



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
Only IAS Academy by Grandson of "Perunthalsivam Kamarajar"

‘Out-of-Work Hours’

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Why in News?

- A **Private Member’s Bill**, titled **Right to Disconnect Bill, 2025**, was introduced in Parliament by **NCP MP Supriya Sule**.
- It has renewed debate on **work–life balance, digital overreach, and employee mental well-being** in India’s evolving work culture.

About the Right to Disconnect Bill, 2025

What it Proposes

- Seeks to provide employees with a **statutory right to disengage from work-related communications** outside agreed working hours.
- Aims to address challenges arising from **remote work, smartphones, and 24×7 digital connectivity**.

Key Features

1Legal Right to Disconnect (Section 7):

oEmployees can **ignore work calls, emails, or messages** after official working hours.

oProtection from disciplinary action or adverse appraisal.

2Defined ‘Out-of-Work Hours’: Time beyond contractually agreed working hours is clearly defined.

3**Employees’ Welfare Authority:** Proposed **central authority** to oversee implementation and protect employee dignity.

4Employer–Employee Negotiation Charter:

oMandatory charter defining:

§Communication norms

§Permissible exceptions

§Emergency protocols

5**Overtime Compensation (Section 11):** If employees voluntarily respond after hours, they are entitled to **overtime wages at normal rates**.

6Digital Well-being Measures:

oAwareness programmes

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oCounselling services

o**Digital Detox Centres**, especially for remote workers.

7Penalty for Non-Compliance: Financial penalty of **1% of total employee remuneration** on defaulting organisations.

Need for the Law

1Always-on Work Culture: Smartphones and remote work have blurred boundaries between professional and personal life.

2Mental Health Concerns: Rising burnout, anxiety, and stress, particularly among:

§Young professionals

§IT and service-sector employees

§Gig workers

3Power Asymmetry: Employees often feel compelled to respond due to:

§Hierarchical pressure

§Job insecurity

§Performance evaluations

4Global Precedents: Countries recognising the right to disconnect:

§**France**

§**Belgium**

§**Ireland**

§**Australia**

o**Productivity Rationale:** Encourages outcome-based work rather than presenteeism.

Challenges

1Diverse Work Structures: IT services, manufacturing, healthcare, gig economy, and global operations require flexibility.

2Enforcement Issues: Difficulty in monitoring informal communications (WhatsApp, personal calls).

3SME Burden: Compliance costs and administrative challenges for small enterprises.

4Operational Flexibility: Risk of rigidity during emergencies or peak workload periods.

5Legislative Limitation: As a **Private Member's Bill**, chances of enactment remain low without government backing.