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SURROGACY: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract: With the advancement in the field of science and technology, which had made the human life easier several developments have also been done in the domain of human reproduction. Surrogacy is one among them as it is a complex situation of application of technology to assist reproduction where many actors from different socio economic background are involved in the whole process. The technological innovations has changed the whole picture of society at basic level be it family, marriage and kinship. The traditional concepts of these institutions have all together changed as society is in a state of transformation due to scientific advancements.

Index-Terms: Surrogacy, Society, Reproductive Technologies

I. INTRODUCTION

The word surrogacy is derived from the Latin word “surogare” means appointed in place of. It also means substitute that is appointing a person in place of another person for a specific role. In the domain of reproduction, it simply means a woman becoming pregnant i.e., acts as a surrogate for a couple of a single parent who are unable to conceive or procreate. By the invention of IVF (In vitro Fertilization), surrogacy has become an important assisted reproductive Technology. The New Encyclopedia Britannica defines “Surrogate motherhood” as the practice in which a woman “surrogate mother” bears a child for couple unable to produce children in the usual way, usually because the wife is infertile or otherwise unable to undergo pregnancy.

Surrogacy is an arrangement in which a woman agrees to bear a baby of other person/s. Across the World, many couples who are childless due to infertility or health issues are opting for Assisted Reproductive Technologies that is artificial insemination and In Vitro Fertilization. Among which Gestational Surrogacy is the most preferred one. Broadly the different types of Surrogacy are:

1. **Genetic Surrogacy (conventional Surrogacy)**
2. **Gestational Surrogacy (Full Surrogacy)**
3. **Altruistic Surrogacy.**
4. **Independent Surrogacy.**

Genetic/ Traditional/ Conventional Surrogacy: Genetic Surrogacy involves the insemination of surrogate’s egg with the intended father’s sperm. It happens in the cases where female partner is unable to bear a child due to problems related to health or when a single person or homosexual want to have a baby.

Gestational Surrogacy/ Full Surrogacy: It includes the implantation of fetus utilizing the eggs or sperm of intended couples, a given egg given treated with a sperm from the intended father. Modern Surrogacy is the most successful treatment of fertility. It is the most common form of Surrogacy as it provides legal protection for both the parents as well as the Surrogate.

Altruistic Surrogacy: In this type of Surrogacy, a woman agrees to be a surrogate or substitute with being compensated. In surrogacy arrangements, the substitute or a surrogate receives compensation for her time and effort on top of general cost related to the process of pregnancy. It is practiced by helping someone who share close social relation that is close friends or for any family member.

Independent Surrogacy: In this type of Surrogacy, a surrogate is working without the support and expertise of any agency or a surrogate goes through the process for someone she is aware of. In some circumstances, when the situation gets complicated and emotions run high, the agency plays an important role or acts as a point of support and protection.



Source:

https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Ffertilityworld.in%2Fblog%2Fcomplete-surrogacy-process-in-india%2F&psig=AOvVaw3obK75gMs1luha_tRZ6py-&ust=1685707945516000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CBEQjRxqFwoTCLDszsyFov8CFQAAAAAdAAAAABAg

Sociological interpretation:

Robert K. Merton an American Sociologist framed “**Social Strain Theory**” to analyse various processes of society. The theory was used to explain social structure and Anomie. Social structure within the society exerts pressure on certain persons in the society to achieve socially approved goals through they lack the means of achieving them. The pressure that is exerted on individual by society causes strain. Strain refers to clash between culturally defined goals and institutionalized means to achieve them. The pressure exerted on individuals they make their own way of achieving the goals set by them by the society.

Taking inferences from the theory of Merton and applying it to the concept of Surrogacy society exerts pressure on family to give birth other factors such as infertility and other social issues may prevent an individual from given birth because an individual is incapable to do so in this scenario family exerts pressure on individual and uses other means to achieve goal. The means used in this case is the Surrogacy where the womb is borrowed to produce babies who are unable to conceive. During this process, Merton linked this theory to deviance explaining that the couple who uses Surrogacy to have a baby has accepted the cultural goal (birth giving) but refused the traditional means (natural way of giving birth) and find a new technique of producing off springs (Surrogacy). This process is terms as innovation in his theory of strain. Thus the person who accepts this technique of producing offspring is termed as innovator.

Sociological Definitions on Family

- **George Peter Murdock** defined **Family** as “The family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually co –habiting adults.”
- **Talcott Parson** defined **Family** as “ Modern families are ‘isolated nuclear families’ and they evolve as a requirement of industrialization in society as there is a functional relationship between the family and economic system of the society.”
- **Ogburn and Nimkoff** defined **Family** as “The basic functions of family are affectional, economic, recreation, protective and educational”.

Conclusion

As far as the above discussion is concerned, technological innovations had made the human life easier but the advancement of surrogacy has affected the basic institution of society. The definitions that have been framed by the sociologists related to the structure of family is somewhat different from today's family structure as the essence of these institutions is in a change due to advancements in human reproduction. The whole framework of institutions is going through a process of change as a technological invention has affected the every aspect of human life.

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