PCPNDT Act

In April Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued a notification which put on hold the implementation of certain rules of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex-Selection Rules) of 1996 till June 30, 2020.

- One of the suspended provisions, Rule 8, is intrinsically connected with the statute’s provisions dealing with the mandatory registration of genetic counselling centres, laboratories and clinics. Non-compliance leads to penalty.
- The rules require ultrasound clinics to maintain detailed records of pregnant women who undergo foetal scans in the clinics and submit them to local health authorities.
- Sections of doctors representing ultrasound clinics have in the past complained that such record-keeping is time-consuming.
- Ultrasound clinics, like other medical services, would be considered essential and could remain open during the lockdown.
- Foetal medicine specialists point out that the suspension of rules would enable clinics to process patients faster and reduce their waiting time at clinics in line with social-distancing measures.
- Suspending the rule means clinics need not produce any records till June 30.
- This could be misused by unscrupulous sections to conduct sex determination tests freely.
- By this Central government has arbitrarily and selectively weakened a legislation aimed at curbing the pernicious activity of sex-selection and sex-determination.
- Supreme Court recently asked the government to explain its decision to suspend crucial rules of a parliamentary law against pre-natal sex determination and sex selection till June end, amid the COVID-19 national lockdown.