

National-Level Sensitization Meeting Convened by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Strengthening PC&PNDT Act, 1994 Implementation

PC&PNDT Act is a Moral and Social Safeguard Against Gender-Biased Sex Selection: Ms. Aradhana Patnaik

Strengthened Implementation of PC&PNDT Act reflects in better Gender Balance at Birth

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The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, convened a National Sensitization Meeting on Strengthening the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

The deliberations focused on reinforcing the effective implementation of the PC&PNDT Act in view of emerging challenges, with an emphasis on coordinated efforts to address gaps, ensure compliance, and uphold the objectives of the legislation.

Delivering the keynote address, Ms. Aradhana Patnaik, Additional Secretary & Mission Director (NHM), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, emphasized that the PC&PNDT Act is not just a legal instrument but a moral and social safeguard against Gender-Biased Sex Selection. She also stated that, “Women by birth are more resilient and have stronger immune System, hence the survival of female child is more possible naturally than a male child.”



Furthermore, she added that, “Instead of taking against action Gender-Biased Sex Selection, we should focus on the Prevention Part of the PC&PNDT Act.” She also emphasised that “The focus of the society or an Individual should be having a healthy Child rather than Gender of the child.”

Highlighting the impact of the Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994, she said that, ‘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 progress made through strengthened implementation of the PC&PNDT Act and related interventions.’



The inaugural session witnessed the release of IEC material, including TVC Video, radio jingle and informative posters developed by the Ministry as part of a 360-degree communication campaign, with a theme “ , ?”. The National Sensitization Meeting, focused upon the directions of the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India in the case of WPC No. 341 (2008), the role of online intermediaries and digital platforms, and the monitoring compliance in the digital ecosystem, including the Section 22 of the PC&PNDT Act (which explicitly prohibits advertisements and promotions related to pre-conception and pre-natal sex determination),

highlighting the pressing issue of online violations and misuse of new technologies, reinforcing the urgent need for proactive engagement with digital intermediaries and stronger compliance mechanisms to uphold the spirit of the Act.



Ms Meera Srivastava, Joint Secretary, Reproductive and Child Health (RCH), MoHFW, Dr. Indu Grewal, Additional Commissioner- PC&PNDT, MoHFW, and senior officials from Central Ministries, Representative from 36 State Governments/UTs, enforcement agencies, digital intermediaries, were also present.



Representatives from the state governments including Telangana, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat, shared their good practices and challenges in enforcement, while representatives from online platforms engaged in an open discussion on strengthening compliance with Section 22.

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