The Lok Sabha on Monday passed the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019 by a voice vote. The Bill, introduced by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, seeks to ban commercial surrogacy and provides for constituting a National Surrogacy Board, State Surrogacy Boards, and the appointment of appropriate authorities for the regulation of the practice and process of surrogacy.

Speaking on the Bill Dr. Vardhan said: “The Bill is aimed at ending the exploitation of women who are lending their womb for surrogacy, and protecting the rights of children born through this. The Bill will also look after the interests of the couple that opt for surrogacy, ensuring that there are laws protecting them against exploitation by clinics that are carrying this out as a business.”

The Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill regulates altruistic surrogacy and prohibits commercial surrogacy. It defines surrogacy as a practice where a woman gives birth to a child for an eligible couple and agrees to hand over the child to them after the birth. The Bill allows altruistic surrogacy, which involves a surrogacy arrangement where the monetary reward only involves medical expenses and insurance coverage for the surrogate mother. Commercial surrogacy is prohibited under the Bill.