




Disha Bill, 2019

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Why in News

The **Andhra Pradesh Disha Bill, 2019** i.e. **Andhra Pradesh Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2019** which provides for death sentence for offences of rape and gangrape has been passed recently.

The Bill amends relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and the Code of Criminal Procedure Act, 1973.

Features Different from Existing Laws

- A **Women & Children Offenders Registry** is to be established, operated and maintained by the Andhra Pradesh Government in an electronic form. This registry will be made public and will be available to law enforcement agencies.
The Government of India has also launched a **National Registry of Sexual offenders** but the database is not digitized and is not accessible to the public.
- **Exclusive punishment of death penalty in cases relating to rape and murder of a woman** where there is adequate conclusive evidence.
At present, provision for punishing an offender in a rape case is a fixed jail term leading to life imprisonment or the death sentence.
- **Reduces the judgment period:** The judgment will have to be pronounced in **21 working days** from date of offence in cases of rape crimes with substantial conclusive evidence.
The **existing** judgment period as per the Nirbhaya Act, 2013 and Criminal Amendment Act, 2018 is **4 months** (two months of investigation period and two months of trial period).

- **Stringent punishment for sexual offences against children:** The Bill prescribes life imprisonment for sexual offences against children.
 - In cases of molestation/sexual assault on children under the **POCSO Act, 2012**, the punishment ranges from a minimum of three years to a maximum of seven years of imprisonment.
- **Punishment for harassment of women through social media:** In cases of harassment of women through email, social media, digital mode or any other form, the guilty shall be punishable with imprisonment.
 - At present, **no such provision exists in the Indian Penal Code.**
- **Investigation Related Provisions**
 - **Exclusive special courts** in each district of the State to ensure speedy trial. These courts will exclusively deal with cases of offences against women and children including rape, acid attacks, stalking, voyeurism, social media harassment of women, sexual harassment and all cases under the POCSO Act.
 - Constitution of **special police teams** and appointment of the special public prosecutor in special courts. There is **no such provision in existing laws.**

Source: TH