



# COVERAGE OF ABORTION ISSUES IN THE ENGLISH AND MARATHI MEDIA



Campaign for Gender Equality  
and Safe Abortion.

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**Section 1**  
**INTRODUCTION**

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***You cannot have maternal health without reproductive health. And reproductive health includes contraception and family planning and access to legal, safe abortion.***

***Hillary Clinton***

### ***Abortion In India***

India is one of the first countries in the world to have launched a **National Programme for Family Planning** in 1952 and pass the Medical Termination of Pregnancy act in 1973, providing conditional access to abortion to its women. Yet, the recent Guttmacher Research Study estimates 48.1 million pregnancies, a rate of 144.7 pregnancies per 1000 women aged 15–49 years, and a rate of 70.1 unintended pregnancies per 1000 women aged 15–49 years. More significantly, abortions accounted for one third of all pregnancies, and nearly half of those pregnancies were unintended.<sup>1</sup> “An estimated 15.6 million abortions were performed in the country in 2015. This translates to an abortion rate of 47 per 1,000 women aged 15–49”<sup>2</sup>, the study says.

The above data speaks volumes about the reproductive health of women who have limited access to contraception, carry the burden of unwanted pregnancies and are vulnerable to debility and death due to unsafe abortions. The same Guttmacher study also estimated that around 9% of all maternal deaths in India are attributable to complications associated with unsafe abortions.<sup>3</sup> The plight of minors, single women, women with disabilities and widows is particularly pathetic with regard to access to safe abortion services considering the stigma attached to abortion, unsympathetic and insensitive attitude of service providers and the social norms which prohibit sexual activity outside marriage.

The falling sex ratios and the concern of the administration to stop pre-birth sex selection has further impacted access to safe abortion services with many medical professionals opting not to provide abortion services for fear of being targeted under the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act.

Despite the fact that the MTP Act has provided conditional access to abortion, a vast section of the population still believes that abortion is illegal in our country, while the MTP act denies access to safe abortion services to young girls and single women by limiting the abortion option

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.guttmacher.org/article/2017/12/incidence-abortion-and-unintended-pregnancy-india-2015>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.guttmacher.org/news-release/2017/national-estimate-abortion-india-released>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/report\\_pdf/abortion-india-lit-review.pdf](https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/abortion-india-lit-review.pdf)

for failure of contraception to married women alone. Thus, a large number of women are excluded by the MTP Act to access safe abortions.

This has led to the demand for amendments in the Act from doctors and women's rights activists, to make abortion access universal but these amendments are still pending.

### ***Pratigya Campaign:***

Women's sexual and reproductive behaviour is controlled through gender discrimination and violence. The falling sex ratios on the one hand and the continuing high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity due to lack of access to safe abortions on the other, are both problems that deprive women of the right to exercise control over their bodies. Both need to be addressed as distinct problems through different stakeholders.

It is with this objective that Pratigya, a campaign for 'Gender Equality and Safe Abortion', was launched in January 2013. The Campaign is committed to promoting women's rights and access to safe abortion in India. The campaign is being spearheaded by individuals and organizations that have been working with the government at the national and state level on issues of women's empowerment and enabling women's access to quality healthcare services.

Pratigya envisions creating a platform to promote gender equality, place the issue of sex selection within this paradigm, while at the same time speaking up for women's right to access safe abortion.

The three pronged strategy of the Pratigya Campaign was to address the problem of conflation of the MTP and PCPNDT acts through;

- Developing strategic communication regarding distinction between MTP and PCPNDT Acts
- Engaging with key government officials working on implementation of MTP and PCPNDT Acts and groups working to prevent sex selection
- Media Outreach in order to address the deep-rooted gender discrimination in society through more nuanced and gender sensitive reporting and to highlight abortion as a reproductive health issue by breaking the silence around it and raising awareness about it.

The current phase of activities of the campaign are focused at the national level and in two states, Rajasthan and Maharashtra where the access to safe abortion services has been compromised by the State governments which targeted the MTP clinics and service providers in their drive to implement PCPNDT Act in a rigorous manner. It was in this context that Population First, a social-impact organization with media advocacy as its forte came on board as the Maharashtra partner of the Pratigya Campaign.

### ***Population First:***

Population First is a communications and advocacy initiative that works on health and population issues from a gender and social development perspective. It was registered in March 2002 under the Bombay Public Trusts Act, 1950. Its key objectives are to help reduce gender imbalances in the population and work towards gender sensitive and social development oriented health and population programmes. It believes that the problem lies not in numbers but in the unequal social development and gender disparities that are prevalent in society. For instance, States with lowest gender and social development indices are the ones which have highest population growth rates indicating that women are not able to exercise their sexual and reproductive choices and are denied access to quality health and contraceptive services.

The problem of falling sex ratio which was highlighted in the Census of 2001 was addressed by the *Laadli* campaign launched by Population First in June 2005, Apart from creating awareness about the falling sex ratios which reflect the deep rooted gender biases in society, *Laadli* also works to challenge the all pervasive misogyny that undervalues women, rationalizes gender inequalities and justifies violence against women by working with the major influencers in the society – media, advertising, films and education institutions. A number of initiatives like media awards for gender sensitivity, media fellowships, gender training programmes, editors' consultations and mainstreaming gender sensitivity into professional bodies like Ad Club, International Advertising Association, Script Writers Associations, Media Networks and Press Clubs along with consistent work with Women Development Cells and National Service Scheme Departments in colleges have helped in bringing about a noticeable change in the way women's and gender issues are portrayed in the media and advertising today.

Since enabling women to exercise their sexual and reproductive choices has been an integral part of the work Population First, it has been engaging actively to leverage its influence in the media to address issues related to access to safe abortion and has been a key partner in the Pratigya campaign.

### ***Media Outreach:***

Population First (PF) has been working on promoting Gender Equality with the youth and media and has a prominent media presence. Prior to the Pratigya campaign PF has worked with Ipsas Development Foundation and developed a press kit with media guidelines for correct and nuanced communication on safe abortion and gender based sex selection. It has also provided six media fellowships over two years for writing on safe abortion issues. It carried out media interactions with senior journalists which led to some of them addressing the issue in their writings.

### ***Role of Media:***

In India, as in other countries, media has a major influence in shaping public opinion on issues - be they political, social or economic. It also acts as a source of information for a vast section of the population; All the more reason then that the information disseminated through the media should be sensitive and supportive of people's rights in a democracy.

In the case of abortion too it is of utmost importance that what is published in the print or online media should not only make people aware of the medico-legal facts about abortion but also make the distinction between gender based sex selection and the right of women to safe abortion very clear. Both prevention of gender based sex selection and access to safe abortion should be highlighted as women's rights. Media can play an important role in changing the patriarchal mindset of society which curtails the freedom of women and deprives them of the right to make independent decisions.

Over the years the media, both print and digital, has been showing an increasing interest in reporting on issues related to abortion and writing articles that not only try to raise awareness about abortion but also advocate for amendments in the MTP Act in order to make abortion more easily accessible. Though these are few in number it can be seen as an encouraging trend.

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**Section 2**  
**METHODOLOGY**

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## ***Purpose of the Study***

The Media Analysis Study was undertaken by Population First with the support of Pratigya Campaign to understand how media is covering abortion issues, what are the gaps, how is the issue being communicated, which issues are picked up by media and why, when is the media reporting on abortion and who and what are the sources for media reporting etc.

## ***Objectives:***

- To identify the problems in communication caused by a conflation of the MTP and PCPNDT Acts thus denying women the right to safe abortion access
- To identify the misleading terminology and imagery that is used
- To identify the triggers that lead to coverage of abortion issues
- To ascertain the perspectives from which the media reports on abortion
- To identify which publications or online platforms have been covering abortion issues and can be potential partners for better and increased communication on abortion

## ***Classification of Media Sources***

The study attempted to cover as many publications from across the country as possible. Sixteen English publications, two Marathi publications and 17 online portals were reviewed for the study. The publications covered are as under:

### 1. English print and e-news

1. Times of India 2. Indian Express 3. Telegraph 4. Hindustan Times 5. The Free Press Journal 6. Pune Mirror 7. Mumbai Mirror 8. Midday 9. Entertainment Times 10. DNA 11. The Asian Age 12. The Deccan Chronicle 13. Greater Kashmir, E-papers 14. Kashmir Observer and periodicals 15. India Today and 16. EPW.

### 2. Marathi print and e-news

Only two publications were covered 1. Maharashtra Times print and e-paper and 2. Lokmat;

### 3. Online sources

Online news portals included 1. Scroll.in 2. The Wire 3. Huff Post 4. Livemint 5. Nyooz 6. NDTV news 7. Zee news and 8. IndiaSpend. Online journals included 9. India Deeply 10. The Print and 11. Gplus, a weekly tabloid from Guwahati;

Online publications included 12. eHealth 13. Down to Earth 14. Live Law 15. Legal India 16. Youth ki Awaaz 17. LadiesFinger 18. YahooLifestyle.



## ***Keywords used to search for articles online and for receiving Google alerts***

The selected articles were published between March 2017 and Sept 2018 and were sourced on line using Key Words and through Google alerts. The key words or key phrases used for sourcing the articles were generic and at times thematic or specific.

1. Generic keywords/ phrases: Abortion, Abortion in India, safe abortion, medical abortion, abortion kits, sex selection, female foeticide, underage pregnancies.
2. Thematic searches included phrases like: MTP Act, PCPNDT Act, Amendments to the MTP Act, POCSO Act, conflation with MTP Act.
3. Specific searches included: Cases of minor pregnancies, Judgments of the H.C. and S.C. regarding MTP of pregnancies beyond 20 weeks, illegal abortion racket in Beed etc.

## ***Selection of articles***

- i. The selection criterion was that the article should focus on some aspect of abortion and published in the period from March 2017 to September 2018. A few exceptions were made and articles published outside this time period were also included due to their valuable content.
- ii. Initially the articles were selected based on their titles and were shortlisted after going through their content and its relevance to the study. The main focus was on dailies, however, online portals were also included as they are the new sources of news and information for the young and the educated and have great potential to create public opinion and build the right perspective. Also a couple of exceptionally informative and analytical articles from magazines like EPW and The Week have been included.

## ***Compilation and Analysis of Data***

Based on the content of the articles chosen and the different aspects of abortion that they dealt with the articles were categorized in to three groups 1. Genreal articles on abortion and sex selection 2. News Based Articles – State Level and 3. News Based Articles – National Level. Total 31 themes were identified which gave a clear indication of the kind of coverage that Abortion issues are receiving in English and Marathi print media and online English Media.

The articles were further analysed to identify major communication issues, to help inform the media advocacy strategies to improve the quality of reportage on abortion issues in media

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**Section 3**

**MEDIA COVERAGE ON ABORTION**

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## Major Findings

Forty seven Marathi articles, 37 online articles and 63 English print media articles were reviewed for this analysis. Among the English publications, the national dailies are covering the issues related to abortion at a higher frequency than the other publications. The top five publications are: Times of India (21 articles) Indian Express (11 articles) The Free Press Journal (9 articles) Hindustan Times (5 articles) and The Hindu (4 articles)

Most of the articles from the TOI, HT, I.E, FPJ and The Hindu were *news reports* and were triggered by some incidents like release of research reports, court judgements etc.

Among web portals it is livemint that takes the lead with five articles out of the total 37 articles studied, followed by The Print, Huffpost and Youth ki Awaaz with two articles each.

Detailed *features* raising awareness about abortion or advocating for amendments in the MTP law were twenty one in number and were found in TOI, Mid-day, FPJ, The Hindu, I.E., Times Entertainment and web portals like Scroll.in, wire.in, IntoLegalWorld, Huffpost, NewsClick, Livemint, Quartz India, Life Site, Gplus and thelogicalIndian.com.

Soumya Gupta, Isha Trivedi, Neetu Chandra Sharma and Natasha Badhwar have been writing on abortion issues for livemint.

At the outset it is very important to know the kind of coverage that is being given to the issue. Is it news driven or issue driven? Usually news driven reporting is done by staff reporters who do not even get a by-line and rely mostly on the press release or briefing from the concerned authority or department. There is no scope for any insight or perspective in such reporting. It is interesting to note that there is a wide difference in the way the English media, the online English media and Marathi media cover the issue of abortion. The appearance of articles with by-line in the three categories of media is as follows:

Table:1  
Articles with By-lines in Total No. Of Articles Reviewed

		Total No. Of Articles Reviewed	No.of Articles with By-lines	% of Articles with By-lines
1	Print Media	63	37	58%
2	On-Line English Media	37	28	76%
3	Marathi Media	49	5	10%
4	Total	149	70	47%

**From the table above it is clear that there are more articles with By-lines in the on-line publications compared to the print media. The number of articles with By-lines in Marathi Media is a mere 10% which indicates the coverage is more driven by news reporting than building perspective or opinion.**

This point is more clearly brought when we look at the kind of writing that appears in the three categories of media:

Table: 2

**Type of Coverage by Category of Media**

S.No		English Print Media		On-line English Media		Marathi Print Media		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	New Reports	48	76%	13	35%	46	94%	107	72%
2	Features	9	14%	12	32.5%	0	0	21	14%
3	Op-eds	6	10%	12	32.5%	3	6%	21	14%
4	Total	63	100%	37	100%	49	100%	149	100%

Data from the above table: 2 shows that Marathi media is majorly driven by news reporting (94%), which explains the absence of by-lines in the articles published. The English media is also driven by news reporting (76%) to a considerable extent.

Thus the coverage is mostly driven by news value with only twenty opinion pieces or analytical editorial articles among 149 articles reviewed; six from English print media, three from Marathi Print Media and twelve from the online media. Thus online media seems to be providing comparatively more space for articles that are likely to influence public opinion and policy making than the print media.

A look at the reportage further shows that there is more analytical and issue based reporting in On-Line media compared to the print media. The time and space available on-line could be one reason why there is more focus on the issue rather than on mere news reporting. Around 65% of coverage in online publications is in the form of features (32.5%) and Op-Eds (32.5%) as against 24% in the print media with 14% being features and 10% being Op-Eds. There were no features in the Marathi reportage covered and Op-Eds formed a negligible 6%.

The articles cover 31 themes (PI See Annexure:5) and the broad areas they focus on are as follows:

S.No	Theme	English Print		On Line English		Marathi	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	General	10	16%	15	41%	6	12%
2	News Based Articles – State Level	18	29%	2	5%	28	57%
3	New Based Articles – National Level	35	55%	20	54%	15	31%
4	Total No.of Articles	63	100%	37	100%	49	100%

From the table above it is clear that on line media is more focussed on creating awareness about the issue and also in covering major developments with regard to proposed amendments, sc and high court judgments, etc. Very little coverage is given to the local issues and

government interventions at the State Level. English print media seems to have a more balanced coverage in terms of the topics and issues covered.

Though there is considerable discussion and advocacy happening on Amendments to MTP act, it is interesting to note that there is no coverage in the regional Marathi media indicating the need to have more regional language media centric advocacy. The coverage on the amendments is more nuanced and informed in the case of the on-line media. In percentage terms 16% of online articles covered the Amendments to the MTP as against 10% in the print media. The amendments are discussed in the context of cases regarding abortion beyond the 20 weeks gestation period, minor rape and abortion cases, abortion as a right of women etc.

English and Marathi media has been covering the court cases much more regularly than the on-line media, perhaps because they make good human interest stories. Basically, the case and verdict are written about in the news report with very little critical insight except in a few online articles. <https://thewire.in/gender/abortion-pregnancy-law-india>

Cases of illegal abortions are covered extensively (18%) in the Marathi media. These are news reports based on the information provided by the police and health department sources on cases where clinics were raided by the authorities. These also make sensational stories. Yet, they may be creating a sense of panic and mistrust about abortion service providers in the readers. These cases are not reported in the English and online media.

Minor rape cases and their abortion needs are also covered in the media. Once again the coverage is more in English (6%) and Marathi (10%) print media as most of these stories are driven by newsworthiness and covered under crime beat as well.

The attempts by the health department to clamp down on abortion clinics is covered widely in the English (13%) and Marathi (10%) press indicating that the government has been successful in garnering the support of the media. Often the raids reflect the desire of the governments to be seen as doing something to stop pre-birth sex selection and could also be politically motivated.

There have been a couple of cases where the spouse had objected to the women going in for abortion without his consent. The court upheld the right of the woman to seek abortion with no requirement of third party consent except in the case of the minors or women not in a position to make a choice. This is covered well in the print (6%) and online media (3%).

A look at Annexure 5 also shows that there is more reporting on local issues like busting of abortion rackets, illegal abortion centres, constituting the Medical Boards to decide on Abortion for Minor rape victims etc in the Marathi Media while English Print and to a great extent online media had more coverage on Lancet report, recommendations of the Parliamentary committee, amendments to MTP act etc. clearly reflecting the target audiences of the regional and national media.

Op-eds on the issue were published written by Soli Sorabji, an eminent Indian jurist and by Dr. Nozer Sheriar, renowned gynaecologist and former President of FOGSI. Mr Sorabji's article that was published in Hindustan Times focuses on the landmark judgment by the Supreme Court in 2017, on the right to privacy as a fundamental right and how abortion should be accessible to women as a right. Dr. Nozer Sheriar's article published in The Print on the other hand focuses on the proposed amendments to the MTP Act.

*गर्भप्रतिबंधकसाधनं कशासाठी ?* – published in M.T. dated June 15, 2017 and written by Dr. Girija Vyas is an opinion piece highlighting the need for contraception as a means to avoid unwanted pregnancies. She elaborates on the fact that the safety of women was a major consideration in enacting the MTP Act in 1971 to decriminalise abortion, remove the stigma and taboo attached

to it and prevent the harm caused by unsafe abortions to women. She talks about raising awareness about contraception and also the knowledge that safe abortion methods are available in our country which can be accessed by women.

Swapnil Misrain from The Free Press Journal, Sangeeta Soni from Times Entertainment, Soumya Gupta and Isha Trivedi from Livemint have written multiple articles and are engaged with the issue consistently.

Themes Covered in the Reporting				
S.No	Topics	English Media	Online	Marathi
	<b>General</b>			
1	Abortion		2	2
2	Abortion as Women's right	2	2	
3	Abortion and maternal health		2	
4	Abortion Rates	2	2	2
5	Abortion as a right for rape survivors	2	2	
6	Sex-selection	2	3	2
7	Conflation of Laws	2	2	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>News Based articles – state level</b>			
1	Abortion Racket			3
2	Abortion Services survey			2
3	Botched /Unsafe Abortions/illegal Abortions	3	1	10
4	Constitution of Medical Board	2		1
5	Compulsory sex determination			1
6	Monitoring/crackdown on abortion clinics	3		5
7	Contraceptive use and abortion rates		2	1
8	Medical Abortion kits	1		1
9	Suicide and MA Regulation	2		
10	Forced abortions	3		2
11	Monitoring of govt clinics/doctors			2
12	Third Party Consent	4	1	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>28</b>
	<b>News Based Articles – National Level</b>			
1	Denial of abortion	1	1	3
2	Minor rape cases	4	1	5
4	Court Verdicts	17	4	7
5	Irish Abortion Case	1	2	
6	Decriminalization of abortion	1		
7	Lancet report	1	1	
8	Late Gestation Abortion cases		1	
9	Parliamentary committee recommendations	1	2	
10	Promotion of sex selection on internet	1		
11	Restrictions on condom	1		
12	Amendments to MTP Act	6	6	
13	Teen Pregnancy Month		1	
14	Medical Abortion Kits	1	1	
		<b>35</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>
	<b>Total no of Articles reviewed</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>49</b>

## Communication issues in the Coverage

### A. Misleading headlines, terminology or imagery:

It is often observed that sensitively written articles are given insensitive headlines and are accompanied by imagery or words that portray abortion as a crime, an act of cruelty or something to be ashamed of. It is unfortunate that both the English and Marathi print media are found to be failing badly on this count. Twenty-two English Print articles, 19 Marathi articles and one on-line article were found having problematic headlines, language or imagery indicating the need to focus on sensitizing the sub editors and the graphic artists on the need to not stigmatize, criminalize and moralize the abortion issue. The pro-life graphics often go against the rights based point of view being espoused in the write up.

It is also observed that the major publications like TOI, HT, DNA and Free Press Journal all have a particular stock image that accompanies any coverage on abortion issues. The graphics show full term baby bump and a new born baby conveying a pro-life and anti-abortion message. A few pictures are placed below: (the pictures with publication name are repeatedly used with abortion related reporting in that publication)



Times of India



Free Press Journal



Hindustan Times

Forty two out of 149 write-ups fell in this category as their headlines either sensationalized abortion or equated it to murder. The images used are also inappropriate as they either show a full term baby bump indicating that a full grown foetus has been terminated or equate termination to murder or killing by showing the image of a new born or full grown foetus being



strangled or a dagger stabbing it in the womb. An example of wrong imagery is seen in the article “Mumbai: 13-year-old rape survivor approaches Bombay High Court for abortion” published in The Free Press Journal on December 1, 2017

(<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/mumbai-13-year-old-rape-survivor-approaches-bombay-high-court-for-abortion/1179680>)

“After Sangli abortion racket, special squads to check district hospitals” is an article from TOI published on 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2017. The headline stigmatizes abortion service providers by using the term – “abortion racket”.

## Window to Real Gujarat #4: How Modi’s ‘Model’ State Govt. Dealt With Gujarat’s Shocking Child Sex Ratio

Subodh Verma

NewsClick

The law for curbing female feticide was never strictly implemented in Gujarat, allowing large scale **illegal killing of girl fetuses.**

The term ‘bhrunhatya’ is freely used in most of the Marathi articles which means foeticide thus suggesting that the foetus is a person and that abortion is equivalent to killing. For example in the article *नाशिकमध्येमुलीवाचल्याहो !...* a news report in M.T. July 19, 2017 not only is the headline misleading as it declares that “Girls have been saved in Nashik ...!” but also uses terms like ‘bhrunhatya’.

In the article *जोडप्यांवरहीगुन्हादाखलहोणार* published on Aug 26, 2017 in M.T. shows an image of a full grown foetus being strangled by a noose which again suggests that abortion is murder and terms like illegal abortion are used giving the impression that abortion is illegal whereas it is pre-birth sex determination that is illegal.



Another example is the image used in a report published in M.T. on Apr 24, 2017 *१२आठवड्यानंतरचेगर्भपातसिद्धिलमध्येच* which shows a huge baby bump indicating an extremely advance pregnancy whereas the article talks only of second trimester abortions.



## ***Linking abortion to sex selection/ Conflation of MTP with PCPNDT Act***

Twenty –two articles reflect the conflation of the MTP and PCPNDT Acts, as the issue of pre-birth sex selection is confused with access to safe abortion. Ten articles each from English and Marathi print media and two online publications have misleading communication regarding sex-selection and abortion. The raids that are conducted on clinics having sonography facilities are often dubbed as raids against illegal abortions. This sort of language is misleading as it leads to a public perception that abortion is illegal. None of the articles delve on the fact that it is sex

determination tests which are illegal and not abortion. The root cause of son preference due to a patriarchal mindset, leading to gender based sex selection, thus, remains unaddressed. E.g. “After Sangli abortion racket, special squads to check district hospitals”

(<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thane/after-sangli-abortion-racket-spl-squads-to-check-dist-hosps/articleshow/57695107.cms>)



**This picture of police men, which accompanies the above article not only makes it look like police have a role in cracking down on abortion clinics, it also subliminally associates abortion with crime**

In Marathi media 18 articles cover the clamp down on abortion clinics. Instead of reporting on sex selection tests as illegal and explaining how it leads to gender based sex selection or talking about the root cause i.e. son preference, the report often uses terms such as “illegal abortions” thus conveying the message inadvertently that Abortion is illegal.

In the report *१२आठवड्यानंतरचे गर्भपातसिद्धिलमध्येच* published in M.T. on Apr 24, 2017 it is stated that in order to bring about transparency about abortions being performed in government centres, the health department has mandated that all second trimester abortions should be conducted only in the civil hospital. This clearly indicated that since the sex of the foetus can be detected in the second trimester, these abortions were suspect. The report is just a news report and does not provide any information about the fact that only a small portion of second trimester abortions are sex selective

In another report in M.T. online edition – *३००हूनअधिकहॉस्पिटल्समध्येत्रुटी* dated May 18, 2017 it is reported that in an effort to curb so called “female foeticide” an inspection drive of all the hospitals in the district was conducted and 300 hospitals found to be lacking in different ways. This inspection drive included abortion centres, sonography centres and hospitals which were not up to the mark as per prescribed standards. Once again the fact that only sonography centres need to be monitored under PCPNDT Act and not the abortion centres is not mentioned at all.

### ***Unregistered Clinics/ Unsafe Abortion/ Unregistered service providers***

Twenty-six articles were found that talked about unsafe abortion and illegal abortions. Some of them use unsafe abortion and illegal abortion inter-changeably, which once again makes it look like all abortions are dangerous. It is interesting to note that premature termination of pregnancy which is allowed beyond 20 weeks under Article 5A of MTP act is also reported as unsafe and illegal abortion in regional media, though online media makes it very clear that pre-term termination of pregnancy is permissible if there is a threat to the women’s life..

### ***Third party consent***

The issue of third party consent has come under media focus after a few incidents were reported about the husbands filing complaints of impersonation or lack of their consent to the abortion. The MTP act clearly articulates that the decision of opting for an abortion is entirely that of the adult

women and does not require consent from anyone else, not even the husband. In an article in the TOI, Decemember 21, 2017 by Gitesha Shelke, the point that third party consent is NOT required is very clearly brought out in the box item which lists the conditions under which abortion is permitted and what the law says about third party consent in the case of Adult women and in the case of Minors and the mentally unstable persons. However, in the text of the article the point is not stressed.

The box item, also contains a picture of a full grown foetus attached to the umbilical cord, once again pointing to the need to have better images and terminology while reporting on abortion.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/pune/woman-male-friend-booked-for-cheating-based-on-hubbys-plaint/articleshow/62200706.cms>.

The headline clearly highlights the crime angle to the story and the report also sticks to the version of the authorities. Yet at the same time the box item gives clear message on third party consent not being a requirement for abortion...but the image included in the box item again shows a new born attached to the umbilical cord. Thus conflicting messaging is seen happening, confusing the readers

### ***Lack of agency for women***

Five articles describe the lack of agency of women to take decisions about their own bodies. One report presents the case in which a woman who had been sexually assaulted was made to undergo an abortion, though it is not clear whether it was against her wish. A cousin is reported to have given consent for the abortion. In another case a cop beat up his wife and forcefully got her pregnancy terminated (<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chandigarh/cop-booked-for-forcing-wife-to-undergo-abortion/articleshow/62141168.cms>). Yet another report in the TOI, on November 25, 2017 covers the case of a woman who filed a complaint of domestic violence and a forced abortion when she was five months pregnant.

(<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/aurangabad/illegal-abortion-centre-busted-woman-detained/articleshow/61788405.cms>). All these stories are reported from a crime angle and relay heavily on the information provided by the police. Though they deal with forced abortions, the stories are not written from an abortion perspective.

### ***Medical Abortion/ Abortion Kit***

Nine articles dwell on women resorting to medical abortions without proper supervision and ending up still being pregnant or being fleeced by service providers for providing medical abortion drugs due to lack of easy accessibility of these drugs. e.g. "Abortion comes at a steep price in India"

(<https://www.livemint.com/Science/a5QMsT48DwglFGzgzlIQ6H/Abortion-comes-at-a-steep-price-in-India.html>)

One of the articles quotes the Lancet study which suggests that a vast majority of abortions (81%) in India were performed using medication abortion, indicating that this was the latest and most convenient method of abortion if provided under medical guidance and made easily accessible.

There is a case reported of a pharmacist committing suicide due to fear of being arrested by the Drug Authority for selling abortion pills without a medical prescription which highlights the problems in accessing and selling medical abortion drugs. "Chemist fears arrest for illegal sale of abortion pills, commits suicide" appeared in Times News Network on April 9, 2018 equating selling abortion pills to selling banned drugs. Once again the report is presented as a crime report with no discussion whatsoever on the issues related to restricting the access to MA Drugs.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/chemist-fears-arrest-for-illegal-sale-of-abortion-pills-commits->

[suicide/articleshow/63673301.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/suicide/articleshow/63673301.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

‘The police said the deceased, Shyamlal Kingar (50), used to sell abortion pills and other banned medicines without a mandatory prescription issued by a doctor’ says the report equating abortion pills with banned cough syrups and medications.’ the report says.

It is these inadvertent associations which create doubts about the legitimacy and safety of MA drugs.

Communication Issues in the Coverage				
		English Print	On-line	Marathi Print
A	Terminology or Headlines or Imagery	22	1	19
B	Awareness about abortion	5	4	5
C	Conflation of MTP with PCPNDT Act	10	2	18
D	Unregistered Clinics/ Unsafe Abortion/ Unregistered service providers	8	1	18
E	Third party consent	4	0	0
F	Agency for women in reproductive choices	4	1	3
G	MTP Act – Misinformation/ Gaps and the Amendments needed	52	24	11
H	Underage pregnancies	18	5	8
I	Medical Abortion/ Abortion Kit	8	1	4
J	Conflation with POCSO	5	1	1
K	Sexual Assault leading to pregnancy and abortion	15	5	2
L	Foetal abnormality/ disability	13	1	6
M	Unwed mothers	2	0	5

## ***Positive reportage in the media:***

### ***1. Articles raising awareness about abortion***

Forty-one articles dwell on the MTP Act, the lacunae in it, the need for amendments in the law and these articles also look at abortion as a right of women and talk about measures to reduce the stigma attached to it. This is indeed a good number of articles that try to raise the awareness of the readers about abortion and the MTP Act. An excellent example is the article “A Law Past its Sell-by Date” that appeared in the Indian Express as an Editorial Column on Nov.27,2018 and is written by Jaideep Malhotra (<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/india-abortion-laws-mtp-act-supreme-court-pocso-5308892/>)

### ***About the Abortion Law – Misinformation/ Amendments needed***

Eighty-seven articles in this category is an amazing number, considering that awareness about the law is not very high in our country. Most of these articles that talk about the limitations of the MTP Act in its present form have been triggered by the number of cases that have recently flooded the High Courts and the Supreme Court for termination of advanced pregnancies as anomalies in the foetus were discovered at a late stage. There is a mention of a recommendation to extend the legally allowed gestation period to 24 weeks. The present law also does not take into consideration unmarried women. One such article from the TOI, dealing with this issue has been selected as an exception, though it is published in December 2016, because of its significance – “Government plans equal abortion rights for single women”. It reports the recommendation by the health ministry to recognize “failure of contraceptives” and “unplanned pregnancy” as lawful reasons for abortion for all women, married or otherwise. ([http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/55931155.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/55931155.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst))

### ***Underage pregnancies***

Thirty-one articles on underage pregnancies report the increasing number of minor rape cases which are traumatic in themselves and how the predicament of the minor becomes even worse when she is discovered to be pregnant at a late stage and then denied abortion by the courts and doctors. Some of these cases are of incest. The reports talk of medical committees being formed to decide on the safety of the procedure in cases of advanced pregnancies. Children as young as 10 years have been exposed to rape and late discovery of pregnancy. An example is the article “Indian court rejects abortion for 10-year-old rape victim”, July 28, 2017, BBC (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-40753409>). Unfortunately even this article says “Millions of female foetuses have been aborted over the years by pregnant women after undergoing foetal gender testing”

### ***Conflation with POCSO – Need to file police complaint***

Six cases of minor rapes are reported in which some of the articles reiterate the suggestion of the court that the police should advise the parents of the minor about the option of abortion so that a further delay is avoided. Also some articles suggest that abortion should be part of the treatment for rape survivors especially if they are minors. E.g. “Should all rape survivors be allowed abortion?”, TOI, July 30, 2017. (<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/should-all-rape-survivors-be-allowed-abortion/articleshow/59827722.cms>) In this article Sangeeta Rege from CEHAT was quoted as saying “Abortion is an essential element of the treatment for rape survivors. This is clearly mandated by law in the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act and POCSO.”

The problem of radiologists not agreeing to provide a sonography for a minor rape victim due to the complication of it becoming a police case under POCSO has also been reported.

Four articles report on how minor rape survivors' abortion access is being restricted due to the reluctance of doctors who are scared to intervene because of the legal requirement of reporting the case under POCSO. Also as the pregnancy advances there are more chances of complications because of which the doctors are wary. E.g. (<https://www.thebetterindia.com/123369/46-year-old-abortion-law-needs-times/>) "Once Progressive, Our 46-Year-Old Abortion Law Needs Move With the Times", The Better India, December 5, 2017. By Rinchen Wangchuk provides a comprehensive view of conflation of abortion with other acts, yet unfortunately it says, "The law, which seeks to tackle the scourge of female foeticide, criminalises sex determination of the foetus during an ultrasound" and shows a full term baby bump in the image.

### ***Sexual Assault***

As many as twenty-nine articles reported about sexual assault survivors the double trauma of stigma and unwanted pregnancy that they face. The articles high-light how misinformation about abortion procedures leads to hesitation on the part of the parents of the survivor thinking it might lead to lifelong complications or even death. If the tormentor is the father this leads to further delay in revealing the predicament and leads to loss of precious time in which the pregnancy gets further advanced. E.g. "HC: Cops fail to inform rape victims about option of abortion" ([https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/cops-fail-to-inform-rape-victims-about-option-of-abortion-hc-118071301010\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/cops-fail-to-inform-rape-victims-about-option-of-abortion-hc-118071301010_1.html))

### ***Mindset about abortion/ lack of awareness:***

Nine articles were found to belong to this category which reflects the stigma attached to abortion denying access to abortion. Motherhood is glorified and abortion seeking behaviour of women is questioned. An example of how the stigma and lack of awareness about abortion can cost a woman her life is very well covered in the article "It's time to talk about abortion", published on livemint on May 31, 2018. (<https://www.livemint.com/Leisure/vDi2zWurLNATOIJFWbnf1K/Its-time-to-talk-about-abortion.html>). Another example is "Mumbai: 13-year-old rape survivor approaches Bombay High Court for abortion" published in the Free Press Journal on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, 2017. However, it has problematic imagery. The article "Ending Unsafe Abortions" from The Hindu, December 12, 2017 talks of lack of awareness about abortion leading to complications. (<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/ending-unsafe-abortions/article22267928.ece>)

### ***Mindset about abortion/ lack of awareness:***

Five articles were found to fall in this category which showed how the mindset about abortion often resulted in denial of abortion services to women and sometimes it was lack of awareness that deprived women of access to safe abortion.

An example of this is the article गर्भपातालापरवानगीनदिल्यानेसरकारलादंड published on Aug 18, 2017 in Maharashtra Times which shows how a woman who was HIV positive had been raped and had approached Patna Government Medical College for an abortion when she was 17 weeks pregnant. However, due to their denial to provide abortion precious time was lost. The woman approached the High Court which refused to give permission as by then she was 26 weeks pregnant. Ultimately when the Supreme Court was approached it passed an order levying a fine

of Rs. 10 lakh on the Bihar Government for denying abortion services to the woman. This clearly shows how the mindset about abortion needs to change and how it affects women adversely.

### ***About the Abortion Law – Misinformation/ Amendments needed***

Eleven articles were found to deal with the problems related to the existing Medical Termination of Pregnancy Law. The need for amending this law has been mentioned in these articles with reference to many cases of pregnancies as a result of sexual assault and the gestation period crossing the legally permissible limit in the process of appealing in court and also late discovery of severe abnormalities in the foetus and having to go to court for permission to abort. One such article in the M.T. *कायद्यामध्येबदलहवा* - published on September 9, 2017 talks at length about the case of the 13 year old assault victim who had to undergo a delivery and give birth to a child as she was denied abortion. This case was admitted in J. J. Hospital, Mumbai. Child rights activists have given statements demanding the formation of guidelines to deal with such cases of minor rape victims. The representative of an NGO – *Samyak*, Anand Pawar has spoken about the right of women over their bodies and advocates and doctors alike have expressed deep concern over the trauma of a full term delivery that the thirteen year old was subjected to and the need for medico-legal solutions and amendments in the law.



## **Recommendations**

### **1. On-line media is the key opinion maker**

The emergence of on-line media seems to be resulting in more nuanced, politically correct and critical look at abortion issues. The fact that more articles appear with by-lines, are in the format of op-eds and features ensures that more emphasis is placed on insight and building perspective rather than mere news reporting.

Therefore, it is important that the media advocacy initiative of Pratiqya campaign engages with them in a more proactive way by making latest reports, data and program related information with regards to abortion issues easily available to them. Regular release of press notes, establishing a news syndicate where the senior members of the campaign regularly write about the issue might further enrich the online coverage and content.

It is important to focus on online publications as they are being read by the people in decision making positions, are available on their smart phones and reach across geographical areas in no time, thus making them powerful opinion makers.

Online media is also easy to share and to create traction and conversation across various social media –facebook, twitter etc.

### **2. Imagery and language continue to be problematic.**

There is a need to invest in coming up with a symbol to indicate Abortion like the red ribbon for HIV/Aids, pink ribbon for breast cancer etc. In the absence of such a symbol, it gets very difficult to represent abortion without getting into the pro-life imagery. The fact that majority of the national news papers are carrying problematic imagery is a cause for concern and needs to be addressed on a priority.

We need to rope in creative professionals to come up with such a symbol/logo/image which would come to be internationally accepted as representing 'abortion'. It could be used widely to accompany media coverage, to be placed on clinics providing services and to identify service providers as well.

### **3. Advocacy needs to breach the regional language barriers**

The Marathi media is reporting regularly on abortion issues but the focus is on the human interest or crime angle. The fact that very few articles carry By-lines and fewer are in the format of op-eds and features indicates that there is a need to invest in organizing more capacity building and sensitization programmes for the regional language media. One-or –two day training programmes at the publication level could be considered as that would get us the buy-in of the management as well. For instance often the word brinhatya is used instead of garbhatya. Similarly, the terms 'illegal abortion' and 'unsafe abortions' are often used interchangeably. There is conflation of the two acts -PCPNDT and MTP.

Also, there is no engagement of senior journalists in writing about the issue. The fact that the stories are covered as crime stories does not portend well for abortion rights of women as they criminalize, stigmatize and moralize the issue of abortion.

However, the consistent coverage shows that there is scope to engage them proactively to report on larger issues of abortion rights, amendments etc. The concerned departments seem to be doing a good job by keeping the media informed about the action taken by them to address the issue of sex selection and 'Sex Selective Abortions'.



Considering the wide reach and credibility a paper like Maratha times has, Pratigya needs to engage with them on an ongoing fashion – particularly to provide a perspective on the initiatives of the government. Having a panel of spokespersons for the campaign at the State level, organizing press-conferences in regional languages on important court verdicts etc would go a long way in bringing about more analytical reporting in the regional media.

It is being recommended that all the campaign material - press releases, research report summaries, data etc be prepared in the regional languages and disseminated widely.

Training programmes also need to be developed for the graphic designers, photographers and the sub-editors who are responsible for framing the story for the readers. There is a dire need for a nuanced, rights based understanding of abortion in the regional media.

There seems to be an urgent need to once again update and formulate new guidelines for the press that outline the dos and don'ts related to imagery, terminology as well as how to report about certain issues like foetal abnormalities, gender based sex selection, medical abortion, underage abortions and pregnancies in unmarried women.

#### **4. Identify and Respond to triggers for media coverage:**

Most articles on abortion seem to be triggered by cases of pleas for abortion beyond the legal limit of 20 weeks flooding the courts, the release of some data or raids conducted to curb sex selection. The newsworthiness and the human interest angle drive the coverage. The death of a woman in Ireland who was denied an abortion, the minor who was forced to carry on with the pregnancy and the various supreme-court and high court judgments have created flutter in the media, yet a rights based discourse is missing in much coverage. It is important to build perspective before, during and after the incidents by regularly analysing media coverage and providing feedback to the media houses and journalists.

There needs to be a lot more advocacy for pushing ahead the much needed amendments in the law that were rejected in 2014 and many more experts writing in mainstream media for this purpose.

#### **5. English Print Media could be a great ally for abortion Advocacy**

English media is able to strike some semblance of balance by providing space for analytical articles and also for the regional and national issues. It could emerge as the voice of a rights based abortion campaign if only we are able to engage with it strategically.

Editorial consultations, fellowships and research grants could be one way of bringing the English National Dailies to consistently engage with the issue of abortion from a rights based perspective.

In conclusion we may say that the picture is not all that bleak. There is hope in the emerging on-line publications and the national English dailies which are reporting on abortion with far greater sensitivity and understanding. The emerging social media could be a boon or a bane for the campaign depending on how we leverage the on-line content on social media to create a pro-choice approach to abortion.

## Annexure 1

**List of Articles in English Dailies & Magazines Analysed for Coverage**

S. No.	Title	Publication	Date of Publication	Type of Article	Name of Author
1	Indian gender gap widens due to number of female foetus abortions	The Telegraph	-	News Report	-
2	A Womb of One's Own: Privacy and Reproductive Rights	EPW Engage, Vol. 52, Issue No. 42-43	10/31/2017	Article	Arijeet Ghosh, Nitika Khaitan
3	A Law Past Its Sell-by Date	Indian Express	27/11/2018	Op-ed	Jaideep Malhotra
4	Government plans equal abortion rights for single women	The Times of India	12/12/2016	Feature	Sushma Dey
5	Mumbai: Need for a rethink over MTP Act of 20-week cap on abortion	The Free Press Journal	9/18/2017	Feature	Narsi Benwal (F)
6	Ending unsafe abortions	The Hindu	12/24/2017	Feature	Jyoti Shelar
7	AL Vijay: Diya is not an anti-abortion film	The Indian Express	5/3/2018	Feature	Ashameera Aiyappan
8	Women, know these 5 facts about abortion in India! (and what's wrong with the act)	Times Entertainment	5/14/2018	Feature	Sangeeta Soni
9	Abortions in city rise 5%, health experts dub it a 'positive' trend	The Times of India City	5/14/2018	Feature	Sumitra Debroy
10	180 unwed mothers including 92 minors delivered babies this year, Pune report	Mid-day	12/21/2017	Feature	Chaitraly Deshmukh (F)
11	Lady doctor arrested for conducting illegal abortion of rape victim	The Free Press Journal	8/27/2014	News Report	-
12	After Sangli abortion racket, special squads to check district hospitals	Times of India City	3/18/2017	News Report	-
13	India's High Court Denies Abortion for 10-Year-Old Girl	The New York Times	7/28/2017	News Report	Hari Kumar and Nida Najar
14	'Should all rape survivors be allowed abortion?'	The Times of India City	7/30/2017	News Report	-
15	Mumbai: JJ Hospital to decide on city teen's abortion after Supreme Court directive	The Free Press Journal	8/29/2017	News Report	Swapnil Mishra
16	Apex Court's nod to abort 31-week foetus with kidney problems	The Indian Express	10/7/2017	News Report	-

Sr. No.	Title	Publication	Date of Publication	Type of Article	Name of Author
17	26-year- old gets pregnant after tubectomy in Mumbai	The Free Press Journal	10/13/2017	News Report	Swapnil Misra (M)
18	Supreme Court upholds woman's right to abort	The Times of India	10/28/2017	News Report	Dhananjay Mahapatra
19	12-year-old rape survivor delivers baby after high court denied abortion plea.	Hindustan Times	11/22/2017	News Report	-
20	Illegal abortion centre busted, woman detained	The Times of India	11/25/2017	News Report	-
21	Mumbai: 13-year-old rape survivor approaches Bombay High Court for abortion	The Free Press Journal	12/1/2017	News Report	-
22	Minor rape survivor petitions High Court to terminate 25-week pregnancy	The Hindu	12/2/2017	News Report	-
23	1.6 crore abortions a year in India, 81% at home	Times of India	12/12/2017	News Report	Malathy Iyer (F)
24	One in three pregnancies in India ends in abortion: Lancet	Hindustan Times	12/12/2017	News Report	Sanchita Sharma
25	Chemist fears arrest for illegal sale of abortion pills, commits suicide	TNN	4/9/2018	News Report	Pradeep Gupta
26	Mumbai: Abortion gone wrong, family moves court	The Free Press Journal	12/16/2017	News Report	Swapnil Misra (M)
27	Cop booked for forcing wife to undergo abortion	The Times of India city	12/20/2017	News Report	-
28	HC directs AIIMS to examine abortion plea	The Hindu	12/21/2017	News Report	-
29	Husband gets wife booked for aborting girl child in Haryana Sonapat	Hindustan Times	12/21/2017	News Report	-
30	Woman, male friend booked for cheating based on hubby's plaint	The Times if India City	12/22/2017	News Report	Gitesh Shelke (M)
31	Drive across the state awaits to unearth illegal pcndt centres	Pune Mirror	12/30/2017	News Report	Vicky Pathare
32	Woman moves HC to abort 27-week fetus	The Hindu	1/3/2018	News Report	Sonam Saigal

S. No.	Title	Publication	Date of Publication	Type of Article	Name of Author
33	Punjab and Haryana HC: Panel to decide on abortion plea of minor rape victim	The Indian Express	1/3/2018	News Report	Sofi Ahsan
34	Parliamentary committee on women's health expresses concern over legalities involved in abortion	DNA	1/4/2018	News Report	-
35	Liberal interpretation of MTP Act, Bombay High Court allows abortion	Mumbai Mirror	1/9/2018	News Report	-
36	Mal-formed foetus allowed to be aborted at 27 weeks	The Times of India	1/10/2018	News Report	Swati Deshpande
37	Woman, 35, dies after cattle grazer carries out abortion	The Times of India City	2/19/2018	News Report	Shanmugasundaram J
38	Abortion of foetus suffering from myriad diseases allowed	The Asian Age	5/7/2018	News Report	-
39	Bombay HC gives one more day to woman to decide on teen daughter's abortion	The Indian Express	5/8/2018	News Report	Sailee Dhayalkar
40	Bombay HC gives abortion nod to rape survivor	The Times of India City	5/10/2018	News Report	Rosy Sequeira
41	Maharashtra: 20-year-old moves HC, seeks nod to abort 23-week foetus	The Indian Express	5/31/2018	News Report	-
42	Sex-determination, abortion racket busted in hospital raid	The Times of India City	6/21/2018	News Report	-
43	GMCH-32 medical board to decide teen's abortion plea	The Times of India City	8/17/2018	News Report	-
44	Minor rape survivor undergoes abortion	The Times of India City	8/18/2018	News Report	-
45	Board rejects abortion for teenager rape survivor	The Times of India City	8/21/2018	News Report	-
46	15-year-old to deliver baby next month	The Times of India City	9/17/2018	News Report	-
47	Woman seeks termination of 30-week pregnancy, approaches SC	The Times of India	9/20/2018	News Report	-

S. No.	Title	Publication	Date of Publication	Type of Article	Name of Author
48	Scan centres under close watch after fatal abortion	The Times of India City	9/20/2018	News Report	-
49	Karnataka health department to conduct inspection of all ultrasound centres	The Indian Express	12/11/2017	News Report	Suraksha P
50	Illegal abortions rampant in India	The Indian Express	7/29/2018	News Report	Kanu Sarada
51	Ireland to draft abortion law within weeks: Health minister	The Indian Express	5/29/2018	News Report	-
52	Med teams to assist in 20-week abortions in Maha	The Free Press Journal	11/4/2017	News Report	Swapnil Misra (M)
53	Bombay High Court allows Mumbai-based woman to abort 25-week fetus	The Free Press Journal	11/7/2017	News Report	-
54	Maha to set up boards to hear abortion pleas	DNA	11/25/2017	News Report	Mustafa Plumber (M)
55	Woman approaches Bombay High Court seeking abortion	The Free Press Journal	5/23/2018	News Report	FPJ Bureau
56	Karu trailer: Sai Pallavi, Naga Shourya's horror-thriller is going to give you goosebumps	The Indian Express	11/19/2017	News Report (Review of a trailer)	A. Kameshwari
57	"Not a woman's choice": India's abortion limit puts women at risk, say campaigners	Reuters	9/6/2017	Op-ed	Roli Srivastava
58	Abortion law: India needs a holistic approach	The Week	9/7/2017	Op-ed	Rekha Dixit
59	What's wrong with India's abortion laws?	The Indian Express	12/6/2017	Op-ed	Nandini Rathi
60	To be or not to be, let women decide over pregnancy	United News of India	5/6/2018		-
61	Abortion In India: Her Womb, Her Choice	Midday	6/2/2018	Op-ed	Debjani Paul and Rupsa Chakraborty
62	Abortion: It's every woman's right to choose	Hindustan Times	1/8/2018	Op-ed	Soli Sorabji
63	Teen can abort at 24 weeks, but lots of time wasted: HC	TNN	4/10/2018	News Report	Rosy Sequeira

## Annexure 2

### List of Articles in On –Line Publications Analysed for Coverage

S. No.	Title	Publication	Date of Publication	Type of Article	Name of Author
1	Revisiting India's Child Sex Ratio Mystery	E- Health Magazine (online)	11/18/2017	Article	-
2	Why simply legalising abortion is not enough	Down To Earth	6/18/2018	Blog	Jagriti
3	Why Is India's Abortion Law Failing Its Women On So Many Fronts?	Huffpost	8/4/2017	Feature	Sonali Kokra
4	India's Abortion Laws Need to Change and in the Pro-Choice Direction	Thewire.in	5/11/2017	Feature	Saumya Rai and Sajid Sheikh
5	Window to Real Gujarat #4: How Modi's 'Model' State Govt. Dealt With Gujarat's Shocking Child Sex Ratio. The law for curbing female feticide was never strictly implemented in Gujarat, allowing large scale illegal killing of girl fetuses.	News Click	11/23/2017	Feature	Subodh Varma
6	A health journal estimates India underreported almost 15 million abortions in a year	Quartz India	12/12/2017	Feature	Maria Thomas
7	India's abortion rate is 20 times higher than estimates, but there's a push for even more liberal laws	Life Site	1/5/2018	Feature	Rebecca Oas
8	Are Abortions Really On The Decline In India?	Huffpost	5/17/2017	Feature	Rukmini S
9	Health Dept emphasises on Safe Abortions with Focus on Maternal Health	Gplus	5/8/2018	Feature	Saumya Mishra
10	Let's talk about TEENAGE PREGNANCY: 3 laws every teen must k ..	Entertainment Times	5/18/2018	Feature	Sangeeta Soni
11	Abortion comes at a steep price in India	Livemint	11/10/2017	Feature	Soumya Gupta Isha Trivedi
12	Know What Are The Laws When It Comes To Abortion In India	thelogicalIndian.com	5/11/2018	Feature	Brindaalakshmi K
13	Is just changing the law on abortions enough?	Livemint	11/24/2017	Feature	Soumya Gupta (F) Isha Trivedi (F)

S. No.	Title	Publication	Date of Publication	Type of Article	Name of Author
14	From sting operations to secret informers: How Haryana is clamping on sex selective abortions	Scroll.in	3/17/2017	Interview	Priyanka Vora (F)
15	Indian court rejects abortion for 10-year-old rape victim	BBC News	7/28/2017	News Report	-
16	Ten-year-old rape victim gives birth in India	CNN India	8/18/2017	News Report	Huizhong Wu,
17	Abortion sans hubby's nod is cruelty	India Today(online)	5/18/2018	News Report	Sneha Agrawal
18	HC: Cops fail to inform rape victims about option of abortion	Legal India	7/14/2018	News Report	-
19	Cops must inform rape victims of abortion option says HC	One India	7/14/2018	News Report	
20	SC says abortion amounts to murder, rejects 20-year-old Mumbai woman's plea	The Print	7/16/2018	News Report	Ritika Jain
21	Chhattisgarh HC allows 13-year-old rape victim to undergo abortion	Zee News	7/16/2018	News Report	
22	Indian nurse arrested over woman's death following abortion	IOL	9/19/2018	News Report	-
23	Woman Allowed Abortion In 30th Week As Foetus Found To Have Birth Defect	NDTV News	9/21/2018	News Report	I
24	Cancer-stricken woman, who risked life to save her unborn baby, dies	Onmanorama	12/27/2017	News Report	-
25	Mother backs out on abortion plea of rape survivor in Mumbai	Nyoooz	5/8/2018	News Report	-
26	Health ministry receives complaints against web giants for sex determination violations	Livemint	1/9/2018	News Report	Neetu Chandra Sharma
27	Parliamentary panel suggests abortions be allowed till 24 weeks of pregnancy	Livemint	2/13/2018	News Report	Neetu Chandra Sharma
28	India's 20-Week Abortion Limit Questioned After Birth of Unwanted Baby	News Deeply	7/13/2017	Op-Ed	Priyanka Borpujari3

S. No	Title	Publication	Date of Publication	Type of Article	Name of Author
29	56% Abortions Unsafe Despite Being Legal; Proposed Amendments On Hold	India spend	11/22/2017	Op-Ed	Shaifali Agrawal
30	Why are Women Dying of Unsafe Abortions Even Though Abortions Are Legal in India	The Ladies Finger	11/22/2017	Op-Ed	Shruti Sunderraman (F)
31	Once Progressive, Our 46-Year-Old Abortion Law Needs Move With the Times.	The Better India	12/5/2017	Op-Ed	Rinchen Norbu Wangchuk
32	As India seeks to expand abortion, it aborts one baby every two seconds	Live Action News	1/14/2018	Op-ed	Carmel Nisha Pius Franco
33	Abortion has been legal in India since 1971 but it is still not a woman's right	The Print	4/22/2018	Op-ed	Nozer Sheriar
34	Before We Can Talk About Abortion As A Choice, We Need To Talk About Abortion As A Right	Youth Ki Awaaz	8/1/2018	Op-ed	Stuti Srivastava
35	Forced Motherhood: The Insufficient Abortion Law In India	YouthkiAwwaz	8/1/2018	Op-ed	Anamika Jha
36	It's time to talk about abortion	Livemint	5/31/2018	Op-ed	Natasha Badhwar
37	Ireland's Abortion Referendum: It Was In The Death Of An Indian Woman That The Irish Found Their Voice...	livelaw.in	5/28/2018	Op-ed	APOORVA MANDHANI...



### Annexure 3

#### List of Marathi Dailies that covered issues on abortion

S. No.	Title	Publication	Date of Publication	Type of Article	Name of Author
1	२६ आठवड्यांनंतरही गर्भपाताची परवानगी	Maharashtra Times Online	7/4/2017	News Report	-
2	उस्मानाबाद जिल्ह्यात मुलींच्या जन्मदरात घट	Maharashtra Times online	8/6/2017	News Report	-
3	गर्भपातप्रकरणी डॉक्टर दाम्पत्याला कोठडीअकलूजमध्ये बेकायदा ३६ गर्भपात केल्याचे उघड	Maharashtra Times online	8/25/2017	News Report	-
4	२५ आठवड्यांच्या गर्भपातास मंजुरी	Maharashtra Times online	9/1/2017	News Report	-
5	गहजब निर्णयांचा!	Maharashtra Times	4/9/2017	Op-ed	Arvind Jadhav
6	गर्भलिंग निदान कायदेशीर कराच!	Maharashtra Times	5/7/2017	Op-ed	Dr. Gauri Gore
7	आभाळ शिवायला सुरुवात!	Maharashtra Times	8/6/2017	News Report	Dr.Amol Annadate
8	गर्भप्रतिबंधक साधनं कशासाठी?	Maharashtra Times	6/15/2017	Op-ed	Dr.Girija Wagh
9	गर्भपाताच्या गोळ्यांवर निर्बंध?	Maharashtra Times	8/4/2017	News Report	Sharmila Kalgutkar
10	२४ आठवड्यांनंतरही हवी गर्भपाताची परवानगी	Maharashtra Times	1/18/2017	News report	
11	तपासणी विना हॉस्पिटलची माहिती तयार	Maharashtra Times Mar 23, 2017, 03:00AM IST	3/23/2017	News Report	
12	कारवाईच्याभीतीने डॉक्टरांनी बदलल्या पाट्या	Maharashtra Times, Vaijapur	3/26/2017	News Report	
13	गर्भपाताचे प्रमाण कमी न होता वाढतेच आहे!	Maharashtra Times, Mumbai	3/29/2017	News Report	
14	गर्भपाताचे प्रमाण वाढतेच...	Maharashtra Times	3/29/2017	News Report	
15	गर्भपाताची कसून चौकशी	Maharashtra Times, Nashik	4/4/2017	News Report	
16	गर्भपात कीट्सची विक्री उघड	Maharashtra Times, Mumbai	4/7/2017	News Report	
17	चेंडू सरकारच्या कोर्टात!	Maharashtra Times, Nashik	4/7/2017	News Report	

S. No.	Title	Publication	Date of Publication	Type of Article	Name of Author
18	डॉ. लहाडेंचे निलंबन	Maharashtra Times Apr 8, 2017, 03:45AM IST	4/8/2017	News report	
19	गर्भलिंगनिदान चाचणीवरील बंदी उठविण्याची सरकारी समितीची शिफारस	Maharashtra Times	4/9/2017	News Report	
20	तर डॉक्टरांवर गंभीर कारवाई!	Maharashtra Times, 04:00AM IST	4/9/2017	News Report	
21	गर्भलिंग चाचणी सक्तीची करा!	Maharashtra Times , 01:59AM IST	4/10/2017	News report	
22	डॉ. लहाडेंचा पाय खोलात	Maharashtra Times	4/17/2017	News Report	
23	१५सोनोग्राफी केंद्रे संशयाच्या भोवऱ्यात	Maharashtra Times Apr 22, 2017, 04:00AM IST	4/22/2017	News Report	
24	ठाणे जिल्ह्यात गर्भलिंगनिदान नाही!	Maharashtra Times	4/22/2017	News report	
25	गर्भपाताचे निर्णयाधिकार समितीकडे	Maharashtra Times, Nashik	4/23/2017	News Report	
26	'ते' गर्भपात रडारवर	Maharashtra Times   Updated:	4/25/2017	News Report	
27	केंद्रीय समितीकडून उणिवांवर बोट	Maharashtra Times	5/17/2017	News Report	
28	३००हून अधिक हॉस्पिटल्समध्ये त्रुटी	Maharashtra Times, Kolhapur	5/18/2017	News Report	
29	जिन्सीतील बेकायदा गर्भपात केंद्रावर छापा	Maharashtra Times T	5/25/2017	News Report	
30	इच्छेविरुद्ध गर्भपात; जामीन फेटाळला	Maharashtra Times, Aurangabad	6/6/2017	News Report	
31	गर्भपात आणि सरोगसी	Maharashtra Times	6/6/2017	News report	
32	दलित मुलीवर अत्याचा; तरुणाला पोलिस कोठडी	Maharashtra Times	6/19/2017	News Report	
33	बेकायदा गर्भपातप्रकरणी कोठडीघरातच सुरु होता गर्भपाताचा धंदा	Maharashtra Times, Pandharpur	6/27/2017	News report	
34	शक्तिमानला दहा वर्षे कारावास	Maharashtra Times	6/30/2017	News Report	

S. No.	Title	Publication	Date of Publication	Type of Article	Name of Author
35	तेरा जणांच्या जामिनीवरशुक्रवारी सांगलीत सुनावणी	Maharashtra Times	7/4/2017	News Report	
36	दहा वर्षीय बलात्कार पीडितेच्या गर्भपातास नकार	Maharashtra Times online	7/19/2017	News Report	
37	नाशिकमध्ये मुली वाचल्या हो...!	Maharashtra Times	7/19/2017	News Report	
38	'त्या' गर्भवती महिलेचा प्रश्न न्यायालयात	Maharashtra Times	7/25/2017	News Report	
39	सुप्रीम कोर्टाचा गर्भपातास नकार	Maharashtra Times	7/29/2017	News Report	
40	गर्भलिंग चाचणी, गर्भपातकरताना बोगस डॉक्टर गजाआड	Maharashtra Times, on- line, Solapur	8/6/2017	News Report	
41	१० वर्षीय बलात्कार पीडितेनं दिला बाळाला जन्म	Maharashtra Times, Chandigarh	8/17/2017	News Report	
42	बलात्कार पीडितेनं दिला बाळाला जन्म	Maharashtra Times, Chandigarh	8/17/2017	News report	
43	गर्भपाताला परवानगी न दिल्याने सरकारला दंड	Maharashtra Times	8/18/2017	News Report	
44	जोडप्यांवरही गुन्हा दाखल होणार	Maharashtra Times	8/26/2017	News Report	
45	१३ वर्षांच्या मुलीच्या गर्भपातास परवानगी	Maharashtra Times	9/6/2017	News Report	
46	कायद्यामध्ये बदल हवा	Maharashtra Times	9/9/2017	News Report	
47	गर्भपात करण्यास नकार; डॉक्टरवर वार	Maharashtra Times, Pimpri	9/10/2017	News Report	
48	१२आठवड्यांनंतरचेगर्भपातसि व्हिलमध्येच	Maharashtra Times Apr 24, 2017, 04:00AM IST	Apr 24, 2017	News Report	
49	उपराजधानीत कुमारी मातांचा प्रश्न	Maharashtra Times, Nagpur	2/14/2018	News Report	

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1. Abortion: It's every woman's right to choose, Soli Sorabji, Hindustan Times, Jan.8, 2018;
2. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/opinion/abortion-it-s-every-woman-s-right-to-choose/story-52qv723N3yXESybsvyHR0J.html>
3. 180 unwed mothers including 92 minors delivered babies this year, Pune report, Chaitraly Deshmukh, Mid-day, Dec.21, 2017;
4. <https://www.mid-day.com/articles/180-unwed-mothers-including-92-minors-delivered-babies-this-year-pune-report/18844162>
5. Lady doctor arrested for conducting illegal abortion of rape victim, The Free Press Journal, Aug.27, 2014
6. <http://www.freepressjournal.in/india/lady-doctor-arrested-for-conducting-illegal-abortion-of-rape-victim/430527>
7. Government plans equal abortion rights for single women, Sushma Dey, TOI, Dec.12, 2016; <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Government-plans-equal-abortion-rights-for-single-women/articleshow/55931155.cms>
8. From sting operations to secret informers: How Haryana is clamping on sex selective abortions, Priyanka Vora, Scroll.in, March 17, 2017; <https://scroll.in/pulse/830114/from-sting-operations-to-secret-informers-how-haryana-is-clamping-on-sex-selective-abortions>
9. After Sangli abortion racket, special squads to check district hospitals, Times of India City, March 18, 2017; <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thane/after-sangli-abortion-racket-spl-squads-to-check-dist-hosps/articleshow/57695107.cms>
10. Why Is India's Abortion Law Failing Its Women On So Many Fronts?, Sonali Kokra, Huffpost, April 8, 2017; [https://www.huffingtonpost.in/2017/08/04/why-is-india-s-abortion-law-failing-its-women-on-so-many-fronts\\_a\\_23063014/](https://www.huffingtonpost.in/2017/08/04/why-is-india-s-abortion-law-failing-its-women-on-so-many-fronts_a_23063014/)
11. India's Abortion Laws Need to Change and in the Pro-Choice Direction, Saumya Rai and Sajid Sheikh, Thewire.in, May 11, 2017; <https://thewire.in/gender/abortion-pregnancy-law-india>
12. Are Abortions Really On The Decline In India?, Rukmini S., Huffpost, May 17, 2017; [https://www.huffingtonpost.in/2017/05/17/are-abortions-really-on-the-decline-in-india\\_a\\_22092872/](https://www.huffingtonpost.in/2017/05/17/are-abortions-really-on-the-decline-in-india_a_22092872/)
13. India's 20-Week Abortion Limit Questioned After Birth of Unwanted Baby, Priyanka Borpujari, Newsdeeply, July 13, 2017; <https://www.newsdeeply.com/womenandgirls/articles/2017/07/13/indias-20-week-abortion-limit-questioned-after-birth-of-unwanted-baby>
14. India's High Court Denies Abortion for 10-Year-Old Girl, Hari Kumar and Nida Najar, New York Times, July 28, 2017; <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/28/world/asia/india-abortion-10-year-old.html>
15. Should all rape survivors be allowed abortion? TOI, July 30, 2017; <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/should-all-rape-survivors-be-allowed-abortion/articleshow/59827722.cms>

16. Ten-year-old rape victim gives birth in India, Huizhong Wu, CNN India, Aug.18, 2017;  
<https://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/17/health/india-child-rape-victim-gives-birth/index.html>
17. Teen can abort at 24 weeks but lots of time wasted  
<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/teen-can-abort-at-24-wks-but-lots-of-time-wasted-hc/articleshow/63686885.cms>
18. Cancer stricken women saved, unborn baby dies  
<https://english.manoramaonline.com/news/kerala/2017/12/27/cancer-stricken-woman-save-unborn-baby-dies.html>
19. Illegal abortions rampant in India  
<http://www.newindianexpress.com/thesundaystandard/2018/jul/29/illegal-abortions-rampant-in-india-1849953.html>
20. Ireland to draft Abortion Law within weeks, Health Minister  
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21. Mother back out on abortion plea of rape survivor in Mumbai  
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26. Irelands abortion referendum: It was in the death of an Indian woman that the Irish found their voice  
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