

Understanding Abortion and Contraception

Lesson 2 - Assignment

Using a rights-based argument, write a response paper about commonly heard myths and misconceptions around abortion. You may choose any myth from the lesson or one that you may have heard otherwise. [300-500 words]

One of the myths related to abortion that I have heard is that **"only bad or 'promiscuous' women choose abortion."**

This misconception is highly sexist and transphobic; it also wholly delegitimises the personal autonomy of a person. Abortions are extremely common and a fundamental human right! According to the study - "Unintended Pregnancy and Abortion in India," 26 to 41% of all pregnancies end in abortions. The moral barrier placed by the society on "who seeks abortions" only increases abortion stigma, resulting in a reduction of access to safe abortion, increasing the unsafe ones.

Another highly problematic aspect of the myth is that it taps into benevolent sexism and pits women against women. By dictating "who seeks an abortion," it creates the notion of "good woman" vs. "bad women," which has been used to control women and their behaviour for years. It internalises the idea of an "ideal" woman in our heads, asserting that anti-choice people are superior and morally more sound to pro-choice people. Perpetuating this myth is not only unhealthy but can also jeopardise the safety of those who seek access to safe abortion. From being exposed to anti-abortion violence to being compelled to seek unsafe abortion because of the stigma attached to it, placing moral barriers can pose numerous risks to the one in need of an abortion. It also creates mental health issues by placing the burden of guilt on the person seeking it, while in reality, safe abortion is and should be an accessible option as a matter of right for them.

Abortion is much more common than one would think, and people seek abortions for many different reasons – as is their right! It's high time we get rid of the moral judgment attached to people seeking abortions. It does nothing but puts people at risk - both mentally and physically.

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