

# When termination of pregnancy is permissible

[Health & Medicine](#), [Pregnancy](#)



The debate about termination of pregnancies has been raging for a long time and it has been pitting the pro abortionists who believe that abortion is permissible under certain circumstances and the anti abortionists who believe that abortion is not permissible under any circumstance. From a logical perspective, the pro abortionists seem to be sensible because there are certain situations where abortion must be carried out. There are some situations where abortion is moral and ethical meaning that it is permissible.

One of the situations where abortion is permissible is when abortion is permissible is when the life of the mother is in danger. When the life of the mother is in danger, do you save the mother or the child?. This situation can be supported by the ethical theory of utilitarianism. This theory states that any act is ethical and moral if it is done to benefit the larger percentage of the society and an act is unethical if it is done to the detriment of a larger percentage of the society.

If this theory is brought into the issue of pregnancy it is easy to understand why termination of pregnancy is permissible in case the life of the mother is at risk. The question that one needs to ask is; who between the child and the mother is more beneficial to the society? The mother could be a woman who has some other children who need to be taken care of. The mother could be a breadwinner in her family. This mother could be a public servant and her demise would affect the services she used to render to the nation. The mother is a relative and a friend to many people and her demise would affect them emotionally.

However, this child does not have as much value to the society as the mother meaning that the life of the child is not as important as that of the

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mother (Sedgh 2007). Therefore, saving the life of the mother, from a utilitarian point of view is more beneficial to the society more than saving the life of the child. Saving the life of the child while letting the mother to die is not ethical because this will present a problem for the child who will have to grow without motherly care and love while the society will place an extra burden to the society which will have to bring up a child in the absence of the mother.

Therefore, in case the life of the mother is threatened by a pregnancy, then termination of such a pregnancy is permissible and supported by the ethical theory of utilitarianism. Another instance under which abortion is permissible is when a woman becomes pregnant after an incident of rape. Though pregnancies arising from rape are rare it is important to note that some pregnancies occur after incidences of rape. Why is pregnancy that arises after an incidence of rape permissible? To start with, rape is a tragic act that violates the body of a woman and also affects her mental health a great deal.

Psychiatrists argue that the mental health of the woman can be safeguarded if a pregnancy arising from such tragic acts such as rape is terminated. From a legal point of view, it is argued that rape is an act of violation, a grave injustice meaning that it is unjust to force such a woman to carry a pregnancy arising from rape to viability. The pregnancy will keep reminding the woman of the violence committed against her and this would last for nine months of the pregnancy and whenever she sees the child.

This would make the woman live with a lot of mental anguish. From a utilitarian perspective, it is quite ethical and moral to terminate this pregnancy because the mental health of the woman is of a higher value than

the life of the fetus. From a humanitarian perspective, the fetus is also considered an aggressor against the integrity and the personal life of the woman and it is defensible and permissible to terminate the pregnancy as a way of defending the personal and human values of the woman because these values are robbed of her by the violent act of rape.

Those opposed to abortion argue that termination of a pregnancy arising after an incident of rape is not permissible because that pregnancy can be avoided according to these anti abortion activists, conception does not occur immediately after sexual intercourse meaning that pregnancy can be avoided in all instances of rape especially if the victim receives medical treatment immediately after the attack to remove the male semen from the uterus to ensure that fertilization does not take place.

However these people fail to realize that rape is a traumatizing act that destabilizes the mental state of a victim meaning that making decisions such as visiting a medical center for immediate treatment may not be easy for the victims. It is good to avoid the pregnancy by seeking instant medical help but in case the pregnancy occurs then it is very permissible to terminate it to safeguard the mental health of the mother.

There are other anti abortionists who argue that the unborn children resulting from rape have the right to live because they are as innocent as the mother. They claim that the rapist is the aggressor and not the unborn, but it is important to note that the child will always remind the woman of the violent action during the entire pregnancy and even after the birth of the child. The mother may not be able to give utmost love and care to the child because the child is unwanted and brings traumatic memories to the mother.

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This means that relieving the mental suffering of the mother is more important than the right to live of the fetus meaning that is ethically permissible to terminate a pregnancy arising from an incident of rape (Finer, 2000). The third instance where termination of a pregnancy is permissible is a situation where a woman gets pregnant as a result of incest. However, this situation depends with the nature of incest because if the woman willingly participates in an incestuous intercourse, then termination of such a pregnancy is not permissible.

However, if the woman was forced by the second party to participate in an incestuous intercourse against her will, then a pregnancy arising out of such a situation can be terminated without moral and ethical questions being raised. This is because there are very few differences between a forced incestuous intercourse and rape. Both of them violate the dignity and the mental stability of the woman and a child arising out of such an intercourse is usually an aggressor towards the woman.

The child will forever be a reminder to the woman of that degrading incident that violated her dignity and self worth and this will affect the mental health of the woman for a long time. Just like in rape where the pregnancy is terminated to safeguard the mental health of the woman, a pregnancy arising out of a forced incestuous intercourse can be terminated because the mental health of the woman is more important than the value of life of an unborn fetus, who in the first place is an unwanted child who will never get enough motherly love, care and attention from the mother.

The fourth circumstance may appear controversial but a deeper look into the argument will expose the logic. According to some pro abortionists, women  
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can be forced to carry a pregnancy to viability just because it is unethical to terminate that pregnancy but the question that arises is; is that woman ready to bring up the child. The woman may have engaged in a sexual activity with a man after mutual consent but gets pregnant accidentally, meaning that she wasn't ready for the pregnancy.

This kind of a pregnancy is called an unwanted pregnancy. In most cases, when women give birth after carrying an unwanted pregnancy to viability, they are never able to give their children the relevant motherly love, care and attention and they usually neglect these children meaning that they are never able to enjoy quality life. Some of these women especially in the third world countries throw the children away after birth or when they are very young and these children usually become street children.

The big question that arises is; which is more ethical between giving birth to an unwanted child then let the child to suffer for their entire life or terminating an unwanted pregnancy before the fetus becomes a human being. The later seems to be more ethical because it prevents the lifetime suffering of an innocent child. This means that if a woman feels that she cannot really take care of the child she is carrying despite her being responsible for its conception, then the termination of such a pregnancy is morally and ethically permissible.

Moreover, women have an ethical claim to their body meaning that they have bodily autonomy which should be regarded as integral to the conception of an ethical and free society that embraces democracy. This autonomy is an ethical necessity meaning that no one should force a woman under any circumstance to carry a pregnancy to viability (Bankole, 1998). There are <https://assignbuster.com/when-termination-of-pregnancy-is-permissible/>

some cases where women are forced to terminate pregnancies because of their careers. Is this termination of pregnancy defensible and permissible?

When a woman really knows that she cannot be a good mother and abort the child they are carrying, they are making the most ethical decision ever because it would be quite unethical to give birth to a child one cannot care for. This means that in such a situation, abortion is permissible. Some of the instances described above may appear controversial especially to those who approach the debate with a closed mind. While religious doctrines and values are not inferior to the secular approach, it is important to note that religious values cannot be a background for tenets that apply to all citizens. List of references

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