Strengthening PC&PNDT Act

***Prelims**: Current events of national and international importance*

Why in News?

Recently, a national-level sensitization meeting convened by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW) on strengthening PC&PNDT Act, 1994 implementation.

- **Aim** – To strengthen the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994 **(PC&PNDT Act).**
- **Focused on** – Reinforcing the effective implementation of the PC&PNDT Act in view of emerging challenges.
- Coordinated efforts to address gaps, ensure compliance, and uphold the objectives of the legislation.
- **Emphasis** – The act to be not just a legal instrument but a moral and social safeguard against gender-biased sex selection.
    - On prevention Part of the PC&PNDT Act, rather than taking action on act violation.
    - Societal views on having a healthy Child rather than Gender of the child.
    - Upon the directions of the Supreme Court of India, on compliance including the Section 22 of the PC&PNDT Act.

***Section 22 of the PC&PNDT Act** explicitly prohibits advertisements and promotions related to pre-conception and pre-natal sex determination.*

- **Highlights** – The country has recorded a positive improvement in the **Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB).**

*As per the **Sample Registration System (SRS) Report 2023**, the SRB has increased by 18 points from 819 females per 1,000 males*

during 2016-18 to 917 females per 1,000 males in 2021-23.

- The **National Sex Ratio at Birth** for the period 2021-23 thus stands at 917 females per 1,000 males, reflecting the strengthened implementation of the act.
- **Campaign** – The session witnessed release of a TVC Video and informative posters developed by the Ministry as part of a 360-degree communication campaign,
    - **Theme** - JAB LADKA LADKI HEI BARABAR, THO POOCHNA KYOO.

PC&PNDT Act, 1994

• **The PC & PNDT Act, 1994** aims to prevent female foeticide and improve India's sex ratio.
• **Purpose**
- To stop the practice of sex-selective abortion, a discriminatory and inhuman act against women.
- To arrest the alarming decline in the sex ratio in India.
- To prevent the misuse of pre-natal diagnostic techniques for non-medical purposes.
• **Key Provisions and Prohibitions**
- **Prohibition of Sex Selection -** It is illegal to determine the sex of a foetus before or after conception.
- **Regulation of PNDT Techniques -** The Act regulates the use of pre-natal diagnostic techniques to detect genetic abnormalities or sex-linked disorders, but not for determining sex.
- **Ban on Sex Determination Tests -** Conducting or assisting in tests that determine the sex of a foetus is an offence.
- **Penalties -** Offenders can face imprisonment and fines, with penalties increasing for subsequent offences.
- Violations invite imprisonment up to 3 years and fine of Rs.10,000.
- **Registration and Control -** Unregistered units conducting PNDT tests are illegal.
- **Equipment Misuse -** Sale, distribution, or renting of ultrasound machines for sex determination is prohibited.
- **Advertising Ban -** Advertising pre-natal or pre-conception sex determination services is also an offense.

References

1. PIB| Strengthening PC&PNDT Act, 1994
2. PC&PNDT portal



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