

The issue of abortion has faced the brunt of various controversial debates. The legal and political opposition to abortion's accessibility has not just curtailed pregnant person's access to their reproductive choices, but have also given way to an environment misinformation. What power has is used to justify and demean what it doesn't (Steinem, 1978), and here the power of opposition curtails access and propagates myths with the aim to stigmatise and highlight abortion as a dangerous, unholy procedure which further restricts pregnant person's access to their own (body) choices. It's important to navigate through the correct information regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights by responding to challenges by relentlessly advocating for abortion. There are many misconceptions propagated regarding abortion like - using sharp objects such as twigs/hangers result in safely aborting the pregnancy; only young women/or irresponsible women seek abortions.

The myth busting should begin with understanding that misconceptions arise due to our underlying socio-cultural belief systems driven by religious and social norms and practices. Many religions oppose abortion with the foundational basis of foetus being a child. Further, pregnancy and abortion rights are not supposed to be restricted to (cis-gendered) women as the common assumption doesn't involve trans-men and non-binary folks to the picture. Abortions are sought by people across the average fertility period that ranges from 12 to 50 years of age. The reasons for seeking abortion may be just as vast as the age range itself. People with a uterus, irrespective of region, educational qualifications, religion, economic status, marital status, number of children and contraceptive usage seek abortions.

Growing up in a middle class family in the 1990s; I witnessed my (late) paternal aunt not being allowed to abort her second child, even when the conception was against her wishes. She rebelled by not having prescribed pregnancy medicines. At a later stage in life when she was diagnosed with breast cancer, relatives began equating her 'wish' to abort a child to the ill manifested on her health. As we grew up and studied about sexual and reproductive health and rights we realised that this ostensible link was allegedly championed by Dr. Joel Brind in the early 1990s itself. The abortion-cancer link is explicitly baseless and is earnestly rejected by the medical community. According to credible sources like the Lancet, there is no evidence linking abortions to higher chances of breast cancer. The narrative of misconception extends to abortion being related to trauma and mental health issues, but the major concern is and should be regarding mental health and the stigma attached to abortion.

Since body choices and rights are of foremost important. Hence, we should become like Indu's friend and be foremost in unlearning and learning so as to relentlessly bust myths around abortions.