



DNA Profiles Would Not Be Kept Permanently

The DNA profile of a person in a criminal case will remain in the DNA databank till the case is solved. It will be removed after a judicial order. This will be specified in the rules which will come after Parliament's approval of the DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2018.

- The Bill is the latest version of the DNA 'Profiling' Bill framed by the Department of Biotechnology in 2015.
- The aim of that draft legislation was to establish an institutional mechanism to collect and deploy DNA technologies to identify persons based on samples collected from crime scenes or to identify missing persons.
- In its report no. 271, Law Commission had raised the concern over whether the databanks were secure enough to protect the privacy of those from whom DNA details were collected. It also deliberated on how, and who were authorized, to collect such information.

DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill 2018 envisages

- DNA Profiling Board- The 11-member Board is supposed to be the regulatory authority that will grant accreditation to DNA laboratories. It will be a full-time Board and chaired by the Secretary, Department of Biotechnology. This will ensure that private laboratories don't proliferate and work without scientific validation.
- DNA Data Bank- To help in investigations, central and regional databanks would store DNA profiles under various heads, such as a 'crime scene index' or 'suspects index' or 'offenders index.'
- The Board, in consultation with members of the judiciary, will frame rules on how long the DNA details of an entrant on a crime index would be maintained.

Benefits

- Forensic DNA profiling helps in solving cases involving offenses that are categorized as affecting the human body (such as murder, rape, human trafficking, or grievous hurt), and those against property (including theft, burglary, and dacoity).
- As per the statistics of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for 2016, the aggregate incidence of such crimes in the country is in excess of 3 lakhs per year. Of these, only a small proportion is being subjected to DNA testing at present. The Bill will ensure speedier justice delivery and increased conviction rate.
- The Bill will enable the cross-matching between persons.
- The technology is also useful during natural disasters to identify dead bodies. Establishing the identity of missing persons with certainty becomes easier with the use of DNA technology.