Hyderabad Veterinarian Rape Case

Why in news?

- A 26-year-old woman veterinarian was recently raped and killed in Hyderabad.
- This has led to an outpouring of anger across the country and in Parliament.

What happened?

- On her scooter developing a problem, she called up her sister when a lorry driver offered help and told her that she was scared by the presence of some drivers.
- She died of asphyxiation while being raped as the killers gagged and smothered her.
- Four lorry workers, arrested on charges of raping and killing her, were kept in solitary confinement.
- Protests rocked Hyderabad demanding speedy justice.

What was the demand made in parliament?

- Several MPs questioned the adequacy of criminal laws and the judicial system in this regard.
- As, the current provisions permit under-age convicts to get away with lenient punishment.
- Others are sentenced to death only to escape through mercy petitions.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has said that the government was ready to make more stringent provisions in law.

What are the existing provisions?

- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act was passed in 2013.
- This came after the 2012 Nirbhaya outrage in Delhi and the following recommendations made by Justice J.S. Verma Committee.
- It brought changes to -

i. the Indian Penal Code
ii. the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973
iii. the Indian Evidence Act, 1872
iv. the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012

- Key amendments were brought in to provide for death penalty for rape that led to death of the victim or reduced the survivor to a persistent vegetative state.
- It also applied to anyone found guilty of rape more than once.
- In 2018, further changes introduced death as the maximum punishment for every perpetrator in a gang-rape when the victim is less than 12 years.
- Life-long imprisonment was given if the victim is less than 16 years.

What happened in the Delhi case?

- In the Delhi case, a fast-track trial court sentenced four to death in September 2013.
- However, the only juvenile accused was freed after a short period at a remand home.
- The Supreme Court dismissed their appeals against conviction in 2017.
- Two years on, the convicts have filed curative petitions in the court and one has already written to the President of India for clemency.

What are the recent incidents?

- After the Nirbhaya incident, the UNHR chief had called rape and violence against women in India a “national problem” which would need “national solutions”.
- Unfortunately, in the recent weeks too, rapes and assault have been reported from Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Telangana.
- The National Crime Records Bureau which released its 2017 data recently said a total of 3.59 lakh cases of crimes against women were reported.
- It noted that there was a 6% rise compared to 2016.
- Of the above, assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty comprised 21.7%, and rape 7%.

What do these call for?

- For every rape reported, there are many which go unrecorded given the patriarchal mindsets in the society.
- A suggestion by an MP that rapists “must be brought out in public and lynched” is hardly the answer.
- Better policing, fast-track courts, quick sentencing are the need of the hour as each can serve as a deterrent.
- Public places must be made safer for all.
- But besides these, a sustainable measure would be to include gender sensitisation in every curriculum, right from school.
- Boys and girls should be raised right in an atmosphere of freedom and a

culture of mutual respect.

Source: The Hindu

