

# Health Ministry considering proposed amendments in abortion laws

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Amendments in MTP Bill still under consideration.
- Amended bill faced opposition in last year from doctors.
- Activists are in support of the amendments.



Abortion laws in India are in dire need to undergo a change; Photo: PTI

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) (Amendment) Bill that contemplates the extension of the legal limit for abortion from the 20 weeks to 24 weeks is still under consideration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Once finalised, it is supposed to be presented before the Cabinet for approval.

### **CABINET APPROVAL NEXT**

"After revising the Bill, we have asked for opinions from the doctors and stakeholders but nothing concrete has been decided so far. We will soon be presenting it before the Cabinet approval. Untill the cabinet approves the Bill, we cannot comment on it whether the

extension in legal limit of abortion will be done or not," said Ajay Kumar, under secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The Health Ministry could not present the draft Bill in the monsoon session of Parliament last year. After facing disagreement by medical professionals and field experts, the ministry had to revise the draft Bill.

### **NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN IN SUPPORT**

The National Commission for Women (NCW) had also proposed an extension of gestation limit for conducting MTP in case of certain vulnerable categories of women e.g. rape survivors, victims of incest, single (unmarried, divorced, widowed) and women with disabilities and also for cases of severe foetal abnormalities where these were detected after the existing gestation limit of 20 weeks.