

# A Brief Study on Abortion in Adolescent Girl-Students in Kathmandu Valley

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## Abstract

*Nepali girl-students of the adolescentage group adopt abortion services in justifiable as well as in unethical ways in the verge of career-making in their study and jobs. There are many responsible factors for abortion deed in Nepali society like the negative impact of social media-internet services, globalization, migration, poverty, legal facility for abortion, and so on. This act has adverse effects on their physical health and performance those who adopt this. This research work objectifies the perception and the attitude of such adolescent girl-students in Kathmandu Valley. To ascertain the study accurate, this research work mentions particular data from Kathmandu Valley as primary sources and also some secondary sources from Nepal Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) and others. It further consults Karl Marx's views as well as the psychoanalytic perspective of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Sigmund Freud as the theoretical tools, and the ideas of David Pavon-Cuellar on Marxist-psychoanalytic theory in the relevant context of the data used in this article suitably in the Nepalese context. It follows sharply the quasi-experimental method of writing from the library's text to the internet and also the field work. Historically, the Nepali adolescent girl-students mostly are aware of abortion than the previous time; they have a legal idea about it, its facilities, and its process now. This research shows that there are majority of such Nepali adolescent girl-students in an urban area, even in Kathmandu city, who use abortion knowingly or unknowingly causing their health poor with poor performance and ruining their career so, it is helpful for the stakeholders to work on the issue raised here.*

**Keywords:** Abortion; adolescence; ethics; idea; legal; Marxism; & psychoanalysis.

## Introduction

Despite having the 'abortion' practice by hiding in Nepal since long, this work is legally in practice in some cases of our society from the year 2002. The number of abortion is soaring in the recent some years. Chiefly access of internet; modernization; globalization; migration; poverty; separation of family, and the legal facility of abortion by the government of Nepal are the causes of increasing the number of it. Though Nepali society has accepted the normal and legal abortion but it takes abnormal abortion as alternate

family planning; sex selective abortion, and unsafe as well as free intercourse. Due to the abortion act either legally or illegally, it has been reducing the fertility rate of the Nepali women as in the average with their worse health than other countries. Such girl-students with poor health and with deficiently, like depression and physical well-being and so on, perform less perfectly at work place and at study. The main objectives of this research article in general are i) to get the perception and the attitudes about abortion as well as practices among adolescent students in Kathmandu Valley; ii) to examine the legal condition of abortion and sensibly it accepted, and secondarily, iii) the researchers aim to seek ways to maintain the fertility of Nepali women as to that of other countries and, if again needed to have an abortion, to follow it with high precaution.

### **Methodology and Theory Applied**

This academic work follows the interview from five community schools randomly selected as primary data out of 300 community schools in Kathmandu Valley from which 250 secondary-level adolescent girl students are the participants. The community schools are the preference of all types of students economically rich and poor. There are altogether 300 community schools in Kathmandu Valley (CBS, 2014). This descriptive method and design of this article interacts with the secondary supportive sources also like NDHS and others which adheres different theories of Karl Marx, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Sigmund Freud on the idea of materialistic society and the psychology of adolescents. The particular biological characteristics of adolescent students in the girl have certain effects on their performance so this article also consults the psychology of those students through the texts on it. Additionally, this academic work studies the practice of communism in Nepal through the article in the online news portal/website which helps one to compare the real Marxism and the Nepali communists in actuality. Hence, this is a quasi-experimental type of research.

Before investigating the contextual theories and ideas over Marxism, psychoanalysis and other such, it is quite essential to discuss briefly the main theme of this research article. It is 'abortion'. Simply abortion in biological term is nothing but ending the life in the womb. According to one definition of 'abortion' (Wehmeier, 2005, p. 3), it is canceling the pregnancy either naturally or unnaturally so that the fetus dies. Actually, abortion itself is not the good act for the sake of women's health. It causes multiple diseases in the body along with depression like psychological side effects by which an adolescent girl-student cannot concentrate on her study and at work. According to one definition of 'depression' (Wehmeier, 2005, p. 410), it medically denotes a condition of insomnia, anxiety and sadness in the person. Such teenager has worries of pursuit of the career but psychologically she becomes feeble and feeble. In psychoanalysis, depression is the basic symptom of all the negative deposition on human consciousness. When an adolescent girl does an abortion at early age, it not only invites weakness on physical and mental health but also it opens the door of depression and infertility.

Now, the further theoretical concept on this article is below. Adolescent age falls between puberty and early adulthood. Where the puberty generally begins from the age of tenth or

twelfth to the thirteenth or fourteenth years in human life, there the adulthood begins from eighteenth years of the life inhuman being. So, characterizing the age from thirteenth or fourteenth to eighteenth year as an adolescence period, J. B. R. (2014) writes that the girls attain this period earlier in life than the boys. According to him, while the early adolescence is a type of biological adjustment sexually, the late adolescence is behavioral maturity. In such a condition one can learn that this period of life is a type of transition in sexual and behavioral maturities. It is very crucial part of the life. It is the reason that J. B. R. characterizes 'adolescence' age as not only the important period of life but also a transition, change, problem age, search for identity dreaded age, time of unrealism and threshold of adulthood.

Now, let us elucidate some ideas on communism. In an article on the real themes of the worldwide communists, basically Karl Marx and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Karna writes that how the Nepali majority of the communist leaders differ from their real theories in practice. He, however, politically argues there with logics at various places in the article that it is one of the causes why there is no change in the life standard of the Nepali youths including the adolescents who go abroad in search of work for livelihood. The author argues that where Hegel claims the idea/consciousness is 'invisible', there Marx cancels this postulation in his theory of 'Dialectical and Historical Materialism' because he says that the human body takes the birth from 'matter' which comes from the parental bodies and both parents as well as this matter are 'visible' (Karna, 2023). He further mentions the sayings of Marx that one should work just four hours a day and the rest of time of the individual should go for career and culture making in the nation.

Karna's attempt of joining the psychoanalysis and Marxism is apparent in David Pavon-Cuellar's *Marxism and Psychoanalysis: In or Against Psychology*. The author tries to combine the materialistic idea of Marx and the psychoanalytic idea of Sigmund Freud upon the adolescent age in the western societies which the age is a transition in many ways and leading crucially to working age group. Cuellar argues that there are contradictions in the individualists and the consumer based social foundation (Cuellar, 2017). Though, the author studies this contradiction in the western societies, it is equally applicable in the context of South-Asian countries like Nepal also, so this article thinks to discuss here. In Nepal also, when the adolescent girl-students have the golden time to make their career, earn for livelihood and to make a better culture for the human society, there they are uncontrollably involved in the act of unethical work of abortion in different circumstances.

### **Data and Interpretations**

This section vitally discusses under two sub-heads: demographic and socio-economic characteristics, and ideas and views about abortion in adolescent school girls.

### **Demographic and Socio-economic Characteristics**

A large number of girl-students of adolescent age group has the idea and knowledge of abortion and its services. There are some socio-economic factors and family size

(population) which affect the level of consciousness in the adolescent girl-students on matter of abortion. Those some factors are the language they speak, caste/ethnic group they belong to, religion, their parents' profession, the nature of the family they belong, their educational level, and their particular age group within the age group (Aryal, 2021). Regarding the legal knowledge on abortion, it is a matter of their level of educational background.

**Table 1: Background characteristics of the participants, 2021**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
15-19	209	83.6
20-24	41	16.4
<b>Educational Level</b>		
Eleven	113	45.2
Twelve	137	54.8
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>		
Agriculture	159	63.6
Business	46	18.4
Job/Service	35	14.0
Others	10	4.0
<b>Religion</b>		
Hindu	178	71.2
Buddhist	14	5.6
Christian	40	16.0
Muslim	11	4.4
Others	7	2.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2021*

Here, while 83.6 percent of the participants fall into 15-19 years; 16.4 percent of the participants are of the 20-24 years age group (Table 1). It also shows that 54.8 percent of the respondents are from class twelve and 45.2 percent from class eleven. It further shows that while 63.6 percent of the responding students' parental lively profession is agriculture in the study area; 18.4 percent business; 14.0 percent job/service, and 4.0 percent the other jobs in the domain. It is important to note that their parents' maximum occupation is agriculture. The very datum illustrates that religiously the participants fall 71.2 percent in Hindu religion, 16 percent Christian, 5.6 percent Buddhist, 4.4 percent Muslim and rest 2.8 percent Kirat.

### **Ideas and Views about Abortion in Adolescent School Girls**

The information of abortion is a collective term. The ideas about abortion and to make the views depend on the various heads like what one knows about abortion, processes, services, its legal matter, and so on. The study of Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), 2011 speaks that about 38 percent of the Nepali women have knowledge on

abortion. It constitutes about two-third of the Nepali women having School Level Certificate (SLC) passed and above SLC who are aware of legal information about abortion leaving the rest 20 percent who are cipher. It further shows that around 60 percent of the Nepali women know the safe place for abortion. But in the same data of NDHS in 2016, the facts are fluctuating. Let us serve a glance at NDHS, 2016 below.

It shows that forty-one percent of Nepali women between the ages of 15-49 years are aware of legal knowledge of abortion. Again, the women of urban area are more aware (43 percent) than the rural area (36 percent) about law of abortion. While categorizing wealth-wise, the women in the highest wealth quintile is 50 percent but of the lowest quintile is just 30 percent. Provincially, such percentage is 46 is Koshi province which remains the higher level of awareness about abortion and legality. It is notable that the women who are legally aware about abortion, they give satisfactory answer to the questions of aftermaths once abortion happens.

In the same way, in another study of Khanal et al. (2014) tries to learn the mentality and emotions of the Nepali women of the general reproductive age on the abortion practices and their ideas on it. For this field study, the researchers select some 181 Nepali women as total population on a semi-structured questionnaire at a Marie Stops Centre in Kathmandu Valley. Here these respondent women are all married with school and higher education levels. This includes the adolescent girl-students too in the Nepalese context. They respond as less informed about the knowledge of abortion in general. The line drawn by the researchers is the responding women of Nepal on the ideas and knowledge on legal abortion is concerned with their and their husbands' educational background and the family income (Khanal et al., 2014). To make this present article more convincing, the writers use another study. This study is to show how socio-cultural matters influence the abortion and services of it and whether it really matters or not. The traditional values (Aryal & Sigdel, 2022), norms and the social beliefs are the dominant factors which affect the abortion and its services in Nepal. They further show the data of about 61 percent women participants who consider that their practicing socio-cultural norms, mores, values all have impact on the attitude of abortion and services related to it but some 57 percent of the respondents put forward the idea of religious norms and beliefs as affecting abortion. They further mention that just 43 percent of those respondents have the confidence about abortion services. It draws a picture that still a majority of the Nepali women have no faith on the ongoing abortion services.

Let the recent data of field survey of Aryal (2021) speaks below to make a good sense at present on the ideas of abortion; its legal ideals, and also ideas on safe abortion and its processes in Nepal.

**Table 2: Views of participants on ideas, and awareness as well as abortion facilities, 2021**

Responses	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Ideas about abortion	225	90.0	25	10.0	250	100.0
Legal ideas about abortion	185	79.7	65	20.3	250	100.0
Awareness of safe abortion facilities	217	86.8	33	13.2	250	100.0
Awareness of the abortion process	194	77.6	56	22.4	250	100.0

*Source: Field Survey, 2021*

This study exhibits that 90 percent of the total respondents keep the ideas and they are aware of abortion. While about 80 percent possess the legal idea of abortion; round about 87 percent of the respondents have an awareness of safe abortion facilities, and approximately 78 percent have an awareness of the abortion process. The result reveals that it is apparent that there are still a large number of Nepali adolescent girl students even in the urban area/capital city who are unaware of abortion, its legal idea, facility, and process.

**Table 3: Views of aborting women under conditions in Nepal, 2021**

Responses	Number	Percent
Pregnancy of 12 weeks or less gestation for a woman	153	81.8
Pregnancy of 18 weeks in the case of rape or incest	143	76.5
Pregnancy causing mother's life risky	136	72.7
Pregnancy causing mother's physical and mental healthrisky	120	64.2
Deformed fetus	114	61.0
Woman having many children	94	50.3
Others	16	8.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>776</b>	<b>415.0</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2021*

*\*Multiple responses*

Likewise, this study reveals that about 82 percent of the participants agree that a pregnant woman can abort a pregnancy of 12 weeks or less gestation for a woman, follow by a pregnancy of 18 weeks in the case of rape or incest (76.5%), pregnancy causing mother's life risky (72.7%), pregnancy causing mother's physical and mental healthrisky (64.25%), deformed fetus (61%), woman having many children (50.3%), and others (8.6%). The Nepalese women have the consciousness to adopt abortion legally to save the life first in different conditions like in the case of rape or incest, life's risk, physical and mental healthat risk, deformed fetus, having many children and so on.

## Result and Conclusion

By reading carefully the above data and tables under the heads like age, education, professionally and religion in the modernistic approach in the above data the adolescent girl-students of Kathmandu valley in Nepal, one can see that such girl student class of the age group between 15-19 years has high percentage (83.6) than 20-24 years (16.4 percent) who knows and follows the abortion in their life. Educationally, such students adopt 45.2 percent in class 11 and 54.8 percent adopt in class 12. It implies that as the age and sexual maturity grow in them and whether they are conscious students, they are having unsafe sex and they resultantly have to follow the abortion. Here the richness/poverty is gone factor. At the same place, it is worthy to pay attention that such students' maximum parental occupation is agriculture which is 63.6 percent of the responding students' population. The rest are 18.4 percent business; 14.0 percent job/service, and 4.0 percent the other jobs in that very domain. Here, this study shows that the abortion the maximum percentage of abortion services adopting such adolescent girl-students belong to the group farming profession which is a clear sign that ignorance causes unsafe sexuality leading into abortion.

The very datum religiously shows another serious matter. It illustrates that the participants fall 71.2 percent in Hindu religion, 16 percent Christian, 5.6 percent Buddhist, 4.4 percent Muslim and rest 2.8 percent Kirat. It means at least two things, firstly, the size of religious people in Nepal is more the Hindu than the other religions, and secondly, while the densely populated Hindus adopt the abortion in this particular selected age group students, the Muslim girl students either adopt less abortion services and the Christians adopt significantly. Here, the education level and the religious faiths play the key role whether to end the fetus or not. For example, where the Hindu, Christian and Buddhists adopt abortion as per the condition in the life, the Muslims do not allow it in any condition generally around the world. In the same way, the people who change the religion in life time like in the country Nepal are educated or greedy of wealth or ignorant so the newly converted Christian girl-students of adolescent group has all these three factors influencing so their number to adopt abortion is second high after Hindu. But as the Buddhists' population is of what size in Nepal, so is the percentage of abortion adopting of their adolescent girl-students.

In another datum of views of such age group students on ideas, awareness and the abortion facilities, the result reveals the facts that there are still a large number of Nepali adolescent girl students even in the urban area/capital city who are unaware of abortion, its legal idea, facility, and process because they still lack the idea of abortion (10 percent), the legal ideas (about 11 percent), awareness of safe abortion (about 14 percent) and awareness of the abortion process (about 13 percent).

Likewise, the another datum shows that Nepalese women have the consciousness to adopt abortion legally to save the life first in different conditions like in the case of rape or incest, life's risk, physical and mental health at risk, deformed fetus, having many children and so on. While their percentages of abortion after having pregnancy of 12 weeks and 18

weeks including rape case and incest are respectively 81.8 and 76.5; the percentages of such abortion adopting under heads like pregnancy causing mother's life at risk, mother's physical health & mental condition risky, having deformed fetus, mother with already many children and other are respectively 72.2, 64.2, 61.0, 50.3 and 8.6.

In such condition, it is necessary to bear in us the Hegel's idea of consciousness invisibly on mind; also the Marx's ideas of materialistic-historical effect of such human resources who are unhealthy due to abortion at the stage of study and career making, and the findings of Cuellar that a country to have a good citizen with their working capacity robust having, it needs the citizen psychologically a strong in the psychoanalytic view of Freud. Abortion creates vicious effects on the mind and body causing bad health, depression and low fertility with high risk of even death. In the lack of these things in the adolescent girl-students, the healthily sound citizen to work a good human resource and also having a good fertility in the future, Nepal will suffer.

### **Recommendations**

From the above discussion and conclusion, the authors suggest the following points to the adolescent girl-students and the related parties of Nepal so that such students can remain always healthily fitful at workplace even they have to go through the process of abortion under any circumstances in the life.

It is apparent that there is a big number of adolescent girl-students who need massive awareness campaign.

- i) Education plays a key role so their access to education is a must and again the nation should provide the education with high morality to make them a valuable as well as ethical citizen;
- ii) These girls-students need to have the knowledge of contraceptives if needed, and if needed, they should get the counselling on depression after abortion;
- iii) Such awareness has the direct link to the income and professionalism of them;
- iv) It makes meaning with the population having their various cultural values and norms;
- v) It is advisable to set the course of studies at school and colleges with abortion and population issues, and
- vi) The citizen of Nepal should know the contemporary abortion services, their sites and legal knowledge for justifiable and safe abortion.

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