



Abortion Rights Vs Ethics

For Mains: Abortion Rights Vs Rights of Unborn

Why in News?

Recently, in a landmark judgment, the [Supreme Court](#) of India allowed [abortions up to 24 weeks for all women](#), including unmarried women.

Why is there a Debate over Abortion Rights and the Ethical Dilemma?

- **Issues with Respect to Women's Right:**
 - **Woman's Right over her Body:**
 - A woman's right over her body has been advocated as a premise for freedom.
 - One cannot force a woman to bear a child in her womb and give birth to a child if she does not want to do so for various reasons.
 - **Health:**
 - Unwanted pregnancies affect both physical and mental health.
 - **Gender Equality:**
 - The right to abortion is vital for gender equality.
 - The right to abortion should be part of a portfolio of pregnancy rights that enables women to make a truly free choice whether to end a pregnancy.
- **Issues with respect to Fetus:**
 - **Right to Life:** Abortion amounts to the murder of a living being.
 - **Motherly Care:** It is a unique unspoken bond shared between two lives, which cannot be questioned or regulated by laws.
- **Issues with respect to Society in General:**
 - **Responsibility of State:** The State has the responsibility of valuing each life.
 - **Inclusion of all:** Abortion **should not become a mechanism of social control** for avoiding the appearance of differences or disabilities.
 - **Giving better life for Existing Children:** Many times, parents want abortion to be able to give a good life to existing children instead of dividing their meager resources into more children.

What are the Arguments against Abortion?

- Abortion is **not viewed by some as liberating**, but rather as a way for society not to cater to women's needs.
- Women don't need free abortion access, but their needs for financial and social survival as mothers are what they need for equality:
 - inexpensive, readily available childcare
 - a workplace or school that acknowledges the needs of mothers,
 - e.g., providing flexible scheduling and maternity leave,
 - state support that helps to reintegrate a woman into the workforce

What should be the Ethical approach to Abortion?

- Ethical approaches to abortion frequently invoke four principles.
 - Respect for patients' autonomy
 - Nonmaleficence (do no harm)
 - Beneficence (beneficial care) and
 - Justice
- The abortion dilemma has overlapping issues from different realms like legal, medical, ethical, philosophical, religious and human rights and it should be analysed from different perspectives.
- There cannot be any hard and fast rule over abortion and it must be discussed and deliberated to evolve a common consensus.

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