

Redrafted Bill on Passive Euthanasia

Why in news?

\n\n

\n

- The redrafted bill on euthanasia is released as the 'Management of Patients with Terminal Illness - Withdrawal of Medical Life Support Bill'.

\n

- Click [here](#) to know more.

\n

\n\n

How did the legislation evolve?

\n\n

\n

- Passive Euthanasia is the withdrawal of medical treatment and life support of a terminally-ill patient to facilitate (natural) death.

\n

- The Supreme Court had recognised passive euthanasia for the first time in the 2011 in Aruna Shanbaug case.

\n

- Accordingly, withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment from patients not in a position to make an informed decision (incompetent case) is permitted.

\n

- The SC further laid down comprehensive guidelines on passive euthanasia, which was to be followed until a law was enacted in this regard.

\n

- Subsequently, government drafted the Medical Treatment of Terminally Ill Patients [Protection of Patients and Medical Practitioners] Bill earlier in the year.

\n

- But, given some concerns regarding the possible misuse of its provisions, the SC suggested adequate changes to ensure proper safeguards.

\n

- It even recommended a proper medical board examination of all cases of euthanasia.

\n

\n\n

What does the new bill provide for?

\n\n

\n

- **Approval Procedure** - Hospitals have to set up approval committees for considering cases of passive euthanasia.

\n

- These panels will decide on applications of “Living will” which is a written document by a “competent” terminally ill patient.

\n

- This will allow them to explicitly state their desire against life-prolonging measures when recovery is not possible.

\n

- For incompetent terminally ill patients, unanimous consent of near relatives has been suggested to apply for withdrawal of medical treatment.

\n

- **Other Provisions** - Any distortion of facts before such panels may lead to a maximum of 10 years in jail and a fine of up to Rs 1 crore.

\n

- The draft provides for pain reducing medication (palliative care) even after passive euthanasia is approved.

\n

- It clearly stated that it did not encourage active euthanasia which is the acceleration of death by using lethal means.

\n

- The bill also provides for the protection of medical practitioners and care givers, by absolving them of guilt in acts of passive euthanasia.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu, Hindustan Times

\n