

8th July 2008

Joint Statement from National Women's Organisations regarding ARTs and Surrogacy

We the undersigned women's organizations and people representing the interests of the weaker and marginalized sections, express our grave concern at the phenomena of indiscriminate proliferation in ART and surrogacy related services in many regions of our country. Many of these are indulging in exploitative practices.

The practice of wombs being rented out for a price has become a thriving and lucrative business, not in the least because neo liberal policies and globalization have transformed everything, including motherhood and various body parts, into marketable commodities.

The first and most serious concern that the women's organizations have is with regard to the growing commercialization of ARTs and the lack of regulation or monitoring by the medical profession and the Government of India, which is leading to the exploitation of vulnerable sections.

The women's movement would like to strongly suggest the following

1. The Government of India frame a National Policy on Assisted Reproductive Technologies as a whole, taking into account Surrogacy as an important aspect of the same. The Policy should reflect the stand of the Government of India, with respect to the human, social, ethical, medical, health issues at the core of the subject. The delay in generation of such a policy has already led to negative impact, since ARTs are flourishing in a rapid and ever increasing way. The Policy on Surrogacy and other ARTs should reflect the values and priorities of the Government of India, in safeguarding the rights and interests of all persons involved, especially the more vulnerable sections.
2. A very dangerous turn that the growth of ARTs in India has taken, is that in recent times, like other medical procedures, they have become one of the major reasons for medical tourism in India today. It is time to call to question the fact that we are in effect inviting people from all over the world, to utilize the "services" (including hiring the uterus of Indian women) in a cheap, and easy manner that their own countries would not allow.
3. We demand that a status report be made public by the Government of India, on Assisted Reproductive Technologies and ART clinics so that we can understand the reality as it is at the present point in time. This should be made transparent to the public.
4. The present ART guidelines of the Indian Council for Medical Research, as presented at the meeting organized by the Ministry of Women and Child Development are highly inadequate, and should be reviewed. We would also like to point out that these ART guidelines are mere guidelines which are not enforceable in a court of law.

दुरुपयोग
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5. Recognizing the fact that there is an increase in infertility due to various causes, there is a need to address the issue of ARTs and Surrogacy in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

We demand that there should be an immediate response from the Govt, and the issue should be treated with the urgency and seriousness that it requires.

ORGANISATIONS

1. GUILD OF SERVICE

SIGNATURES
V. Neel. Gu

2. All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA)

Budhe

3. National Federation for Indian Women (NFIW)

Annie Raj

4. Lawyer's Collective

5. Joint Women's Programme (JWP)

Jyotsna Chatterjee

6. Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)

Rudra

7. Initiative for Health, Equity and Society
Diverse Women for Diversity

Mirica Shiva

8. Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS)

For Subeeta