

ABORTION: LEGISLATION AND BEYOND

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ABSTRACT

*Abortion has been a burning issue for ages, but lately, it has been making headlines for the wrong reasons. In August 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States of America **overturned the almost 50 years old Roe vs Wade judgment** that permitted access to abortion. Soon after this overturn, **Texas state laws banned abortion after 6 weeks**, with absolutely no exemptions for rape or incest, and with a slight exception for risk of life.*

But what the state fails to understand is that the human body does not even show symptoms of pregnancy until after 2 weeks of conceiving, and many people do not know of their pregnancy even after that.

ETHICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND SOCIAL IMPACTS

Let's go back to 2012 when a dentist from Ireland died due to septic miscarriage. This woman was Savita Halappanavar and she was blatantly denied an abortion on legal grounds. Abortion could have saved her. Following this, Ireland repealed the ban on abortion. Only after taking a life of a young woman (must note that most of these cases remain unreported) did they realize why women should have bodily autonomy. The legalization of abortion will allow individuals to have control over their lives.

Besides the economic and financial implications, that has the primary focus of the society, a person has to struggle with several mental and social hiccups, if and when they become a parent. A major argument of the conservatives is about how females should be sexually responsible and bear the consequences of their sex life, which not only creates a lot of stigma and taboo regarding pre-marital sex but also puts the burden of contraception on the person with the uterus. Unwanted pregnancy can cause substantial trauma for the child bearer and alter their education, career, and thus their entire future.

Ban on abortion will not stop “abortions”, it will only stop “safe abortions”. People who are desperate for a termination of their pregnancy will simply reach out for unsafe, and extremely dangerous alternatives.

Additionally, it is unfair to the child that will come into this world to subject them to an unhealthy environment- both psychologically and socially. In a world that is already drowning under the pressure of overpopulation and acutely scarce resources, it is simply unethical to make another individual go through probable abandonment (something that the conservatives constantly fail to address in their attempt at “saving human life”), for them to have a low standard of living and have their entire future altered too.

It's like killing two birds with one stone- the child bearer and the child. Way to go, conservatives!

SHOULD INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT A UTERUS HAVE A SAY IN IT?

This is not a subjective debate. The answer is simple and clear - *NO*. For example, one male human can impregnate several females in a matter of 9 months, where as a female, once pregnant, can only bear children after delivering, i.e. post 9 months, in most cases. This fact nullifies the conservatives' two arguments:

- (I) That the male should have a say in “the life that they created”,
- (II) That the female partner should be the responsible one.

In a relationship, yes, the partner without a uterus could have some say in the pregnancy; they could even volunteer to support the child financially and emotionally; but ultimately, it is not their body, and it should not be their choice. This debate doesn't remain legal anymore because it has extended over to a human's biological and basic rights. If a person decides that they do not want to carry a child, no entity has the right to hinder that choice.

Speaking of sexual responsibility, both partners engaging in any sexual activity are equally responsible (except in the cases of non-consensual sex), and so both of them should bear the consequences equally. Statistically, it is often the person with the uterus who bears the burden of contraception. Not only is it harder for these people to gain access to contraceptives due to social stigmas (especially in India), but it is also proven that contraceptive pills have high risks of failure. But be assured, there is still a male partner out there relying on his female partner for getting a condom.

Here's another shocker for the conservatives: there is a way of reducing unplanned pregnancies other than just “the youth indulging less in sexual activities”! It's called a vasectomy. Vasectomy is a surgery that prevents the entry of a sperm into the semen, and they are entirely unharmed and reversible. But oh, the state would rather ruin a female individual's life than police the male population.

NOT ALL NATIONS?

Yes, not all nations. The Center for Reproductive Rights provides detailed statistics about the world abortion laws, and yes, there are countries that acknowledge a person's right to bodily autonomy. Global abortion laws are divided into 5 categories: Prohibited altogether- 24 countries to save a life- 42 countries to preserve health- 48 countries Broad socio-economic grounds- 13 countries on request (varying gestational limits)- 75 countries in some countries, such as France, abortion is even covered by most health insurance plans. Also, in most countries, there are organisations that offer support to women who are considering or have had abortions. These organisations can provide information about the procedure, help women find a qualified doctor, and offer emotional support.

CONCLUSION

24 countries in our world still insist upon policing basic human rights. 700 million females of reproductive age are impacted by the inability to obtain safe and legal abortion services. One of these 700 million people could be someone you love, or worse, you. It is time that we realised how important each of these lives is and it is time our leaders stopped playing with these 700 million lives.

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