

**Policy Review of Pre Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic
Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act**

The State Development Policy Council (SDPC) (erstwhile State Planning Commission) organized a meeting to review the PC&PNDT Act - "The Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act" under the Chairmanship of Thiru. C. Ponnaiyan, Hon'ble Vice-Chairman, SDPC on 06.11.2020 with stakeholder departments and domain experts.

Dr. Atul Anand, I.A.S., Member Secretary (FAC), State Development Policy Council briefed the participants on the objective of the workshop. Experts from the field and department officials responsible for the implementation of the Act made presentations and participated in the discussions.

Pre Conception and Pre – Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act was introduced by the Government of India in 1994 and subsequently the Government of Tamil Nadu adopted the Act and came into effect from 1996. The Director of Medical and Rural Health Services is the State Appropriate Authority for implementation of the Act. This Act prohibits sex selection, before or after conception, regulates pre-natal diagnostic techniques for the purpose of detecting genetic abnormalities or metabolic disorders or chromosomal abnormalities or certain congenital malformations or sex – linked disorders and prevents misuse of diagnostic techniques for sex determination leading to female foeticide.

The general sex ratio and juvenile sex ratio have been declining in India and in Tamil Nadu as well. Tamil Nadu had shown progress in improving General Sex Ratio and Juvenile Sex Ratio from the census years 2001 and 2011. However, the State is yet to achieve a positive sex ratio as there are a lot of disparities across districts. In 2001, districts Dharmapuri, Salem, Namakkal and Theni were known for female infanticide and foeticide with a low Juvenile Sex Ratio. In 2011, in addition to the districts, Krishnagiri, Erode, Karur, Dindugul, Cuddalore and Ariyalur have also registered low Juvenile Sex ratio. Cuddalore and Ariyalur districts have child sex Ratio below 900. Lower sex ratio is not only a gender discrimination issue but a threat to balanced demography of a society.

Measures to prevent female foeticide and implementation of the PC&PNDT Act were discussed in the Policy Review meeting. Dr. S. Gurunathan, Director of Medical and Rural Health Services elucidated the implementation of the PC&PNDT Act in the State. The domain experts shared their perspective on the Act.

The Hon'ble Vice Chairman SDPC in his address stated though our State has performed remarkably well in the implementation of PCPNDT Act, socio cultural practices still pose to be a hindrance in improving the Child Sex ratio. He insisted for strict enforcement of Inheritance laws, economic empowerment of women, wage parity, stringent action against unauthorized USG training centres and drafting modalities to regulate Scan centres. Necessary awareness programmes are conducted for protection of children and Tamil Nadu has taken up progressive programmes for protection of girl children. He concluded that Womanhood of India should be empowered with Health and Nutrition.

Tmt. Jayashree Raghunandan, I.A.S., Additional Chief Secretary to Government opined that the good practices followed in other States and Countries and should be adopted in our State. She insisted for partnerships and collaboration with NGOs and retired health officials for their expertise and support in implementation of PC&PNDT Act.

The discussions have provided valuable inputs for improving the implementation of the Act. The recommendations of the workshop would be sent to Government for necessary follow up.

Member Secretary (FAC)
State Development Policy Council

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