



ENHANCING INDICATORS FOR IMPROVING POLICIES AND EVIDENCE GATHERING SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE’S ACCESS TO ABORTION (Project INDIGO)

Data Analysis from Kaduna State Research

Kaduna is one of Northern States in Northwest Nigeria. The state has an interesting mix of both Christian and Islamic religious people. As a northern state, they are guided by the penal code of the Nigerian constitution and by their religious doctrines.

Kaduna is known to have a functioning health care system with Primary Health Facilities in every ward. Although sexual and reproductive health and rights topics are generally treated with a great level of concern in Kaduna State, the controversy around abortion can still be observed in this state. The penal code (*Nigeria’s Criminal Law: Penal Code Sections 232, 233 and 234*) and religious doctrines (Christianity and Islam) that guide the inhabitants of Kaduna state, opposes abortion as it is seen as ending a life. However, some of the elites and literate inhabitants of the state hold a stand for abortion.

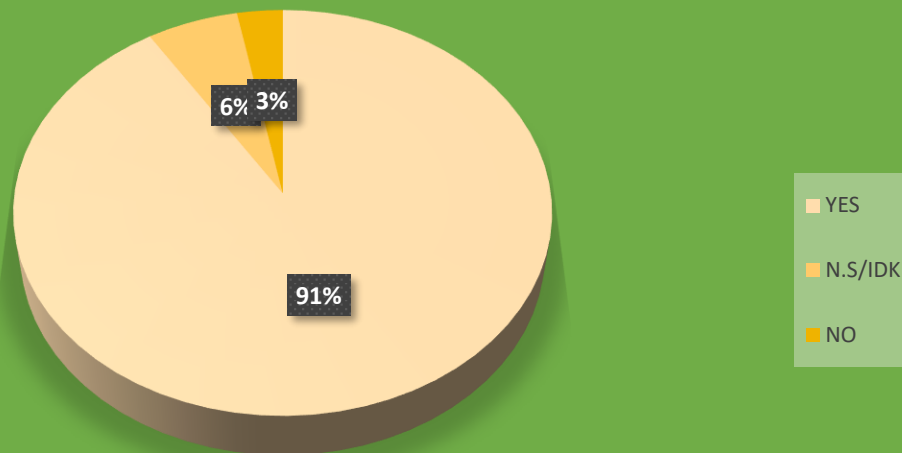
Several studies have shown that abortion is a contributor to maternal mortality and morbidity in Nigeria. A publication from Maternal and Perinatal Deaths Surveillance and Response in 2018 showed that 123 maternal deaths were recorded in 30 public health facilities in Kaduna State. One of the many reasons stated for these deaths is that 56% of the hospitals do not have the Manual Vacuum Aspiration Kit for the management of incomplete abortion.

This research study was aimed at understanding the scope of medical abortion in Kaduna State and to understand the level of availability of abortion services and abortion pills in the state to inform provision of better medical abortion services and expanding the cadre of medical abortion service providers in the state.

Kaduna South was the sample area for this study and we had respondents from Kakuri, Sabo, Barnawa, Nasarawa, Trikania and Romi communities.

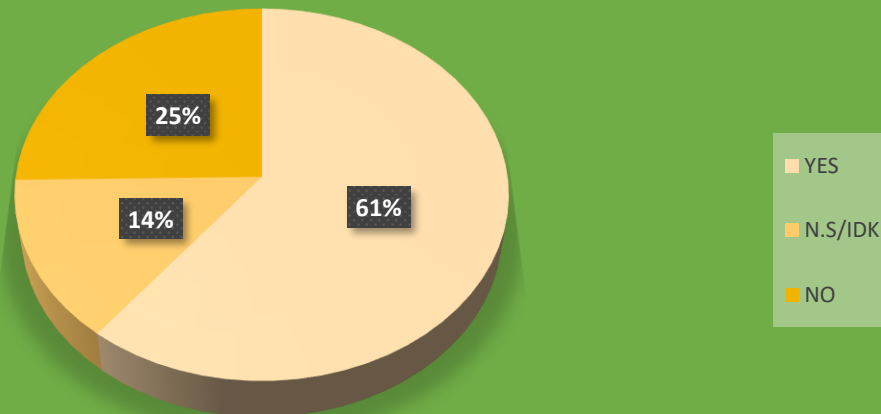
The survey questions and an analysis of the responses gathered are shown below;

1. Many women/girls die or have severe complications as a result of unsafe abortion



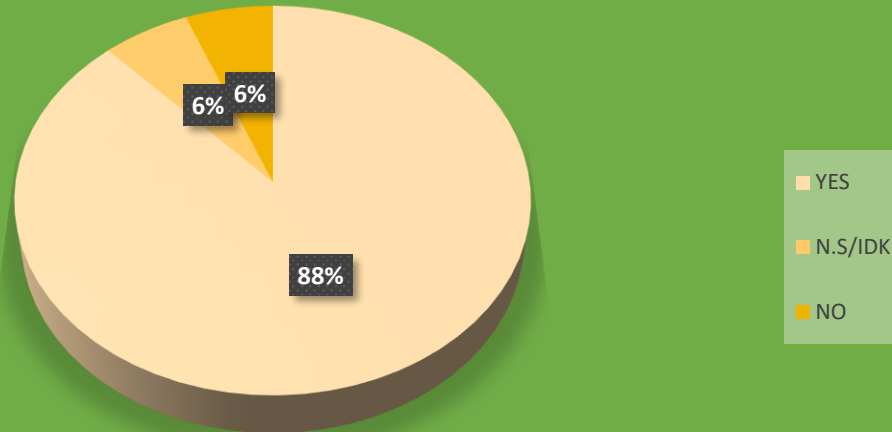
1. Majority of the respondents agreed with the above statement with respect to their state.

2. Do you think the unsafe procedures many people use for abortion has anything to do with it being criminalized in Nigeria?



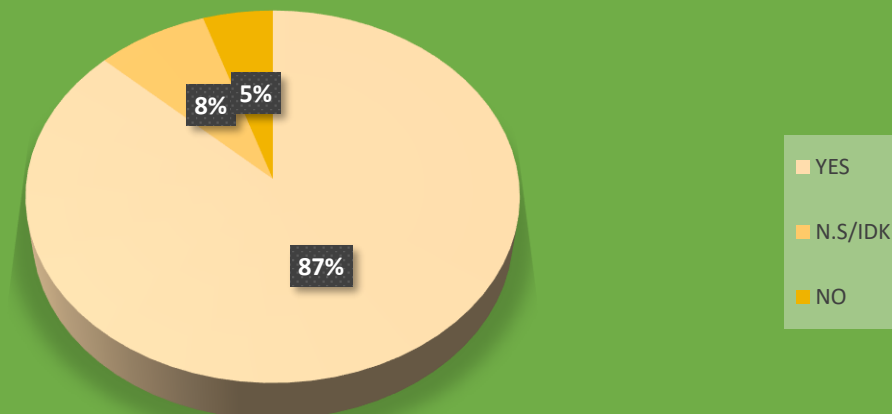
2. Most of the respondents agreed that if abortions become safer, it will be easier to influence the policies around it. The few who answered NO to the question said that the policies and laws on abortion were made because of the moral value attached to it in the state.

3. Comprehensive Sex Education in secondary schools can enlighten our young girls on unsafe abortion and its consequences and thereby reduce it



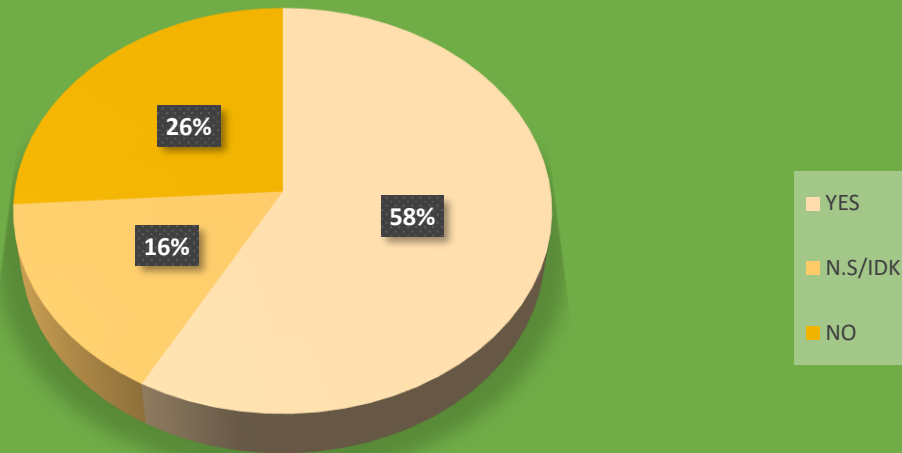
3. Majority of the respondents are in support of having CSE in their schools. They believe it will help to equip their young ones with the appropriate information and knowledge about their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

4. Do you think it is okay for an adolescent girl to ask her parents/guardians/teachers questions on the concept of abortion?



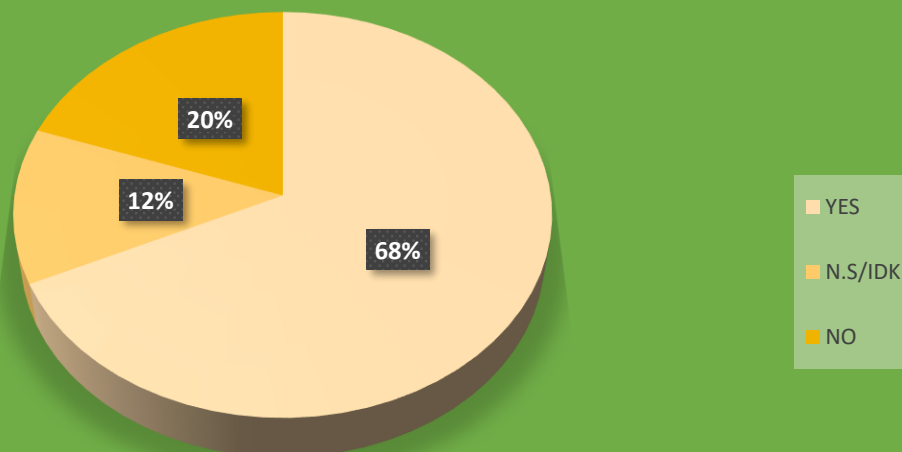
4. Most of the respondents here said it is high time parents/guardians/teachers started welcoming such questions from adolescent girls so that they can be properly guided. The respondents further said that if the parents/guardians/teachers do not welcome such questions, the girls will get answers from other inappropriate sources.

5. Do you think there are cases that would require a pregnancy to be terminated?



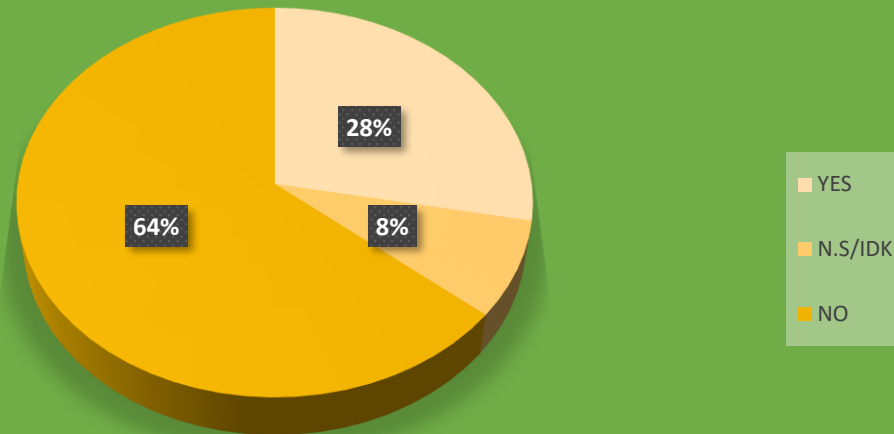
5. The greater percentage of respondents here think that there are cases that would require a pregnancy to be terminated. They all opined that it will be required if it's an ectopic pregnancy or if the pregnant person's life is at risk.

6. Do you know that safe abortion can be done with medically approved pills?



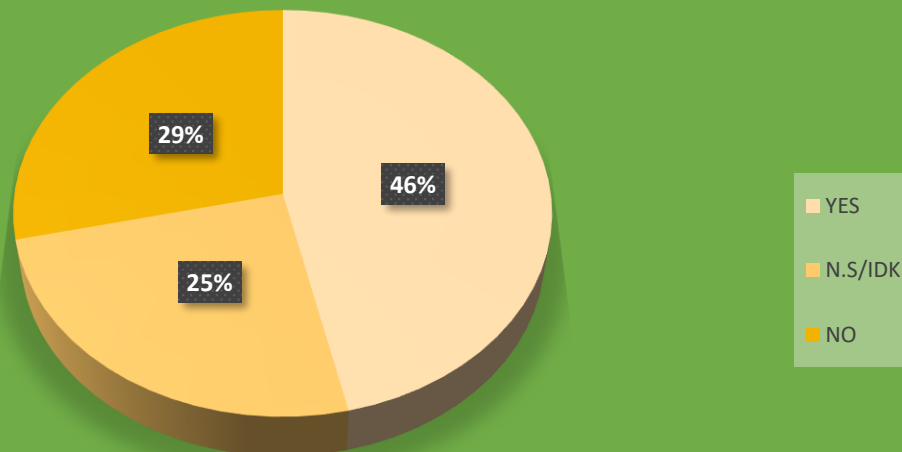
6. Over 20% of the respondents have no idea of medically approved abortion pills in Kaduna State.

7. Do you know any facility around you where you can easily access Medical Abortion (medically approved abortion pills)?



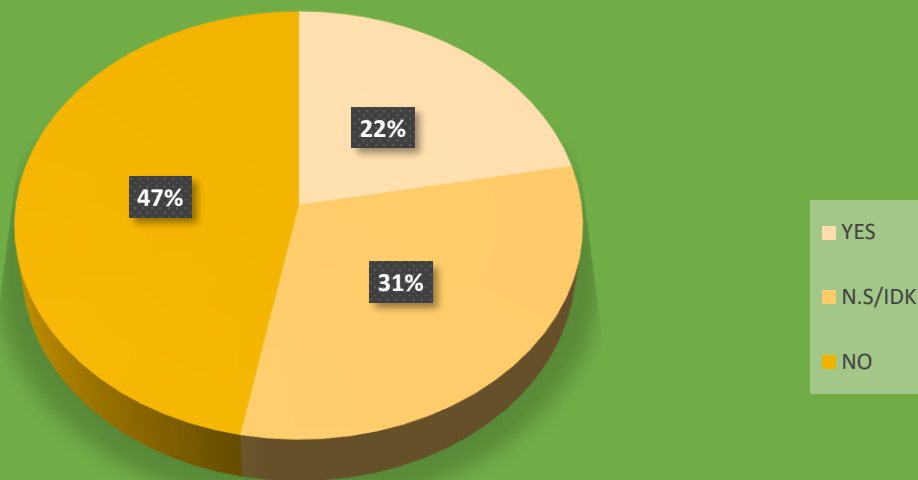
7. The majority of the respondents do not know any facility where medical abortion can be procured in Kaduna State. Only 28% of the respondents seem to know facilities where medical abortion can be procured. Some respondents provided names of facilities that provide medical abortion services in the state.

8. Do you think the facility in Q7 above is a safe place to procure safe abortion?



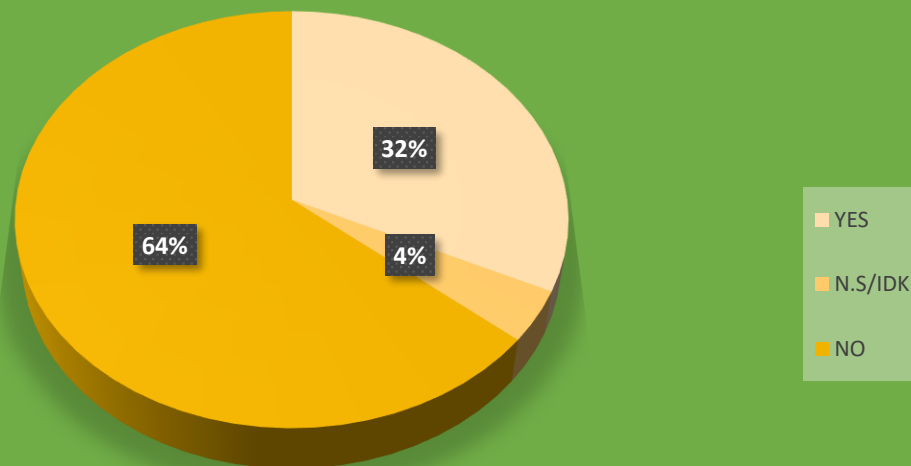
8. Out of the 28% who knew facilities that provide medical abortion services in Kaduna State, only 46% feel the facilities they know of are safe places to procure abortion. Over half of this number do not think the facilities they know that provides medical abortion services are safe.

9. Do you think there are enough facilities around you where people can access medical abortion services?



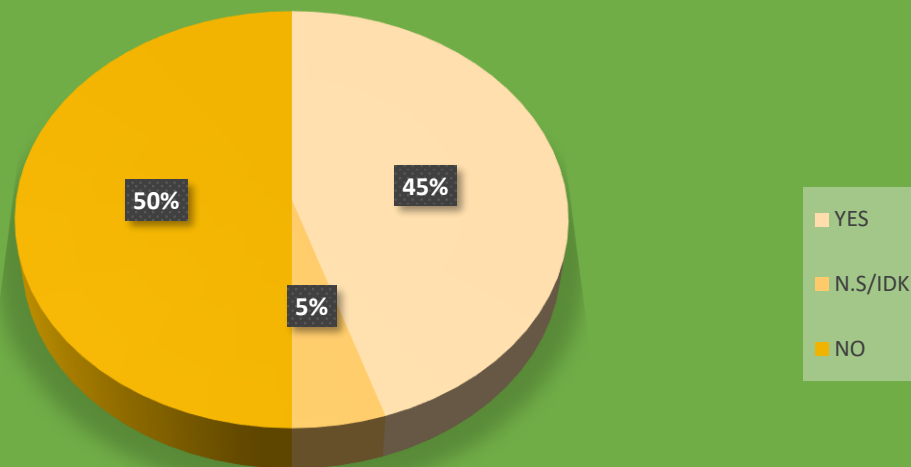
9. Here again, the greater percentage of respondents do not think there are enough facilities in Kaduna State where medical abortion services can be accessed.

10. Do you know of any medically approved medicines for abortion?



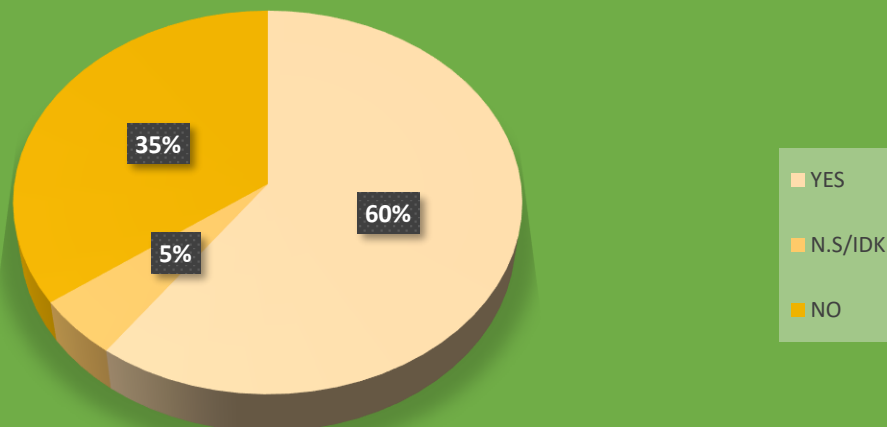
10. The greater percentage here does not know of any medically approved medicines for abortion. The few who answered YES mentioned POSTINOR 2 as the medically approved pill they know.

11. Have you ever heard of Misoprostol and/or Mifepristone?



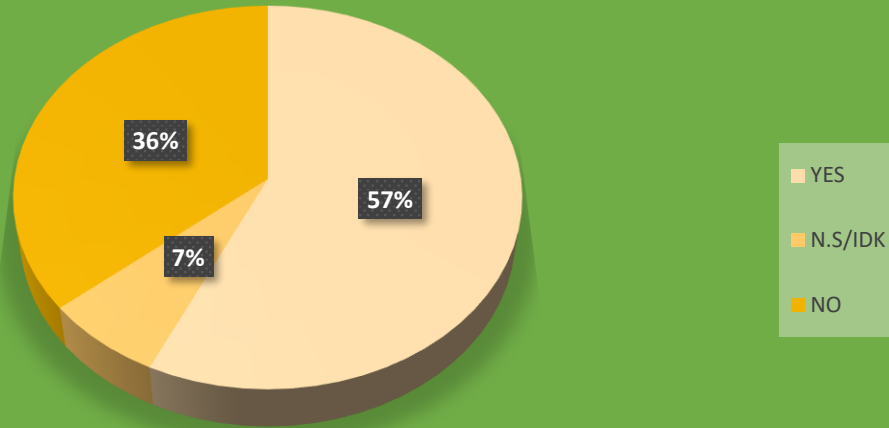
11. 50% of the respondents have never heard of Misoprostol or Mifepristone pills. The few who have heard of it shared that they know them for Ulcer treatment and other cases besides abortion.

12. Do you know anyone who has been harmed from an abortion because they did not use the right medicines or get a facility to procure safe abortion?



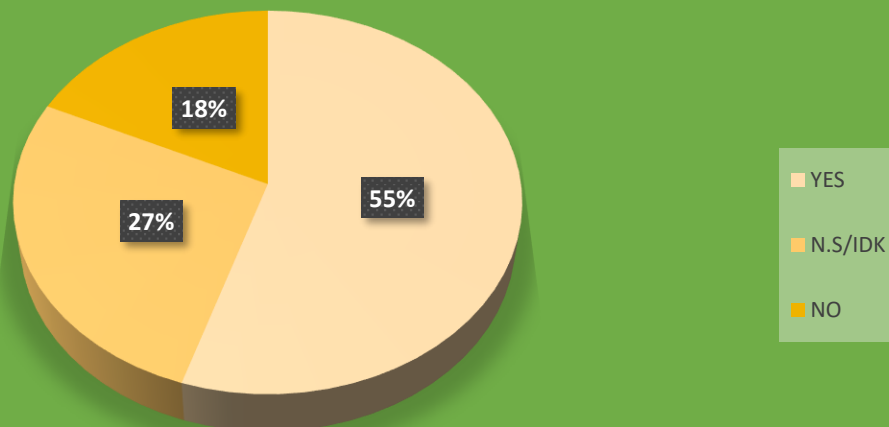
12. The greater percentage here said they know people who have either had a complication or died as a result of unsafe abortion.

13. Women and girls should be allowed to procure medical abortion as long it is safe and has no complications



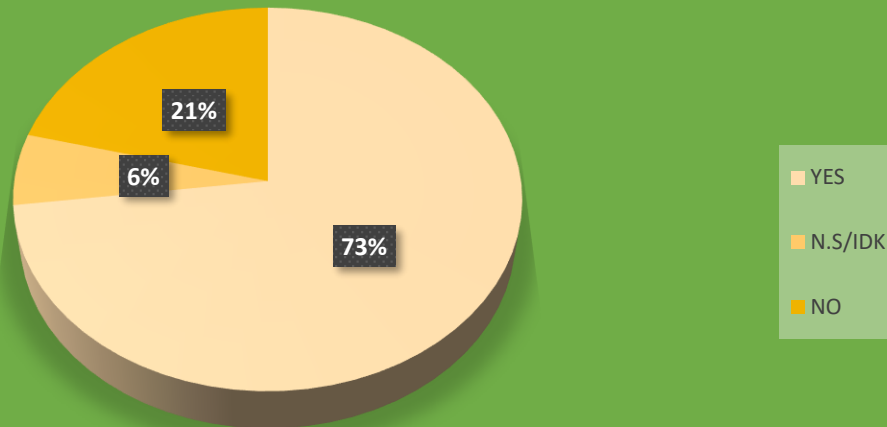
13. Most of the respondents here agreed that women and girls should be allowed to procure medical abortion as long as it is safe and has no complications. The fewer percentage said NO because they feel the women and girls will abuse the access.

14. Do you think there are qualified abortion service providers in Nigeria who can provide safe abortion services for women/girls?



14. 55% of the respondents think there are qualified abortion service providers in the country. The other percentage feel that healthcare providers in Nigeria should be properly trained on providing safe abortion services.

15. Do you think death from unsafe abortions will reduce if abortion is decriminalized and safe abortion services are made available?



15. 73% of the respondents here feel that the criminalisation of abortion in Nigeria is a driver of unsafe abortion and if abortion is decriminalised, unsafe abortion and its consequences will be greatly reduced.

KEY POINTS

- There is need for safe abortion services to be made available and easily accessible as lack of it has been shown from the research to be a major reason for the criminalisation of abortion generally.
- CSE is a valid tool to impart knowledge and the appropriate information on sexual and reproductive health and rights to young people.
- Parents/Guardians/Teachers of adolescent and young people should be sensitised to welcome questions on sexual and reproductive health from their children/wards/students as this is a valid means of learning for adolescents and young people.
- Health Care Providers in Kaduna State should sensitise the inhabitants of the availability of medically approved abortion pills as many inhabitants of the state have no idea of such pills.
- Facilities that currently provide abortion services in the state should be engaged for further sensitisation and advocacy to influence the abortion policy in the state and possibly expand the cadre of abortion service providers in the state.
- Most of the respondents suggested that Misoprostol and Mifepristone should be made available to facilities that currently provide medical abortion services in the state.
- Results from this research and its kind should be used to develop strong advocacy messages to improve policies that limit access to safe abortion in Kaduna State.