Chapter –II

A UNIVERSAL HISTORY OF EUTHANASIA

Euthanasia means “Good Death “IT is also well-known as “mercy killing” or Honour Killing. Euthanasia is derivative of,” Eu (good) and Thanatosis (death)” that is” Easy Death. "Suetonius, a Roman historian, used this word for the first time to describe the death of Augustus Caesar. However, the term euthanasia, which was used for Augustus’, his death was not accelerated by the actions of any other person.

Euthanasia means intentional killing of the individual. This is observed with a view to relieve the living being from pain and suffering. It is carried out deliberately either by the patient himself or with someone else’s assistance. It is painless killing of a living being in order to relieve him from an incurable, painful disease. It is an act, form or a method of permitting death without suffering or pain. Euthanasia is thus a deliberate act performed by an individual himself or with the assistance of the other to terminate life. It is an act or omission, done for its supposed benefit.

2.1 Historical perspective

Euthanasia was prevalent right from the ancient times even before man could be civilized. It has been observed that it was a Tribal Custom. It prevailed even before their lands were colonized. History depicts that many tribal communities primeval or contemporary, abandoned their aged. In other cases where recovery was not possible from a particular ailment, or patients had arrived at a phase where recourse of the patient was not possible to normal life euthanasia was administered. The unwanted newborn children who were infirm also had to face the same fate of in firms. They were strangulated, famished, treaded heavily or stabbed till the last breath. All these techniques, procedure to end life were in human. Many of the times individual’s wishes
were considered, in case he was able to exercise his choice. It can be observed that the primordial approach of the civilization then was more liberal. In states of Rome, Greece tradition of ending life with any techniques was prevalent.

The Eskimo also practiced euthanasia. The old and infirm Eskimo were abandoned to be ravaged. According to them, an Eskimos must work hard to earn his living and survive on it. They did not believe in supporting those who were unable to contribute towards the welfare of the group. They believed that rather than waiting around to see the old and aged dwindle toward death, they were left to freeze or starve to death. This was basically done for them to move on to the next life in which they strongly believed. A practice of passive manslaughter was adopted.

Amidst the tribes, the Caribs believed that the terminally ill were possessed by evil spirits and therefore should be terminated. The Caribs believed that wicked spirits become more powerful and controlling if these people hug or stick to life. Thus in the interest of the community and to endanger the safety of the tribes, the Carbis administered euthanasia. The Caribs tribes were cannibals, but did not eat such people because of the malevolent belief. They believed that if done so wicked entities would enter their bodies. They only ate healthy war captives and young boys who were fattened up for the said purpose.

The Kalinago tribes from the island of Grenada were more civilized; they practiced euthanasia but to relieve him from pain and suffering. They performed it only after they were convinced that, sparing the infirm was debilitating, causing inconveniences and pain to the infirm. The method used by them was easy and comfortable for the victims. They transported them into the afterlife with the aid of herbal poisons inconveniences and pain to the infirm.

The inhabitants of the Western Mediterranean island of Sardinia, an autonomous region in Italy known as Sardinian also believed in termination of the old and infirm. They thought that it was disgraceful for a human to continue living in a situation where his life is worthless. The society was then dominated by pagan religion and therefore did not firmly criticized euthanasia.
Paganism stands for a large mixture of traditions that, emphasize admiration for nature and a reinforcement of ancient polytheistic and animistic religious practices. Paganism is not a traditional religion as it does not have any official doctrine. One of the ordinary beliefs is the divine presence in nature and the reverence of the natural order in life.

The tribes of Sparta in Greece also practiced Euthanasia, to get rid of those unworthy of life, named: eugenics getting rid of all those in the society that are assumed to be "unworthy of life." Thus, it was not just restricted to the elders, but also infant, which were feeble and not fit for survival. Apart from these, people who desired to terminate their living, which hated their existence, which were overwhelmed by fate or bowed with grief, were also euthanized. They abandoned life with the drink hemlock. (a poisonous plant toxic to humans and animals).

2.2 Ancient and Classical Views

The theoretical discussions about death, suicide can be traced back to Plato. That is around 428 BC-348 BC. He in his writings, Phaedo, Socrates has clearly articulated suicide as wrong. According to him it was a disgraceful act; an act of cowardice. He also stated that those who committed it, their bodies should be buried in unmarked graves. But he recognized it when one's mind is crooked and dishonest According to him self-killing was also permitted when done pursuant to judicial order or when self-killing was essential because of extreme and unavoidable personal misfortune and self-killing was a result of grossly unjust actions. Aristotles also shared more or less the same opinion about suicide. He said it was a harm but if done voluntarily not be considered a wrong. Thus, both showed marginal concern for human autonomy. Their justification for suicide was based on social roles and obligations. Whereas Stoics emphasized on naturally flourishing life, that was to be healthy happy and wise and if this was not available can commit suicide. He believed that it does not really diminish moral virtues. Thus, during tribal era, getting rid of a person was based on eugenics or evil spirits but as time changed, it was accepted for social obligations.
2.3 Era B.C
The primeval Greek and Roman people were liberal in their approach towards deliberate termination of life by any means. The doctors of the polytheistic religion community carried out recurrent abortions and termination of lives with consensus or without it. They strongly condemn to the thought of prolonging agony of the terminally ill. For them it was not hastening of death but an easy death. Prominence was on fading life with on a fine note. The populace in Greece and Rome thought that sympathy was needed while handling patients with irretrievable sickness. And euthanasia was a least painful mechanism to achieve it. The populace of both these states showed maximum compassion for mercy killing. When it was administered at appropriate juncture of life that is when it was really essential and just to do so.

It was approximately in the fifth century B.C that mercy killing was on the rampant, the doctors in spite of the Hippocratic Oath often gave their patients the poisons they requested. In Athens, even the judiciary set aside store of toxic substances for those wishing death. They were made available on demand. This was again specifically done only in case of the right cause. However, the Greeks and the Romans did not believe in autonomy of the person but emphasized on sympathy to be the cause of this good death.

2.4 A 1st Century A.D.-Late middle Ages
The practice of euthanasia prevalent in the B.C slowly tapered down from the fifth to the 15th century. This period was also known as the middle Ages, or Medieval period in In European history. This period witnessed the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the dawn of the Age of Discovery. The therapeutic principles pertaining to mercy killing, suicide faded with the advent of Christian religion. The reformation and the influence of the monk St. Thomas Aquinas, the medieval ethos changed. He called attention to the fifth commandment, "Thou shall not kill,"He emphasized that this commandment applied to suicide and homicide. Therefore, in the middle ages because of the reformation the genial ethics towards euthanasia or any kind of murder faded. Further to deter the people from any kind of form of euthanasia practice. The suicidal bodies were not allowed to be buried. They were hauled, pinned in
public or even thrown in the river. This was done to discourage the people from activities of suicide or euthanasia. The Christian religion believed in the concept that life is a gift of God. It is he who solely has the right over it. Further the Hippocratic Oath diverted the people. They strongly believed that it breached obligation that one has to perform towards itself. Suicide was thus considered incompatible towards obligations assigned by the almighty. This changed the attitudes about suicide that prevailed earlier.

2.5 15th -17th Centuries
During 1478-1535 writings of Sir Thomas More, influenced the society. He was a staunch catholic but still ridiculed the opposition for euthanasia through his writings, “Utopia as a work of satire”. He was the first Christian to advocate euthanasia in his writings. He stated that if a terminally ill was suffering from pain, distress, agony, termination was the only solution to end the bitter life. It was said that, it should be the priest and public officials who should encourage it and allow others to free him. It was basically the Utopian priest and public officials who encouraged mercy killing in certain conditions. The priest and men believed that if a disease was distressing, agonizing, cessation was the only way to free him from this bitter life. This could be done, if the patient desired and gave his consent. It was considered primarily the doctor’s responsibility to lessen the suffering of the individual in an easy, and painless way.

This belief of the Utopian was further upheld by the English philosopher, Francis Bacon (1561-1621), According to him it was considered that primarily the medical fraternity should be made responsible for lessening the suffering of the individual in an easy and painless way. He promoted the term pa (a helper, supporter, an aide) He emphasized that it was the doctors who should acquire the skill of passing a easy, quiet and a peaceful death.

2.6 18th -19th century
Euthanasia was thus defended in the 17th century. However, there were no serious conversation debates arguments on euthanasia in Europe until the eighteenth-century. The 18th century turned to be revolutionary. Many writers
battered the respected philosophy of the Christian priest pertaining to self killing or mercy killing. Then afterwards for the first time legislation came into existence in Prussia on the subject in June 1794. It stated that lesser penalty should be imposed on the individual who assisted the terminally ill to end their lives. In spite of this, during that period people did not genuinely give widespread attention to the issue of mercy killing in any form. Then after academicians such as, Reil, Marx and Ruhlf’s emphasized the importance of autonomous examination of the issue scientifically.

The illumination amongst people to accept suicide proved to be temporary. At the same time in the 17th Century in the American Colonies the Common Law Tradition Prohibited Suicide and Assisted Suicide. It was considered as a deliberate hatred against his own life or as a murder.

In the late 18th century, the American Evangelical Christians also known as “fundamentalists” believed that the Bible is authoritative. They shared the message of faith to others, with the view that others may adopt your beliefs. These Evangelicals started immense initiation on the subject during middle of the 17th century. They started with dynamic religious retaliation in the late 18th Century. This evangelical zeal reinforced the criticism on the subject. This laid the atmosphere of former time which existed during the colonial period. However the refusal for mercy killing and self killing stayed hard. In 1828 a criminal legislation was outlawed under the guidance of Dudley Field which extended assistance to suicide. It mentioned punishment for those who particularly, provided an individual with any poisonous drug or deadly weapon with the knowledge that they will use it to take their own life.

This fervor against euthanasia continued, until 1870. The euthanasia debate again got momentum. Samuel Williams a non-physician promoted the usage of medicines like morphine to terminate life. This was done openly in public. In the nineteenth century, morphine was commonly used as an analgesic a painreliever. He further promoted the utility of the drug. He spread amongst the public that the medicine reduces miseries and also helps in ending the life of the patient if given in excess. He further advocated that it should be administered only by the medical fraternity. The underlying condition to its implementation was patient’s request. Drugs like chloroform were used to
destroy consciousness of the patient and were terminated. This was fast and effortless measure adopted. This preposition received a great attention by medical professionals. However, the Medical Association strongly opposed it and specified its use only to alleviate pain, and not to hasten death.

In 1873 Lionel Tollemache in a Fortnightly Review observed that incurable sick as a useless and burdensome to others. His writing was totally influenced by utilitarianism and social Darwinism, theories that maximizes utility. His thoughts were dismissed as revolutionary but still, analogous observation emerged. The development of eugenic science changed the people’s outlook. The thoughts sterilizing the retarded and the disabled became the latest thing.

These views were further supported by the German philosopher, Nietsche in 1889. He also emphasized, on the trouble that the beloved faces on maintaining the irretrievable sick and therefore suggested that they should be terminated. Similar opinion was shared by an advocate Jost. This german expressed his opinion through his writings. He published a book named "Killing Law." According to him when life goes down to zero in value, they should be allowed to die. Thus, when the patient is suffering from a incurable sickness, one should assist the suicide of the patient, if he desired.

Even in France, laws against suicide become more compassionate towards the concept. Again in the 19th century waves supporting euthanasia resumed. Populace accepted it and considered it as serene demise. Religion helped in formulating an opinion consoling the patient but was not really helpful in relieving the patient and therefore accepted by all. The medical fraternity had to adjudicate on its implication. They were considered to be the best people to decide. It was they who diagnosed the ailment and suggested whether recovery was possible or not. It was they who were aware of the modern techniques and studied the drugs and their reaction on human beings and therefore given this ultimate power.

The effect of all these discussions was so conducive for euthanasia that in 1905-1906, the euthanasia debate crossed the threshold of the press and political forums in USA. Efforts were made from Medical Association for legalization of euthanasia. They recommended gentle and easy death. The
effect of this was the Ohio, lowa state went further to enact law. They produced a bill on the issue in 1906. Unfortunately it was not passed for want of the requisite majority. A parallel attempt was once again made to have legislature on the subject. This time the legislature was for irretrievable sick people, malformed figures that are badly distorted humans and mentally sick infants, young and the adolescents. It was for the second time again that the proposals were not accepted by the government.

In 1915 Dr. Haiselden chief staff at Chicago's German-American Hospital allowed a distorted infant to pass away. He refused to perform any surgical treatment on the infant. He refused to administer medication that would help in its existence. He stood by passively' and allowed him to pass away naturally. Dr. Haiselden announced it in the conference called for the said purpose. Number of prominent personalities in the medical field endorsed his decision. The publicity encircling his professional behavior motivated the others. Americans now took imitative in supporting euthanasia not only for terminally ill but also for the weak malformed babies. This was done in the interest of the civilization and on humanitarian grounds. Thus, Dr. Haiselden nurtured a cultural climate with assistance of science, naturalism, and humanitarian reformation in favor of euthanasia. This sensational case of Dr. Harry Haiselden was not too far from the media. A film maker inspired by it made a feature film The Black Stork, in 1917 on it. It displayed the anxieties of people related to medicine and disability during the period. It also depicted how doctors claimed absolute authority when it comes to question of sustenance of the human living. This further called for many thinkers to express their views on the subject. The medical fraternity accepted the decision, but the subject was not argued in public, as it should.

Apart from the film in 1920, writings of two German professors influenced the masses. Their writings which stated the discharge of valueless, insignificant creatures influenced the society. They campaigned for termination of those patients who had been useless to the society. The writings laid a foundation for euthanasia to be performed even if the patient did not express his/her desire. Writers such as Alfred Hoche, a psychiatrist and Karl Binding a lawyer specified about implementation of euthanasia on requisitions of patients. They firmly asserted that aid should be given to the person demanding it. This
assistance has to be extended by the doctors under cautious proscribed circumstances. To further emphasize their views Alfred Hochea, a psychiatrist at Freiburg University wrote an essay, allowing annihilation of existence if that living was worthless. In this literature, he depicted honor killing as an appropriate remedy to terminate frail and vulnerable. He justified it as good and suitable modus operandi from the medical and legal point of view.

Another Frenchman, Dr. E. Forgue., tried to promote the issue through his writings in 1925. His piece of writing, “Easy death of incurable patients” advocated killing of beings. This was supposed to be good and appropriate if it was done the consent of the irretrievable, vulnerable patient. It had to be forgiven and was not to be considered a crime. The German thinker, Karl Binding and psychiatrist Hoche adopted similar thinking, they strongly recommended taking away of lives, which were worthless lives where cure was impossible. During the same period Roland Gerkan, a vulnerable patient in a terminally ill state made a legal development plan for promoting euthanasia. His project was based on his own experiences that he was going through and had very well explained the necessity of the legislation for patients like him. The court had to permit euthanasia. Hence terminating the irretrievable that had consented was no more a crime. They were forgiven by the state. Colombia and Uruguay were the other two states of South America who accepted this legal condition. Russians also followed the footsteps of these states and amended their Law pertaining to crimes. They reduced the existing penal provision; lesser punishment was implicated for those who assisted in the euthanasia. But unfortunately this legislation was short lived. But in the 1930s, the topic of euthanasia gained impetus, after subsiding in the 1920s. These years were held to be the crucial revolutionary years in the American history for euthanasia. Americans again began to discuss on the issue of mercy killing and also self extinction. Dr. Harry Haiselden's principle of terminating the endurally malformed newborns and the psychologically challenged infants again was upheld by the Americans. The civic polling done pointed out that almost 50 percent of the population was in favor with Dr. Haiselden decision. They had approved euthanasia.

C. Killick Millard, retired public health physician, subsequently founded a euthanasia society. He laid the foundation of this society in 1935 in England.
He named this society as Voluntary Euthanasia Society. This assisted the ailing in all the possible ways.

Again on this background an attempt to legalize euthanasia was done. A bill was introduced, discussed and argued in the British parliament but was defeated. The opinion polls results showed that 60% of the voters supported them. Further, around 2000 physicians and about 50 religious ministers defended the subject in American cites but still failed to get recognition in the House of Lords.

The promoters did not give up they made yet another attempt for legislation on active euthanasia. A bill for voluntary euthanasia was again launched in the year 1937 in the senate of America, which proposed for the legalization of active euthanasia. 53% of American physicians defended euthanasia. They presented a new application to the American government for legalizing euthanasia. The proposal recommended was well drafted. It took all the utmost precautions of preventing its misuse. The proposal suggested that if the incurable ill patient was 21 or above, his consent was essential. Then a committee of three persons constituting of physician and lawyer would be constituted. They had to examine the issue from medicinal and legal perspective. They had to again confirm the patients decision after 3-4 days and then kill with an intravenous morphine injection. However it never came up for voting.

Then after in 1938 the American doctors in New York founded a National Society which thrived for having legislation on euthanasia. This society was later recognized as Euthanasia Society of America (ESA). They believed in the autonomy of the individual to extinct his living incase he/she was suffering from untreatable sickness or was terminally ill.

However, for Germany in 1935 Henkel and Kohlrausch the Germans criticized euthanasia after its legal acceptance by the courts, as they were afraid of the misuse of it. However, the proponents of euthanasia did not agree that this theme caused misuses. Hence this century witnessed about how euthanasia was shielded by many reformers at the same time also condemned by the opponents.
2.6.1 Nazi Era

1939 was the Nazi Era. Adolf Hitler influenced by the writings of the German professors Hoche's, implemented mercy killing generally. He administered it for disabled kids and worthless beings. He further promoted it, due to eruption of warfare. He announced extensive honor killing for the vulnerable and immobilized individuals. He eliminated "lives that were unworthy of life". This was called Aktion T 4, "the Nazi euthanasia program. The BBC described it as genocide. In this killing announced no "pity" was shown on the people. Many a time's sick that were not vulnerable and could be cured were also terminated.

It was the first "state that supported euthanasia. The people who supported this termination were officials of his office. The Reich Committee constituted for methodical listing of hereditary ailments present at birth, that were incurable, were also the prime supporters. The primary focus was on the newborns and very young children below three years of age. In case any child in this category demonstrated indication of cerebral or bodily deformity, were definitely euthanized. Soon this was extended to all that is young, adolescent, elders or even old no one was spared. During the period, some physicians who were designated by name in the Reich Committee established had to diagnose the condition of sickness, in case it was incurable, accord a mercy death. Duty was casted on the doctors and midwives to register children born with irregularity or those who displayed indications of cerebral ill health. Extermination being the final solution for the Nazis near about 350,000 Germans were sterilized it was not only because of physical disability, mental deficiency but were also terminated in the ground of homosexuality. They were euthanized as they believed that they were genetically unfit to take further their Aryan race, Nazi used involuntary Euthanasia. This changed the Public opinion of euthanasia. All were administered euthanasia indiscriminately. Individuals who were incurable are accorded a mercy death. This was done, after careful diagnosis of their sickness.

People in the state were sent to gas chambers to be euthanized. Those who were not capable to do any realistic, practical, operational, functional vocation as précised by the state were not spared. The psychologically sick, people
suffering from epilepsy, persistent intellect disorders, cerebral lumps etc. were euthanized according to the above stated method. The consensus of the sick suffering from any kind of disease was not taken. They were forced to do so under the state administration.

Prior to 1933, every physician was made to take the Hippocratic Oath of medical fraternity. The oath took an undertaking that they would be doing no damage to the patient in any form and always work for his upkeep and betterment. However, this was not followed by the Nazis. They changed this Hippocratic Oath to Gesundheit. The physicians now were made to work only for the wellbeing of the state. Now there was change, the physician’s prime responsibility was to obey the states orders and abide the Reich committee’s reports.

With the outbreak of World War II there was an exposure to the Nazi death camps. People viewed the doctor’s participation in annihilation camps. This overwhelmed the people. This however did not deter the people from eradicating conversation on the subject.

In 1940, the euthanasia movement of mass killing gained momentum. The deformed were killed in poisonous gas vans and killing centre’s. The adaptation of mercy killing by the Nazis was influenced by Adolf Jost exertions on the subject. His piece of writing of 1895 “The Right to Death” persuaded the most. It emphasized that the decision of death for a being should be taken managed by the state. They should have a power over the termination for a person. This right is to be exercised by the state because it is they who are responsible for their citizens. It is they who have to look after their upkeep and wellbeing. The concept was also entwined with eugenics and Darwinism theory of utility. The state had to take pains to discredit conventional ethics and moral values of the citizens when they applied it randomly.

Further, in 1940s influence of Nazis were seen in the US. There were changes in the Public Perception of Euthanasia. In 1939, a very sound law proposal for accepting mercy killing was forwarded to the British government. The proposal stated that the patient had to give his written consent, which was compulsorily to be observed and certified by two individuals. The doctors had to acknowledge the determination of the requestor in script. It was also
determined that amongst the doctors giving the acceptance one should be the person who has been treating the patient while the other belonged to the health ministry. It was further stated that the resolution of the requestor had to be given effect only after 7 days. During this period, the caretakers of the patient had to be given an opportunity to speak with the patient. It was proposed that after the satisfaction of these entire conditions, person should be euthanized. However, this offer was not acknowledged. The Academy of Political and Ethical Science, in November 1949 also took this subject for discussion, but rejected it because of the fear of its misuse. The proponents kept their fight going for the change.

A lady doctor resident of Holland Postma Van Boven defended this issue in her state.

Again efforts were made by Americans towards legalizing euthanasia in 1950. A commission of doctors was formed in 1946 in the state of New York to take active steps for legalizing voluntary euthanasia. The polls yet again showed declining support for physician-assisted suicide.

In an oration in the year 1941 Clemens August Count the catholic bishop condemned the euthanasia pattern followed by the Nazis. This brought a temporary break to the euthanasia program.

In 1942, the Swiss laid emphasis on offering a noble demise to those diagnosed with terminal sickness and definitely had a small period of survival left with them. Then after during the period of 1952 a requisition was made to the UN Commission for human rights by the British and American Euthanasia Societies. They requested to modify the United Nations declaration. They petitioned to incorporate the right to die in the right to live for terminally ill patients so that they can euthanatize them. They stated that the right of mercy killing is concurrent with right of freedom envisaged in the UN declaration of human rights.

Further Pauline Taylor, the president of the euthanasia society of America was successful in changing the attitude of Americans towards euthanasia in the year 1962. She convinced the people that allowing the incurable sick to die, instead of compelling them to reach out with extreme measures was both humane and morally permissible. Thus instead of emphasizing on the
individuals autonomy and his soundness to take a decision to end life she tried to change the societal approach towards euthanasia.

After her Donald Mc Kinney became the President of the euthanasia society of America in the year 1965. He continued her legacy for next two decades. In his efforts to change the views towards euthanasia, He was successful in convincing people that there exists a basic difference between passive and active euthanasia. And opinions shared against or for euthanasia should not be generalized but specific relating to its form.

The Harvard Medical Schools', Ad Hoc Committee in the year 1967 defined the term irreversible coma” This was done with the basic view to make the society aware about how painful, burdensome it was for the patient, his family, hospital and the community to try to revive irreversibly comatose patient. People were thus shown different prepositions related to euthanasia. The Hastings Centre Founded in 1969 also focused its study to death, heredity, study about reproduction, natural science, populace issues, and mannerism. Thus it has been observed that there were various authorities who took efforts in promoting the concept of euthanasia during those times.

The 1970s witnessed a change, patient autonomy, his rights; of refusing palliative care, medication and life-sustaining methods, apparatus was recognized and accepted. The acknowledged authority of the medical fraternity to make a decision and outweigh the individuals right came under concerted attack .This change was definitely a progressive step towards the concept.

Subsequently the senate commission on aging known as SCA of United States organized its national examination on euthanasia titled as "Death with Dignity" for the first time in 1972. This hearing gave an opportunity to the professionals and common person to discuss their views on issues relating to aging and terminal illness. They also discussed about the developing relationship that exist between the physician and his patient, the complexity concerning death .It reflected the Americans unhappiness. They emphasized about brutal satire of medicinal wonders. They strongly expressed about how the procedure of death was extended without assuring self-respect and excellence of good life.
In 1974 the society for the right to die initially known as euthanasia society of America founded; first US sanatorium for vulnerable people so that they are assured of quality of life and quality of death. The society also pursued for legalization of active euthanasia.

In 1975 the Dutch Voluntary Euthanasia Society (NVVE), was formed to give advice to the dying. In the first year, it received twenty-five requests.

In 1976 The Supreme Court of New Jersey delivered a landmark judgment, wherein Karen Ann Quinlan aged 21 years of age was permitted to withdraw life support equipment as she was suffering from a terminal illness and was in an vegetative state. The court had allowed passive euthanasia. This verdict on end-of-life issues attracted discussions not only within the nation but also amongst the other nations. Subsequently in the same year Oct. 1, 1976 California was recognized as the first state to have legislation in their nation. Natural Death Act of California authorized the vulnerable ill patients or patients in an irretrievable condition where their death was certain to administer passive euthanasia. They were allowed to withdraw or withhold life saving treatments or equipments.

Dr Tenrei Ota of Japan formed the Japan euthanasia society in the year 1976. An international meeting was organized by this society to converse on the issue right-to-die. Japan, Australia, Netherlands, United Kingdom, and United States were the nations that participated in the symposium. The issue conversed in the conference was right-to-die. The conference helped the issue to attain international outlook. The experiences shared by the participating states were useful to give the subject a broader view.

Subsequent to the conference in the year 1977 there were 8 countries that endorsed legislation. They were as follows, California, New Mexico, Arkansas, Nevada, Idaho, Oregon, North Carolina, and Texas.

In 1978, Derek Humphry from England administered euthanasia to his terminally ill wife. He then published an article advocating a legal change. He also forwarded information about how-to-die and how he helped his wife to die. The article once again initiated movement in America for assisted dying.

Soon then after in the year 1980 he founded the Hemlock Society in Santa
Monica, California and Los Angeles which favoured physician-assisted death. The society passed a Resolution in Support of Aid in Dying. Similar societies who worked for euthanasia and the rights of the individual on his death were established in 1980 in Germany and Canada. Different organizations from various countries around the world came together and formed an association in 1980 known as “The World Federation of Right to Die Societies”. It worked in favor of euthanasia and promoted it. They emphasized the importance of the right to die.

The society working for euthanasia in the same year gathered at Oxford to convene the euthanasia program further. 18 countries attended the conference. Near about 200 members from various states attended it. The association has grown since its formation. 38 societies all over the world became members of the federation. Each member association took the honor of hosting conferences on the subject. They strongly supported the subject.

This movement in support of euthanasia further continued, in 1984 American Medical Association Supported the Withdrawal of Life-extending Medical Treatment in definite situations with the consensus of the patient. Similarly, in Netherlands also voluntary euthanasia was allowed with definite stipulations.

In 1987, California State Bar supported Physician Aid in Dying and thus became First Public Body to approve it.

The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations a liberal group also passed a declaration in 1988 known as "The Right to Die With Dignity." The resolution allowed termination, with proper precautions in place to avoid abuse. This was the first congregation of religious people to support the resolution. Thus, the growing support to the right-to-die movement was evident amongst the American public. As a result, the "Hemlock Society’s" membership increased considerably. It reached a figure of 50,000 in 1990. There was a bulge in activities related to euthanasia by all that is medical fraternity, courts, staunge supporters and the people in general. Pursuant to the pro euthanasia wave the first right-to-die case was filed in the US. The apex court in the case of Cruzan v. Director Missouri Department of Health, held that a person of sound mind has the authority which is conferred by the constitution to reject therapeutic action. However, this
refusal should be clear. The court stated that desire of the patient and convincing evidence was essential in case to grant permission. In view of this ruling Nancy Cruzan the petitioner was permitted to remove her feeding tube, passive euthanasia had thus got an approval of the courts.

On this, background the United States Congress approved the bill. The “Patient Self-Determination Act” came into existence. It was obligatory for the federal funded hospitals to inform patients about the right they have of demanding or refusing treatment. On this basis, compassion in dying was founded in Washington in 1993. The aim of the foundation was to advice, guide and offer detailed information regarding death devoid of distress, torment. They also sponsored litigation challenging state laws, which were against assisted suicide.

In 1993 Europe also the pro euthanasia movements made its way towards acceptance, though euthanasia was illegal, doctors were not prosecuted for performing assisted suicide under precise guiding principles.

In Nov. 1994, “Oregon Death with Dignity” bill was passed in . It permitted suicide with the aids of doctors under proper safeguards. A doctors recommendation was essential if any individual wished to dismiss his life with dignity.. The votes casted in favor of the bill were 51-49 percent. The state is Health Services Commission in 1998 resolute to make arrangements to disburse money from the state resources below the “Oregon Health Plan” for those who had taken doctors assistance for suicide. This was initiated by the state with the aim that no one i.e. basically the poor would not be discriminated against it.

The Australian Northern Territory enacted a legislation on euthanasia in 1995. It was effective from 1996. However the act was short lived. The Australian Parliament upturned it in 1997. The result was that only four people could avail the benefit of the act. Dr Philip Nitschke was the surgeon who assisted in all these four deaths.

Subsequently 1997 the United states apex court in 1997 gave a verdict that there right to die is not recognized. Persuant to the decision in the year to 1997 president Clinton prohibited usage of federal funds for assisted suicide. The Michigan citizens in 1998 made efforts to have legislation on mercy
killing and suicide with the aid of doctor. However, the efforts went fruitless. The requisition was not accepted by the parliament. 71%. Votes were against it. Then after the Michigan court in the year, 1999 convicted a MD Jack Kevorkian, for administering euthanasia by a lethal injection. Kevorkian had assisted many patients to terminate life in spite of the fact that his acts attracted punishment. The Michigan court convicted him for murder. He was penalized and was given imprisonment.

However, the same year, 1997 Colombia legalized euthanasia for terminally ill with their clear consent. The two US states Luxembourg and Washington legalized doctor aided suicide and Euthanasia. This resulted in legislation for Washington. “Death with Dignity Act” came into existence.

Albania further carried the bastion and legalized euthanasia in 1999. This nation allowed passive euthanasia even to those patients who were unable to give their consensus. In such cases, the law prescribed consent of three family members to be essential before administration. However, this law passed in the state has always been a divisive issue because of the pressure of the Catholic churches.

2.7 Euthanasia in the third millennium - 2001

In 2000, Netherlands also approved voluntary euthanasia. It took the honor of being the first country on the globe to support euthanasia lawfully. Later in 2002 the Netherlands, the Dutch also allowed euthanasia on consent of the patient. Doctors aided suicide was also permitted. Belgium also legalized euthanasia in the same year. In 2002, they passed an analogous legislature permitting both the acts. The two states while passing legislation made doctors and psychologist involvement mandatory in case there were doubts about patient’s competency. The “Swiss National Council” in 2001 agreed to the suicide legislation and established it.

In Canada, assisting suicide is a crime but still in 2002, the Canadian court acquitted the person who assisted in suicide. On this background, the proponents forwarded a bill in the Canadian House of Commons in the year 2008. The bill proposed to save the doctors from the charges of murder and
manslaughter. It also thought of assisting the terminally ill to die with dignity. However, unfortunately the bill did not receive support, as it was believed that the chances of its abuse were high.

In the same year 2008, the Mexican senate legalized passive euthanasia. The physicians were allowed to withdraw life supporting devices and medication with the consensus of the patient.

Hence the 20th century witnessed pains and hard work of the proponents of euthanasia. The history shows that passive death known, as orthothanasia was prevalent in majority of tribes and the civilized society for various different reasons suitable to them. In many of the state’s efforts were made for its legalization but has always met with mixed responses from the people of different background. It has been examined that those who have no will power or intelligence of their own, absolutely incapable of improvement were a liability for their associates and civilization. It was not only to them but also to themselves. They could be terminated with proper safeguard measures to avoid abuse. Many countries like Switzerland, Oregon, Colombia, Albania, Netherlands, Belgium, Washington and Montana have been successful in enacting it as a law in spite of the controversies pertaining to the subject in this century only.

End Notes
1. From Merriam-Webster Dictionary. An Encyclopaedia Britanica Company