

# Experiences of providing safe abortion services in the context of PC-PNDT Act



Madhya Pradesh

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## BACKGROUND

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (MTP) and Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PC-PNDT) Act are two acts – both for protecting women's interest.



### MTP Act

- Enables women in India to seek abortion under certain specific conditions
- Specifies requirements for safe and legal abortion – who, upto how many weeks and where
- Specifies under what conditions can abortion be provided

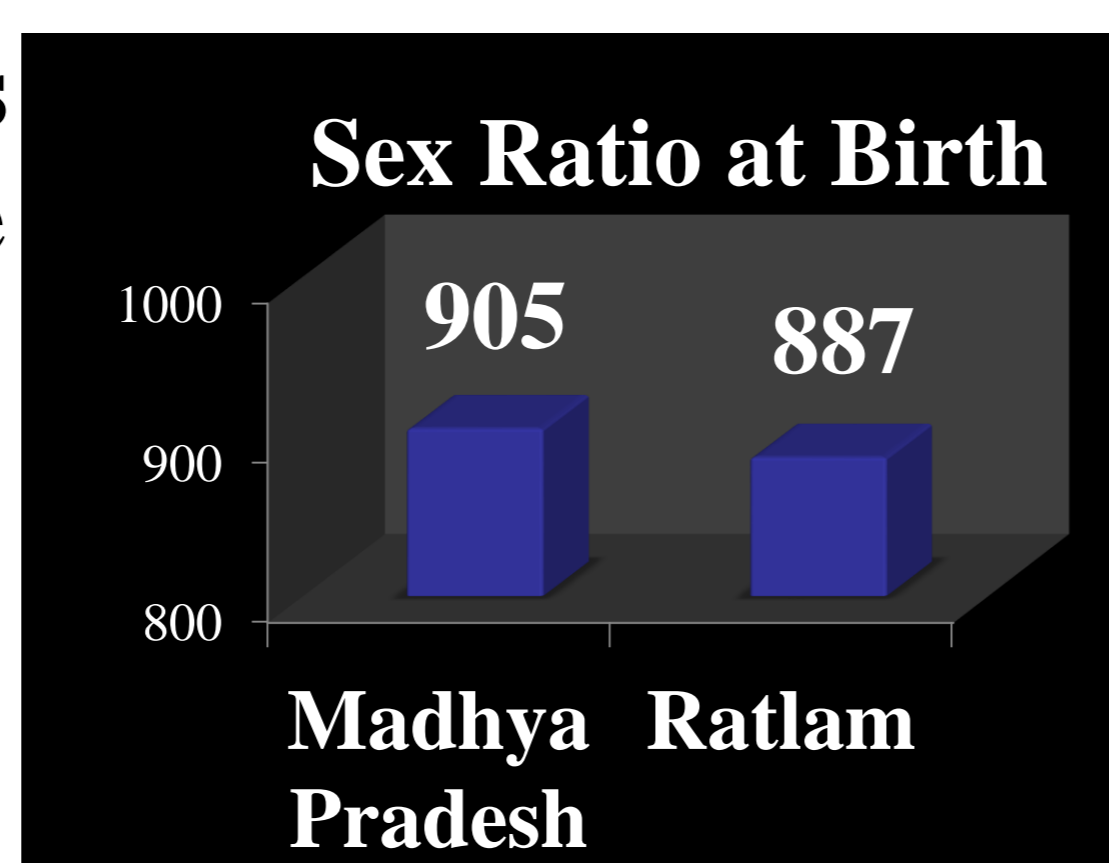
### PC-PNDT Act

- Enforced to stop female foeticides and control the declining sex ratio in India
- Prohibition of sex selection – before and after conception
- Prevention of misuse of sex determination leading to gender biased sex selection



## CONTEXT

- Ratlam has a **sex ratio of 887 females per 1000 males**. Major reasons can be attributed to deep-rooted social and cultural issues that value son over a daughter
- Political scenario is focused more on implementation of PC-PNDT Act rather than giving equal emphasis on implementation of PC-PNDT and MTP Act
- Due to implementation of '**Beti Bachao Abhiyan**', a campaign initiated by the Government of Madhya Pradesh aimed at arresting the declining sex ratio, state and district officials feel pressurized to focus more on implementation of PC-PNDT Act as this campaign is under personal stewardship of the Chief Minister of MP



## CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF MTP ACT

- ➔ Frequent memos/notices pertaining to PC-PNDT act which are difficult to understand and implement
- ➔ Rampant growth of illegal ultrasonography centers have made sex determination easy, and difficult to differentiate a genuine abortion case from sex-selective abortion
- ➔ Constant vigilance of local media on abortion cases – with enquiry and sometimes irrelevant queries of abortion cases
- ➔ Spill-over effect felt in Ratlam due a recent development in neighbouring district (Indore), where the District Magistrate issued a circular that all abortion cases should undergo ultrasonography along with identity proof of woman

## SUGGESTIONS

- Advocacy with policy makers and relevant officials to sensitize them on the need for equal emphasis on implementation of PC-PNDT Act and MTP Acts
- Sensitization of media on these Acts and guidance on correct terminology (eg. avoid use of words certain 'bhrun hatya') and appropriate use of graphics and headlines
- Approved private clinics should display about the availability of abortion services so that women feel less stigmatized and are able to access services
- Initiate Behaviour Change Communication BCC for public and private providers for proper counselling and to motivate community to stop sex determination



## CONCLUSION

There is a need to clearly understand and explain the true intent of both the Acts so that healthcare providers and officials have a better understanding of what each does with regard to the protection of safe abortion and the prevention of sex selection, so that both the Acts can be implemented without affecting the other.