



A GUIDEBOOK ON:

# SAFE ABORTION

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# Table of **CONTENTS**

- 01**      **Why the Guidebook**
- 02**      **Abortion**  
            Perspectives and Interpretations
- 03**      **Roe v Wade**  
            Global Catalyst for Reproductive Rights
- 04**      **India's Abortion Policy**
- 05**      **Safe Abortion Practices**
- 06**      **NGOs Providing Safe  
Abortion Services**
- 07**      **References**

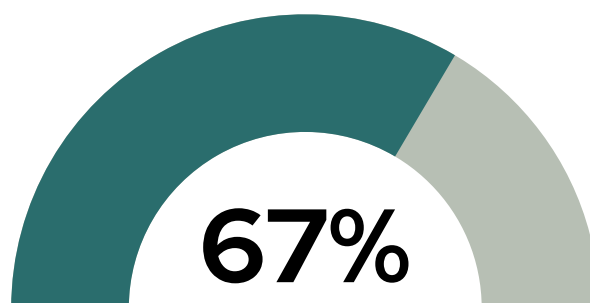


# Why the GUIDEBOOK

Abortion occupies a central space in the feminist discourse, especially since the '60s and the '70s. It was the 2nd wave of feminism (aka Radical Feminism) when the 'chattel' status of women, as a class, was being challenged. In the contemporary era, abortion has emerged as a contentious issue for feminists, especially with the overturning of the landmark Roe v Wade case in the USA. This has intensified with the differing perspectives on and interpretations of abortion as an issue.

As conservative forces align, both institutionally and socially, to deny pregnant persons their bodily autonomy and reproductive rights, access to safe abortion is becoming increasingly distant for child-bearers across the gender spectrum. For those in society who are more at risk, such as adolescents, tribal women, LGBTQIA+ community, etc. these hurdles grow more

severe. This is reflected well in the fact that despite the liberal abortion policies of India, approximately 67% of the total abortions are unsafe here (UNFPA, 2022).



*Unsafe Abortions in India*

While each individual is entitled to their own beliefs and values around abortion as an issue, it is essential that messages about abortion are factual and supportive of individual choices.

To this end, Mandonna is proud to release its maiden guidebook on Safe Abortion. As an organisation dedicated to mainstreaming the gender discourse, we hope this guidebook acts as a vital educational resource for people

## Who this guidebook is for?

This resource is dedicated to all those who wish to learn more about:

- Abortion as a feminist issue
- Family planning policies in India
- Safe Abortion Practices

with child-bearing capabilities across the gender spectrum. In our quest to guide people from all backgrounds on the path to accessing safe abortion aids, we

have compiled ways to execute the safest abortion practices. We hope this Guidebook helps you! Happy Reading!!

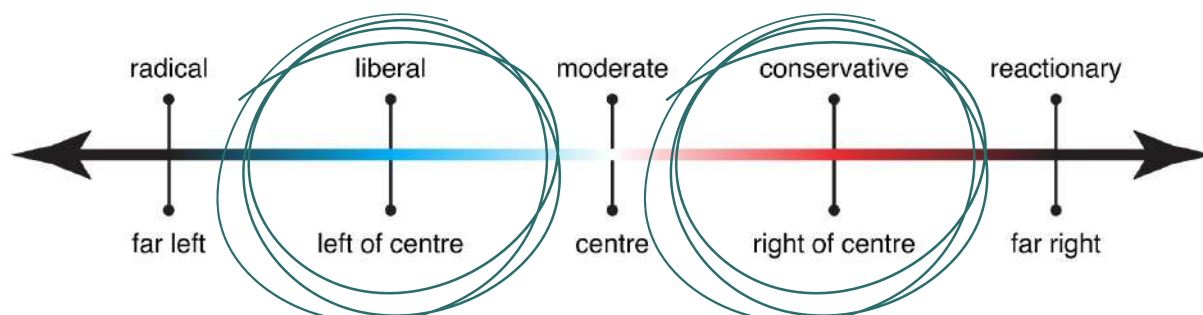
# INTRODUCTION

## Abortion and the Various Perspectives on it

Defining abortion is controversial and subject to the socio-political opinions of individuals. While major medical dictionaries define abortion as the spontaneous or induced termination of pregnancy before the fetus reaches a viable age (Davis, 2011), abortion is not only about scientific knowledge. It can be understood as a religious issue, given the long history of Christian

theologians condemning abortion through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, abortion is also a feminist issue as any social opinion or legal measure on it by the state, is an interference on a woman's individual and bodily autonomy. Since every individual has a right over their own body, abortion is also a human rights issue.

Broadly speaking, there are two major standpoints about abortion as a feminist issue:



### PRO-CHOICE

Or the Liberal Position

Proponents of liberalized regulation of abortion hold that only a woman herself, rather than the state, has the right to manage her pregnancy. Making abortions illegal would be potentially dangerous and deadly for women.

### PRO-LIFE

Or the Conservative Position

Opponents of abortion argue that there is no rational basis for distinguishing the fetus from a newborn infant; each is totally dependent and potentially a member of society, and each possesses a degree of humanity. Hence abortion is likely murder!

Enormous public debate on abortion has made it an exceptionally complex and ambiguous political and ethical problem. As abortion continues to draw political controversy, it is vital to protect women's right to self-determination and bodily autonomy. Hence, this guidebook furnishes its readers with the most

important knowledge about abortion, both in a global and Indian context. In addition, this resource also lists some safe abortion practices along with the places to avail the service. The central aim of the guidebook is to raise awareness and reduce the vulnerability of women when it comes to abortion.

# ROE v WADE

## Global Catalyst for Reproductive Rights

Roe vs. Wade, the iconic legal case decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973, holds a position of unparalleled importance in the ongoing abortion debate, with its influence transcending national boundaries. At its core, this landmark ruling established a woman's constitutional right to have an abortion, marking a pivotal moment in the fight for reproductive rights. This recognition of a woman's autonomy over her own body became the catalyst for a profound shift in the discourse surrounding reproductive rights, not only in the United States but across the globe.

The Roe vs. Wade debate has since transcended its initial courtroom setting to become a symbol of the ongoing struggle for women's reproductive rights. Its transformative impact effectively nullified numerous state laws that imposed severe restrictions or

outright criminalization of abortion, leading to a significant expansion of women's reproductive freedoms. Globally, the judgement has catalyzed reproductive rights movements in other countries, inspiring calls for legal reform and greater access to safe abortion services worldwide.



However, this victory was not without its challenges, sparking ongoing debates and political polarization that have made

abortion a defining feminist issue globally. As the abortion debate continues to evolve, Roe vs. Wade remains a central point of reference in discussions surrounding individual autonomy, women's rights, and the role of the judiciary in shaping

social policy. The legacy of this landmark case serves as a reminder of the enduring importance of protecting reproductive freedoms and ensuring that women have the agency to make decisions about their bodies, regardless of where they live in the world.

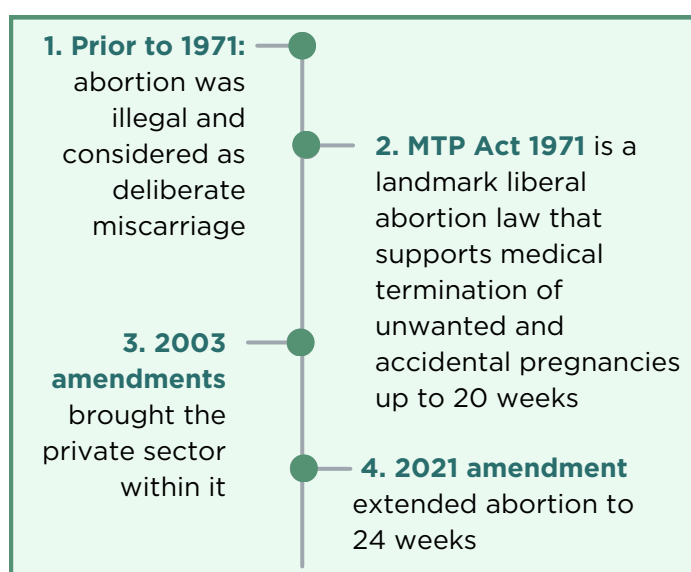
# INDIA'S ABORTION POLICY

India has one of Asia's broadest abortion laws, as abortion has been legal in India since 1971 through The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act 1971. Before that, abortion was criminalized under Section 312 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, describing it as intentionally "causing miscarriage" (Bean, 2014). The act provides the legal framework for abortion and has been subsequently amended twice.

In 2003 the act was amended to enhance its implementation through the active involvement of the private sector, along with a range of other measures like

like District committees for better execution.

The act was amended again in 2021, expanding women's access to safe and legal abortions from 20 to 24 weeks. The attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3.1, 3.7, and 5.6 will be sped up with the help of this law.



Moreover, the cost of the abortion service is covered fully by the government's public national health insurance funds, Ayushman Bharat and Employees' State Insurance with the package rate for surgical abortion being set at ₹15,500 . This includes consultation, therapy, hospitalization, medication, follow

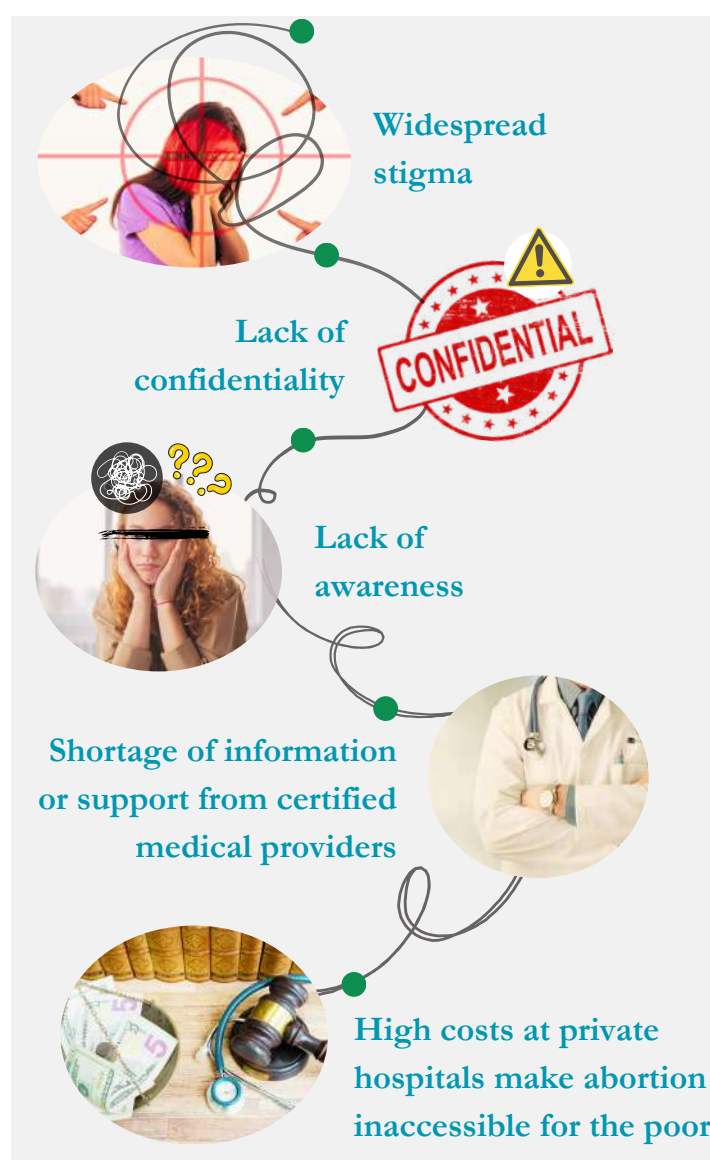
up treatments. However, despite liberal policies, abortion laws in India suffer from poor execution. Poor awareness of the law, unnecessary spousal consent requirements, contraceptive targets linked to abortion, and informal and high fees also serve as barriers (Hirve, 2005).

# SAFE ABORTION PRACTICES

Unsafe abortion occurs when a pregnancy is terminated either by persons lacking the necessary skills, in an environment that does not conform to minimal medical standards or both (WHO, 2019). Most abortions in India already happen outside health facilities, which is why they are considered perilous. Owing to this, abortions have emerged as the 3rd largest cause of maternal mortality in India, claiming 13 lives every day (Snigdha, 2018).

Unsafe abortions are a common recourse for most women in the country, including in the rural pockets, due to various social, economic and logistical barriers.

## WHAT MAKES ABORTIONS UNSAFE?

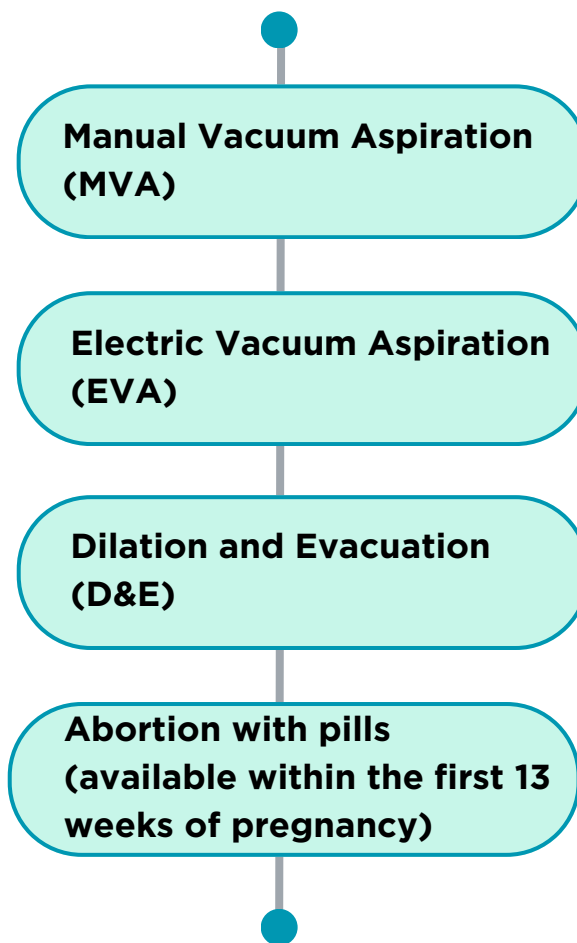




Unrestricted access to medication abortion, evidence based information, and support when managing abortion are more urgent than ever to guarantee that abortions are safe and that patients feel aided throughout the process. In our bid to avail this information to all the stakeholders, here is an exhaustive list of NGOs that provide safe abortion services.

MVA is the most commonly offered abortion practice, in government-approved public facilities and private clinics. Common abortion pills include Mifepristone and Misoprostol. Both services are available free of cost in public clinics.

## ABORTION PROCEDURES IN INDIA



# NGOS PROVIDING SAFE ABORTION SERVICES:

## Family Planning Association of India

Family Planning Association of India (FPA India), a social impact organization with seven decades of experience in sexual and reproductive health, was founded in



1949 and provides vital health services in 18 states of India. It is an International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) accredited autonomous organization, which has pioneered the family planning movement in India and collaborates with national, state, and local governments and NGOs.

FPA India provides health services through static and outreach-based service delivery systems and clinics in multiple cities. For more information, visit the official website of FPA India at <https://fpaindia.org/>.



## Janani Organization

Janani, an Indian Society founded in 1995 to assist the government in delivering family planning and safe abortion goods and services in low-resource settings, operates 14 clinics under the name Surya in Bihar, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh.

Surya Clinics provides permanent and long-term contraception techniques to over 2 million clients as of 2018. Janani family planning products and services assist women in preventing unintended pregnancies and empowering them to use contraceptive methods that allow them to live stress-free.

What they do:

- Promote usage of subsidized, branded contraceptives sold through widespread established retail outlets.
- Actively conducts safe abortions, prevents unwanted pregnancies, averts risky abortions, assists in using IUDs, etc.

For further information, check out their [website](https://www.janani.org/index.php) <https://www.janani.org/index.php>.

## Safe2choose

Safe2choose connects women worldwide to accurate and tailored information on safe abortion options, allowing them to undergo a safe abortion where, when, and with whom they feel most at ease. Their website,

<https://safe2choose.org/abortion-counseling> provides information on how to attain abortion care, materials on safe abortion techniques, and counselling services.

Safe2choose's medically-trained counselling team is available from Monday to Friday.



## Hidden Pockets Collective

Hidden Pockets Collective (HPC), a Non-Profit Organization registered in India, has been using various digital tools to educate young people and advocate for policy changes around sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice. They utilize an intersectional approach and reproductive justice framework to tackle the taboo around reproductive health through a creative lens by connecting various movements like adolescent groups, privacy groups and technology committees, thus facilitating conversations around reproductive and sexual health among the youth and raising awareness.

Check out their unique work at <https://hiddenpocketscollective.org/>.

## Foundation for Reproductive Health Services India

Foundation for Reproductive Health Services India is a leading Indian Non-Governmental Organisation working since 2009 to enable women and girls to exercise their reproductive rights and choices. In 2015, it emerged as the country's

No. 1 provider of clinical family planning services in the NGO and the private sector. Service Delivery Channels:

- **Clinical Outreach Team:** A fully staffed and well-equipped mobile team provides family planning services at public sector sites.
- **Family Health Centre:** These health centres are a one-stop facility offering high-quality family planning and safe abortion services.
- **Public Sector Support:** FRHS provides public sector support in selected sites, identifying gaps and facilitating actions to improve quality and client-centeredness.

You can learn more about FRHS here

<https://www.frhsi.org.in/index1.php>.

### Asian Safe Abortion Partnership

Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP), facilitated by ICMA, works on south-south capacity building and providing a forum for experience sharing and interactions. Members

and partners at the country level get aided in their advocacy work through small grants, networking, and capacity-building opportunities.

Their primary goal is to promote, protect and advance women's sexual and reproductive rights and health in Asia by endorsing access to comprehensive abortion services and reducing unsafe abortion and its complications.

ASAP India can help you tackle difficult abortion questions and the personal upheaval they cause. You can write to them at [coordinator@asap-asia.org](mailto:coordinator@asap-asia.org).



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### ABOUT MANDONNA

Mandonna is a research company that specialises in producing publications and enabling critical reasoning in the field of gender studies by providing research consultancy services. We work on the motto of "**Sapere Aude**" which means "Having the courage to use your own reason". Our mission is to empower a comprehensive understanding of gender in all walks of life, by making research a powerful tool, available to all.

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