

Need for Gun Control Laws -US

Why in news?

\n\n

A Las Vegas Strip in US witnessed a mass shooting, killing around 60 people and injuring more than 500.

\n\n

What are second amendment rights?

\n\n

\n

- In 1791, the Bill of Rights, which is the first ten amendments to the Constitution, was adopted.

\n

- The Bill of Rights provided for **greater constitutional protection for individual liberties** and specified prohibitions on governmental power.

\n

- The **second amendment** pertains to the right of every citizen to bear arms and ammunition.

\n

- It was envisaged as a provision to give a sense of freedom to the citizens and for their own defense.

\n

\n\n

What is the concern?

\n\n

\n

- The constitution makers did not mean this provision for the present sophisticated, automatic-firing killing machines.

\n

- Also, being a truly federal state, the US states brought in their own rules governing the possession of arms and ammunition.

\n

- It differs from stricter regulations to those that does not mandate even a license to bear arms and limitation on the numbers.

- \n
- The regional difference and unregulated use have resulted in many instances of gun violence, claiming thousands of innocent lives.
- \n
- On an average, more than 90 Americans lose their lives to gun violence every day.
- \n
- Though the shooter in recent case is suspected for IS links, the need is for a more sensible gun ownership regulation.
- \n

\n\n

What were the earlier attempts?

\n\n

- \n
- Many attempts at bringing in gun control regulations failed in the US Congress.
- \n
- The former President Obama launched a final attempt through an executive action.
- \n
- Introduced in 2015, the King-Thompson bill aimed at closing the loopholes in gun laws.
- \n
- It aimed at -
- \n

\n\n

- \n
1. expanding the existing background check system.
- \n
2. The system would cover all commercial firearm sales including those at gun shows, over the internet or in classified ads.
- \n
3. However, it provides reasonable exceptions for family and friend transfers.
- \n
4. boosting funding for federal agencies enforcing the laws.
- \n
5. improving treatment of mental health conditions nationwide.
- \n

\n\n

- \n
- Despite these attempts, the U.S. Congress shows reluctance to take steps.

- \n
- This is primarily because of lobbying by the National Rifle Association and the huge number of gun manufacturers.
- \n
- The gun lobby's interest is being upheld by a cultural inclination for gun ownership rooted in the Second Amendment.
- \n

\n\n

What should be done?

\n\n

- \n
- The US Congress must take efforts to pass the bipartisan King-Thompson legislation.
- \n
- This can strengthen the life-saving background checks that keep guns out of the wrong hands.
- \n
- A Select Committee on Gun Violence could be created to study and report on a sensible legislation addressing other issues in this regard.
- \n
- This can ensure that children and those with mental illnesses don't have access to guns.
- \n
- The 'right to bear arms' would become meaningful only with accompanied responsibilities.
- \n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n