

Argentina abortion law & abortion laws around the world

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In news

Recently, Argentina's lower house passed a bill to allow abortion

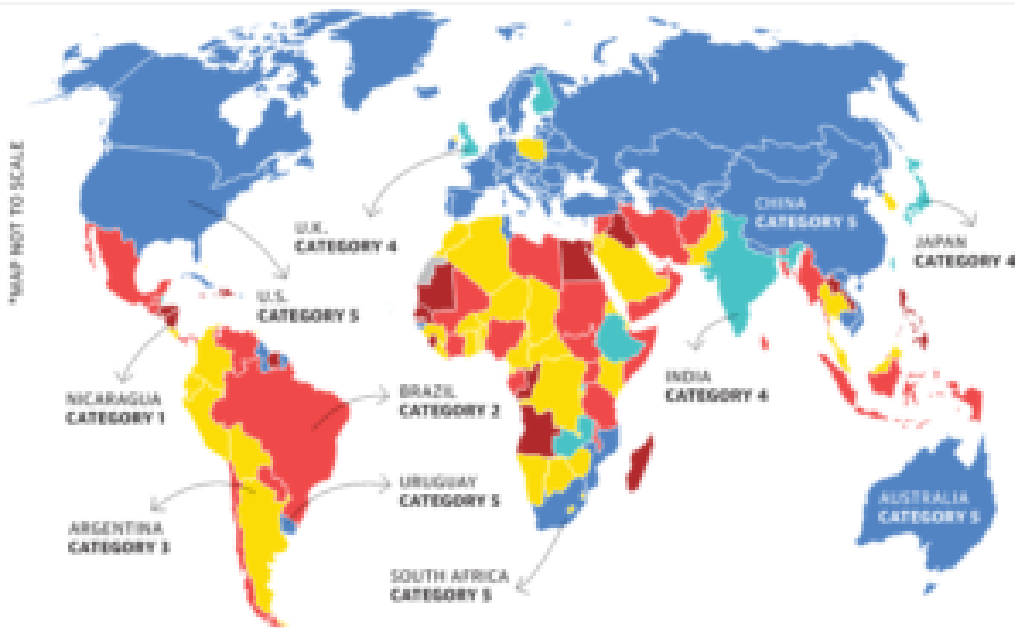
Key highlights

- With the passage of the bill, Argentina will become only fourth Latin American country where abortion is legal
- Latin America has some of the world's most restrictive abortion laws, with only three countries Cuba, Uruguay and Guyana are permitting elective abortions and several, including El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras, outlawing them altogether

Status of abortion laws in the world

- The laws of as many as 56 countries permit abortion on the basis of health or therapeutic grounds.
- 23.7 crore (14%) of women of reproductive age live in 56 countries in this category.

The map below depicts the legal status of abortion across countries, based on five broad categories:



The categories are:



Category 1: Prohibited altogether:

- The laws of some countries do not permit abortion under any circumstance, including when the woman's life or health is at risk.
- About nine crore (5%) women of reproductive age live in 26 countries that prohibit abortion altogether.

Category 2: To save a woman's life:

- The laws of some countries permit abortion when the woman's life is at risk.
- About 35.9 crore (22%) women of reproductive age live in 39 countries that allow abortion to save the woman's life.

Category 3: To preserve health:

- The laws of as many as 56 countries permit abortion on the basis of health or therapeutic grounds. 23.7 crore (14%) of women of reproductive age live in 56 countries in this category.

- Argentina currently belongs to this category. If the latest Bill gets approved, the country may move to a higher category.

Category 4: Broad social or economic grounds:

- Apart from health, some countries consider a woman's social or economic circumstances too to permit abortion under a broad range of circumstances.
- About 38.6 crore people or 23% of women of reproductive age live in 14 countries that fall under this category.

Category 5: On request (gestational limits vary):

- 59 crore (36%) women of reproductive age live in countries that allow abortion on request. 67 countries globally fall within this category.
- The most common gestational limit for countries in this category is 12 weeks.
- Gestational limits are calculated from the first day of the last menstrual period, which is considered to occur two weeks prior to conception.

Status of abortion laws in India

India is among the countries that fall under category 4. The Cabinet has recently approved the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020 (MTP Bill, 2020).

Medical Termination of Pregnancy(Amendment) Bill 2020

- Currently, abortion requires the opinion of one doctor if it is done within 12 weeks of conception and two doctors if it is done between 12 and 20 weeks.
- The 2020 Bill increases the time period within which abortion may be carried out. **The Bill allows abortion to be done on the advice of one doctor up to 20 weeks, and two doctors in the case of certain categories of women between 20 and 24 weeks.**
- The Bill sets up state level Medical Boards to decide if

a pregnancy may be terminated after 24 weeks in cases of substantial foetal abnormalities.