



## DNA Bill, 2019

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### Why in News?

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Recently, the scope for violations of privacy in the proposed DNA data bank was discussed by a parliamentary panel on the contentious **DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019.**

### Key Highlights

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- **The Bill** provides for the establishment of a **National DNA Data Bank** and **Regional DNA Data Banks** for states.
  - DNA laboratories are required to share DNA data with the National and Regional DNA Data Banks.
  - Every Data Bank will be required to maintain indices for the following categories of data-
    - a crime scene index
    - a suspects' or undertrials' index
    - an offenders' index
    - a missing persons' index
    - an unknown deceased persons' index
- It aims to **store the unique genetic information for administrative purposes.**
- It also provides for the **establishment of a DNA Regulatory Board**, which will supervise the DNA Data Banks and DNA laboratories.
- **The Secretary, Department of Biotechnology**, will be the **ex officio Chairperson** of the board and the additional members will be-
  - experts in the field of biological sciences
  - Director General of the National Investigation Agency
  - Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation

### Concerns

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- **Threat of data Hacking:** After the incident of **malware infection at the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant** there is a risk of this sensitive data bank being hacked.
- **Violation of Human Rights:** DNA can play an important role in solving the crimes but it also puts human rights at stake. It can lead to misuse and miscarriages of justice.
- **Not Cost Effective:** Creating large databases is not a very budget friendly option with limited resources.
- **Inadequate Resources:** Currently, laboratories are able to assess only one or two samples at a time. This results in delayed investigations.
- **Possibility of misuse of DNA samples:** Through DNA, not only the identity of a person can be known but also other characteristics like if she/he is suffering from any disease etc. There is a possibility that people having access to DNA samples, blackmail the person who has submitted his/her DNA sample.
- **Single Use:** Bill envisages the use of a DNA sample for a particular specified purpose only. For any other purpose, the DNA sample will have to be processed again.

## Way Forward

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- **Modernisation of Technology:** It will help process around 40 to 50 samples at a time which will in the quick resolution of various cases and thus will strengthen India's Justice Delivery System.
- **Multiple usage:** Use of DNA cannot be restricted to a particular purpose. A series of situations may arise that can demand usage of a DNA sample again and again.
- **Effective implementation:** It is required to ensure the proper storage and usage of DNA bills.
- **Securing Human Rights:** The authorities need to regulate three broad areas of concern – capacity, training and consent before unleashing the DNA Bill in India.

**Source: The Hindu**