

### **Access to Information and Attitudes towards Abortion Legislation; is there an association?**

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Abortion is legally permitted in Sri Lanka, only if it is performed to save the mother's life. However, it is estimated a large number of induced abortions take place in Sri Lanka. This study aims to understand the public attitudes towards abortion legislation and influence of access to information in determining attitudes towards abortion legislation in Sri Lankan Context. A cross sectional community based study was conducted among males and females between 19 to 49 years of age, residence in Colombo city at least for one year. A structured interview schedule was administered among representative sample of 743 respondents recruited using multi-stage stratified, cluster sampling method. Descriptive statistical analysis and non-parametric hypothesis testing were performed using SPSS software. A majority agreed to legalize abortion for rape (65%), incest (55%) and pregnancies with lethal fetal abnormalities (53%). However, less than 07% of respondents agreed to legalize induced abortion for other reasons such as contraceptive failure, bad economic conditions, on request, etc. The most common source of information on abortion was informal discussions, followed by the mass media. Access to information on abortion through newspapers, leaflets/handouts, TV/Radio programs and news, internet and informal discussions shows a positive association with liberal attitudes towards induced abortion. Access to mass media shows the highest influence in determining abortion attitudes. In conclusion, respondents demonstrated conservative attitudes towards induced abortion. Access to information is positively associated with the liberal attitudes towards induced abortion

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