



Government of India accords the highest priority to ensuring the safety, security and well-being of children

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The Government of India accords the highest priority to ensuring the safety, security and well-being of children. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 provides a comprehensive, gender-neutral legal framework for protection of children below eighteen years from sexual offences and pornography. The Act prescribes graded punishments commensurate with the gravity of offences and was strengthened through the amendment by enhancing punishments, including the death penalty for certain aggravated penetrative sexual assault offences. The Act further incorporates child-friendly procedures, including mandatory reporting of offences (Section 19), child-friendly recording of statements and medical examination (Section 24 & 27) designation of Special Courts (Section 28), child-friendly trial procedures by the Special Court (Section 33) in-camera trials (Section 37), while Section 42A gives overriding effect to the provisions of the POCSO Act in case of inconsistency with any other law.

The POCSO Rules, 2020 strengthen implementation of the Act by providing for care, protection, rehabilitation and reintegration of child victims. The Rules provide for appointment of a Support Person (Rule 4 (8)) with the consent of the child and guardian, confidentiality during proceedings, regular communication regarding case progress, Special Relief (Rule 8) for urgent rehabilitation needs through the Child Welfare Committee (CWC), District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) or District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), and interim or final compensation (Rule 9 and 10) based on the nature of harm suffered. Compensation is payable by the State Government within the prescribed timeline i.e. within 30 days of the Court's order, with coordination by the CWC, DLSA and DCPU for rehabilitation and related support services.

The data relating to State-wise number of such cases registered, charge-sheeted and resulting in convictions during the last three years including Tamil Nadu may be seen at National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB's) portal <https://ncrb.gov.in>.

Section 193 (2) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) 2023 states that the investigation in relation to an offence under sections 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 or under sections 4, 6, 8 or section 10 of the POCSO Act, 2012 shall be completed within two months from the date on which the information was recorded by the officer in charge of the police station.

Section 346 (1) of the BNSS 2023 states that in every inquiry or trial the proceedings shall be continued from day-to-day basis until all the witnesses in attendance have been examined, unless the Court finds the adjournment of the same beyond the following day to be necessary for reasons to be recorded:

Provided that when the inquiry or trial relates to an offence under section 64, section 65, section 66, section 67, section 68, section 70 or section 71 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 the inquiry or trial shall be completed within a period of two months from the date of filing of the chargesheet.

To facilitate expeditious disposal of cases, the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs), including Exclusive POCSO Courts (e-POCSO), under the Nirbhaya Fund. In Tamil Nadu, 20 Exclusive POCSO Courts are functional under the Scheme, which have disposed of 12,184 cases, while 9,065 cases remain pending. The Scheme presently stands extended up to 30 September 2026. Regular review meetings with States & UTs and High Courts are held, while timely disposal of POCSO cases is regularly reviewed through communications with Chief Ministers, Chief Justices and Inter-State Zonal Council meetings.

The Government has significantly strengthened forensic infrastructure and capacity across the country through multiple initiatives. A state-of-the-art DNA Analysis and Research & Development facility has been established at the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL), Chandigarh, while machinery and equipment have been upgraded across CFSLs, including in specialized disciplines such as forensic analysis of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, digital forensics, DNA forensic analysis, and forensic psychology. A National Cyber Forensic Laboratory has been set up at CFSL Hyderabad to investigate major cases of digital fraud and cybercrime, with approval granted for six additional National Cyber Forensic Laboratories under the umbrella scheme *Safety of Women*. To expand forensic infrastructure, the Government has approved eight new CFSLs in Jammu (UT of Jammu & Kashmir), Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Kerala.

The Government has also strengthened victim rehabilitation through statutory compensation and medical support mechanisms. Section 396 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023 provides for Victim Compensation Schemes, while Section 397 mandates free medical treatment for victims of specified offences, including offences under the POCSO Act, and Section 200 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita penalises denial of such treatment. Section 27 of the POCSO Act and Rule 6 of the POCSO Rules provide for child-friendly medical examination, emergency medical care within 24 hours, forensic evidence collection, treatment of injuries, management of sexually transmitted diseases, HIV prophylaxis, emergency contraception, psychological counselling, pregnancy-related assistance under applicable laws, and appropriate care for children with disabilities.

The Central Government has also established the Central Victim Compensation Fund (CVCF) to supplement State Victim Compensation Schemes. States & UTs have also been advised to implement the revised NALSA compensation scheme for women victims/survivors of sexual assault and other crimes.

The Ministry continuously in consultation with the States & UTs undertakes necessary policy and programmatic interventions from time to time for strengthening women's and children's safety measures.

This information was given by the Minister of State for Women and Child Development Smt. Savitri Thakur in Rajya Sabha in reply to a question.

SS/PC

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