human being has both an individual rights and an individual soul, including the right to not take another individual's life unjustly especially when influenced by others. Gradually, as science attempted to overshadow religion, the Church perceived abortion as a heinous act to be committed at any stage of pregnancy and also as a manifestation of homicide. The church as an institution advocates that an unborn child must be respected right from its conception inside the mother's womb. The catholic tradition promotes the thought that an individual's rights are not dependent on the circumstance under which a woman conceives. For instance,

a child conceived by a rape victim, must be respected like any other child born under normal circumstances. According to the catholic understanding, to kill a child as a reaction to the heinous crime of rape committed by the father is never an option. The church stands for both the mother and child and treats them both as precious and worthy of respect. Even in cases when the unborn child is found disabled, his/her life should be respected just like that of any other human being. Abortion is opposed by the church even in cases when the mother is diagnosed with a medical condition. An attack on the well being of the unborn child is not tolerated by the church no matter her mental or physical condition. The church stands for the view that a pregnancy engages two innocent living human individuals. Since the one is dependent on the other, it does not nullify the rights of either of the two, and their intimate relationship of a mother and a child signifies that their welfare is closely intertwined.

In the Islamic tradition the Muslims consider the act of abortion as erroneous or haram (forbidden), though it accepts that such an act can be committed only in special circumstances. All schools of Islam agree to abortion only if enduring the pregnancy will jeopardize the health of the mother. Owing to this reason abortion is accepted in the Islamic tradition only after 120 days of the process. Various schools of Islamic law such as Hanafi, Maliki uphold diverse outlooks on whether an unborn child could be aborted due to other reasons and at which stage of the pregnancy is it permissible to do so. Some schools sanction abortion in the first 16 weeks of pregnancy, while others only allow it in the first 7 weeks. But a common belief that unites all the schools of Muslim law is that the more advanced the stage of pregnancy, the greater is the wrong in aborting the unborn child, these ideas have been stated in the article, 'Therapeutic Abortion in Islam: Contemporary Views of Muslim Shiite Scholars and Effect of Recent Iranian Scholars' by K M Hedayat. (Hedayat, 2006) The Islamic tradition stands on the top precedence the religion endows to the sacredness of life. In the Sharia Muslim Law, abortion is branded as the lesser evil owing to the facts that the mother is the creator of the foetus, she is well settled, endowed with various duties and responsibilities, and lastly permitting the mother to die would also result in the death of the fetus. The Quran bans abortion on financial grounds relating to the mother and the other family members. It advocates that the unborn child should be aborted out of fear of not being able to provide for it, instead the family should place their faith upon Allah to look after it.

Rape and incest are also deemed as legit grounds for abortion in the first 120 days of the pregnancy. In cases when the fetus is found to have some genetic disease or other abnormalities, the Islamic school of law do not allow for the abortion of the flawed fetus, even if it results in the mother giving birth to an ailing or disable child.

The prime proponent that drives the Hindu health ethics is the law of ahimsa - of non-violence. In view of abortion, the Hindu tradition promotes the action that will cause least amount of injury to the mother and the father along with the fetus and the society. Hinduism in general is opposed to the act of abortion except for when it is inevitable to save the life of the mother. The Hindu classical texts such as the Upanishads and the Vedas echo the same sentiments regarding this issue. (Ferrer, 2018) They often compare the act of abortion to the heinous crime of killing a priest, some texts brand abortion as a despicable sin which is of a far greater magnitude than murdering one's parents, while another text threatens a woman who performs such an derogatory act of abortion with the consequence of losing her caste. Both traditional and contemporary Hinduism perceive abortion as a violation of the obligation to procreate to maintain the family lineage and produce new individuals in the community. In this context, procreation is seen as a 'public duty' and not as an 'individual expression of personal choice' (Lipner,1989). In Hinduism, the soul and the matter that comprise the fetus are believed to be conjoint since the time of its conception. The principle of reincarnation states that a fetus is not an underdeveloped human life, but an individual from a premature state. It includes a soul that is reborn and as such should be treated like a human life should be treated. It is also believed that by the 9<sup>th</sup> month the fetus gains considerable consciousness. This doctrine of reincarnation is used by the Hindu tradition to take a string stance against the act of abortion. It advocates that when a fetus I killed, the soul residing inside it endures a severe karmic hindrance. It is dispossessed of the privileges its probable human life would have given it to bring in good karma, and is driven back to the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. This justifies the act of abortion as an impediment of the spiritual advancement of the soul.

In Sikhism the act of abortion is strictly prohibited, rendering it as an act that impeded the Almighty's creative work. As Sikhism propagates that life begins at the very moment of

conception (one reference is found on page 74 of the Guru Granth Sahib), it immediately becomes a sin to kill a life, thereby stringently opposing the act of abortion.

Talking about the history of provision of abortion rights in India, it also relates to the idea of how religious interpretations have shaped the history of these rights in India.

## **1.2 Implication of Abortion Rights in India**

The two acts under the British Offences against the Person Act 1861, i.e. the Indian Penal Code 1862 and the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898, declared abortion as a criminal offense. It saw both the woman and the person performing the abortion guilty of the crime of abortion, unless it is performed to save the woman's life. The surge of liberalization during the 1960s and 1970s saw an increase in abortion laws across European countries and in U.S.A, which influenced a lot of other countries. In India the liberalization of abortion laws started in 1964 as an outcome of high mortality rates in mothers due to perilous abortion procedures. It was found that doctors often came across seriously sick or almost dying women who had opted for unsafe abortions performed by inexperienced practitioners. They apprehended that most of women looking for abortions were wedded and under no social and cultural stress to hide their pregnancies and that de-criminalising the act of abortion would persuade women to ask for abortion services in lawful and secure atmosphere. The formation of the Shah Committee, according to the guidelines of the Government of India, formulated an all-inclusive evaluation of legal, socio-cultural and remedial facets of abortion and in the year 1966 suggested that legalising abortion to avert impairment of women's physical health and lives on both sympathetic and medical grounds. Although some States looked upon the proposition as an approach for plummeting population growth, the Shah Committee particularly refused that this was its rationale. The term "Medical Termination of Pregnancy" (MTP) was employed to lessen resistance from religious groups disinclined towards the liberalization of abortion laws. As a result the MTP Act was passed by the Parliament in 1971, and it legalised abortion in almost whole of India except for the states of Jammu and Kashmir. In spite of more than 30 years of the enforcement of liberal laws regarding abortion, studies show that a large number of women are still unable to access safe abortion.

### **1.3 Present Day Regulations on Abortion in India**

Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act: This Act was enforced by the Indian Government in 1971 with the aim of controlling and guaranteeing access to safe abortion procedures.<sup>2</sup> According to this Act, only registered allopathic doctors are permitted to perform abortion at licensed abortion facilities. This is can be done under different circumstances; abortion is imperative to save the woman's life, or to safeguard her physical and mental well being, or when it is an absolute financial or social need or in cases such as rape, incest, fetal defect or the malfunction of a contraceptive means used by the married woman or her partner. In terms of consent, except for the consent of the woman who has to undergo the abortion, her husband's or her family members consent is not needed. But consent of a guardian is needed when the woman asking for abortion is below the age of 18, or is mentally sick. The law permits an unintentional pregnancy to be ended up till 20 weeks' of the gestation period.

Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act: Discriminatory practices prevail against women in India and stem from the cultural traditions that give more importance to men than women. Sons are seen as breadwinners thereby enhancing the family income and getting dowry during marriage, while daughters are perceived as necessitating families to pay a dowry and arrange for other marriage expenditures and are considered less capable of being able to look after their parents in their old age.<sup>32</sup> Although the concept of having a small family has gained precedence over time, women are still burdened to bear at least one male child. In 1980s technologies came into vogue that permitted parents to find out the sex of the fetus before the birth of the child. This approach was opted by many families to keep the family small and yet be sure of having a male child. But these technologies also gave rise to the discriminatory practice of aborting the female fetus. To deal with this issue, the government enacted a law in 1994 with the aim of eradicating prenatal sex determination and related sex-selective abortions and thereby apprehending the waning sex ratio in India. Furthermore, the amendments in the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act in 2003, forbids the abuse of antenatal diagnostic procedures for the intention of sex determination. The Act also restricts the announcements of such medical procedures, entails listing of all facilities that employ them and bans those

performing the tests from informing the sex of the fetus to the parents who are expecting the child.

#### **1.4 Rationale of the Study**

Findings of this study will spring back to the benefit of gender studies researchers to build a more compact understanding of their perspective around abortion by delving into the comparative analysis between the ideas women hold, and the ideas that religious representatives hold about abortion and how do they justify their interpretations, and how are women base their decisions on it. The study will help organizations who work to address the issue of abortion by better understanding the social practices, ideas around religion and class struggle and societal narrative around abortion that forces women to implement agency of their own bodies and fight shy of abortions because of the essentialist views of the society. This study will allow lawmakers to significantly improve accessibility, convenience and safety of induced abortion services by amending regulations to expand services to primary health centres, endorse medical abortion for terminating early pregnancies, and the advocate manual vacuum aspiration as the safe and effective method for early surgical abortion to increase success rate and reduce blood loss, hospital stay and procedure related complications. It will also allow lawmakers to keep up with medical advancements to ensure that all women across India can legally and rightfully get access to safe abortions, and modify the contraceptive failure clause from "married women" to "all women" to include unmarried women, so that they can access safe abortion in cases of contraceptive failure. The study also helps enabling major Indian religions who have always opposed abortion stating the sanctity of life understand their arguments are questionable considering their support /silence towards wars, famines. Finally, the study also makes a contribution to addressing the major gaps in literature by reinstating the lived experiences of these women from upper middle class families which along with other social, political and economic factors enhance or inhibit the reasons why they are pro or against abortion.

#### **1.5 Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study is to identify the problems women face regarding abortion, belonging to a particular section of the society and how their plight is heightened due to caste, class, religion and culture. The poor and the rich will always be seen as black and



white, there is no existent grey literature. Thus in this research an attempt has been made to understand the grey literature related to upper middle class women in India. This research will identify upper middle class women who are residing in Hyderabad, who belong to certain class and culture. This research also aims to understand how distinctive class and culture affect these upper middle class women in Hyderabad.(Chatterjee, 2019) The objective of the study is also to understand if their belief systems have been similar across all religions or do they have different perspectives which have formed because of their interpretation of the culture. To maintain the data within a certain class, as we are taking the upper middle class here, the participants will be asked certain questions which will contribute to the understanding of the research project.

### **1.7 Research Questions**

The questions that will be posed by the researcher would be specific to the Indian context. To maintain the data within a certain class, as we are taking the upper middle class here, the participants will be asked certain questions which will contribute to the understanding of the research project:-

- A) Is abortion a social phenomenon?
- B) If abortion is a social phenomenon, is it a function of class, religion and practise?

### **1.8 Chapterisation**

This study has been divided into sections that are 5 in number. Chapter one talks about the subject matter and also facilitates in understanding better. The first chapter has been divided into sub- sections. The first chapter talks about the objectives, rationale, and information related to the study. The second chapter talks about the review of literature which mentions how the study has been thematically analysed. This chapter goes back into the existing body of literature and tries to address the gap in the existing literature through this research. It talks about all the arguments that have been discussed, the viewpoints and the findings in previous papers. The chapter also identifies the themes and tries to fit the analysis in relation to the themes. The chapter number three talks about the procedures and methodologies that the researcher has used during the duration of the study. The fourth chapter talks about the thematic analysis that has been acquired from the findings. The fifth chapter uses the

thematic analysis used in the previous section to motivate discussions and also taking the help of literature to understand new reforms that can take place. This chapter helps in identifying the juxtapositions, odds and the similar ideas between data and literature. The fifth chapter concludes by suggesting an all total understanding of all the chapters.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 2. Introduction

The last chapter dealt with the research questions and the topics regarding the subject matter. The reasons for the study have been mentioned and also the objectives have been specified. Chapter 2 will consist of the sub themes in the desired area of study and also the gaps in the Literature it will be addressing.

#### 2.1 Medicalisation and Reproductive Rights

Reproductive agency as suggested in 'Women's Reproductive Autonomy: Medicalisation and Beyond' is of prime importance to women's overall health because women are the childbearers and being childbearers, they are presumed to be responsible for the upbringing of the child. Some of the factors that affect their agency are poverty, destituteness and belief systems and superstitions often undermine such agency. Often people do not prioritize such autonomies. This is a sad state of affairs because women's agency is not only necessary for women but also for the welfare of the entire social system. (Purdy, 2006)

Another study, 'A Profile of Abortion Cases in a Tertiary Care Hospital', is the result of the collaboration of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology with Department of Forensic Medicine at Rohilkhand Medical College and Hospital, Bareilly, U.P. conducted between October 2009 and September 2010. Abortion despite legislation is one of the most neglected health care problems faced by females in their reproductive age-group. The contributing factors are a multifarious array of troubles such as rate of literacy is low, their social and economic status is low, they are married off early and their usage of contraception is less but abortion on the basis of sex is rampant. Limited admission to services provided for abortion in rural areas, deprived practices associated to pre and post natal attention. Females should be educated concerning the validity of abortion which should be supported to look for premature secure measures in qualified care amenities to bound humanity arising as of dangerous abortion, since in spite of an abortion rule an anticipated millions of abortions that are conducted illicitly in the India subcontinent. With declining era of the beginning of period and the premature commencement of

sexual uproar, unnecessary pregnancy and next abortions are constantly on the increasing page. (2011)

Medicalisation also feeds into the pro life and pro choice argument. The paper, 'Beyond Pro-Choice versus Pro-Life: Women of Color and Reproductive Justice' debates whether the paragon that deals with anti-abortion and pro-abortion for reproductive health care dismisses brown women, destitute women, women who lack able bodies, and women from other underprivileged sections of the community. The pro-abortion versus anti-abortion paragon undertones white supremacist ideas. Both parties gave empty talk to address the matter regarding non White women and their political stance reeked of racism and sexism. Non White women activists should rather introduce and come up with alternative paragons that would help them to constructively critique capitalism.(Smith, A, 2005)

### **2.1.1 Women's Agency in Abortion**

Women's agency in abortion is also granted on the basis of their marital status. Unmarried women, face issues in case of a contraceptive failure. According to the article, 'Abortion in India: Experts Call for Changes' The MTP Bill which was up for amendment, 2020, suggests an extension of the higher frontier of pregnancy cessation for a maximum of 12 fortnights. With the information processed from the WHO, from 2010-2014 has led to a total of millions of unsafe and safe abortions that were going around from 2010- 2014 has led to a total of millions of unsafe and safe abortions that were going around till the age of 2014.

### **2.2 Factors Influencing Abortion**

In an article named, 'Socio- Demographic Determinants of Abortion in India: A North-South Comparison' by Bose, it has been suggested that Unwanted pregnancy alone does not determine the decision to terminate pregnancy but a combination of factors influence each other to terminate pregnancy. This study was undertaken to know about the reasons for undergoing abortion. The study shows how women who belong to the global south are

educated and their participation in paid labour work is more. They also have less preference for male children and believe in nuclear families.(Bose, 2006)

### **2.2.1 Social & Maternal Factors**

The following paragraph is going to talk about how the state decides on them undergoing an abortion or not based on constricting women only to their gender roles, that is by reproducing. In the article, ‘The new politics of abortion: an quality analysis of woman-protective abortion restrictions’, Due to the imposition of abortions by threat or force and to have women subjected to physical harm and emotional trauma, and in order to prevent this government of South Dakota had passed the legislation which prohibits the abortion allowing it in those exceptional cases where it helps in preventing the pregnant woman from dying. However the ban passed by South Dakota was defeated by a vote on a ballot question, the woman protective act of anti aborting is rapidly spreading. This theory debates that even if Roe's proposal was to be is reverted, constitutional principles and constitutional rules of protection with equity compel the regulations by government on abortion. This theory implies that this act of protecting women and antiabortion is used to provide justification to the ban passed by South Dakota stands on the stereotypes about the potential and capacity of women and the family roles they are expected to abide. The understanding was that the state should drive the women’s decision makings on abortion, on which originally the ban was based out of. This was because of the state assuming to know it better for women on what they would really want and what would need in the aspects of motherhood.(Siegel, 2007)

The study, ‘Maternal and Social Factors Associated with Abortion in India: A Population-Based Study’ aims at synthesizing the aspects connected with the phenomenon of abortion within the Indian context. The son preference inside the Indian communities has amounted in the missing of around 60 million women. India's sex ratio has taken such a shape because of gender inequality and want for male children. The most recent 2011 census shows how for every 1000 men there were only 943 females, all because of this practice of son preference. Even the sex ratio that indicates the same in children shows a total of only 918 female to 1000 male children, which is self explanatory as to the kind of worse times one has called upon. There is an accepted insight that such partiality for male children is further common amid uneducated, blue-

collar individuals in rural locale. Information standing on projection of World Bank tells such that the sex ratio is being threatened and has gone down since the last years, and this will be understood better in the wake of (Stones, 2006)

Abortion in India and Indian civilization is pretty much similarly old. All societal systems try to dictate women's bodies. The article, 'Abortion in India', talks about Government laws, religious taboos are nearly used by every culture to dictate women's bodies and govern the women's rights to abortion. Religious bodies have always opposed abortion stating the sanctity of life yet their arguments are questionable considering their support /silence towards wars, famines. (Mohan, 1975)

### **2.2.2 Coloured Women's Agency in Abortion**

The paper, 'Beyond Pro-Choice versus Pro-Life: Women of Color and Reproductive Justice' debates whether the paragon that deals with anti-abortion and pro-abortion for reproductive health care dismisses brown women, destitute women, women who lack able bodies, and women from other underprivileged sections of the community. The pro-abortion versus anti-abortion paragon undertones white supremacist ideas. Both parties gave empty talk to address the matter regarding non White women and their political stance reeked of racism and sexism. Non White women activists should rather introduce and come up with alternative paragons that would help them to constructively critique capitalism.(Smith, A, 2005)

Brown women from India cannot exercise their agency on deciding if they can undergo an abortion because patriarchal members of the family decide on sex selective abortion, favouring the male sex. In India, it has been seen how North Indian states, have a want for male children, and not female children. In 'Misuse of Prenatal Diagnostic Technology for Sex- Selected Abortions and its Consequences in India', it has been suggested that, a discovery during 1800 by the British government led them to believe that there were no girl children in the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh which is situated in India. The 2001 census shows that the ratio for men and women is 100:93. Destitute families do not want a female child but what is more shocking is the fact that even people with higher incomes are unwilling to bear a girl child. It gets bad as time passes by and it has been found out

that abortions happen everywhere, more so sex selected abortions despite stringent action taken against them. (Sharma, 2007)

## **2.3 Abortion within the Context of Religion and Cultural Ideology**

We will be using Michael Foucault's concept on Cultural Hegemony and Power, where he suggests that the body is site for exerting power by the dominant culture. In the issue, 'Foucault, Culture and Power' by Powell says that we need to understand the idea of the modern body in a contemporary society. (Powell, 2015) We will be using Foucault's idea of power and culture to understand how the dominant culture shapes the factors that help women to take decisions on abortion.

### **2.3.1 Religious Ideologies**

The main aim of the paper, 'Religious Perspectives on Abortion and a Secular Response' is to throw light how the world's major traditions view abortions. It gives us a religious and a societal narrative around abortion. In this article they do not aim to critique all the commentaries across the world, rather uses commentary from every religion to cite them within the social context. Social and cultural paradigms influence the decision making of a woman in the abortion context. (Stephens, 2010)

Thakur in his article, 'A Discourse on Motherhood in Radical Feminist Writings and in the Manusmriti', in feminist theory motherhood has always been a recurrent source of disagreement. It boils down to a simple, but very difficult, and perhaps unanswerable, question— is biological reproduction a source of oppression, or a means of empowerment. In its most concrete form, the radical-feminist disagreement over motherhood concerns the role of reproductive technology—including in vitro fertilization, artificial insemination, gestational surrogacy, and ex utero gestation—and whether those capabilities are a venue for feminist emancipation, or instead a backdoor method of consolidated patriarchal control. Manusmriti argues that the part of a mother in a family is vital which has no correlation particularly in the matter of the youngster's mind. In Manusmriti it is said that the place of mother is more prevalent than father and teacher. (Thakur, 2009).

Feminist research studies talk about individual decisions that had been taken during their reproductive phases during the formation of a socialist state. Can family be

an important space to look at the fertility decline within the intersection of regional variation? The article, 'Later, if ever: Family influences on the transition from first to second birth in Soviet Ukraine Continuity and Change' also gives us a detailed summarization of kin based relationships and how they influence individual decisions regarding reproduction during change of phase from preliminary to transitory phase in the locale mentioned. In order to compare the cities of Kharkiv and Lviv which are the borderland cities which are eastern and western cities, interviews were done on the life documented histories which were done around in the years 1950 to 1975. The results conclude that the differences of the Spousal cooperation and the intergenerational tie which molded the reproduction strategically transitioning to the second birth which specifically were being postponed in the Kharkiv city and leading to spacing in the city of Lviv respectively. (Hilevych, 2016)

Conflicts also arise out of religious differences in a secular state in India. In the article, 'Balancing minority rights and gender Justice: the impact of protecting multiculturalism on women's rights in India', Strategists and policy makers argue the role and importance of cross culturalism, pluralism, and diversity in social structures that are libertarian and how it affects the women of those societies. Strategists should be thoughtful and receptive to the needs of cross cultural communities and women of the underprivileged communities in these societies. A living example could be India. India, despite being a Hindu majority nation, has 138,000,000 Muslims and 24,000,000 Christians. India, lately, has also seen some of the most violent uprisings against minority rights. (Jain, 2005)

### **2.3.2 Gender Inequalities in Modern India**

In 'Female selective abortion – beyond 'culture': family making and gender inequality in a globalizing India, Culture, Health & Sexuality', there has been a developing discourse on the global conditioning of abortion which is based on sex and is based on selection of female children (FSA) in India witnessing an rising inequity in their sexual category ratios in favor of sons. Whilst in attendance an increase in demographic in addition to societal surveys resting on the subject, a modest amount of knowledge is implicit



regarding FSA as any information preferred or contested performance in the procedure of making a family. Taking examples of what has been suggested by feminists, doctors and lower, middle-class the paper explores differing perceptions and attitudes to FSA in the country. The article also suggests that gender inequality and marriage anxieties shape especially lower-middle-class women's engagement with reproductive technologies, including those of sex selection. The article also analyses whether the decision to use selective abortion of female babies are informed by their common and pragmatic understanding of the economic realities of gender discrimination and their social obligations as wives, to reproduce a particular quality of the patriarchal family. (Kumar, 2010)

## **2.4 Abortion and Law**

A study named, 'Legal Abortion in Indian State', talks about the distinctiveness of those looking for abortion in and around areas of Karnataka, which consists of a total of 29.3 million individuals. Abortion that has been induced by medical agencies has been seen as an illicit business in India which is known as the pregnancy termination with the help of modern medical facilities which is also known as the MTP Act. With regards to a law of such nature, abortion can be allowed till the time limit of 20 weeks of gestation period only in order to save the mother's life or to take care of her mental and physical well being and some excluding cases are when a woman goes through rape or other economical issues, such that she cannot be responsible for a child or the foetus has developed an anomaly. Pregnancies which are already over 20 weeks can only be taken up only if the mother is in dire peril. It has always been suggested that abortion is an illicit affair in India, a lot of evidence shows that how abortion takes place and which situations lead to that, the documentation is very limited. Statistics from the office of incidence which is published under the ministry and government in India, underestimate the number of times, abortion takes place due to coverage issues of services which are facility based and their status is incomplete and some abortions are also conducted outside legal buildings because they take place in urban areas mostly and a lot of women from the village cannot have access to the cities because of huge costs. (Baskara, 1987)

### **2.4.1 Muslim Personal Law**

The study, 'Muslim Personal Law and the Constitutional Framework In *Gender and Community: Muslim Women's Rights in India*' examines the status of legality of the Muslim women of India. This topic consists of considerable amount of controversies and debates and it is quite the complex issue which involves the questions that are not only of the gender justice, and but also that questions of the minority rights, religious freedom, and the accommodation of the difference of that of the policies of the state. Based on the religious laws that are modified by the judicial precedent and state legislation, it is governed by the family relations which is a validation in itself as a Personal Law. Basing the Muslim's religious identity, the Personal law is possibly the only law in India that is applicable to all of the individuals. Although as the Indian Constitution provides the guarantee of equality of all the citizen and freedom from discrimination, the personal law denies that most of the Muslim women are restricted under the Muslim Personal Law.

#### **2.4.2 Fundamental Rights in the Indian State**

There is a study named, 'Abortion: A Fundamental Right', examines abortion as a fundamental right. Abortion has always been the most controversial subject all around the globe. From lawmakers to the common citizens, everyone is in a quandary whether if a mother has the right to abort her unborn child during anytime of her pregnancy or to give the unborn child the right to live. The right of abortion is recognized to be the right that is the most crucial and also a fundamental right which could be registered under the right to have privacy and which again is a part of right to have personal liberty freedom and which emerges from the right to life. And the question appears to arise always that whether if an unborn baby is to be considered as an existing human being and whether the unborn child should be given the valid legalized status of being a person or not. There are different aspects such as religious aspects, ethical aspects, morality and legality that happen to impact and rule over the right to abortion aspect. Ms Gangoli argues that abortion is a lot mostly about the right to bodily condition of self-government, and that abortion as a fundamental would help in protecting people from misuse but also to provide and build a basic framework internally with which the people are protected in a democratic society.(Gangoli, 2000)

Another study, 'Abortion and Unintended Pregnancy in Six Indian States: Findings and Implications for Policies and Programs' focuses on the state wise survey obtained from a large-scale case study done in six different states: Bihar, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh of unplanned or Unintended Pregnancy and Abortion in India (UPAI), that drives to fill these gaps of evidence and seek to provide substantial proofs to remove these gaps of understanding. The motive is to provide a safer accessible and effective services and facilities for abortion is the most important priority of the Indian Government's (RMNCH+A) Health program. The only thing that provides resistance to this kind of governmental initiatives is the lack of information which could be reliable, for the implementation and planning, and yet also the data which is comprehensive about the abortion incident and provision of services has been very limited. A few surveys based on communities (such as NFHS) collect their information on aborting of child directly from the women themselves. However, these kind of studies cannot be reliable in terms of the data collected or the gathered information on incidence because of the response received to the mark of disgrace associated with the termination of a pregnancy. Women usually keep their abortions off the record most of the time and do not necessarily open up about it in any of the face-to-face interviews. This is a problem that may get worse if women are under the presumption that abortion is illegal. Apart from only by getting the estimates of the facilities based provisions to care for women who are going through complications concerning abortion, also analyses the abortion incident information to estimate the levels of unplanned or unintended pregnancy amongst women.

The report, 'INDIAN ABORTION LAW REVISION AND POPULATION POLICY: AN OVERVIEW', synthesizes the law of abortion in India revision and population policy. The MTP Act passed by the Parliament of India in the year 1971 was intended to regulate and ensure that everybody was provided with ease of access to have a safer abortion. According to these writings, this law permits only registered medical practitioners of allopath at facilities of abortion that are certified and to perform abortion acts only to save a woman's life or in order to prevent her physical health or her mental health; abortion is also permitted in few cases of social or economic necessity, incest, rape, impairment of the fetus or in case of a contraceptive method failure which is used

by any married woman or her husband. In the year 2000, the National Population Policy also known as the NPP had officially suggested for the expansion of provision of abortion of up to eight weeks' of duration of gestation as a part of service to all public facilities, which also included the primary healthcare centers. After about 10 years, community health centers have continued to be the primary providers of abortions which was of up to eight weeks' duration of gestation, and also the provision that is at the lower levels remain to be a challenge because most of the primary healthcare centers are not well staffed with certified professional abortion providers. And also the additional amendments added to the MTP Act and sets of few Rules and Regulations were made in the year 2002 and year 2003 in an effort to organize registration of privately certified doctors as the professional abortion providers and then there after further it and expand and provide access to safe abortion services. The amendment added in the year 2002 to the MTP Act the rules and regulation of the abortion facilities got decentralized from the state level committees to the District Level Committees. And the other subsequent amended Rules and regulations streamlined and sorted the registration process of facility by creating a few facility inspection deadlines to which of these the district-level committees must compulsorily adhere—the changes in policy that were supposed to speed up the process of private facilities to be certified. Also the rules changed the physical standardizing for the facilities providing first-academic quarter aborting services: There isn't any longer requirement of the facilities to have the onsite capable nature for management of any complications that needs to be addressed as an emergency, but must have the person trained to identify the complication and its severity and should be capable to refer the subjected patients to an other facility centre for the emergency care respectively. The local government came into power in decision making of that to regulate the abortion providing services after the decentralization of the registration and certification process was done. Functionally, however, the implementation has been distorted and uneven because many of the Committees on District Level are nonfunctional and unoperable; In addition to this, the delegation of the power to the lower level leading to the local level does also imply that there may have been differences in rules and regulations across other states as well. Now in India, where it is known that the majority of the Indian population are not literate, custom-ridden, fatalist,

and usually do not believe in future or family planning, only the initiative of Indian government can be helpful in having some control over the growing population of the country. For better understanding of this concept, the Indian population policy can be divided into three: the most urgent objective of this is to address the needs that aren't met for contraception, And the infrastructure of health care and personnel of health and to have the provision of continuous integration of services to be delivered for basic reproduction and health care for the children. The medium level term's objective is to bring the TFR (Total Fertility Rate) to the replaceable level by the year 2010 through some immense implementations in the incomparable operational strategies. And in the long term plan the objective is to accomplish a standardized population by the year 2045 at a level which is consistent with respect to the requirements of economic growth sustainability, environmental protection, and also the social development. (Thomas, 1974)

## **2.5. Abortion as a Social Stigma**

Concept of autonomy- In the research article, 'Women's reproductive autonomy: medicalisation and beyond' by Western theorist L. Purdy, talk about how child bearing and abortion, these two decisions should be only limited to a woman who is bearing the child as the women is the sole bearer of the child. (Purdy, 2006). Using this theory, we can expand on the idea that women cannot always exercise their agency because of the belief system and poverty.

Essentialism- In the article, 'Essentialism in Philosophy, Psychology, Education, Social and Scientific Scopes', by Sahin Mehmet it has been said, "Essentialism is an approach assuming that people and things have natural and essential common characteristics which are inherent, innate and unchanging. Thus, it is regarded as an educational philosophy. However, having the common essence and the same essentials at the same levels can lead to undesired practices in real life too." (Mehmet, 2018) I will be expanding on this theory to understand how essentialism leads to undesired practices like women being reduced to individuals who can reproduce and they can only take part in sexual division of labour. Thus, the social practices, ideas around religion and class struggle might lead to women being not able to govern their own bodies and

being forced to believe in not taking up an abortion because this is their only form of contribution as has been deduced by essentialist views by the society.

Feminist epistemology coincides with feminist policy analysis of empirical nature. This issue talk about inter disciplinary areas regarding studies, representing its dialogues with Politics and Gender, Public Policy of Comparative nature, Politics of Comparative nature, and Studies of Public Policy. Also, this book, 'Theorising Feminist Policy' intends to justify the weakest link of these new areas, that is the study of the ample feminist actions that have been taken by the government and they are of explicit nature. Across 13 countries, a comparative framework has been used to understand feminist policies in democracies, relating to post-industrial period. This empirical study talks about state action within the domain of feminist policy. And the findings are that the formation feminist policy combines culture and other institutional influences. These findings also indicate one pertinent question, i.e. Do Culture and Institutional influences matter in framing the policy outcomes and processes? The book ends by focusing on how to develop the formation of feminist policy with the help of comparative theories. When we theorize the feminist policies, it talks beyond the understanding of its dimensions which have been achieved from the discourse of the feminist policy. This looks into contributing systemically to the idea of the state, post industrialism. It has resulted in social reforms pertaining to the contemporary world. (Mazur, 2002)

### **2.5.1 Understanding Reasons why Women Undergo Abortion**

There are various reasons that drive women to opt for an abortion. The basic and immediate cause of abortion is accidental pregnancy. But there can be multiple reasons that could contribute to the decision of having an abortion. In the presence of multiple factors, it becomes hard to recognize a single factor as the most significant one. One of the factors is the intention to halt the childbearing process as a family control and planning measure. Another of the factors is due to financial instability. Women often take the decision to abort the fetus because of their inability to provide monetarily for the child. Women also decide to abort the fetus due to relationship incompatibility, where the partner is not ready for the pregnancy. Often when women are young and unmarried, they fear that their parents would not consent to the pregnancy and hence opt for an abortion. Then there is another category that drives women to abort the fetus, which is when the

pregnancy poses risk to the health of the mother. The risks may be physical and emotional. The health hazards are identified and diagnosed by the doctors or by the woman. Any defect in the fetus often drives women to have an abortion. This is only a viable option in the countries where advanced testing methods are available and legal.

## **2.6 Gaps in Literature**

One of the major gaps in literature as identified by the researcher is that little has been done in terms of participatory research to understand the place-based experiences of women in India from different faith. There is a severe lack in study focusing on the lived experiences of these women from upper middle class families. These very experiences along with other social, political and economic factors enhance or inhibit the reasons why they are pro or against abortion. This thesis seeks to make a significant contribution to addressing that gap. Also, the idea of abortion is not seen from a fuller perspective, it is not understood as a social phenomenon.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The last chapter talks about the imperative standpoints from the existing body of literature regarding the subject matter. This chapter deals with sampling techniques, tools and methods, research design, epistemological stance, population concerned and the data types and sources. This chapter also deals with other significant details such as data analysis, procedure for recruitment, ethical considerations, data validity, and pertinent questions in this research. The last section talks about limitations and how the field experience influenced the researcher's thesis.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The need of this study is to understand and reinstate the pertinent questions of the chosen subject matter. The questions are like what are the reasons why a woman goes through an abortion, how does a woman take the decision of abortion, is it based on her individual decision or consensus of the family. The study also deeply addresses how people think and how their cultural background perpetuates such the way they think. For deeper understanding the researcher is going to engage with narratives and data of qualitative nature.

There is a lot of literature on abortion, agency, autonomy, but there has been no research till date regarding perception on abortion of representatives of religion and women in Hyderabad, and how their ideas and opinions differ and are similar around the 4 different religions. Thus, an attempt has been made by the researcher to study the specific area to fill the gap in existing literature.

The theoretical grounding of this research is the essentialist theory by William C. Bagley and the concept of autonomy by Immanuel Kant grounded in feminist theories.

The researcher is using the essentialist theory because it suggest that every possible thing nature is essentialised, for example according to biological segregation by sex essentialises the idea that a man is supposed to dedicate his labour to paid work, and women are supposed to be involved in reproductive labour. In the article, 'The Anti-Essentialism v. Essentialism Debate in Feminist Legal Theory: The Debate and Beyond' by Jane Wong, it has been said that essentialism in the feminist theory can be understood as anything that has



been biologically defined that is to say that a woman's role restricted to the physical attributes she possesses. (Wong, 1999)

The researcher is using the concept of autonomy because it empowers them to recognise their bodily rights and realise their agency in making decisions regarding child rearing and abortion. In the article, 'Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy' it has been said that feminists are interested in the idea of where autonomy has failed to impress them, hence leading to Gender Based Violence. Thus feminists want to understand autonomy closely to link it further for their growth. (2008)

Before critically analysing these questions, the researcher will be using the paradigm of social constructivism. In the article, 'The Significance of Social Constructivism in Education' by Radhika Kapur suggests,

"The social constructivist perspectives focus upon the interdependence of social and individual processes in the co-construction of knowledge; after the momentum for understanding the influence of social and cultural factors on cognition is reviewed, methods that are identified to account for learning from this perception are identified." (Kapur, 2018). It is imperative to understand that the researcher is using this paradigm to locate the phenomena of abortion within intersection of social and cultural causes. The social causes being class and cultural cause here can be identified as religion and belief systems.

### **3.3 Epistemological Stance**

**Ontological Assumption-**The researcher is using ontological assumption for the qualitative research because the researcher has accumulated data to further analyse the data to come up with a conclusive statement. As suggested in the article 'Ontological Assumptions and Generalizations in Qualitative (Audience) Research' by Brigitta Hoijer it says that the ontological stance is important for any social science research because the researcher always starts with an assumption in the search for reality and the nature of it. (Hoijer, 2008)

**Epistemological Assumption-** This kind of assumption is important in any kind of qualitative research such as this. The researcher is using this assumption because in the article 'An awareness of epistemological assumptions: the case of gender studies' by Mairead Dunne it

has been said that to address any kind of issues regarding gender, and other inequalities it is necessary to use this assumption. (Dunne, 1992)

Social Constructivist Paradigm- This paradigm helps to understand and establish the relationship between the researcher and the chosen participants. In the article 'Doing social constructivist research means making empathic and aesthetic connections with participants' by Mi Song Kim it has been suggested that this paradigm helps on building a palpable relationship between the participant and the researcher in order to establish a relationship where both understand each other's position. (Ali, 2014)

### **3.4 Participants**

Any study with a cultural background provides ample space for multiple consciousness and interpretations. The participants of this research belong to upper middle class families of Hyderabad which has been determined by their class status and the kind of surroundings they live in. It also consists of representatives of religion who are from upper middle class backgrounds. These participants, total 16 in number are from different communities. They belong to the four main religions in the Indian subcontinent, which are- Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Christianity. The aim of the paper was to identify people's perceptions regarding abortion and how their cultural beliefs have led to their understanding about abortion. The Upper middle class were chosen for study because there is not much literature around them and most literatures only existed in the extremes of the classes. There has been no literature talking about the perceptions of the middle ground.

### **3.5 Sampling Technique & Sample Description**

Sampling strategy used by the researcher is Purposive snowball Sampling. The sampling will be done in Gachibowli, Hi- tech city and Turkyamjal, all located in Hyderabad. Tongca suggests in his paper, 'Purposive Sampling as a Tool for Informant Selection',

Purposive sample is used alongwith numerous techniques related to data gathering. A survey is usually done before purposive sample can be used. This not only helps in gathering data but also uses a questionnaire in a systemic way to conclude how many informants can respond on acculturation studies, which has been reinstated by Godambe in previous papers ( Godambe, 1982). (Tongca, 2007)

### **Sample Size 1**

The researcher has interviewed 3 women from who belong to 4 distinct faiths: Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Sikhism. This sample size will act as a sample set or as a representation of the entire population. This results to a total of 12.

### **Sample Size 2**

The researcher has interviewed 4 men, each practitioners of each relationship that have been taken into account in the research. These people were randomly selected from temples, Gurdwaras, Mosques, and churches who have the in- depth knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. These two sample sizes can be amalgamated to a total of 16.

### **3.6 Tools & Procedures Involved in Data Collection**

The methodology in the paper is qualitative method that is by using interviews as a way to understand the perception of the population, with the help of questions. A data analysis has been conducted of the data collected and demarcating each interview across their faith to bring out more detailed results in order to understand how different faiths affect individuals differently. The researcher will also be using literature to substantiate arguments found from the data obtained. In the issue, 'Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper: Qualitative Methods' by University of Southern California, it says that, Qualitative research has three elements to its research; they are naturalistic, purposeful and are evolving in nature. Any research design which includes qualitative kind of research is based on this design which includes there three elements. (2020)

The tentative semi structured questionnaire is:-

1. Now that we are acquainted with the research topic, would you like to talk to us about abortion in general? What are your ideas revolving it? And have you undergone one? Would you be comfortable to talk about it?
  
2. What factors did you consider before undergoing an abortion? If you haven't been through one, do you know of any close friend or family member who has been through an abortion and has talked to you about it? What factors did they mention before they finally took the decision?

1. Which member of the family could you open up to the most? Would you like to share any instance or how they reacted when they came to know? In case you haven't been through an abortion have you had any friend or family member telling you who they opened up to in their family and what were their experience?

2. We have a fair knowledge about how a lot of women are coming up and how there are still a majority of woman who are unable to take the step further. This is a very recent phenomenon. What do you think about this new Indian culture that is developing and do you think women are acquiring any benefits or are they suffering more?

The majority part of the questionnaire is attached to the annexure in Part B.

### **3.7 Locale**

The site that was chosen for conducting the study was Hyderabad, Telengana. More specifically, the areas which were chosen in Hyderabad were Hitech City, Financial District, Kondapur and Turkyamjal. Hyderabad was chosen because it is the capital city of Telengana, and it is the best location to study an Upper Middle Class population, also it is a metropolitan, hence it was very accessible in terms of reaching out to participants. It was also chosen because people of all religion can be found in this part of India, given that Hyderabad is the IT hub of India.

The researcher chose this as the research site because the researcher presumed that this research would act as a discourse to future discussion on perceptions of abortion across four major religions in India.

The factor why this area was chosen as the research site because the researcher is familiar to the location and the language for the mode of communication was Hindi which made the researcher to communicate better and escape the biases of translations.

A lot of literature already covered a lot of states in the Southern part of India but never spoke about Hyderabad from the perspective of understanding how the perspectives are similar or different across cultures.

### 3.8 Data Analysis

The data collected by the researcher is qualitative data. The primary source of data here is taking the help of surveys, focused group discussion, to gain a better understanding to create a more succinct knowledge base from the collected data. As mentioned earlier, the author will be using purposive snowball sampling to collect data as to understand the psychological perspective of both women and men, but majority of the sample size will be women.

The researcher had used thematic analysis to delve into people's views, opinions, knowledge, experiences or values from the set of qualitative data which in this case would be the [interview transcripts](#). This method of analysis allowed the researcher a lot of flexibility in interpreting the data, and to approach large data sets more easily by sorting them into broad themes. The researcher had used the six-step process of thematic analysis: [Familiarization](#), [Coding](#), [Generating themes](#), [Reviewing themes](#), [Defining and naming themes](#), [Writing up](#). [Familiarization](#) has involved [transcribing the audio](#), reading through the text and taking initial notes, and generally looking through the data collected to get familiar with it. In the next step was coding, the researcher coded the data by highlighting sections of the text – usually phrases or sentences – and came up with shorthand labels or “codes” to describe their content. Coding was followed by identifying patterns among them and starting to come up with themes. In the fourth step, the researcher made sure that his/her themes are useful and accurate representations of the data. This was done by returning to the data set and comparing the themes against it. Once the final list of themes was ready, the researcher named and defined each of them. Finally, the researcher wrote the analysis of the data.

### 3.9 Validity

The data in this study shows that the perceptions of people studied and their cultural practices is representatively true. The respondents belong to the same community that was intended to be studied. The data is authentic in nature because the researcher conducted purposive, snowball sampling through a friend who belonged to their mutual circles, and that friend belongs to one such community that has been studied in this research paper. Duration of the interview was substantiated by conducting sincere conversations, and also leads to the initiation of trust.

### 3.10 Ethical Considerations

The researcher had used 'World Health Organisation's Standards and Operational Guidance for Ethics Review of Health- Related Research with Human Participants', to maintain transparency, quality and accountability. The sample was selected on the basis of tenet of selection process as mentioned in the WHO guidelines. Confidentiality was maintained. Their information was only being put to use for the research paper, with their names changed. Safe reporting was assured. Participants was followed up and they were also be given the idea of how their information has turned out and helped the research work. The participants also signed a consent form in order to feel at home which was provided by the researcher with the facilitation of the guide.

### 3.11 Fieldwork Experience

The researcher wanted to interview people on the basis of two sample sizes, one which was only concerned with women, who have been through or not been through abortion. The other section of people, are therepresentatives of religion of their community. It was a little difficult for the researcher to ask questions to the representatives of the religion because they were very conservative in nature. Talking to the women from all communities was also a little difficult because this was their first time participating as a research participant. Also, some of them lived with families which were extremely traditional.

There was a lot of existing research which never mentioned the thought process of upper middle women who share their different perspectives belonging to different faiths.

The first step is always very difficult and it was strenuous to begin with the first respondent because the researcher and the respondent, both of them were nervous. Since, the second meeting the researcher started to feel anxious and could communicate better. The participants also started to feel very free after a number of meetings. The women were also very warm and welcoming.

The researcher had to also take note of a lot of details which the researcher found difficult to grasp. While conducting the interview the researcher was also judged by the participants who were very disturbed on hearing the topic of discussion being abortion and religion. They also started talking more freely when they felt comfortable with the conversation. The researcher had to recurrently probe into the discussion to understand the consistent themes.

The researcher also spoke to representatives of distinct religion who were constantly troubled by the thought of a female researcher working on such topic which deals with religion and abortion.

### **3.12 Limitations**

The limitations associated to this research will be enlisted below: - 1) one of the major limitations in this research was that the existing body of literature published by government agencies never suggested as to how the religion reinforced individual belief system. These literatures are mostly propaganda literature that are created by some party against other parties to showcase that women are under the shackles of patriarchy in the opposition party, as portrayed by the party which develops such literature. 2) Another limitation of this research paper was the Propagation of the 'Hindu' nation state has incited scholars to produce more literature which supports the Hindu ideology. 3) The last challenge to this research project posed that the researcher would always have to accompany a translator to record documents in Telugu in order to understand and ask relevant questions. Thus on the spot translator was necessary It was difficult to match dates with the participants and the translators.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher is going to talk about the findings that have been realized during the entire procedure. The last chapter spoke about the two pertinent research questions and how the research has been conducted step by step. Here, the researcher is going to discuss how culture influences traditions, norms and decision making in abortion. For the purpose of this research, the researcher has identified two significant topics, which when linked will help to understand each participant's perspectives.

### 4.2. Sample Size 1

Sample size includes women aged 21- 38 from different parts of Hyderabad and belonging to 4 distinct religions

Participant Number	Age	Religion	Locale
1	22	Islam	Hyderabad
2	35	Islam	Hyderabad
3	27	Islam	Hyderabad
4	21	Hinduism	Hyderabad
5	28	Hinduism	Hyderabad
6	34	Hinduism	Hyderabad
7	33	Sikhism	Hyderabad
8	25	Sikhism	Hyderabad
9	22	Sikhism	Hyderabad
10	38	Christianity	Hyderabad
11	32	Christianity	Hyderabad
12	31	Christianity	Hyderabad

### 4.3. Sample Size 2

Sample size 2 consists of Men of God from the 4 distinct religions, namely Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Christianity.

Participant	Religion	Age	Locale
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1	Islam	48	Hyderabad
2	Hinduism	57	Hyderabad
3	Christianity	42	Hyderabad
4	Sikhism	65	Hyderabad

**The data interpretation below has been conducted on sample size 1**

#### **4.4 Issue Revolving around Abortion**

There are a lot of socio economic factors that a first world woman would consider before undergoing an abortion, but a third world woman has to consider her family before she can make any decisions. The need to address this issue to the family is more so because third world women even if they find any freedom, their only source is the household. Women in India have such biases before undergoing an abortion; it is no more their individual decision. In the article 'Factors Influencing Abortion Decision-Making Processes among Young Women' by Mónica Frederico, it has been said that third world women not only face the ties of economical and social barriers but are also limited because of multiple reasons which lead them to become more vulnerable. This paper talks about the situation in Mozambique, where women cannot exercise autonomy due to the lack of resources and family pressures. (Frederico, 2018)

Participant 5 said,

*“A woman’s decision of aborting the child is always taken by the head female members of the family and it is always decided on the basis of the woman being married or unmarried. If she is unmarried, she has called for trouble for herself and the family.”*

Participant no. 12 said,

*“If the fetus is above 3 months, it is against the will of our God, that we would permit the abortion. No God fearing human will ever commit such a sin.”*

Participant no. 10 said,

*“No fetus should be killed, because it is a life form. Every life form should have the privilege to live their life once. There is only one lord that can decide who should live and who should not.”*

In the article, ' Economy in Twentieth Century Northwestern Ghana 'Now If You Have Only Sons You Are Dead': Migration, Gender, and Family' by Gariba B Korah, it has been said that unmarried women do not have any agency and they are prostitutes because they are not attached to any male. This means that if women travel alone or have to courage to do things outside their gender roles they are termed as prostitutes. (Korah, 2011) For instance here the participant no. 5 says that the foetus can be aborted or not depends on the marital status of a woman, hence it establishes that a married woman's gender role is to conceive, bear, and rear the child and for the unmarried woman it is promiscuous to be pregnant and the decision can be taken by the lead female member of the family.

The understanding here is that most women said this to the questions answered. For them, it is the duration of the foetus which decides if the foetus should make it. They also reaffirmed their belief that one should undertake abortion, if absolutely 'necessary'; to them necessary is justified as reasons such as a foetus that has not matured, and they believe the first trimester is the marker for any woman to stop exercising her abortion rights. In the article, 'Induced abortion and risk of subsequent miscarriage' by Yuelian Sun, it has been said that induced abortions after the first trimester is usually dangerous for the mother and it has pernicious after effects. This scientific article talks about the perils of taking the decision of abortion forward after the first trimester. This argument has a both a religious and a scientific perspective to it, as the participant says that due to their religious sentiments that they believe that any God fearing human would never take resort to abortion at a later stage.(Sun, 2003)

In conclusion, the notion is that a woman needs to exercise her autonomy to decide if she wants to undergo an abortion or not, but that is not the case with a lot of women in the global discourse. Here the woman's autonomy for her own body is never given to the them, it is decided by family members who are already prejudiced by culture, caste and class positioning. The decision making or the factors affecting a woman's abortion is always decided by the members of the family who do not believe that women belonging to their households can exercise agency. As suggested in the article, 'What is the Sense of Agency and Why does it Matter?' by James W. Moore, it gives us a complete idea of what is agency and what inhibits us from exercising it, the internal and the external factors. (Moore, 2016) This article gives us an insight as to how women and many individuals cannot exercise agency of their own bodies.

#### 4.5 Contemporary Ideas Revolving Around Abortion

Participant no. 2 said, she is a Hindu and she is 35 years old,

*“Abortion is not wrong because it is our body that we are claiming rights for. What will a girl do if she is pregnant and not married, should she repent her entire life after this mistake or she should look forward to making it better?”*

Participant no. 6 said,

*“Abortion should be taken as a measure when absolutely necessary. Women who have the audacity to have kids without marrying they will be doomed and punished and this is God’s way of punishing such women by letting everyone in the society know.”*

Participant no. 7 said,

*“If the parents come to know they will beat up their daughter, and say nothing to the man who impregnated her. This is not correct both are equally responsible and as parents they should talk to their children and find a solution in the very first month of conceiving.”*

Here we find two conflicting views, such that two of them say that women are punished because of their infidelity and promiscuous nature, or because they have exhibited unsophisticated behaviour. Here, some women also said that they feel that parent stand by the pregnant woman’s side, even though they believe that they have done wrong. Another woman was of the opinion that a woman is claiming rights for her own body. This testimony can be linked to the argument around morality. The study, ‘The Moral and Philosophical Importance of Abortion’ by Reynolds Wright says that it is the philosophical and probity right to exercise abortion to necessitate development. There are political institutions which profess the idea of no abortion under the garb of politics that is progressive, but to understand that a woman should have the right to abortion without any inhibitions on morality and nobody should lead the woman to any decision.(Wright, 2013) In connection to this argument we can analyse every participant’s understanding about abortion and how does it revolve around morality. Some participants have suggested that they feel the woman is wrong but she should be pardoned and given another chance. Other participants are of the opinion that the woman does not have a true character and hence she fell prey to this and now to seek forgiveness she should rear the child and pay for her sins. Some women hold a neutral perspective and they do not believe in morality, rather they believe that they should have rights to their own body. Thus morality can also be understood within the

discourse of power and gender, how gender is always influenced by the one who has power and leads to inequality.

#### **4.6 Religious Interpretations around Abortion**

Participant no. 2 said,

*“Allah will never spare someone who will undergo an abortion because of petty reasons. If only the foetus poses as a threat to the mother’s life and if the husband and male members consent to it, because their opinion is of prime importance.”*

Participant no. 12 said,

*“It has been always heard that abortion is a sin. Virgin Mary gave birth to Jesus, if a chaste woman can give birth to Baby Jesus then other women ought to bring happiness to the family by doing the same.”*

Participant no. 5 said,

*“A child is God’s gift. Do you know how many women pray to Bhagwan ji everyday but never get through their first child? Child rearing and bearing is all that completes your life, but also sometimes we are unable to give each other time, my husband and I. Bhagwan ji would never like any woman giving up on their children when it was developing because she is a mother above all identities, after she conceives.”*

Participant no. 7 said

*“The gurus and his devotees have never cherished the idea of an abortion. No religion should be so intolerant that they kill a newly formed cell. Once the child is born it ought to bring happiness in and around the family. They are small angels who watch over us and we are their gaurdains, so the idea is to protect them and never harm them.”*

The views here are not in conflict, but help define each other. All the views are such that they coincide with each other, and they say the same thing over and over again. All individuals who have participated believe that a child is a gift given by God to a blessed couple. Everybody looks at pregnancy within marriage as a positive element, but a pregnancy that needs to be annulled, whether inside or outside marriage is seen as a curse. Another participant draws the reference of Virgin Mary as an outside figure with reference to other women who are not chaste. So a participant said that if a chaste woman like Virgin Mary could get happiness to the family, then why women who are unchaste can’t do that. Also, another participant who is a Hindu said that Bhagwanji would never like a person who would abort such a blessing. This testimony takes a

morality perspective where the participant says that adults are guardians to little children; they should protect them and not kill them. It also extends to the argument of power relations where the adults are supposed to hold higher positions, as guardians, and children should be under their special care.

#### **4.7 Cultural Implications of Abortion**

Participant no. 1 said,

*“During our times, our generation had respect for their elders, and we would never indulge into something that was cause us to go through something so worse. These days parents are more free and they talk to children about stuff that does not need to be told to children. Limited knowledge is enough, which children get from schools. Parents are more liberal now and that allows children to make such heinous mistakes.”*

Participant no. 7 said,

*“Our culture is very different from the western culture. We are rooted in our traditions. Never did we hear our classmate getting pregnant while we were in college. Some girls would be married during their BA Programmes and would talk about their sex life which was frowned upon as indecency and unmarried women would stay away from such endeavours.”*

The cultural implications have been testified such as that there is a strong hint of disgust towards western culture. Western decadence has been a major concern for all these participants and they think that it is the western culture that has led women of this generation to take such steps. There is a belief that their culture is better than western culture. The Indian tradition respective of all religions has been given much more precedence than the culture in the global sphere. Hypernationalism refers to the act of believing that one’s culture comes first and other cultures are demeaned in one’s ideologies. In the article, ‘The Pathology of Hypernationalism’ by Joseph Werlin, it has been said that today’s nationalism is such that it has been embedded in the minds of the people that their culture, class structure, or values are better than these elements in other culture. The idea is to demean one, and glorify another culture. (Werlin, 1939)

#### **4.8 Decision Making and Advisory Roles**

Participant no. 2 said,

*“Ayesha should have waited for a while before she could unite with her husband. She could have easily gotten married to him, because he was a well educated Muslim man. Waiting a*

*year, to get married would not have caused such problem. She will not be perceived as a good woman, though she belongs from a respectable family.”*

Participant no. 11 said, she is a Christian and she is 32

*“If I was Mary, I would never break the trust of my parents. My parents would like him and we would get married. Abortion because of your negligence, carelessness is unacceptable. Nobody has asked her to not engage in intimate situations, but she could have done it after they get married and nobody would have anything to say.”*

Participant no. 9 said, she is a Sikh woman, aged 22

*“Manpreet is a master’s student and such affairs at this age are normal. She can go talk to her mother and her best friend about it. At first they will be very disappointed, but later they would want to take her out of this situation as soon as possible.”*

Question number 7, 8 and 9 are case studies that were given to these women who answered what they would do if they were in the position of the aggrieved. The responses are self explanatory. The women said that they would never undertake an abortion due to their recklessness. If she was in her position she would be more careful. Other participants said that they feel that a talk with the parents would have helped as the parents would have arranged for a wedding and there would have been no issue if she was married and pregnant. The idea that most participants hold is that a woman needs to be married in order to be pregnant. This idea can be linked to Kanchan Gandhi’s article, ‘Living Single: Being a Single Woman in India’, where she says that how the single individual is an abnormality in the society because the normal is the hetero- normative definition of a man- woman constituted family.(Gandhi, 2016) Thus, any model beyond that has been looked at as deviant and unforgiveable in the society. All the participants have suggested marriage as a resort to withhold the decision of abortion.

#### **The data Interpretation below is with regards to sample size 2**

It is very important to know all the perspectives because they are representative of their thought process and how they link it to their religious teachings and stance. Due to limitations the researcher could not cover every participant’s view point, but that attempt will be made in this section.

#### **4.9 Factors Governing Abortion**

Participant 1 said,

*“According to Islamic Hadith, a cell comes to life form after 120 days of the woman no reason why she would like to abort the foetus after 120 days or initiate an intentional abortion. She is allowed to undergo an abortion only if the mother’s life is in threat.”*

Participant 2 said,

*“It has been said that killing of a foetus is worse than committing murder of a priest or it is seen in more derogatory sense that that of killing your own parents. Thus abortion is a sin, and young girls are taught that since childhood, then why should they ever do something that would lead to unwanted pregnancy.”*

Participant 3 said,

*“Before looking at how I think about abortion or how God wants it is it not important to reflect on yourself and what do you think is abortion moral? You are an adult, you should know that killing of a foetus can never reflect well on your character. A person of true character is one, who has always faithfully adhered to God’s words. ”*

Participant 4 said,

*“In Sikhi this is a crime. You are leading to the death of an unborn baby. Waheguru never regarded the problems the child could have it was his belief that if parents have conceived a child, it is their blessing and their love should never be unconditional rather obligatory without any grievances.”*

The responses recorded above consistently and explicitly portray abortion as a ‘crime’, as an act that is against the will of God/Allah/Bhagwan/Wahi Guru. The act of abortion becomes an act of killing or murdering an individual life when seen from religious lens. The views expressed by the participants strongly articulate the internalization of the stigma around abortion. These respondents were extremely religious in nature, which is expressed with unequivocal reference to their religious beliefs. And based on those very religious dogmas they have named abortion as wrong. According to them when women undergo abortion they violate the norms as prescribed in their religious doctrines, thereby subjecting women who undergo this process to community

stigma. Thus it is seen that both the ideas of community stigma and character blemishes (Goffman, [1963](#)) are also directly linked to religion, the women who then undergo through the process of abortion are placed in an alien category, where they fear they might not be seen as ‘good’ enough to be able to maintain their preceding religious association. When such views are propagated by men of God, women who are pious in nature feel, yet want to terminate their pregnancy feel stigmatized at the very thought that how individuals outside their immediate family would perceive them once they come to know about this. Thus fear of being judged is extended to the larger society. In this context, one can conclude that the permeation of the prevailing stigma around abortion instilled in the minds of women the fear of being condemned by kin and society members, founded in their religiously influenced antagonism to abortion, eventually leading women to not opt for abortion even in dire times, leading to health impairment or death.

Here the researcher is using the concept of essentialism, given by William C. Bagley. All the representatives of God have essentialised the very nature of a woman and the nature of her work is of the nature of sexual labour. As suggested in the article, 'The (Biological or Cultural) Essence of Essentialism: Implications for Policy Support among Dominant and Subordinated Groups' by Nur Yalcinkaya says that how when information is made essential it leads to implementation of that information in platforms for social justice and norms. This suggests that the essential information that women are reproductive labourers reinforces the idea that they are supposed to produce children and never question this information by taking the decision of an abortion.

#### **4.10 Present-Day Notions about Abortion**

Participant 1 said,

*“Children these days have no izzat for the community. They think they are the best and they would rebel against their parent and always do the wrong thing. This is how these teenagers need to compensate for the time they have wasted and not heard their parents’ advices. A bortion should never be made an option for them rather they need to learn the kind of commitment they need to give when they are parents.”*

Participant 2 said,



*“Abortion has always been frowned upon. It is never like children have no idea about what happens before a foetus is formed. They should have been careful so as to avoid that, but they chose this path. How are they different from murderers?”*

Participant 3 said,

*“Do you know the worth of a child to parents who have been waiting for this moment all their lives and today’s generation discards them for which a lot of barren couples are trying for everyday. Where is the responsibility, where is the sensitivity among ‘Today’s kids’?”*

Participant 4 said,

*“Children are representative of God and a lot of people even after coming so close to God, have the audacity to perish them completely, without the knowledge of anyone. The two people are just about enough to decide someone’s death that is their own. I have a major problem with this outlook; this easy way of lifestyle.”*

The responses recorded in this section reiterate the concept of Abortion stigma. Abortion Stigma is defined “as a shared perception that abortion is morally wrong and/or socially unacceptable. It is experienced through negative attitudes and behaviours related to anything that has to do with abortion. An inferior status is experienced by women who seek abortions or who have abortions, the abortion providers, and others involved in abortion care”. Abortion stigma has catastrophic outcomes worldwide and leads to women seeking to opt for the process of abortions, being persecuted, dishonored and marginalized. Sometimes women seeking abortion are also punished, thus thwarting them from looking for protected health care facilities. It is seen that not only women who seek abortion, but individuals who perform abortion are abused, dehumanized and beleaguered by laws and by anti-abortion flag bearers. As a result abortion stigma results in societal, remedial, and legal marginalization of abortion care services worldwide and is an obstacle to the right to use healthcare facilities regarding abortion.

Also abortion is seen a transgression of ( Kumar et al, 2009) two very deep-seated principles of womanhood namely ‘nurturing motherhood and sexual purity’ The concept of nurturing motherhood propagates the notion that motherhood should be considered as a women’s most important role in life. This idea has long historical roots and is connected to all arenas of sexual

reproductive health ([Forna, 1998](#); [Hays, 1996](#); [Lowe, 2016](#); [Luker, 1984](#)). This is further exhibited by the sacrificial nature of a mother which is again rooted in the belief that women view their children's wellbeing before theirs, irrespective of whether those children are already born, or in the womb of the woman, or is still being planned. This sacrificial attitude is believed as the indicator of the 'proper' woman ([Hays, 1996](#); [Lowe, 2016](#)). This attitude further serves as a weapon to regulate women's bodies and their conduct, whether they have children or not ([Lowe, 2016](#)). The emblematic purpose of a motherly sacrifice is that it reinforces conventional notions of gendered roles in personal, social or countrywide levels ([Lowe, 2016](#); [Page, 2016](#)). The woman who denies to make pertinent sacrifices is portrayed as jeopardizing not only the future of her present and her future children but also the replication of communities via the process of reproduction and is portrayed as a bad mother ([Lowe, 2016](#)). Furthermore, women who are in marginalized positions, by the virtue of their class, caste, ethnicity, or for being of the 'inappropriate age' are termed as bad mothers in spite of their mothering conduct. This notion of motherly sacrifice is deeply ingrained in the abortion discourses and promulgates the view that pregnancy should not be terminated forcefully no matter the consequences ([Ginsburg, 1989](#); [Lowe, 2016](#)).

Now coming to the second principle of womanhood which is sexual purity, this notion propagates that women should only engage in coitus only when their aim is to procreate, thereby emphasizing the thought that coition for gratification is prohibited for women but natural for men. This results in the double stigmatization of abortion because when women have sex for pleasure or without any intention of procreation, then it means that she is trying to wield control over her own body and sexuality, both of which intimidate the prevailing gender norms (Kumar et al., 2009).

#### **4.11 Autonomy and Agency as Suggested by Representatives of Distinct Religions**

Participant 1 said,

*“The agency should be only in the hands of the wife, husband and the immediate family members of the groom's family. They help the woman to discuss freely with them if she is having any health issue, but whatever it is, the sooner, the better it is to take a decision on it and the husband and the wife's say is the last in this regard.”*

Participant 2 said,

*“Autonomy is a word that has been always used to understand women critically and the rights they have. Women may not have land rights, because the land is always a site for conflict and very technical. Women know best about their bodies and they should be given the full right to decide, if she is not married but that should be any time before 3 months.”*

Participant 3 said,

*“Husband and wife make a family. They share secrets, keep it secret from others. If a woman wants to abort her child, firstly the husband needs to figure out why the woman wants to have an abortion. If the husband deems it natural, he will let his wife know and they would take a common decision, together.”*

Participant 4 said,

*“We are very broad minded. I don't think one can blame the person completely. It just shows the weakness of the person who is stuck into such pleasures, which could have been very close to God. A female can make the best decision when she is around elderly female.”*

In this section all the responses recorded have one common trend. According to the men of God, even if abortion is permissible, then also before undergoing through the process, the women must be dependent of others. She must discuss with her husband, parents, and in-laws and take the step only when everyone has consented to it. This mindset has two very important connotations. Firstly the woman who is pregnant with the child is denied the right not only over her body but also her sexuality. Secondly it also completely negates the existence of her agency to take decisions regarding her body and sexuality. Sometimes the decision to abort the fetus is also taken against her will.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

As this paper suggests, there are multidimensional perspectives on abortion. The main focus of the paper is that abortion in Hyderabad, among upper middle class women is never based on choice alone because they are economically sound. Their ideals are shaped by the intersections of caste, class, culture and other significant markers.

This paper also tries to draw the reader's attention to the reasons that shape a woman's struggle before undergoing an abortion.

Gender inequality has paved the way for such disparity that women of third world countries face in comparison to women of first world countries. It is no more restricted to a woman's individual choice and neither is her choice determined only by the economic conditions in her life.

Another important observation has been made in this research that there is no regard for unmarried women in abortion. All the narratives, representing all religions talk about one thing in common is the dependency of married women on their partners to decide whether they are undergoing an abortion or not.

*'Izzat'* is not only associated with the women of Islam community, but also with the women of other three communities in the research analysis. There is no doubt that the terms are different but across all communities abortion has always been seen in a demeaning sense, to indicate a woman who is promiscuous, someone who bears an unnatural child, or someone who is unable to rear child. All the connotations around abortion are negative in nature. They refer to a woman's weakness in the body or character.

When one thinks of abortion in India, the thoughts primarily revolve around abortion care facilities or to be more precise on the medical/ procedural aspects of the process, which results in the negation of women's emotional and physical wellbeing. This happens when women who undergo abortion are perceived as lacking the essential qualities of mothering or being sexually impure. Consequently, these thoughts contribute to abortion being an alienating experience for the woman. In this context, what is required is an ambience where women can talk about their abortion issues in a non-hesitant way, provided the ambience is secure and understanding.

Thus based on the research undertaken, I would recommend that the future research on abortion should be based on the observational mode of study. When this mode of study would be combined with qualitative research, I believe this would allow researchers to explore new avenues regarding the issue of abortion, while delving deep into it and for a longer period of time.

## **5.1 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS**

The existing body of literature has been much separated in the sense it has been very difficult to draw linkages and also to bridge the gap as there is substantial information, but it has not been in places. The research will help readers to build a more compact understanding of their perspective around abortion. This study is first of its kind, because there has been a lot of research around women's perspective but there has not been any comparative analysis between the ideas women hold, and the ideas that representatives of the religion hold about abortion and how do they justify their interpretations, and how are women basing their decisions on it.

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## ANNEXURE

### Part A: The Informed Consent Letter

## Informed Consent Form



This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

- Information Sheet to share information regarding the research
- Certificate of Consent

### Part 1: Information Sheet

I am Ananya Sarkar, Master's Student of Tata Institute of Social Sciences. I am conducting a Research on '*Perceptions about Abortion Rights in Upper Middle Class Women of Hyderabad: Beyond Myths of Religion*'. I will be asking you questions regarding your awareness on the ideas that shape your perception about abortion and I would also like to know about the experiences you have been into with your loved ones. You do not have to decide today whether you want to participate in the research. You can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with before you decide. The consent form might contain words that you may not understand. Please ask me to stop and explain as we go through with the form. If you have any more questions, you can ask them whenever you want.

#### Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the research is to understand the perception women from the age of 18- 60 have about abortion and how men think about the same in Hyderabad. Are the perceptions and

attitudes same or different across religion, gender or age groups? Understanding the ideologies of my participants will help me draft a paper which will bring out a revelation of the ideologies which affect one of the major health practises in women's reproductive health in India.

### Type of Research Intervention

This research will involve your participation in a one-hour interview

### Participant Selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because we feel that your experience as an individual can contribute much to our understanding and knowledge of health practices in women regarding abortions.

### Voluntary Participation

The choice that you make will have no bearing on your job or on any work-related evaluations or reports. You may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

### Confidentiality

Your personal information will not be shared with anyone. The information that you share during the interview about the study will be the only data that will be used in the research project.

### Right to Withdraw

You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to. You have the right to withdraw at any point. I can show you my notes at the end of the interview and if you wish for some part to be omitted or modified you are welcome to say so. You are also welcome to provide me with clarifications if you do not agree with my notes.

Contact:

If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact any of the following:

Name: Ananya Sarkar

Contact Number: 8586019515

E-mail: ria.ananya.sarkar@gmail.com

### **Part B: The Tentative Questionnaire**

1. Now that we are acquainted with the research topic, would you like to talk to us about abortion in general? What are your ideas revolving it? And have you undergone one? Would you be comfortable to talk about it? Factors of abortion
2. What factors did you consider before undergoing an abortion? If you haven't been through one, do you know of any close friend or family member who has been through an abortion and has talked to you about it? What factors did they mention before they finally took the decision?
3. Which member of the family could you open up to the most? Would you like to share any instance or how they reacted when they came to know? In case you haven't been through an abortion have you had any friend or family member telling you who they opened up to in their family and what was their experience?
4. We have a fair knowledge about how a lot of women are coming up and how there are still a majority of woman who are unable to take the step further. This is a very recent phenomenon. What do you think about this new Indian culture that is developing and do you think women are acquiring any benefits or are they suffering more?
5. Talking about our culture, what do you think the condition is in your times, or was during your times? To what degrees do you agree or disagree with it?
6. Case Study for Islam: Ayesha is a 22 year old woman. She falls in love with a 27 year old man from her Urdu poetry class. They start secretly meeting in hotels and at his house when his parents are not home. She doesn't want her father to know. They want to get married as soon as she finishes master's that is due in a year and half. After 6 months she misses her periods and they find out that she is pregnant. They used contraceptives and always had safe sex but this time it slipped off. Now she is in a quandary who to talk to. She fears if she will be accepted according to the culture. What would you do in a similar situation?
7. Case Study for Hinduism: Anisha is a 22 year old woman. She falls in love with a 27 year old man from her Bharatnatyam class. They start secretly meeting in hotels and at his house when his parents are not home. She doesn't want her father to know. They want to get married as soon

as she finishes master's that is due in a year and half. After 6 months she misses her periods and they find out that she is pregnant. They used contraceptives and always had safe sex but this time it slipped off. Now she is in a quandary who to talk to. She fears if she will be accepted according to the culture. What would you do in a similar situation?

8. Case Study for Christianity: Mary is a 22 year old woman. She falls in love with a 27 year old man from her Urdu poetry class. They start secretly meeting in hotels and at his house when his parents are not home. She doesn't want her father to know. They want to get married as soon as she finishes master's that is due in a year and half. After 6 months she misses her periods and they find out that she is pregnant. They used contraceptives and always had safe sex but this time it slipped off. Now she is in a quandary who to talk to. She fears if she will be accepted according to the culture. What would you do in a similar situation?

9. Case Study for Sikhism: Manpreet is a 22 year old woman. She falls in love with a 27 year old man from her Urdu poetry class. They start secretly meeting in hotels and at his house when his parents are not home. She doesn't want her father to know. They want to get married as soon as she finishes master's that is due in a year and half. After 6 months she misses her periods and they find out that she is pregnant. They used contraceptives and always had safe sex but this time it slipped off. Now she is in a quandary who to talk to. She fears if she will be accepted according to the culture. What would you do in a similar situation?

## H2018WS003

## ORIGINALITY REPORT

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SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

## PRIMARY SOURCES

<b>1</b>	<b>pdfs.semanticscholar.org</b> Internet Source	<b>%2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>www.guttmacher.org</b> Internet Source	<b>&lt;%1</b>
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<b>4</b>	<b>Submitted to Broome Community College</b> Student Paper	<b>&lt;%1</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Submitted to Johns Hopkins University - Bologna Center</b> Student Paper	<b>&lt;%1</b>
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54 Maya Unnithan-Kumar. "Female selective abortion - beyond 'culture': family making and gender inequality in a globalising India", Culture Health & Sexuality, 2009  
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