

## Psychological Effects of Abortion in Sindh

Om Parkash<sup>1\*</sup>, Aatma Ram<sup>1</sup>, Mahmood Khan<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

This study focused the psychological aspects of women in post abortion phase in province of Sindh. The rate of abortion in last few years has increased dramatically in Sindh. Majority of abortions are performed by non-skilled health workers. Two different survey studies conducted at two different districts of Sindh. Depression, guilt and stress are found major prevalent states in women in post abortion phase. Marital conflicts also significantly visible in couples in post abortion phase.

**Keywords:** *Psychological Effects, Abortion, Sindh*

When you find dead infants in the dump of dirt in any country like Pakistan it is not unusual because abortion in clinics is illegal that is why some people throw their infants in dirt. In Europe and United States it is opposite you can go to clinic and easily perform abortion till certain gestational age. With 1.2 million abortions each year in America, this works out to 30,000 “minor” complications and 6,000 “serious” complications each year (prolifeaction.org). Around 200,000 women in Sindh opted for abortion in the year 2014, indicating an increase in abortion cases by 20,000 in a year and double over the past 13 years (dawn.com). This shows every day 550 tiny lives are going to be snuffed out each day. This issue creates a serious moral and ethical question in society. This conflict led to many domestic violence issues in the families. These questions really bother us to think who decides ethical and moral boundaries in our society? Religions or science? What are outcomes of abortion? Women rights? Feministic movements? These all things create a complex picture of our society and divide society in multiple ways on the basis of only these issues. Pro-abortion use to give an argument that abortion is good because of rape or forced pregnancy but statistics say otherwise. According to a study conducted in Karachi, some 88 percent of pregnancies ending in induced abortion resulted from unwanted pregnancies or contraceptive failure (Gazdar, Khan, and Qureshi 2012).

Abortions occur for many reasons, and women tend to have multiple explanations for their abortion decisions. The most common reason, given by three-quarters of women having abortions, is that having a baby at that time in their lives would conflict with major responsibilities such as work or school. Two-thirds of women having abortions give economic reasons for delaying or foregoing parenthood. Half of the women choosing abortion do not have the supportive relationship that they would like for becoming a parent—

<sup>1</sup> Physician, Health Department, Government of Sindh, Pakistan

[\\*Responding Author.](#)

Received: January 31, 2019; Revision Received: February 21, 2019; Accepted: March 8, 2019

## Psychological Effects of Abortion in Sindh

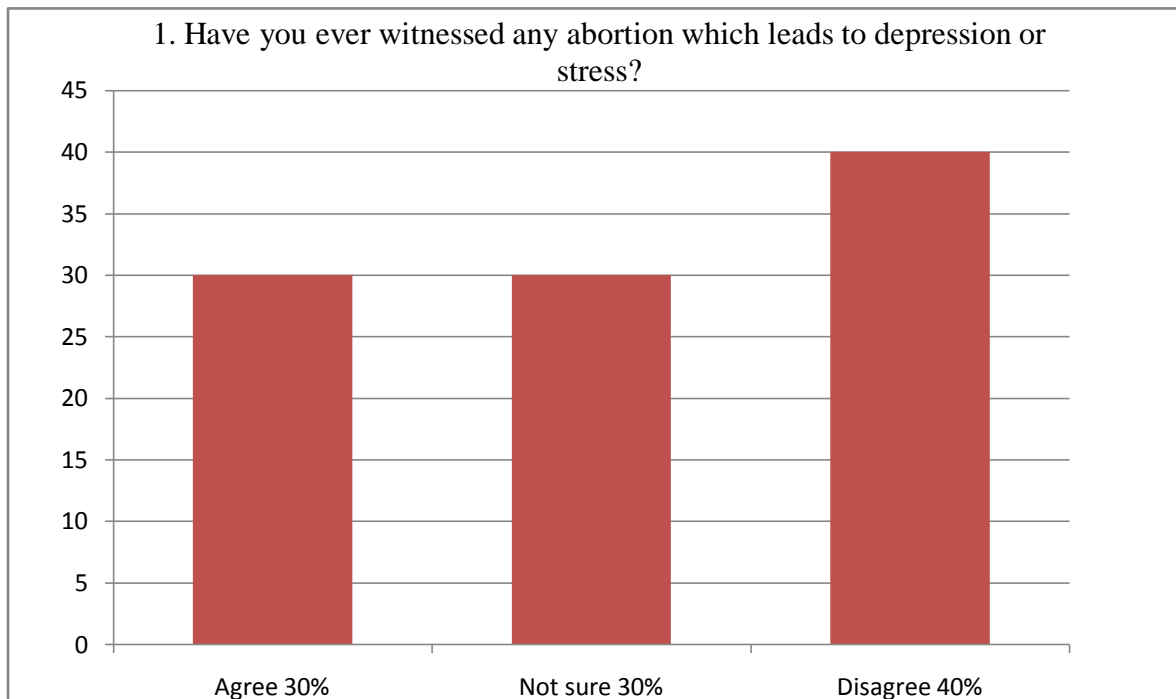
either they do not want to start out as a single mother or they are having problems in their relationship with a husband or partner (Metaxas, Eric1-3).

Now we focus mainly on post abortions states of a woman or how a woman deals with the abortion. In most cases a woman in first faces problems in decision making of abortion then after that if abortion is performed then it may lead to post abortion complications like depression, stress, guilt, shame and regret. Canario Catarina, Figueiredo, Barbara and Ricou Miguel in their article “**Women and men’s psychological adjustment** after abortion: a six months prospective pilot study” states about post abortion state that “when women decide to undertake a therapeutic abortion , they usually present feelings of sadness, despair and guilt, resulting in severe suffering, The pain and sadness that these women feel is similar to those who suffer spontaneous abortions”. This gives us an idea that how post-abortions are how likely to be.

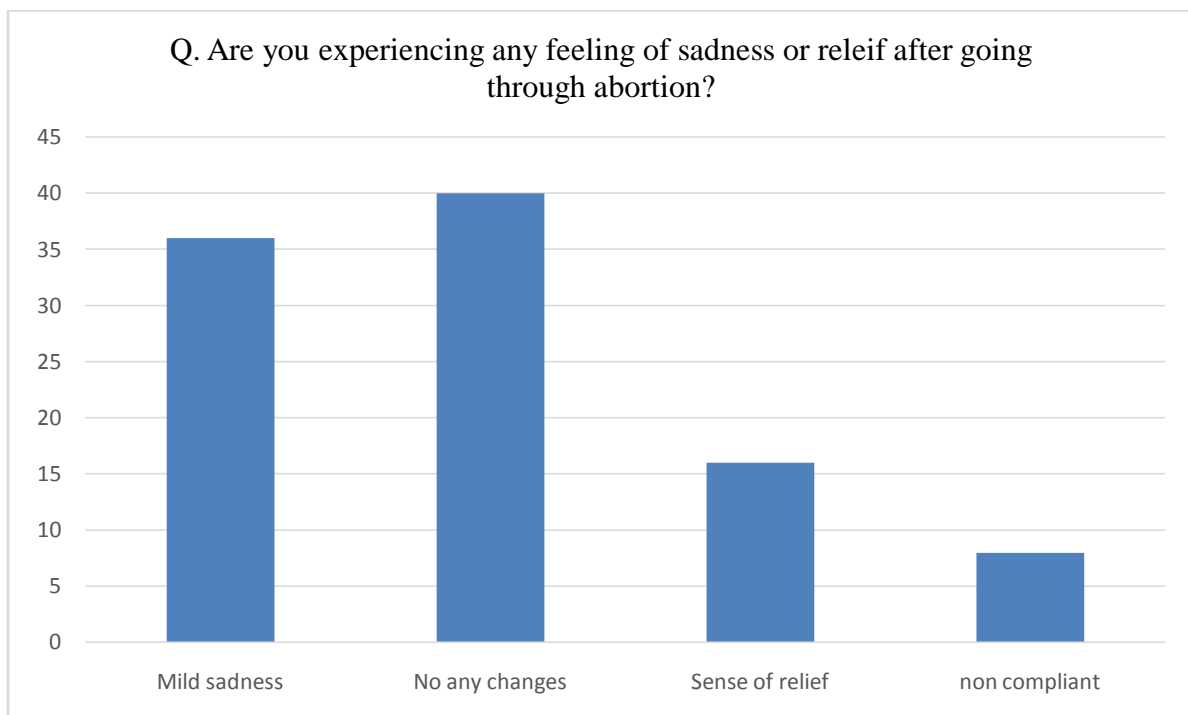
Woman’s socio-economic conditions, relations, faith and mental condition in pre-abortion state also affect highly post-abortion conditions and survival. Kimport K, Foster K, Weitz TA in their article “social sources of women’s emotional difficulty after abortion: lesson from women’s abortion narratives” stated that “a woman’s mental health before an abortion is a strong predictor of her mental health afterward, although it does not explain all variation: some women without prior mental health problems experience post abortion distress. It is important, therefore, to consider interpersonal and psychosocial factors”. It means psychological clearance and risk stratification in pre-abortion state also largely contributes in post abortion psychological effects.

Depression is an emotional state, psychologically defined as a feeling of unhappy and sadness. It can come from any uneven action and their uneven consequences. As here the condition of abortion, in most cases abortion leads to depression due to faith or clinical mishap or fear. In faith a woman usually think that she has done an unethical act or she has done a sin and God is not going to forgive her. Abortion surgeries are usually performed in only lower limb anesthesia so she probably has some flashbacks in her mind about that surgery and whenever she recall those movements of surgery she may get episodes of depression. Other clinical perspective is that in some abortion surgeries leads to permanent infertility. She may have that kind of fear in her mind that can lead to depression. Catarina Bárbara Miguel in their pilot study research paper discussed depression as “other studies indicate 20% of women are reported to experience high levels of depression, emotional disorder tends to decrease after abortion but for 30% of women, emotional disorder prevails in the month of following the event” this report is only telling us about high levels of depression cases but mild cases are more prevalent among post abortion persons. In a personal survey conducted by me, at Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences Jamshoro, Sindh, from 30 students and in that 30% persons agreed that they have witnessed that abortion leads to depression.

## Psychological Effects of Abortion in Sindh



In another survey study conducted at Liaquat University Hospital Hyderabad, Sindh and DHQ Hospital Mithi, Sindh. In this survey 96 women were given a questionnaire who had abortion within past 15 days. 36% of women told about their feeling of mild sadness after abortion and flashbacks about baby. 40% of women were not sure about any psychological changes in post abortion phase. 16% of women reported feeling of relief after abortion, pertaining to the reasons that pregnancy was incompatible to their social and financial life. 8% of women didn't respond to the questionnaire.

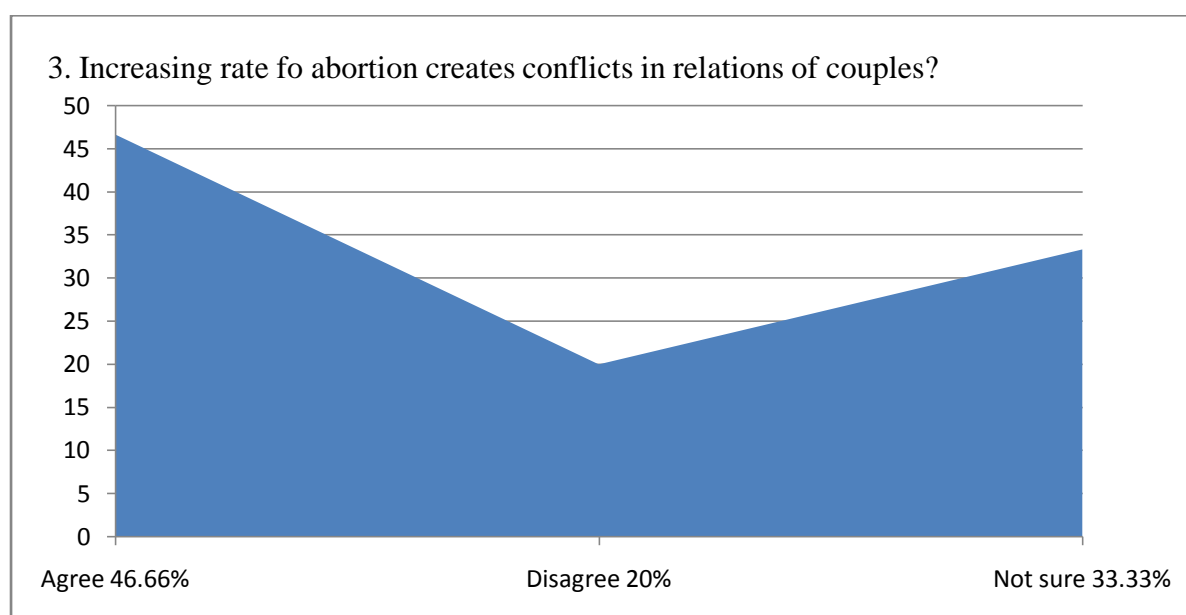


## Psychological Effects of Abortion in Sindh

Guilt is an emotional condition psychologically defined as an emotional state in which a person thinks that he/she has violated ethical and moral standards. Among other post abortion states guilt is one of them. Catarina, Barbara and Miguel in their pilot study research paper elaborate psychological imbalance as there is a tendency for these women to become more psychologically defensive and repress their emotions. Psychological defensive impairment state of mind can cause result in guilt, shame and emotional drawback.

Stress is another psychological condition psychologically it is defined as anything that poses a challenge or a threat to our well-being. In abortion a woman first feels stress indecision making about abortion then in post abortion states woman faces stress in most of cases. Stress usually generates from society, woman usually hides abortion form society. If someone in society knows about her abortion then she may face stress in facing that situation in social gatherings, parties and festivals. In some cases woman avoid social life due to abortion that lead to loneliness in their home that even worst the stress.

Post abortion condition of relations varies in different ways. In some cases psychological imbalance of woman creates gaps in relations and in some cases regret about abortion can also lead to conflicts between relations. In same survey conducted by me 46.66% persons agreed with the point that abortions create conflicts in relations of couples.



Overall issue of abortion creates a complex image in society. Increasing rate of abortion on one hand and post abortion psychological consequences like depression, anxiety, guilt and stress are some controversial issues to be solved by all stakeholders involved.

## CONCLUSION

Increasing rate of abortion is harsh reality of our society. Multiple reasons behind the question why women abort? Unplanned pregnancy, forced conception, marital conflict are few of them. Abortion significantly affect psychologically in post abortion phase. From difficulty in decision making to depression, guilt, stress, marital conflict, all these states manifest themselves in subtle to milder form in majority of women.

## REFERENCES

- Canario Catarina, Barbara Figueiredo, and Miguel Ricou. "Women And Men's Psychological Adjustment After Abortion: A Six Months Prospective Pilot Study." *Journal Of Reproductive & Infant Psychology* 29.3 (2011): 262-275. Academic Search Premier. Web. 7 Dec. 2013.
- Ed. Neil J. Salkind. *Abortion: Child Development*. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2002. p1-3. COPYRIGHT 2001 Macmillan Reference USA, COPYRIGHT 2006 Gale, Cengage Learning Trude Bennett and Dennie Nadeau
- Kimport, Katrina, Kira Foster, and Tracy, A. Weitz. "Social Sources Of Women's Emotional Difficulty After Abortion: Lessons From Women's Abortion Narratives." *Perspectives On Sexual & Reproductive Health* 43.2 (2011): 103-109. CINAHL Plus with Full Text. Web. 7 Dec. 2013.
- Metaxas, Eric. "The War On The Unborn." *Human Life Review* 39.3 (2013): 13-19. Academic Search Premier. Web. 7 Dec. 2013.
- Parkash, Om. Personal Survey 30th August 2018
- Parkash Om Personal Survey 15th Nov 2018
- "Pro-Life Action League." Pro-Life Action League. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 Dec. 2013.
- Gazdar Haris, Khan Ayesha, Qureshi Saman. "Causes and implications of induced abortion in Pakistan, A social and economic analysis". Research report. Karachi, Pakistan: Collective for Social Science Research; 2012.

### *Acknowledgements*

The authors profoundly appreciate all the people who have successfully contributed in ensuring this paper is in place. Their contributions are acknowledged however their names cannot be able to be mentioned.

### *Conflict of Interest*

The authors carefully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests.

**How to cite this article:** Om. P, Ram. A, & Khan. M (2019). Psychological Effects of Abortion in Sindh. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 7(1), 594-598. DIP:18.01.066/20190701, DOI:10.25215/0701.066