

Analyzing How Accessible Contraception Affects Abortion Rates in Developing Countries

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Abstract

The study examines the relationship between abortion rates and access to contraception, as well as the consequences for reproductive health outcomes, in order to demonstrate the significance of addressing contraception access in lowering abortion rates. It draws from studies that examine the effects of socioeconomic factors, access to contraception, and ethical issues related to reproductive healthcare on abortion rates.

The reproductive choices and access to contraception of individuals are greatly influenced by socioeconomic factors, including income, education, social support networks, and healthcare services. These factors also contribute to regional and population-level differences in abortion rates. The study emphasizes the value of comprehensive reproductive healthcare services in fostering reproductive autonomy, averting unwanted pregnancies, and safeguarding the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. These services include contraception counseling, education, and access to a variety of contraceptive methods.

In summary, the goal of this paper is to address access to contraception which is critical to lowering the prevalence of abortion, advancing reproductive autonomy, and accomplishing more general public health and social justice objectives. Policymakers, healthcare professionals, and advocates may fight to create environments where people can make informed decisions about their reproductive life, free from coercion and injustice, by giving investments in contraception availability and reproductive healthcare infrastructure priority.

Keywords: Contraception, Abortion, Reproductive Health, Socioeconomic and Access
Introduction

In women's lives, public health policy and societal discussions, abortion and contraception are two essential elements of reproductive health care. These subjects have intricate social, ethical, legal, and medical components that influence people's decisions as well as healthcare and public policy around the globe. The intentional ending of a pregnancy is known as an abortion, and it has been performed throughout history and in many cultures. It can happen naturally, in which case it's called a miscarriage, or artificially. Depending on the gestational age and local laws, medications or surgical methods may be used during an induced abortion. Despite advancements in medical technology and increasing awareness of contraception methods, abortions continue to be prevalent globally. According to estimates, there were approximately 73.3 million induced abortions worldwide each year between 2015 and 2019, with the majority occurring in developing countries where access to

contraception and comprehensive reproductive healthcare may be limited.¹

The term "contraception" refers to a broad category of techniques and tools intended to stop conception by blocking ovulation, fertilization, or the implantation of a fertilized egg. These techniques include intrauterine devices (IUDs), barrier techniques (like condoms and diaphragms), sterilization techniques (like tubal ligation or vasectomy), hormonal contraceptives (like birth control tablets, patches, and injections), and fertility awareness techniques.² Accessible contraception is essential for enabling individuals to make informed decisions about their reproductive health and family planning.

Numerous philosophers with differing opinions and points of view have added to the conversation over abortion and contraception. For example, in her well-known essay *A Defense of Abortion*, Judith Jarvis Thomson³ uses the well-known "violinist" analogy to support her claim that, even in cases when a fetus has a right to life, abortion is not inherently morally wrong. She supports a woman's right to an abortion, particularly when it puts her own life or health in danger. Also, Mary Anne Warren makes the case for personhood based on criteria, arguing that fetuses do not meet the requirements for persons and do not, therefore, have a right to life.⁴ She upholds a woman's right to an abortion on the grounds that the fetus has no moral standing and is an autonomous body. However, Peter Singer, who is well-known for his utilitarian viewpoint, contends that minimizing suffering and increasing well-being is necessary for the moral justifiability of abortion and contraception.⁵ In general, he is in favor of both, especially when doing so lessens unwarranted suffering or advances the wellbeing of current people. Additionally, Thomas Aquinas, based on his natural law theory, generally disagrees with contraception and abortion since he believes that they go against the intended purposes of human reproduction.⁶ He contends that both are immoral because they tamper with the natural order that God established.

Studies however have shown that increased access to contraception correlates with lower rates of unintended pregnancies and abortions.⁷ However, disparities in access to contraceptive services persist globally, particularly in low-income and marginalized communities, and countries and Nigeria as a country is not an exception contributing to higher rates of unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions.

 1. Bearak J, Popinchalk A, Alkema L, Sedgh G. "Global, regional, and sub-regional trends in unintended pregnancy and its outcomes from 1990 to 2014: estimates from a Bayesian hierarchical model". *The Lancet Global Health*. 2018;6 (4): doi: 10.1016/S2214-109X(18)30029-2. pp380-389

Trussell J. "Contraceptive failure in the United States". *Contraception*. 2011;83(5): doi:10.1016/j.contraception.01.021. Pp. 397 - 404

3. Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion, 2018," in *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 1, no. 1: 47-66.

4. Mary Anne Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion," *The Monist* 1973 57, no. 4: 439-459.

5. Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* 2011 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

6. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1947 translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province New York: Benziger Bros.

7. Finer LB, Zolna. "Declines in Unintended Pregnancy in the United States", 2008–2011. *N Engl J Med*. 2016;374(9): doi:10.1056/NEJMSa1506575. Pp. 843 - 852

It should be noted that abortion and contraception have a complex relationship with multiple facets and it must be noted that contraception is crucial to lowering the number of unintended pregnancies and the need for abortions. When using effective contraception, people can plan pregnancies according to their preferences and personal circumstances, giving them greater autonomy over their reproductive choices. Less access to contraception, however, may result in a higher rate of unintended births and a rise in the demand for abortion services, particularly in places where the practice is legal. According to Sedgh, Restrictive laws and the stigma associated with abortion can also make it difficult for people to get safe, legal abortions, which could force them to turn to dangerous procedures that carry serious health risks.⁸

Aspects of reproductive healthcare such as abortion and contraception are intertwined as said earlier on and have a significant impact on people individually, in their communities, and across society. Promoting reproductive autonomy, lowering the number of unwanted pregnancies, and guaranteeing safe and legal abortion services when needed all depend on accessible and comprehensive reproductive healthcare services, which include contraception education, counseling, and access to a variety of contraceptive options. Improving reproductive health outcomes and advancing gender equality require addressing obstacles to accessing contraception, such as lack of information, cultural norms, financial limitations, and restrictive legislation. Policymakers, healthcare professionals, and members of civil society can work to create environments where people can make informed decisions about their reproductive lives without being subjected to coercion or discrimination by placing a high priority on investments in reproductive healthcare infrastructure, education, and advocacy.

Importance of Studying Contraception's Impact on Abortion

Pointedly, researching how contraception affects abortion rates is important because it clarifies the intricate dynamics of reproductive health, influences public health regulations, and directs initiatives to increase access to quality reproductive healthcare services. Here are some main ideas emphasizing the value of this kind of research.

It must be noted that understanding the relationship between contraception and abortion rates provides valuable insights for policymakers in designing effective public health interventions. By identifying factors that influence contraceptive use and access, policymakers can develop targeted strategies to promote contraception uptake and reduce unintended pregnancies, consequently leading to lower abortion rates.⁹ The significance of enabling people to make knowledgeable decisions about their reproductive health is highlighted by research on the effect of contraception on abortion rates. With the help of easily accessible contraceptives, people can schedule pregnancies in accordance with their choices and unique situations, which lower the need for abortions and supports women's autonomy and rights around reproduction.

Also, research on contraception's impact on abortion rates helps identify disparities in access to reproductive healthcare services, particularly among marginalized populations. By examining factors such as socioeconomic status, education, and geographic location, researchers can

Sedgh G, Bearak J, Singh S, et al. Abortion incidence between 1990 and 2014: global, regional, and subregional levels and trends. *The Lancet*. 2016;388(10041): doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(16)30380-4. Pp. 258 – 267

Finer LB, Zolna, "Declines in Unintended Pregnancy in the United States", *Ibid*

pinpoint barriers to contraception access and advocate for policies aimed at reducing health inequities and improving reproductive health outcomes for all.¹⁰ The possibility of preventing unsafe abortions is one of the main advantages of researching how contraception affects abortion rates. It is crucial for people to have access to safe and legal abortion services in order to safeguard their health and wellbeing. Researchers can contribute to lowering the rate of unwanted pregnancies and, in turn, the need for unsafe abortion operations, hence reducing related health risks and complications. This can be achieved by encouraging the use of contraception and removing access barriers.

Furthermore, studying how abortion rates are influenced by contraception helps to improve and develop family planning services and initiatives. Healthcare professionals and policymakers can optimize resources and customize treatments to meet the various needs of individuals and communities by identifying effective contraceptive techniques and delivery approaches. Study results can improve counseling services and guide healthcare personnel' training to help people make educated decisions regarding family planning and contraception.

To sum up, contraception affects abortion rates is crucial for improving the state of reproductive health, encouraging reproductive autonomy, and resolving health disparities. Such plays a critical role in expanding access to complete reproductive healthcare services and eventually improving the health and well-being of individuals and communities by producing evidence-based insights and driving policy and programmatic initiatives.

Ethical Considerations of Abortion And Contraception

The individual autonomy, reproductive rights, society values, and moral convictions are all factors in the complicated and multidimensional ethical debate around abortion and contraception. Several significant ethical issues concerning abortion and contraception are listed below.

Reproductive autonomy is a fundamental ethical concept that discusses the freedom of individuals to make informed decisions about their reproductive lives without external pressure or coercion. It is relevant to conversations concerning both abortion and contraception. Maintaining an individual's right to decide whether to continue or end a pregnancy based on their own values and circumstances, as well as giving them access to thorough information, counseling, and a variety of contraceptive alternatives, is all part of respecting their autonomy.

The freedom of individuals to make private decisions about their bodies and reproductive health without undue interference from the government or other institutions is known as the right to privacy, and it is protected by a number of international human rights instruments. This emphasizes how crucial it is to safeguard people's privacy and confidentiality when they use reproductive healthcare services. It also covers decisions about the use of contraception and abortion.

Sedgh G, Bearak J, Singh S, et al. *Ibid*

Also, addressing gaps in access to reproductive healthcare services is another ethical aspect of abortion and contraception, especially for underprivileged and marginalized groups. Promoting reproductive justice and reducing health disparities resulting from socioeconomic status, geography, race, ethnicity, gender identity, and other intersecting factors require ensuring equitable access to safe abortion services and contraception.

Contraception and abortion provide difficult moral and religious issues that are relevant to a variety of civilizations, worldviews, and ethical frameworks. Respecting people's varied cultural and religious views on reproduction is vital when it comes to ethical issues. Additionally, universal human rights standards must be upheld, and everyone must have access to necessary reproductive healthcare treatments, regardless of their beliefs. A common topic in ethical debates concerning abortion and contraception is how to strike a balance between people's rights to reproductive freedom and physical autonomy and larger societal goals, such as the preservation of potential life and social welfare. By addressing both the individual rights of people and the collective societal obligations of promoting the welfare of all its members, ethical frameworks aim to resolve these conflicts.

Now, providing abortion and contraception services in an ethical and compassionate manner is mostly dependent on healthcare providers. Maintaining professional integrity, giving truthful and unbiased information, adhering to patients' autonomy and confidentiality, managing possible moral dilemmas while making sure that patients' needs and rights come first are all examples of ethical issues.

Ultimately, a number of intricate concerns about privacy, health justice, human autonomy, cultural diversity, and professional obligations are included in the ethical considerations surrounding abortion and contraception. It takes a sophisticated grasp of the ethical issues at hand as well as a dedication to protecting reproductive justice, human rights, and universal access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare services to address these issues.

Comparison of Abortion Rates Based on Contraception Access

Understanding how well contraceptive techniques work to prevent unwanted pregnancies and lower the demand for abortion services requires comparing abortion rates based on access to contraception. This comparative analysis looks at how abortion rates are affected by access to contraception and pinpoints variables that might affect access to and usage of contraception in various demographics and geographic areas.

According to Bearak, Countries with robust family planning programs and comprehensive contraceptive services tend to have lower abortion rates compared to those with limited access to contraception.¹¹ To support the view of Bearak, in most rural areas of this nation, there is little or no education concerning contraception resulting in the death of promising Nigerians. Abortion rates are clearly correlated with access to contraception, as numerous studies have shown. People can prevent unwanted pregnancies by using easily accessible and reasonably priced contraception, which lowers the demand for abortion services.

Ibid

Accordingly, factors such as socioeconomic status, education, cultural norms, and healthcare infrastructure play significant roles in shaping contraceptive use and abortion rates within populations.¹² Regional and national differences in abortion rates are partly caused by differences in availability to contraception. Abortion rates are often lower in wealthy countries with affordable and easily accessible contraception than in underdeveloped countries with restricted access to contraception and abortion regulations.

For Finer & Zolna, access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare services, including contraception counseling, education, and a range of contraceptive methods, is essential for reducing abortion rates.¹³ Abortion rates are often lower and reproductive health outcomes are better in nations that place a high priority on investments in family planning programs and the infrastructure supporting reproductive healthcare. In addition to making contraception more accessible, these programs target the root causes of unwanted pregnancies and abortions, such as poverty, gender inequity, and illiteracy.

The effectiveness of contraceptive methods in preventing unintended pregnancies varies depending on factors such as method type, adherence, and user preferences. Long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs) such as intrauterine devices (IUDs) and contraceptive implants have higher efficacy rates compared to short-acting methods like condoms or birth control pills.¹⁴ The possibility of unwanted pregnancies and abortions is decreased when people have access to a wide variety of contraceptive alternatives, allowing them to select the ones that most closely match their preferences and reproductive goals. The availability of contraception and the ensuing rates of abortion are significantly influenced by socioeconomic conditions. Higher socioeconomic class people frequently have better access to healthcare, education, and contraceptive services, which results in lower abortion rates when compared to lower socioeconomic class people. Potter maintains that, addressing socioeconomic disparities through policies aimed at improving access to education, employment opportunities, and healthcare can help reduce unintended pregnancies and abortions among marginalized populations.¹⁵

The legal and policy frameworks surrounding contraception access and abortion rights also influence abortion rates. Countries with progressive laws that prioritize reproductive rights and healthcare access tend to have lower abortion rates and better reproductive health outcomes. Conversely, restrictive abortion laws, lack of contraceptive coverage, and barriers to access due to stigma or discrimination can lead to higher abortion rates and increased risks of unsafe abortions.¹⁶

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (2019). ACOG Committee Opinion No. 707: Access to Contraception. *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 133(2), e73–e87. <https://doi.org/10.1097/aog.0000000000003074>. Pp. 73-87

Finer LB, Zolna, "Declines in Unintended Pregnancy in the United States", *Ibid*

Trussell J. Contraceptive failure in the United States. *Contraception*. *Ibid*

Potter JE, Stevenson AJ, Coleman-Minahan K, et al. Challenging unintended pregnancy as an indicator of reproductive autonomy. *Contraception*. 2014;90(5):476-481.

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Grimes DA, Benson J, Singh S, et al. "Unsafe abortion: the preventable pandemic". *Lancet*.

2006;368(9550): doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(06)69481-6. Pp. 1908 - 1919

Socioeconomic Factors Influencing Abortion Rates

Socioeconomic factors play a significant role in influencing abortion rates, as they can impact individuals' access to healthcare, education, economic opportunities, and social support systems. Understanding these factors is crucial for addressing disparities in abortion rates and promoting equitable access to reproductive healthcare services.

Addressing poverty through policies aimed at increasing access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities can help reduce abortion rates among low-income populations.¹⁷ Abortion rates are strongly correlated with income levels and poverty rates. Financial obstacles may prevent people with lower earnings from getting access to abortion, prenatal care, and contraception. Higher incidence of unwanted pregnancies and abortions can be attributed to lack of resources and unstable economies, as people may believe parenthood is financially unaffordable.

Also, Education plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding reproductive health and family planning.¹⁸ Fewer abortions are linked to higher levels of education because educated people typically have better access to contraception, reproductive health knowledge, and the freedom to make their own decisions. Comprehensive sexuality education programs can decrease the number of unwanted pregnancies and abortions by empowering people to make informed decisions about their reproductive lives and providing accurate information about contraception, pregnancy prevention, and abortion options.

Furthermore, reducing the number of abortions requires access to complete healthcare services, which include prenatal care, abortion services, and counseling on contraception. The accessibility of timely and reasonably priced reproductive healthcare treatments can be impacted by socioeconomic factors, including one's location, health insurance coverage, and the availability of healthcare providers. Abortion rates based on socioeconomic class and location may differ in rural and underserved populations due to difficulties in accessing abortion clinics or healthcare facilities that provide contraception services.

Access to abortion services and people's reproductive decisions might be influenced by their employment position and workplace rules as well. Unplanned pregnancies and abortions may be less common among people who have steady employment and supportive workplace practices, such as paid parental leave, flexible work schedules, and access to daycare. These people may also feel more confidence in their abilities to plan and sustain a family. On the other hand, those who encounter discrimination, job instability, or a lack of benefits at work can be more susceptible to financial constraints that affect their choice to become pregnant.

Finally, individuals' reproductive experiences and decisions are greatly influenced by their social support networks, which include friends, family, and local groups.¹⁹ Strong social support

Jones RK, Jerman J. "Abortion Incidence and Service Availability In the United States", *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*. 2017;49(1): doi:10.1363/psrh.12015. Pp. 17 - 27

Upadhyay UD, Johns NE, Meckstroth KR, Kerns JL. "Distance Traveled for an Abortion and Source of Care After Abortion". *Obstetrics & Gynecology*. 2017; 130 (3):doi:10.1097/AOG.0000000000002161. Pp. 616 - 624

Coleman-Minahan K, Stevenson AJ, Ghosh A, et al. "Pregnancy Intention and Maternal Social Support: Trends and Correlates in a Population-Based U.S. Sample". *Maternal and Child Health Journal*. 2020;24(8): doi:10.1007/s10995-020-02914-5. Pp. 956 - 965

networks can help people suffering unwanted pregnancies emotionally, practically, and financially, which lowers the chance that they will turn to abortion as their only choice. On the other hand, those who do not have social support may find it more difficult to make decisions about pregnancy and to have access to reproductive healthcare services, which could result in a higher rate of abortion. Socioeconomic variables significantly impact the prevalence of abortions by determining an individual's access to social support networks, healthcare, education, and employment possibilities. Comprehensive approaches that address underlying socioeconomic disparities, support equitable access to reproductive healthcare services, and enable people to make educated decisions about their reproductive lives are needed to address the discrepancies in abortion rates.

Conclusion: Importance of Addressing Contraception Access For Reducing Abortion Rates

Pointedly, reducing abortion rates and enhancing reproductive health outcomes globally without a nation suffering require addressing access to contraception. Encouraging people to make educated decisions about their reproductive lives through widespread access to contraception lowers the risk of unwanted pregnancies and the need for abortion services. A few essential factors can be used to outline the significance of improving access to contraception in order to lower abortion rates. People can schedule and space out pregnancies based on their preferences and personal circumstances when they have access to contraception. Healthcare practitioners can contribute to the reduction of unwanted pregnancies and the subsequent decrease in the need for abortion services by offering a variety of contraceptive choices and educating people about their use.

Also, access to contraception is crucial to advancing people's rights and reproductive autonomy. Policymakers and healthcare practitioners can empower people to take charge of their family planning and fertility decisions by making sure they get the information and assistance they need to make educated decisions about their reproductive health. Unwanted pregnancies can seriously endanger a person's health, especially if they end in termination. By preventing the necessity for abortion operations, access to contraception helps lower the risks and consequences related to those procedures for health. Healthcare professionals can contribute to the protection of people's health and wellbeing by encouraging the use of contraception. Abortions and unwanted pregnancies can have negative social and financial effects on people, families, and society as a whole. Access to contraception can lessen the financial, psychological, and social burdens that come with having unexpected children or having an abortion. This is because it helps avoid unintended pregnancies.

Furthermore, access to contraception and women's empowerment are intimately related. Access to contraception can advance gender parity, educational achievement, and economic opportunities by giving women agency over their reproductive decisions. Consequently, this advances more general objectives of social and economic growth.

Finally, addressing access to contraception is critical to lowering the rate of abortion, fostering reproductive autonomy, and enhancing the health of individuals and communities with regard to reproductive issues. Advocates, legislators, and healthcare professionals may fight to guarantee that everyone has access to the information and assistance they need to make an informed decision about their reproductive lives free

from prejudice and coercion by funding comprehensive reproductive healthcare services.

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