

International Conference

On

“Exploring the Impact of Assisted Reproductive Technologies ART

on Women and Motherhood”

Organised by

Department of Women Education

Maulana Azad International Urdu University, Hyderabad.

&

Centre for Study and Research (CSR) New Delhi

16th, 17th January, 2025

Concept Note

Introduction

Advanced Reproductive Technology (ART) has profoundly changed how people perceive motherhood, gender roles, and gender identities. Surrogacy, artificial wombs, and gene editing technologies have opened a Pandora's box of questions about women's rights, roles, agency, classical feminist discourse, and the fundamental paradigms of motherhood and fatherhood. Primarily, these technologies have the potential to alter the traditional landscape of motherhood and womanhood.

An artificial womb, also known as an ectogenesis system, refers to a controlled environment that mimics the conditions of a natural womb. It provides essential nutrients, synchronised with oxygen, and maintains an optimal temperature for the gestation and development of a fetus outside the mother's body. Researchers have primarily explored this concept to address complications arising from premature births. Artificial wombs could potentially offer a more controlled and supportive environment than traditional neonatal intensive care units.

However, the concept raises serious concerns about the morality of growing human embryos or fetuses outside their biological environment. It also touches on issues related to maternal health, maternal-fetal relationships, and the potential separation of reproduction from the embodied experience of pregnancy.

Similarly, surrogacy is a reproductive arrangement where a woman, known as the surrogate, carries and gives birth to a child for another individual or couple, known as the intended parent(s). This process often involves assisted reproductive technologies (ART) and may be pursued for various reasons. These reasons include infertility, medical conditions that make pregnancy difficult or dangerous, and same-sex couples seeking to have a biological child. There are several types of surrogacy, each with distinct legal, ethical, and emotional considerations.

The International Conference on " Exploring the Impact of Advanced Reproductive Technologies on Women and Motherhood " aims to further discuss the effects of these technologies on women and motherhood. It positions itself as an intellectual crucible for the confluence of diverse disciplines. The conference seeks to delineate the complex interactions woven by technological innovation, ethical quandaries, and socio-cultural repercussions on the already stressed fabric of women's lives and the conceptualisation of motherhood.

Objectives

- To cultivate a sophisticated discourse that goes beyond a superficial examination of technological prowess.
- To encourage interdisciplinary discussions, urging participants to explore the intersection of technology, ethics, law, religion, culture, and feminism in the context of advanced reproductive technologies.
- To unravel the transformative impact of ART technologies on women's lives, identities, and societal roles. This includes examining the broader implications for the concept of motherhood.
- To explore the positive contributions that religion can make in this realm.

The conference aims to gather scholars, thinkers, and practitioners to explore the complex interplay between advanced reproductive technologies, feminist discourse, and the evolving landscapes of identity, agency, and motherhood.

Sub-Themes:

1. Ethical dilemmas in artificial wombs

- What exactly are artificial wombs
- Ethical considerations surrounding the use of artificial wombs
- The moral implications of growing human embryos outside the biological environment
- Maternal-fetal relationships and potential societal impacts.

2. Commercialisation of motherhood: What is new in the old

- Socioeconomic aspects of the commercialisation of surrogacy.
- Religio-cultural implications of the commercialisation of surrogacy.
- Ethical concerns and potential exploitation associated with commercial surrogacy.

- Legal regulations in different countries, along with the challenges of balancing the rights of surrogates and the desires of intended parents.

3. ART and religious discourse : Navigating need and faith

- Bring fresh insights in to the religious and ART discourse.
- Perspectives from different religions on ART.
- Investigate how various religious and cultural norms shape attitudes towards surrogacy and other assisted reproduction technologies.
- Explore the variations in perceptions of motherhood and how these perspectives influence societal views.

4. Feminism, motherhood and Beyond: The unravelling saga of ART

- How feminism interacts with ART
- Implications of a feminist view on women's rights and ART
- How the intersectionality of feminism, religion, agency, and ART is unfolding

5. Shaping ART Discourse: Feminism Neo-feminism and Beyond

- Provide insights into the evolving role of feminism in the discourse on ART
- Discuss and critically appraise reproductive autonomy, bodily autonomy, and the impact of these technologies on women's agency and identity.

6. Listening to surrogates: The Psychosocial Impact of Surrogacy on Surrogates

- Delineate the emotional and psychological experiences of surrogate mothers in both traditional and gestational surrogacy arrangements.
- Discuss the need for supportive measures and ethical considerations regarding the mental well-being of surrogates.
- Address issues related to the emotional trauma experienced by surrogates.

7. ART and Family Structures: Reshaping or dismantling?

- Critically examine the evolving discourse on family.
- Explore how ART challenges traditional family structures and dynamics.
- Critically evaluate the societal implications of diverse family forms that result from assisted reproduction.

8. Reproductive Tourism and Cross-Border ART: The Rich, the poor and the disadvantaged

- Briefly describe the phenomenon of reproductive tourism, where individuals travel across borders to access ART services.

- Discuss the legal and ethical challenges associated with cross-border reproductive care and potential global standards.
- Critically examine the exploitation that cross -border ART can bring.

9. Traversing the less traversed: long term health impacts of ART on “The mothers”

- Discuss the potential long term health consequences of ART procedures for both mothers and children, using empirical evidence.
- Present case studies and discuss research findings on health outcomes, highlighting the need for ongoing monitoring.

Expected outcomes

The international conference aims to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the transformative impact of advanced reproductive technologies on women and motherhood. Participants are expected to engage in meaningful dialogue, share diverse perspectives, and propose recommendations for ethical practices in the field of assisted reproduction. Considering

Travel support

No TA/DA will be provided to the participants. Please manage your own TA/DA expenses.

Local hospitality

Lodging will be provided by the conference organisers. Delegates are expected to cover any additional expenses they may incur, including food.

Accommodation

Limited accommodation is available on the university campus for out- of-station delegates, based on a first -come, first -served basis.

Registration fee

There will be no registration fee.

Call for paper

- Participants are advised to contribute original, unpublished, and well -researched papers for the international conference.
- Participants can submit their papers in either English or Urdu.
- Full paper shall be submitted by the participants with a word count 4000 to 6000 words typed in double space A4 size paper using 12 pt Times New Roman font. Heading and referencing pattern would be accepted in APA (7th Edition) format with in-text citations.

The tentative schedule of the two-day international conference would be as follows:

- Inaugural session
- Panel Discussion
- Technical session
- Valedictory session

Important Dates

- Abstract Submission Deadline: November 15, 2024
- Notification of Acceptance: November 20, 2024
- Full Paper Submission: January 1, 2025
- Conference Date: 16th,17th January 2025

Seminar Coordinators:

1. Dr. Shabana Kesar
Asst. Professor, Department of Women Education
MANUU, Hyderabad.
2. Dr. Ayesha Alvi
Group Head, Islamic Perspectives in Bioethics,
Centre for study and Research (CSR),
New Delhi.