

Dear All

The US Supreme court overturned a 50-year-old judgment, Roe vs Wade and asked the states to decide on abortion. This is a HUGE change, and many argue that it is taking women back 50 years. This will have a serious bearing on many aspects of American life and policy and will also impact the world. Over the last two days, I have tried to learn as much about this super sensitive topic, so here are my learnings:

1. The US Supreme court overturned a 50-year-old Roe vs Wade decision, giving a woman a right to abortion in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.
2. Roe vs Wade of 1973 is a famous case where in 1969, Jane Roe challenged the abortion law in a Texas court. The district Attorney of Dallas in the case was Henry Wade and hence the case came to be labelled as Roe vs Wade. Jane Roe was a mother of two and was pregnant with a rape and hence wanted to abort. The court ruled in her favor and the court prescribed three trimesters – the first trimester of 12 weeks was in the hands of the woman; the next 12 weeks were to be government regulated and the third trimester had to have the states approval. This continued for the last 50 years.
3. Today there are 64 countries in the world who have legalized abortion. Some do it in case the mother's life is at risk, some do it in case of rape etc.
4. This new judgement is an interpretation of constitutional law and is deeply political. Donald Trump made an election promise that he would appoint conservative judges and ensure that Roe vs Wade was overturned. Those appointments happened and today we have this outcome. This cannot be overturned by any protest now. About 26 states already have banned abortion. There will be a few states led by democratic states like California and New York where abortion will continue to be legal. There are about 600,000 to 800,000 abortions a year in the USA.
5. Many tech companies have offered to pay the travel cost for a woman wanting to get an abortion now.
6. This is a deeply emotional topic and the decision to abort is one of the most difficult decisions a woman can make. Here's a raw statistic, the rates of abortion are the same whether the country has legalized abortion or outlawed it! One in six pregnancies ends in abortion for various reasons.
7. Pro-abortion supporters argue that the Roe vs Wade ruling forced women to choose between family and career, and today times have changed. In a twist, many American women are deleting their period tracking app because they are concerned that this data will get into the wrong hands!!
8. 60 % of Americans want abortion to be legal, however there are many parts of America where that data is the opposite.
9. Expectedly, UK, France, Canada have spoken against this new ruling calling it a regressive move. President Biden himself calls it a dark day.
10. Here's the final surprising data point – the first country to legalize abortion was Lenin's Russia in 1920 followed by Ukraine ruling then in 1921!! Northern Europe followed in the 1930s, the UK in 1965 and USA in 1973. It's a full cycle back now!!

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