

EUTHANASIA IN INDIA – A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF ITS LEGAL AND ETHICAL DIMENSIONS

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ABSTRACT:

Euthanasia, or "mercy killing," is a contentious subject in India, entailing significant legal and ethical challenges. While passive euthanasia was legalized by the Supreme Court in *Aruna Shanbaug v. Union of India (2011)* and reaffirmed in *Common Cause v. Union of India (2018)*, active euthanasia remains illegal. The ethical debate revolves around personal autonomy, the sanctity of life, and the risk of coercion. A comparative analysis with countries like the Netherlands and Canada highlights India's restrictive approach. Challenges include legal ambiguities, inadequate palliative care, and socio-cultural opposition. Future prospects suggest the need for comprehensive legislation, stronger safeguards, improved healthcare infrastructure, and enhanced public awareness to ensure euthanasia laws uphold both dignity and ethical integrity.

Introduction:

Euthanasia, often referred to as "mercy killing," is a highly debated topic worldwide, involving the intentional act of ending a person's life to relieve them from suffering. It raises complex legal, ethical, and moral questions, particularly in a country like India, where diverse cultural, religious, and social perspectives shape public opinion. The term euthanasia originates from the Greek words *eu* (good) and *thanatos* (death), meaning "good death" or "peaceful death." The discussion on euthanasia in India gained momentum with significant judicial interventions, particularly in cases such as *Aruna Shanbaug v. Union of India (2011)* and *Common Cause v. Union of India (2018)*, which played a crucial role in shaping its legal status. While passive euthanasia, involving the withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment, has been legalized under strict guidelines, active

euthanasia remains illegal and is considered homicide under Indian law.¹⁴⁷⁹

The ethical debate surrounding euthanasia revolves around several key concerns, including the right to die with dignity versus the sanctity of life, patient autonomy, and the potential for abuse in a society with unequal access to healthcare. Supporters argue that individuals suffering from terminal illnesses and unbearable pain should have the right to choose a dignified death rather than prolonged suffering. On the other hand, opponents raise concerns about the moral implications of allowing euthanasia, the possibility of coercion, and the ethical dilemma it poses for medical practitioners.¹⁴⁸⁰ Furthermore, religious beliefs play a significant role in shaping perspectives on euthanasia in India, with Hinduism, Islam,

¹⁴⁷⁹ *Aruna Ramachandra Shanbaug v. Union of India*, (2011) 4 SCC 454

¹⁴⁸⁰ *Common Cause v. Union of India*, (2018) 5 SCC 1

Christianity, and other faiths offering varied views on life, suffering, and death.¹⁴⁸¹

Despite the Supreme Court's landmark rulings, the implementation of euthanasia laws in India remains complex due to ambiguities in legal interpretation, lack of public awareness, and ethical concerns. The country still struggles with inadequate palliative care facilities, making the right to a dignified death a challenging issue. This article critically examines the legal and ethical dimensions of euthanasia in India, analyzing its current status, ethical considerations, challenges, and the way forward.

CONCEPT AND CLASSIFICATION OF EUTHANASIA

Euthanasia, derived from the Greek words *eu* (good) and *thanatos* (death), refers to the deliberate act of ending a person's life to alleviate suffering. It is often associated with individuals suffering from terminal illnesses or irreversible conditions that cause extreme pain and distress. The concept of euthanasia is fundamentally linked to medical ethics, legal principles, and human rights, making it a highly debated issue worldwide. While some consider euthanasia an act of compassion that upholds human dignity, others view it as morally and legally problematic due to concerns about misuse and the sanctity of life.¹⁴⁸²

Euthanasia is broadly classified into various categories based on the method of administration and the patient's consent. The primary classifications include active euthanasia and passive euthanasia. Active euthanasia involves the direct administration of lethal substances or interventions to cause death, such as a physician giving a patient a fatal injection. This form of euthanasia is currently illegal in India and is considered an act of culpable homicide under the Indian Penal Code.¹⁴⁸³ In contrast, passive euthanasia entails the withdrawal or withholding of life-sustaining

treatment, such as stopping ventilator support or withholding artificial nutrition and hydration. The Supreme Court of India legalized passive euthanasia in *Aruna Shanbaug v. Union of India* (2011) and later reinforced this position in *Common Cause v. Union of India* (2018), recognizing the right to die with dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution.¹⁴⁸⁴

Another classification of euthanasia is based on the patient's consent, categorized as voluntary, non-voluntary, and involuntary euthanasia. Voluntary euthanasia occurs when a competent patient explicitly requests to end their life, often through a legally recognized directive such as a living will. Non-voluntary euthanasia applies to cases where the patient is incapable of making an informed decision, such as individuals in a persistent vegetative state, and decisions are made by legal guardians or family members. Involuntary euthanasia, on the other hand, is performed without the consent of the patient and is often equated with murder or medical malpractice.¹⁴⁸⁵

A related concept is physician-assisted suicide (PAS), where a doctor provides the means for a patient to end their own life, such as prescribing lethal medication. Unlike euthanasia, where the act is carried out by another person, PAS involves the patient taking the final action themselves. While PAS is legal in some countries like the Netherlands, Canada, and certain U.S. states, it remains prohibited in India under existing laws.¹⁴⁸⁶

The classification of euthanasia highlights the complexities involved in its ethical and legal evaluation. While passive euthanasia is permitted under strict legal guidelines in India, the debate over active euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide continues to raise moral, legal, and medical concerns. As discussions on the right to die evolve, it

¹⁴⁸¹ Patra, M. (2020). "Euthanasia: A Religious and Ethical Perspective." *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics*, 27(3), 245-250.

¹⁴⁸² Beauchamp, T. L., & Childress, J. F. (2019). *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*. Oxford University Press.

¹⁴⁸³ Indian Penal Code, 1860, Section 302 & 304.

¹⁴⁸⁴ *Aruna Ramachandra Shanbaug v. Union of India*, (2011) 4 SCC 454; *Common Cause v. Union of India*, (2018) 5 SCC 1.

¹⁴⁸⁵ Jackson, E. (2016). *Medical Law: Text, Cases, and Materials*. Oxford University Press

¹⁴⁸⁶ Dyer, C. (2010). "Assisted Suicide: A Global Perspective." *British Medical Journal*, 341, c4861.

becomes crucial to address the safeguards, medical ethics, and legal structures surrounding euthanasia to prevent potential abuse while upholding patient rights.

LEGAL STATUS OF EUTHANASIA IN INDIA

The legal status of euthanasia in India has evolved significantly over the years through judicial interpretations rather than direct legislative enactments. Indian law traditionally upholds the sanctity of life, as enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to life and personal liberty. However, the question of whether this right includes the right to die has been a matter of legal and ethical debate. The Indian Penal Code (IPC) criminalizes suicide and any assistance in ending a person's life. Section 302 of the IPC penalizes homicide, while Section 304 prescribes punishment for culpable homicide not amounting to murder.¹⁴⁸⁷ Similarly, Section 306 makes abetment of suicide a punishable offense, thus restricting any form of assisted dying.¹⁴⁸⁸ Despite these prohibitions, judicial interventions have gradually recognized the right to a dignified death under specific conditions.

A landmark moment in India's euthanasia debate came with the case of *Aruna Ramachandra Shanbaug v. Union of India (2011)*, where the Supreme Court, for the first time, addressed the legality of euthanasia. Aruna Shanbaug, a nurse who had been in a persistent vegetative state (PVS) for 37 years, became the center of the euthanasia debate. The Court, while rejecting the plea for active euthanasia, permitted passive euthanasia under strict judicial guidelines, stating that the withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment in terminal cases was legally permissible.¹⁴⁸⁹ This decision marked the beginning of passive euthanasia's recognition within the Indian legal framework.

The legal stance on euthanasia was further refined in *Common Cause v. Union of India (2018)*, where the Supreme Court expanded on its previous ruling. The Court recognized that the right to life under Article 21 also includes the right to die with dignity. It legalized passive euthanasia by allowing patients to draft advance medical directives or "living wills," which enable individuals to refuse life-prolonging medical treatment in case of terminal illness or irreversible coma.¹⁴⁹⁰ The ruling laid down comprehensive guidelines for implementing passive euthanasia, including the involvement of medical boards, family consent, and judicial oversight to prevent misuse.

Despite these legal advancements, active euthanasia remains explicitly illegal in India. Unlike countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, and Canada, where active euthanasia is legally permitted under regulated frameworks, India continues to consider it as culpable homicide. The judiciary has refrained from legalizing active euthanasia due to concerns over ethical dilemmas, medical ethics, and the potential for misuse in a country where healthcare access and regulatory oversight remain inconsistent.¹⁴⁹¹

While the Supreme Court's rulings have provided clarity on passive euthanasia, the absence of comprehensive legislative backing remains a challenge. Although the government has drafted guidelines for implementing euthanasia laws, there is still a need for specific legislation that clearly defines procedures, safeguards, and accountability mechanisms. Until then, euthanasia in India remains a judicially regulated practice rather than a legislatively enacted right, leaving room for further legal and ethical discourse.

ETHICAL DEBATES SURROUNDING EUTHANASIA

The ethical discourse on euthanasia is deeply complex, encompassing diverse perspectives from medical ethics, human rights, religion, and

¹⁴⁸⁷ Indian Penal Code, 1860, Sections 302 & 304.

¹⁴⁸⁸ Indian Penal Code, 1860, Section 306.

¹⁴⁸⁹ *Aruna Ramachandra Shanbaug v. Union of India*, (2011) 4 SCC 454.

¹⁴⁹⁰ *Common Cause v. Union of India*, (2018) 5 SCC 1.

¹⁴⁹¹ Bhat, S. (2019). *Law and Medicine: Evolving Legal Frameworks for End-of-Life Decisions*. Eastern Book Company.

societal values. The central debate revolves around two conflicting principles: the sanctity of life versus individual autonomy and the right to die with dignity. While proponents argue that euthanasia provides relief from unbearable suffering and respects a patient's right to make end-of-life decisions, opponents contend that legalizing euthanasia could lead to its misuse, erode moral values, and compromise the fundamental duty of medical professionals to preserve life.¹⁴⁹²

One of the primary ethical arguments in favor of euthanasia is based on personal autonomy. According to this view, individuals should have the right to make decisions regarding their own bodies, including the choice to end their life in cases of terminal illness or irreversible suffering. Supporters argue that forcing a person to endure excruciating pain against their will violates human dignity and personal liberty, principles that are fundamental to a democratic society.¹⁴⁹³ The Supreme Court of India, in *Common Cause v. Union of India (2018)*, acknowledged the right to die with dignity as an extension of Article 21 of the Constitution, thus reinforcing the argument for allowing passive euthanasia under strict regulations.¹⁴⁹⁴

Conversely, opponents of euthanasia emphasize the sanctity of life, a principle deeply rooted in religious and ethical traditions. Many religious doctrines, including Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam, consider life to be sacred and believe that only natural forces or divine will should determine death. Hindu philosophy, for instance, views suffering as a result of past karma and a phase of spiritual growth, while Christianity and Islam strictly oppose any form of life-ending intervention, equating euthanasia with murder.¹⁴⁹⁵ Ethical concerns also arise from the potential slippery

slope effect, where legalizing euthanasia could lead to its misuse, particularly among vulnerable populations such as the elderly, disabled, or economically disadvantaged individuals who might be coerced into euthanasia due to familial or societal pressure.¹⁴⁹⁶

Another ethical dilemma revolves around the role of medical professionals. The Hippocratic Oath, historically taken by doctors, emphasizes the duty to "do no harm," which contradicts the act of euthanasia. Medical ethics dictate that doctors should focus on healing and providing palliative care rather than actively ending a patient's life. However, some argue that in cases where no cure or relief is possible, facilitating a dignified death may be a more compassionate approach than prolonging suffering through futile medical interventions.

Furthermore, concerns related to legal and procedural safeguards play a crucial role in ethical debates. If euthanasia were to be widely legalized, clear guidelines would be required to prevent potential abuse, ensure informed consent, and establish medical and judicial oversight. Countries such as the Netherlands and Canada have developed strict regulatory frameworks to address these concerns, but in a country like India, where healthcare disparities and legal enforcement challenges exist, ensuring that euthanasia is not misused remains a significant ethical challenge.¹⁴⁹⁷

Ultimately, the ethical debates surrounding euthanasia reflect a tension between compassion, personal rights, and societal obligations. While passive euthanasia has been legally accepted in India, the broader ethical concerns regarding active euthanasia continue to be a matter of intense debate. As medical advancements and societal attitudes evolve, India must strike a balance between safeguarding life and respecting individual

¹⁴⁹² Beauchamp, T. L., & Childress, J. F. (2019). *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*. Oxford University Press.

¹⁴⁹³ Dworkin, R. (1994). *Life's Dominion: An Argument About Abortion, Euthanasia, and Individual Freedom*. Vintage Books.

¹⁴⁹⁴ *Common Cause v. Union of India*, (2018) 5 SCC 1

¹⁴⁹⁵ Patra, M. (2020). "Euthanasia: A Religious and Ethical Perspective." *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics*, 27(3), 245-250

¹⁴⁹⁶ Keown, J. (2002). *Euthanasia, Ethics, and Public Policy: An Argument Against Legalization*. Cambridge University Press.

¹⁴⁹⁷ Emanuel, E. J. (2017). "Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide: A Review of the Empirical Data." *Medical Ethics Journal*, 28(4), 365-381.

dignity while ensuring robust legal and ethical frameworks to prevent abuse.

COMPARATIVE LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

The legal status of euthanasia varies significantly across countries, reflecting diverse cultural, ethical, and legal frameworks. While some nations have embraced euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide (PAS) under regulated conditions, others continue to prohibit it due to concerns about ethics, religion, and the potential for misuse. India's stance on euthanasia, particularly the legalization of passive euthanasia through judicial rulings, can be better understood when compared to international practices. The comparative study of euthanasia laws provides valuable insights into the regulatory mechanisms, safeguards, and societal implications that shape legal policies worldwide.

One of the most well-known cases of legalized euthanasia is in the Netherlands, which became the first country to formally legalize both active euthanasia and PAS through the *Termination of Life on Request and Assisted Suicide (Review Procedures) Act* of 2002. Under this law, euthanasia is permitted if a patient is suffering unbearably with no prospect of improvement, has made a voluntary and well-considered request, and if the procedure is carried out by a physician following strict medical and legal guidelines.¹⁴⁹⁸ Belgium followed a similar path, legalizing euthanasia in 2002, allowing it for both adults and, later, terminally ill minors under stringent conditions.¹⁴⁹⁹

In Canada, euthanasia and PAS, known as Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD), were legalized in 2016 through the *Criminal Code Amendment (Bill C-14)*. The law initially permitted assisted dying only for patients whose natural death was "reasonably foreseeable," but later expansions allowed individuals with severe and irreversible conditions, even if not terminal, to request

euthanasia.¹⁵⁰⁰ In contrast, the United States follows a more state-specific approach, with only a few states, such as Oregon, Washington, and California, legalizing PAS under strict conditions through laws like the *Oregon Death with Dignity Act* (1997).^[4] However, active euthanasia remains illegal in the U.S., and patients must self-administer life-ending medication rather than relying on a physician to do so.

Unlike these countries, India's legal framework on euthanasia remains restricted to passive euthanasia, which was formally recognized by the Supreme Court in *Aruna Shanbaug v. Union of India* (2011) and later reinforced in *Common Cause v. Union of India* (2018). The latter judgment permitted individuals to draft living wills, allowing them to refuse life-sustaining treatment in cases of terminal illness or irreversible coma.¹⁵⁰¹ However, active euthanasia remains illegal in India, classified as culpable homicide under the Indian Penal Code.¹⁵⁰²

A comparison with other Asian countries highlights similar restrictive approaches. Japan does not have explicit legislation on euthanasia, but certain court rulings have permitted it under strict medical conditions. China and Singapore prohibit euthanasia entirely, emphasizing traditional values that prioritize life preservation. However, countries like South Korea have gradually moved towards recognizing the right to die with dignity, allowing limited forms of passive euthanasia.¹⁵⁰³

This comparative analysis reveals that while India has taken steps toward recognizing euthanasia through judicial rulings, it lacks comprehensive legislation similar to countries that have fully legalized and regulated euthanasia. The absence of a well-defined statutory framework leaves room for ambiguity and challenges in implementation. If India were to consider expanding its euthanasia laws,

¹⁴⁹⁸ Termination of Life on Request and Assisted Suicide (Review Procedures) Act, 2002 (Netherlands)

¹⁴⁹⁹ Belgian Act on Euthanasia, 2002.

¹⁵⁰⁰ Criminal Code Amendment (Bill C-14), 2016 (Canada).

¹⁵⁰¹ Oregon Death with Dignity Act, 1997 (United States).

¹⁵⁰² Indian Penal Code, 1860, Section 302 & 304

¹⁵⁰³ Seo, J. (2020). "End-of-Life Decisions in South Korea: Ethical and Legal Developments." *Asian Bioethics Review*, 12(1), 45-58.

examining the safeguards and procedural guidelines in countries like the Netherlands, Canada, and Belgium could offer valuable lessons in ensuring both ethical and legal clarity while preventing potential misuse.

CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS IN IMPLEMENTING EUTHANASIA LAWS

The implementation of euthanasia laws in India faces several challenges and concerns, ranging from legal ambiguities and ethical dilemmas to socio-cultural and medical infrastructure constraints. While the Supreme Court's landmark decisions in *Aruna Shanbaug v. Union of India (2011)* and *Common Cause v. Union of India (2018)* have paved the way for passive euthanasia, numerous obstacles remain in effectively enforcing and regulating such laws. These challenges raise crucial questions regarding the feasibility, safety, and ethical integrity of euthanasia within the Indian socio-legal framework.

One of the primary concerns is the lack of comprehensive legislation governing euthanasia. Although passive euthanasia is legally recognized, the absence of a specific statute creates ambiguities in its implementation. The procedural guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court, including judicial approval and the involvement of medical boards, remain complex and often difficult to execute in real-life scenarios.¹⁵⁰⁴ Without a well-defined law, there is a risk of inconsistent application and legal uncertainty, making it difficult for patients, families, and medical practitioners to navigate end-of-life decisions.

Another significant challenge is the potential for misuse and coercion. Given India's socio-economic disparities, there is a concern that legalizing euthanasia, even in a restricted form, could lead to undue influence or coercion of vulnerable individuals, particularly the elderly, disabled, or economically disadvantaged. Families struggling with financial burdens or lack of access to healthcare may see

euthanasia as an economic necessity rather than a voluntary and dignified choice.¹⁵⁰⁵ Safeguards such as strict medical oversight and judicial review aim to prevent such abuses, but the risk remains in a country with widespread poverty and an often overburdened legal system.

From a medical perspective, India's healthcare infrastructure poses significant challenges to the ethical and effective implementation of euthanasia laws. Many hospitals, particularly in rural areas, lack well-equipped palliative care facilities, making it difficult to differentiate between cases where euthanasia is genuinely necessary and those where better pain management could suffice.¹⁵⁰⁶ Additionally, Indian doctors often lack training in end-of-life care and decision-making related to euthanasia, leading to concerns about misjudgments or ethical conflicts in determining eligibility for euthanasia.

Religious and cultural beliefs also play a crucial role in shaping the euthanasia debate in India. Many religious traditions, including Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, emphasize the sanctity of life and oppose any form of intentional life-ending intervention.¹⁵⁰⁷ The fear of violating moral and religious principles may prevent individuals and families from considering euthanasia, even in cases of extreme suffering. Furthermore, medical practitioners who hold strong religious beliefs may refuse to participate in euthanasia procedures, leading to ethical conflicts and challenges in enforcement.

Another critical concern is the legal and procedural burden placed on families and patients. The current guidelines for passive euthanasia require approval from medical boards and courts, leading to lengthy and often distressing legal battles. Patients in terminal conditions and their families may find it difficult

¹⁵⁰⁵ Gupta, R. (2019). "Euthanasia in India: Ethical and Socio-Legal Challenges." *Journal of Indian Law and Society*, 10(2), 147-162.

¹⁵⁰⁶ Pallium India (2020). "Palliative Care in India: Challenges and Future Directions." *Indian Journal of Palliative Care*, 26(4), 321-328.

¹⁵⁰⁷ Patra, M. (2020). "Euthanasia: A Religious and Ethical Perspective." *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics*, 27(3), 245-250.

¹⁵⁰⁴ *Common Cause v. Union of India*, (2018) 5 SCC 1.

to navigate the bureaucratic hurdles, delaying the process and causing unnecessary emotional and financial strain.¹⁵⁰⁸ While judicial oversight is essential to prevent misuse, a more streamlined process is needed to ensure that euthanasia remains accessible to those who genuinely require it.

Finally, the issue of public awareness and societal acceptance presents a major challenge. Many people in India are unfamiliar with the concept of euthanasia, and misconceptions about its implications persist. Misinformation and stigma associated with end-of-life decisions may deter individuals from considering euthanasia as a legitimate option, even when it is legally permitted.¹⁵⁰⁹ Efforts to educate the public and medical professionals about the legal and ethical dimensions of euthanasia are necessary to promote informed decision-making and reduce societal resistance.

FUTURE PROSPECTS AND SUGGESTIONS

The debate over euthanasia in India is far from settled, and its future prospects depend on a combination of legal reforms, ethical considerations, medical advancements, and societal acceptance. While the Supreme Court's rulings in *Aruna Shanbaug v. Union of India (2011)* and *Common Cause v. Union of India (2018)* have set the foundation for passive euthanasia, the absence of comprehensive legislation continues to pose challenges. Moving forward, India must focus on developing a clear legal framework, strengthening medical infrastructure, ensuring safeguards against misuse, and fostering public awareness to create a balanced and ethical approach toward euthanasia.

One of the most pressing future developments should be the **enactment of a dedicated euthanasia law**. While the Supreme Court has provided guidelines for passive euthanasia, a

formal statute would help clarify procedural complexities and establish uniform implementation across the country. The law should define the legal status of advance medical directives (living wills), specify the roles of medical professionals, and provide clear procedures for obtaining consent and judicial approval.¹⁵¹⁰ By following models from countries like the Netherlands, Canada, and Belgium, India can create a regulatory framework that ensures both ethical integrity and accessibility for patients in need.

Another crucial aspect is the **strengthening of palliative care and end-of-life medical support**. Many requests for euthanasia arise due to inadequate pain management and lack of access to quality healthcare. Expanding palliative care services across the country, particularly in rural areas, would provide terminally ill patients with alternative options for managing suffering without resorting to euthanasia as a last resort.¹⁵¹¹ Additionally, medical professionals should receive specialized training in handling end-of-life decisions to ensure that euthanasia, if opted for, is carried out ethically and with informed consent.

To prevent the **misuse and coercion of vulnerable individuals**, it is imperative to establish **strict safeguards and monitoring mechanisms**. A multidisciplinary panel consisting of legal experts, doctors, and ethicists should be involved in reviewing each euthanasia request to ensure that it is made voluntarily and without external pressure.¹⁵¹² Additionally, clear penalties for coercion or malpractice should be defined to deter any potential exploitation, particularly among the elderly and economically disadvantaged populations.

Public awareness and societal acceptance also play a key role in shaping the future of

¹⁵⁰⁸ Bhat, S. (2019). *Law and Medicine: Evolving Legal Frameworks for End-of-Life Decisions*. Eastern Book Company.

¹⁵⁰⁹ Bhat, S. (2019). *Law and Medicine: Evolving Legal Frameworks for End-of-Life Decisions*. Eastern Book Company.

¹⁵¹⁰ *Common Cause v. Union of India*, (2018) 5 SCC 1

¹⁵¹¹ Rajagopal, M. (2020). "Palliative Care in India: The Way Forward." *Indian Journal of Palliative Care*, 26(4), 315-320

¹⁵¹² Emanuel, E. J. (2017). "Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide: A Review of Regulatory Frameworks." *Medical Law Review*, 15(3), 421-437

euthanasia in India. Currently, misconceptions and stigma surrounding euthanasia often lead to resistance against its acceptance. **Public education campaigns** should be conducted to inform citizens about their legal rights regarding end-of-life care and euthanasia. Increased discussions in medical, legal, and ethical forums can help foster a more informed and progressive approach to euthanasia legislation.¹⁵¹³

India should also explore the **possibility of legalizing physician-assisted suicide (PAS) under strict conditions**. While active euthanasia remains illegal, countries like the United States (in select states) and Switzerland have allowed PAS under regulated frameworks. If India decides to expand its euthanasia laws in the future, it must ensure a well-monitored process where patients can make autonomous, well-considered decisions while preventing potential abuse.¹⁵¹⁴

Finally, **continuous legal and ethical review mechanisms** should be put in place to assess the implementation of euthanasia laws and address emerging challenges. A specialized committee should periodically review euthanasia cases, analyze their impact, and recommend necessary amendments to the law to keep pace with medical advancements and changing societal attitudes.¹⁵¹⁵

In conclusion, while India has made significant progress in recognizing the right to die with dignity, there is still a long way to go in terms of legislative clarity, medical preparedness, and ethical safeguards. By adopting a well-regulated, transparent, and compassionate approach, India can ensure that euthanasia laws serve the interests of patients while upholding ethical and legal standards. Future reforms should strike a balance between individual autonomy and the need for safeguards, ensuring that the right to die with

dignity does not become a tool for coercion or medical negligence.

¹⁵¹³ Dey, S. (2021). "Public Perception of Euthanasia in India: Awareness and Ethical Debates." *Asian Bioethics Review*, 13(1), 55-74

¹⁵¹⁴ Oregon Death with Dignity Act, 1997 (United States).

¹⁵¹⁵ Keown, J. (2021). *Euthanasia, Ethics, and Public Policy: An Argument Against Legalization*. Cambridge University Press.