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Cabinet approves historic bill for women's welfare

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Cabinet approves the Assisted Reproductive Technology Regulation Bill 2020



The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has approved a historic Bill for the welfare of women in the country – the Assisted Reproductive Technology Regulation Bill 2020.

This follows the introduction in Parliament of the Surrogacy Regulation Bill 2020, and the approval of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Amendment Bill 2020. These legislative measures are path breaking steps to protect women's reproductive rights.

Once the Bill is enacted by the Parliament, the Central Government shall notify the date of the commencement of the Act. Consequently, the National Board will be constituted.

The National Board shall lay down code of conduct to be observed by persons working at clinics, to set the minimum standards of physical infrastructure, laboratory and diagnostic equipment and expert manpower to be employed by clinics and banks.

The States and Union Territories shall constitute the State Boards and State Authorities within three months of the notification by the Central Government.

The State Board shall have the responsibility to follow the policies and plans laid by the National Board for clinics and Banks in the State.

The Bill also provides for National Registry and Registration Authority to maintain a Central database and assist the National Board in its functioning. The Bill also proposes for a stringent punishment for those practising sex selection, sale of human embryos or gametes, running agencies/rackets/organisations for such unlawful practices.

The major benefit of the Act would be that it will regulate the Assisted Reproductive Technology services in the country. Consequently, infertile couples will be more ensured/confident of the ethical practices in ARTs.