

## What is 'imported' human embryo? Why the government has banned import of human embryo?



### Imported Human Embryo

On July 20, 2022, Union government restricted the import of human embryos in accordance with the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021 and Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act, 2021. Before this, such imports were restricted or prohibited except for research purposes.

Important features of the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act, 2021 include:

- Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill 2020 was passed in December 2021.
- It asks to constitute a “national registry and registration authority”. This authority looks after the clinics and medical professionals serving in India.
- Act defines ART to include all techniques which tries to obtain pregnancy by handling sperm outside the human body and then transferring the embryo into reproductive system of a woman.
- Some of the ART services are- in-vitro-fertilization, gamete donation, and gestational surrogacy.

#### ART

#### Procedures:

Under the ART procedures, eggs are removed from woman’s ovaries by surgery. It is then combined with sperm in the laboratory. Following this, it is either injected to woman’s body or are donated to another woman. Such treatments handle woman’s egg as well as man’s sperm. This procedure is used to treat infertility. **Ban on Embryos Import:**

There are many Indian couples, who freeze their egg or embryos in foreign countries. Once they move to India, they think of going through IVF and bring the embryos back. Such embryos are called as “Imported” Human Embryo. In India, importing embryo is considered an illegal act. India had banned the import of embryo, ovum or sperm in 2015. However, exception was given for research purposes. Government banned the import of embryos because several parents want a child with “non-Indian looks”. This was leading to illegal import, in which IVF clinics were also involved.