

Abortion in sri lanka



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Today in Sri Lanka escalating unsafe abortions has become a significant health and social issue. The law behind the abortion is exceedingly restrictive permitting for abortion except, the situation where pregnancy threatening to the life of the mother. But today in the society large numbers of unsafe abortions are performed. Main reason for that is women faced with unwanted pregnancies are forced to undergo abortions which are conducted secretly by untrained individuals in exceptionally unhygienic conditions. FPA Sri Lanka proposes to work against unsafe abortions through lobbying and advocating for the universal right of women to live healthy and safe lives, free from the fear of death and disease. But on the other hand today in Sri Lanka large numbers of women how severely suffer from unwanted pregnancy on their perspective abortion is help them to reduce their stress.

Some of them tend to suicide due to this stress. Affected parties* Pregnant mother Women who are raped severely suffer from this. If the children suffer from genetic abnormalities are a burden on the parents as well as to the society. Both mother and those children suffer throughout their lives.* Unborn child Unborn child has or is likely to suffer from a severe disability, or where pregnancy is the result of rape or incest.

* Their Relatives* Medical professions A medical professional who consulted for a pregnant woman in situations like unborn child has or likely to have a severe disability would incur criminal liability.* Government * Child Development and Women's Affairs Ministry * Health Ministry and Justice Ministry Identified facts* According to the UN publication " World Abortion Policies 2011", abortion is allowed in most countries in order to save a woman's life (97% of countries). Other commonly accepted reasons are

preserving physical (67%) or mental health (63%). Abortion in the case of rape or incest is accepted in about half of all countries (49%), and performing them because of economic or social reasons in about a third (34%).

Performing an abortion only on the basis of a woman's request is allowed in 29% of all countries. In some countries, additional procedures must be followed before the abortion can be carried out even if the basic grounds for it are fulfilled.* Sri Lanka has 741 abortions per 1000 live births and there are induced abortion levels of 150,000 to 175,000 per year.

Data from the Ministry of Health has shown that 7-16% of all admissions of females to government hospitals are probably due to complications of induced abortion. Moreover, other studies have shown that induced abortions and the complications arising from these accounts for almost 6% of all maternal deaths in Sri Lanka.* The criminal offence of abortion has existed unchanged in Sri Lanka since it was introduced to the Penal Code by the British in 1883. Section 303 provides that 'whoever voluntarily causes a woman with a child to miscarry shall, if such miscarriage be not caused in good faith for the purpose of saving the life of the woman, be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both; and if the woman be quick with child, shall be punished imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to a fine'. An explanation in the Code provides that this offence may be committed by a woman who causes the miscarriage herself.* An abortion may only take place legally in Sri Lanka where the miscarriage is caused in good faith for the purpose of saving the

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life of the pregnant woman. The burden of proof in cases of abortion is on the prosecution to show beyond reasonable doubt that it was not carried out in good faith for the purpose of saving the life of the pregnant woman.

Many people aren't aware of the existing law, and some of them aren't due to social and cultural barriers, because of these reasons we have approximately 9%-12% teenage mothers, with the highest death during childbirth.* Sri Lanka's abortion law is to be amended allowing abortions under strict conditions. Suggested reforms will allow abortion for girls under the age of 18 who have become pregnant due to rape or incest and for mothers carrying babies with severe genetic abnormalities. The Child Development and Women's Affairs Ministry, Health Ministry and Justice Ministry have formed a committee to implement amendments to the existing law. Two specialist doctors will conduct medical tests and the reports will be sent to the courts.

The court will make the decision within 3 months after examining the reports. Pregnant women who belong to the above-mentioned categories will be able to apply for legal abortion once the amendments are incorporated with current law.