



The Indian Journal for Research in Law and Management

Open Access Law Journal – Copyright © 2026

Editor-in-Chief – Dr. Muktai Deb Chavan; Publisher – Alden Vas; ISSN: 2583-9896

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike 4.0 International (CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0) License, which permits unrestricted non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium provided the original work is properly cited.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION: A SOCIO-LEGAL STUDY OF THE POCSO Act, 2012

- Yashika Panwar

ABSTRACT

Child Sexual Abuse is one of the worst attacks on human dignity and not only should the laws be made to prevent such abuses but they should also be practiced. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO Act) was enacted by the Parliament of India to combat the rising issue of child sexual abuse. POCSO Act, is a progressive and child-centric piece of legislation. This paper analyses the functioning of the POCSO Act from a socio-legal perspective and establishes the disparity between its legal intent and practical realization. By analysing various provisions of the Act, court pronouncements on POCSO, available statistical data and practical hindrances at the implementation level, this paper demonstrates that despite being an important move in the right direction, POCSO's effectiveness as a prevention mechanism stands diluted due to lack of reporting, stigma, systemic failure and delays. The paper further offers specific recommendations for translating law in books to law in action.

INTRODUCTION

It is deeply unsettling that children, creatures that are meant to be afforded all of society's protections, can be so abused in what should be safe haven sites - home, school, places of worship, neighborhoods. Child sexual abuse (CSA) is not a new phenomenon. It has existed across all cultures and all times and it has been hidden by shame and silence. It is our ability to now, however slowly and painfully, name it, call it, and legislate it, that has changed.

The scale of the problem in India is enormous. The 2007 Study on Child Abuse conducted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development found that more than 53% of the children surveyed stated that they had been victims of some form of sexual abuse. Yet for decades, India did not have a dedicated statute for child sexual offenses. The relevant law used for crimes of sexual offense, was the Indian Penal Code, 1860, which is meant for adult victims of sexual assault and is consequently completely inappropriate in the case of children. There was no special evidentiary rule pertaining to child witnesses, no special court procedures and no duty to report.

It was in this context that Presidential assent was granted to the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO Act) on 19 June 2012. The enactment of this statute was driven by India's international commitments under the UNCRC to which India was a signatory on 11 December 1992 as well as by the recognition of a legislative deficit within India. This Act criminalized all forms of sexual offenses against children under the age of eighteen and provided for the establishment of Special Courts to facilitate prompt trials as well as for special child-friendly procedural mechanisms. However, the effectiveness of any law depends on its enforcement. A decade later, we are faced with the hard questions - Is the POCSO Act actually succeeding in preventing CSA? Are our children safer now than they were prior to 2012? Are the Courts, the Police, social workers, families equipped with adequate resources to apply the POCSO Act effectively? This paper seeks to answer these questions from a socio-legal perspective, where the focus is on examining not only the letter of the law but also the social milieu in which it functions, the institutional apparatus by which it is implemented, and the human experience it seeks to protect.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The central question, which this paper is concerned with, is the huge, disturbing disparity between the POCSO Act as a legal document and the POCSO Act as a lived reality for children in India. The Act itself is very thorough. It criminalises acts on a broad definition, mandates reporting, creates Special Courts and provides assistance to victims and lays down hefty punishments for perpetrators. The ground reality is, however, much murkier. Not only are very few cases of abuse ever reported it has been estimated that barely one in ten cases of sexual abuse against a child is ever reported, but the rate of conviction, even of reported cases, is

abysmal. In 2022, NCRB data shows, the conviction rate for POCSO cases stood at 32.2%. Trials in such cases take years and re-traumatize survivors. Shame, fear of ostracization, the perpetrator being a member of the family, all combine to silence victims.

The gap between legal aspiration and the reality of enforcement cannot be seen as purely a lacuna in the law. It is deeply connected to structural, socio-cultural factors such as the deeply ingrained patriarchal norms that deny children a voice, caste and class disparities that decide whether or not a child's abuse will be considered serious, institutional apathy, undertrained officers, and a justice system that has, in spite of formal amendments, remained a terrifying place for a traumatized child. In sum, the problem is that POCSO is a dual punitive-preventive statute, and its preventive potential has been severely damaged by a systemic collapse that cannot be attributed to the legislation alone.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The present study aims to achieve the following:

1. Reviewing the legal framework of the POCSO Act, 2012 and critically analysing its sufficiency in addressing the different aspects of child sexual abuse.
2. Looking into POCSO's potential as a preventative tool with more focus on reporting mechanisms, Special Court structure and victims' welfare facilities.
3. Understanding the socio-legal obstacles in the implementation of the Act, such as stigma, non-reporting, institutional shortcomings and procedural delays.
4. Examining the judicial pronouncements on critical provisions of the Act and to understand its judicial interpretation and application.
5. Suggest policy, legislative and social remedies aimed at enhancing its preventive and protective mechanism.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The paper is structured around the following central questions:

1. To what extent does the POCSO Act, 2012, cover all the various forms of sexual offences against children, and to what extent has this been widened by later amendments?
2. What are the main obstacles to the successful implementation of the Act, and to what extent do social, cultural and institutional factors influence under-reporting?
3. To what extent have the Indian courts interpreted and applied the POCSO Act, and what do the judicial interpretations tell us about its strengths and weaknesses?
4. What is to be done if the Act is to become proactive instead of simply a retrospective piece of legislation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There exists an extensive academic and policy literature on child sexual abuse and the POCSO Act which has, across a range of disciplines such as law, sociology, psychology and public health, given us only fragments of a multifaceted problem. The empirical work of Kacker, Varadan and Kumar in 2007, commissioned by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, was the first to look at child abuse on a large scale in India.

It confirmed that sexual abuse was much more prevalent than the discourse would have suggested and that boys were just as prone to abuse as girls, contrary to widespread beliefs. It was this report that served as a key driver for the framing of POCSO. Mathews and Kenny in their comparative piece have observed that laws obligating mandatory reporting, such as the one in POCSO, "can only be effective with significant institutional back up, such as appropriately trained mandatory reporters and adequately funded, child-responsive child protection services". This point is particularly relevant to India, where mandatory reporting under Section 19 of the POCSO Act continues to remain largely unenforced on account of public ignorance and official inaction. The research carried out by Shruti Murthy & Radhika Bhattacharya, analyzing special courts constituted under POCSO, highlighted the gross disparities between statutory provision completion of trials within one year under Section 35 of POCSO and the reality on the ground where trial completion in most states took more than three years, with a number of cases exceeding ten years in length. They largely attributed this to a severe dearth of designated special courts and the posting of judges without requisite child-sensitivity training.

Geeta Pandey's BBC report exposed the reality of "secondary victimisation" - re-traumatisation of child victims through unsympathetic police interrogations, redundant medical examinations, and open-court cross examination - despite the procedural protections already built into the POCSO for this very purpose.

The HAQ Centre for Child Rights has published a series of reports evaluating the implementation of POCSO in different states. Each of them noted the absence of Special Child Protection Officers and Support Persons as provided for in the Act and consequently child victims left to navigate the justice system alone. Scholars like Vrinda Narain analyzed the intersectionality of gender, caste and class in POCSO cases and showed how while Dalit and tribal children are overrepresented among victims, they are significantly underrepresented among those receiving justice.

In their analysis of POCSO in 2017, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy highlighted the challenges of the Act's gender-neutral approach to both medico-legal procedures and victim assistance, particularly for male and transgender victims, whom they reported the legal framework was simply not equipped to handle. There is far less on the preventive aspects of the legislation. Sanlaap's research on community-based programs in West Bengal indicated that the programs enhanced rates of disclosure of child abuse. This suggests that prevention has to reach into schools, families, and communities-beyond simply the realm of legislation-but currently such programs are disparate, and not institutionalized at a national level. Overall, the existing literature paints a picture of a benevolent law struggling to function in an under-resourced, socially conservative and institutionally fragile environment; an environment where parallel social, legal and administrative reforms must take place to realize the goals of the statute in prevention as well as response.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The approach adopted in this study is socio-legal, considering law not only as a system of rules, but also as an institution of society. The socio-legal method offers an interdisciplinary framework, enabling the combined study of legal doctrines with sociological and empirical approaches. The main primary sources under study were the text of the Protection of Children

from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 as amended in 2019; the POCSO Rules, 2020; the Indian Penal Code, 1860; applicable Constitutional provisions such as Articles 15(3) and 39(f) and selected judgments of the Supreme Court of India and the High Courts interpreting the POCSO Act.

Secondary sources include reports by the National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Women and Child Development, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and non-governmental organizations such as the HAQ Centre for Child Rights and the Centre for Child and the Law (National Law School of India University). Books, legal commentary and journal articles have also been reviewed. The nature of the study is qualitative and analytical. It is not based on field work or personal interviews, although existing empirical data obtained from second sources have been used. The analysis is based on a critical examination of the legislative text, its interpretation by the courts, and the existing socio-legal context for its implementation.

ANALYSIS

A. The Legislative Architecture of the POCSO Act

The POCSO Act, 2012 is an important piece of legislation due to several factors. It is the only stand-alone, comprehensive legislation in India that deals with child sexual offences and defines crimes with a specificity far greater than that achieved by the Indian Penal Code; its structure is child-centric and focuses on preserving child's dignity, privacy and well being at all stages of criminal procedure. It states that a child is anyone below the age of eighteen years, irrespective of gender. It is refreshing that the gender-neutral concept of a child was adopted, breaking from a trend where the law viewed sexual offenses as crimes against women, and acknowledging that children of all gender identities (including boys and girls) are vulnerable to sexual violence.

The offenses under the POCSO Act fall into three categories, being penetrative sexual assault (section-3), sexual assault (section-7) and sexual harassment (section-11), each having an "aggravated" form attracting a penalty of imprisonment for life, or for a term not less than ten years, for offenses committed by those in a position of trust or authority (e.g. Parent, teacher, doctor, or police officer) or against children with mental or physical disabilities.

The act further penalises using a child for pornographic activities (section-13) and has also defined abetment and attempt as offenses under the act-18 and the amendment to the POCSO

Act, 2019 introduced the death penalty as a punishment for aggravated penetrative sexual assault, along with defining new offenses regarding child pornography.

Crucially, section-29 requires that where any person is prosecuted for having committed, or for having abetted, any offense under this Act, the Special Court shall presume that such person has committed or abetted such offense, unless the contrary is proved. This shift of burden is the policy decision by which law favors the child victim, given the obvious power asymmetry between a child and an adult accused. Section 19 makes it a mandatory reporting requirement to anyone (including children) who has knowledge, or apprehends, that any sexual offence has been committed or is likely to be committed against a child. This a very wide reporting duty, applicable not only to law enforcement personnel, but also to neighbors, family members, teachers and doctors; a failure to report is an offense under section-21.

B. Special Courts and the Aspiration of Speedy Justice

The constitution of the Special Courts is central to the child protective aspect of the POCSO Act. Section 28 of the Act provides that the Special Courts shall be designated for the trial of offences under this Act.²³ Section 35 of the Act states that the Special Court shall complete the trial as speedily as possible endeavoring to complete it within a period of one year from the date of the cognizance of the offense. There is sound logic behind this provision: Children have fading memories and limited resilience to lengthy procedures. The delay itself can result in secondary harm, a reduced period of child vulnerability and a declaration by society of a rejection of abuse, with no hesitation. However, reality is different. As of 2023, there are over 2.4 lakh cases pending before Special POCSO Courts in India. The number of designated Special Courts is disproportionately less compared to the pending cases. Uttar Pradesh and Bihar report the highest number of cases and are among the states that suffer from the most acute backlogs. For most of the states, the average pending period is more than 3 years and it is common to find cases pending for 5-7 years. In response to the pending cases of POCSO, in *Alakh Alok Srivastava v. Union of India*, the Supreme Court took suo motu cognizance of the pendency of cases under POCSO and directed for the constitution of Fast-Track Special Courts across the country. Following this the government of India came out with the scheme of Fast-Track Special Courts in 2019. The target for setting up of FTSCs was 1023 courts. This has increased the disposal rate

to an extent, however still is far from efficient and fails to match the rate at which new cases enter the judicial system each year.

C. Child-Friendly Procedures: Promise and Practice

The POCSO Act provides a series of detailed procedures aimed at limiting the trauma experienced by a child survivor. Section 26 forbids any question in an aggressive or leading form to the child. Section 33(2) allows a child to appear by video link, at a location other than the Special Court. Section 36 forbids public disclosure of a child's identity in the media. The Act makes provision for a "Support Person" to accompany the child throughout legal proceedings (Rule 4, POCSO Rules 2020), and that the statement of the child is to be recorded by a police officer not below the rank of Sub-Inspector, and preferably a woman, in civil dress (Section 24). Such measures show careful recognition of the extra trauma that the legal process can impose. However, these measures suffer from severe implementation issues. The "Support Person", which is usually drawn from a social worker, NGO or volunteer organisation, has been largely non-existent in actual court proceedings due to lack of capacity by the Child Welfare Committee, lack of awareness by police and prosecutors, or lack of necessary infrastructure.

A number of studies have cited cases where child survivors were made to appear in the court in the presence of the accused (cross examination happened in open court against the spirit of the Act), where judges were lax in restraining police and prosecuting counsels from leading aggressive questioning, and where police took statements in inappropriate languages which twisted the child's words. The most significant criticism of POCSO's effectiveness lies in the yawning gap between the procedural safeguards put in place on paper and the harsh reality of child survivors in the courtroom.

D. The Problem of Underreporting

No study of POCSO is complete without addressing its most significant obstacle, which is that the overwhelming majority of child sexual abuse in India is never reported. Data vary significantly but most researchers have concluded that reported cases account for a tiny percentage-as low as ten percent, of all reported cases.

The many reasons for under-reporting are intertwined and socio-structural. Firstly, as in most of the world, the majority of offenders are known to the child, i.e., are relatives, neighbors,

neighbors, teachers or employers. Disclosure in such cases means damage to family ties and networks and thus puts enormous pressure on the child and family to be silent. Secondly, stigmas associated with sexual assault most often attach themselves to the victim, not the offender, in many Indian societies; girls are discriminated against in marriage if they are sexually abused. Third, children themselves may lack the language to narrate their experience, or spaces in which to do so- schools are not generally equipped to teach children about their rights to privacy; parents may be themselves unwilling or unable to engage in discussions about abuse. Fourth, there is significant distrust of the police and justice system in some areas, especially by marginalized groups; a report by HAQ states that parents from SC and ST communities are far less likely to file complaints under POCSO, as they fear police hostility.

The mandatory reporting section 19 tries to overcome this in some sense, in that it requires anyone, regardless of the families' concerns about being shamed and alienated from the community for such crimes, to report suspected child sexual abuse. Section 19 however, has remained a dead provision, and prosecution under section 21 for failure to report has been largely insignificant with teachers and healthcare workers blaming the law's obscurity, fear of consequences and the lack of protocol to report known crimes.

E. Judicial Interpretation: Calibrating the Act

Indian courts have played an important role in the interpretation of the POCSO Act, both by extending its protection and at times posing complex questions of its application in the fringes.

In *State of Kerala v. Rajesh*, the SC reaffirmed that in all stages of proceedings, the child's best interests must be of paramount concern, and the courts have to take a trauma-informed approach to the analysis of evidence.

In *Nipun Saxena v. Union of India*, the SC issued directions on protection of the child victim's identity; holding that identifying a child victim even implicitly through case facts amounted to contravention of the Act, and violation of the child's constitutional rights. The SC ordered all media Houses to follow the directions on Section-23 of POCSO Act and Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 with utmost diligence. The most controversial interpretation has been of "skin-to-skin contact"; In *Attorney General for India v. Satish* the SC reversed a decision of the Bombay HC which held groping without skin to skin contact did not fall under section 7 of POCSO Act as a

'sexual assault'. Child rights groups rejoiced over this decision for it upheld the legislative intent to not make assault dependent on whether the child victim is clothed or unclothed.

With regard to the age of consent the Courts have been conflicted in cases that concern adolescent relationships where two minors are involved or one of the persons giving consent is a minor who is old enough. In *S. Murugan v. State* the Madras High Court recommended that "close in age exception" need to be made in the law for teenage relationships, however, this recommendation remains unheard.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the analysis above, the following findings emerge:

Finding 1: Structurally strong, resourcing weak. The POCSO Act provides an adequate legislative framework for combating child sex abuse, a law which is gender-neutral and child-centric. Yet, the physical infrastructure and human resources that a system predicated on this law demands – a network of Special Courts, suitably trained police officials, Support Persons, a fully functional forensic network, child-friendly examination rooms – is severely lacking across most states.

Finding 2: Lack of reporting. Underreporting of sexual abuse is the biggest stumbling block in its prevention. The POCSO Act is unable to protect those who do not report sexual abuse. The reporting mandated under Section 19 is virtually ineffective due to lack of awareness, no training and no consequences. Aggressive and far more intense efforts in the area of prevention and training the reporters will be required.

Finding 3: Trials are harmful. Delay in the disposal of trials has a cumulative impact on the child survivor and causes an institutional damage that would likely further endanger future vulnerable victims of sexual abuse. It remains the objective of a trial in the context of POCSO to achieve disposal within a year as is mentioned in Section 35, and most courts have failed to adhere to this in a majority of the cases.

Finding 4: Procedural safeguards not universally followed. The POCSO Act envisages a child-sensitive system of judicial process. Procedures that include taking child's evidence through video conferencing, provision for support persons and prohibition of aggressive

questioning, though written into the Act, is practically ignored in most states by overworked judges and inexperienced police force which are not adequately trained or monitored by the State.

Finding 5: Margins amplified. Marginalised children, from a scheduled caste/tribe background, from migrant communities and poor economic strata face compounded disadvantages. While on paper the Act ensures equal treatment to all, in reality, its effective enforcement to reach all strata is uneven and requires proactive interventions targeting the most vulnerable children.

Finding 6: Prevention function ignored. As an Act, the POCSO is designed as an instrument of punishment. Its potential to act as a preventative measure by using public education, deterring would-be offenders, and creating a protective community network has been virtually neglected. Its legislative, administrative and social functions, all necessary to realize a preventative mechanism, do not seem to operate in sync with one another.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to strengthen the POCSO Act as a preventive and protective instrument:

1. Mandatory and Standardised Child Safety Education in Schools

The National Curriculum Framework should stipulate compulsory and age-appropriate personal safety education in all schools, beginning with Class 1 Children need to be taught, using child-friendly language, about body autonomy, safe and unsafe touch, the right to say NO and disclosing to a trusted adult. This is not sex education per se but safety education and a powerful preventive strategy.

2. Effective Implementation of Mandatory Reporting

The government should issue a National mandatory reporting protocol and disseminate it to all schools, hospitals, childcare facilities and public offices. This protocol should be backed by adequate training to all mandatory reporters. There must be prosecutions under Section 21 in appropriate cases to create deterrents and show that the obligation to report is meaningful. A

safe, confidential and accessible reporting mechanism such as a specialised child helpline manned by well trained officers should be made prominent.

3. Adequacy of Fast-Track Special Courts

The target of 1,023 FTSCs laid down in the central scheme must be surpassed, and each court must have well- equipped child-friendly rooms, video-conferencing facilities, child-sensitive and adequately trained judges and prosecutors, and dedicated child-welfare officers. The court must be physically and psychologically safe. The stipulated one year trial duration should be closely monitored and enforced through a national case-management system where judges can be held accountable for delays.

4. Institutionalisation of the Support Person Mechanism

Every police station, court and CWC should have designated and trained Support Persons in all POCSO cases. The government should work with NGOs and social work institutions to create a cadre of these support persons and make their involvement mandatory from the registration of the case rather than at the discretion of the authorities.

5. Specialised & Sensitive Police Training

All police personnel should be provided training in child-sensitive investigation techniques, trauma-informed interviewing and specific requirements of POCSO cases. Child-friendly investigation kits and trained child forensic interviewers as prevalent in many developed countries should be piloted and later deployed widely.

6. Legal Aid and Psycho-Social Support to Survivors

Every child survivor is entitled to free legal aid under the Act but current levels of legal aid are inadequate. There should be a dedicated POCSO Legal Aid panel with a sufficient number of lawyers trained in child rights law. At the same time, free, long-term psycho-social support must be provided to child survivors through an integration with existing child development services.

7. Legislative Reform- Close-in-age exception

Parliament must consider introducing a narrowly defined "close-in-age exception", for consensual sexual activity between adolescents within a specific and narrow age bracket, to avoid penalising relationships among teenagers and allow law enforcement to concentrate on actual abuse and exploitation. This must be drafted very carefully so that it does not create loopholes for adult offenders.

8. Community-Based Prevention Programs

Legislation alone will not end child sexual abuse. There must be community-level programs involving parents, religious leaders, gram panchayats and health workers to change attitudes around silence, shame and reporting of abuse. Successful models of community intervention have been found crucial to the effectiveness of child protection systems in other countries.

9. Monitoring and Accountability Mechanisms

A national monitoring framework should be established to collect data on POCSO case registration, trial pendency, conviction rates, support person appointments, and rehabilitation outcomes. This should be compiled as quarterly state reports and made public. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) must be empowered to conduct independent audits of the implementation of the POCSO Act.

CONCLUSION

Child sexual abuse is a crisis that is predominantly unseen, unseen behind closed doors, behind trusted relationships, hidden from sight by a mantle of social silence. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 was the first meaningful, significant and genuine attempt to bring this crisis into the sunlight of law, and since its enactment more than a decade ago has served as the legal framework for criminalising the offence, facilitating protection of victims in court, and communicating social disapproval of perpetrators.

But law is only as effective as the society and system which breathe life into it. In present times the POCSO Act exists in a system that is characterized by systematic underreporting, lack of resources at the institutional level, procedural and institutional lapses, delays in the trial, and strong social-cultural resistances that no legal remedy, alone, can overcome. It is not the lack of

harsh punishments but the lack of investment in people, institutions, communities, and social attitudes that causes the disconnect between the intent and impact of the Act.

Genuine prevention would mean that children recognize their right to safety, their right to speak, and that teachers, doctors, police, community members understand their obligation to listen and to report. It would mean that police officers, prosecutors, and judges can treat a traumatized child in a manner that is efficient, professional and respectful. It would mean that court proceedings take place at such a pace that a survivor is not punished again through an endless trial. Most of all, it would mean that society - from homes and schools to media, both conventional and social - should unequivocally turn away from the silence that has always enabled abusers to operate with impunity. The POCSO Act is only a foundation upon which all of society must build with political will, resources, and steadfast determination to transform it into what it was always envisioned to be: not just a law against abuse, but society's comprehensive pledge against child sexual abuse.

REFERENCES

Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, No. 32 of 2012, *Gazette of India*, Part II, Section 1 (June 20, 2012) [hereinafter POCSO Act].

Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act, No. 25 of 2019, *Gazette of India*, Part II, Section 1 (Aug. 5, 2019).

Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Rules, 2020, G.S.R. 71(E) (Jan. 31, 2020).

Indian Penal Code, No. 45 of 1860, as amended.

Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, No. 2 of 2016, *Gazette of India*, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 1 (Dec. 31, 2015).

INDIA CONST. art. 15, cl. 3.

INDIA CONST. art. 39(f).

CASES

Alakh Alok Srivastava v. Union of India, (2018) 17 SCC 291 (India).

Nipun Saxena v. Union of India, (2019) 2 SCC 703 (India).

Attorney General for India v. Satish, (2021) 3 SCC 117 (India).

State of Kerala v. Rajesh, Criminal Appeal No. 1188 of 2019 (India).

S. Murugan v. State, CrI. A. No. 3443 of 2019 (Madras H.C. 2019) (India).

BOOKS & REPORTS

Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, *Study on Child Abuse: India 2007* (2007).

HAQ Centre for Child Rights, *Crimes Against Children: An Analysis of Crime in India 2020* (2022).

National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, *Crime in India: 2022* (2023).

Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, *Implementing POCSO: A Study of the Law in Practice* (2017).

Sanlaap, *Child Sexual Abuse Prevention and Community Awareness in West Bengal: A Field Report* (2019).

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, *Annual Report 2021–22* (2022).

JOURNAL ARTICLES & ONLINE SOURCES

Loveleen Kacker, Srinivas Varadan & Pravesh Kumar, *Study on Child Abuse: India 2007*, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India (2007), <https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/StudyonChildAbuse2007.pdf>.

Ben Mathews & Maureen Kenny, *Mandatory Reporting Legislation in the United States, Canada, and Australia: A Cross-Jurisdictional Review of Key Features, Differences, and Issues*, 16 Child Maltreatment 50 (2008).

Shruti Murthy & Radhika Bhattacharya, *Delays in POCSO Trials: A Data-Based Assessment*, 4 Indian L. Rev. 102 (2020).

Vrinda Narain, *Gender, Caste, and Child Protection: Intersectionality in the Application of the POCSO Act*, 8 J. Indian L. & Soc'y 55 (2017).

Geeta Pandey, *India's Child Sex Abuse Law: Has POCSO Made a Difference?*, BBC News (Nov. 18, 2019), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-49946849>.

Rahi Bhatt, *POCSO at 10: Promises, Progress and Pending Work*, The Wire (June 20, 2022), <https://thewire.in/law/pocso-10-years-implementation>.