



Hate speech

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Why in News?

- Karnataka has become the **first Indian State** to introduce a **dedicated law** to curb *hate speech* and *hate crimes*.

Key Features of the Bill

- **Definition of Hate Speech:**
- Any expression causing injury/disharmony against a person or group on grounds of **religion, race, caste, gender, sexual orientation, place of birth, disability**.
- **Collective Liability:**
- Persons in positions of responsibility in an organisation can be held liable if hate speech is linked to their organisation.
- **Regulation of Online Content:**
- Empowers State Govt. to **block or remove** hate content online.

What is Hate Speech?

- As per **Law Commission 267th Report (2017)**:
- Speech/acts meant to stir hatred against groups based on **race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation**, etc.

Constitutional Basis

- **Article 19(1)(a)**: Freedom of speech.
- **Article 19(2)**: Reasonable restrictions for sovereignty, public order, decency, incitement to offence, etc.

Existing Legal Provisions Against Hate Speech

- **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023:**
- **Section 196 (ex-153A IPC)**: Promoting enmity between groups.
- **Section 299 (ex-295A IPC)**: Outraging religious feelings.
- **SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989**: Punishes intentional insults/humiliation of SC/ST individuals.
- **Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955**: Penalises incitement of untouchability.
- **Representation of People Act, 1951**: Conviction for promoting enmity can lead to disqualification.
- **IT Act, 2000: Section 66A** (struck down in **Shreya Singhal, 2015**).

Important Supreme Court Judgments

- **Shaheen Abdulla (2022)**: SC directed police to take **suo motu action** in hate speech cases.
- **Tehseen Poonawalla (2018)**: Guidelines to curb hate-crime-linked mob lynching.
- **Pravasi Bhalai Sangathan (2014)**: SC asked Law Commission to examine the need to define "hate speech".
- **Shreya Singhal (2015)**:
- Struck down Section 66A, holding it vague and unconstitutional.