



Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Why in News?

A petition has been filed in the **Delhi High Court** to stop a person, who has been suffering from **Chronic Fatigue Syndrome** since 2014, from travelling to Europe to undergo a physician-assisted **euthanasia**.

What is Chronic Fatigue Syndrome?

▪ About:

- It is a **serious and debilitating disease** that affects the **nervous system**, the **immune system** and the **body's production of energy**.
- It is also known as **"Myalgic Encephalomyelitis"**.
- Its potential results are **viral or bacterial infection, hormonal imbalances and genetic predispositions**.
- It can **affect anyone**, from children to adults of all ages.

▪ Symptoms:

- Significantly **lowered ability to do activities** that were performed before the illness.
- **At least 6 months (or longer) of debilitating fatigue** that is more severe than everyday feelings of tiredness.
- Most recognizable symptom is **Post-Exertional Malaise (PEM)**.
 - A **"crash"** in physical/mental energy following even minor activities like grocery shopping or brushing teeth.
- **Other Symptoms:**
 - Trouble sleeping, difficulty in thinking, memory retention and concentration, dizziness/light-headedness, headaches, muscle pain, joint ache, flu-like symptoms, tender lymph nodes and digestive issues.

▪ Treatment:

- There is **no specific test for the disease**, and doctors have to rely on medical examinations, blood and urine tests.
- Doctors have recommended ways to deal with the symptoms of the disease like **"Pacing"** in which patients learn to balance rest and activity to prevent crashes caused by exertion.

What is Euthanasia?

▪ About:

- **Euthanasia** is the practice of **ending the life of a patient** to limit the patient's suffering. The patient in question would typically be terminally ill or experiencing great pain and suffering.

▪ Types:

- **Active euthanasia:**
 - Killing a patient by active means, for example, injecting a patient with a lethal dose of a drug. Sometimes called "aggressive" euthanasia.
- **Passive euthanasia:**
 - Intentionally letting a patient die by withholding artificial life support.
- **Voluntary euthanasia:**
 - With the consent of the patient.
- **Involuntary euthanasia:**

- Without the consent of the patient, for example, if the patient is unconscious and his or her wishes are unknown.

▪ **Legal Provisions in India:**

- In 1994, the [Supreme Court of India](#) in **Gian Kaur vs State of Punjab** had held that **both assisted suicide and euthanasia were unlawful**.
 - The bench stated that **the [right to life](#) did not include the right to die**, hence **overruling the two-judge bench decision in P. Rathinam vs Union of India which struck down section 309 of [Indian Penal Code](#) (attempt to suicide) as unconstitutional**.
- In 2011, the Supreme Court in **Aruna Ramchandra Shanbaug vs Union of India** held that **passive euthanasia could be given a nod in case of exceptional circumstances and under strict monitoring of the apex court**.
- In 2018, the Supreme Court declared **the right to die with dignity as a [fundamental right](#)**, **allowing passive euthanasia** in the country.

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