

Mapping POCSO Act 2012 Case Statistics: Haryana and India (2020–2022)

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Abstract

This research scrutinizes case statistics under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, establishing a comparison between Haryana and all-India trends from 2020-2022, based on official data from the Ministry of Women and Child Development (based on NCRB reports). The key indicators analyzed, as included in the datasets, were cases registered, charge sheeted, disposed by police, disposed by courts, pending investigations, pending trials, arrests, and convictions. The analysis of the data reveals a continual increase in cases registered and conviction rates at the national level, whereas Haryana exhibited disproportionately elevated levels of case registration rates when compared to the national average. Convictions in Haryana increased significantly, from 56 in 2020 to 354 in 2022, resulting in an increase in conviction rates, from 3.0% in 2020 to 16.0% in 2022. These conviction rates exceeded the national average of 14.0%. However, in spite of these findings, rate of absolute convictions in Haryana remains low, and the number of pending investigations and pending trials consistently grew, highlighting continuing stress and delay in the system for victims of sexual violence. These results provide initial tentative evidence that although positive developments in reporting and judicial responsiveness may be emerging, considerable backlogs and relatively low efficiency of conviction rates will continue to undermine the objectives of achieving timely justice under POCSO Act. Policy recommendations include expanding the number of Fast-Track Special Courts to hear POCSO cases, establishing more capacity in police investigation, more resources in forensic services, establishing more victim assistance service support, and community awareness, including engaging local organizations. Trends in Haryana mirror the national trend, and in some case may exacerbate the national trend, which calls for timely institutional reform to address these critical objectives when it comes to investigation, prosecution, and conviction outcomes.

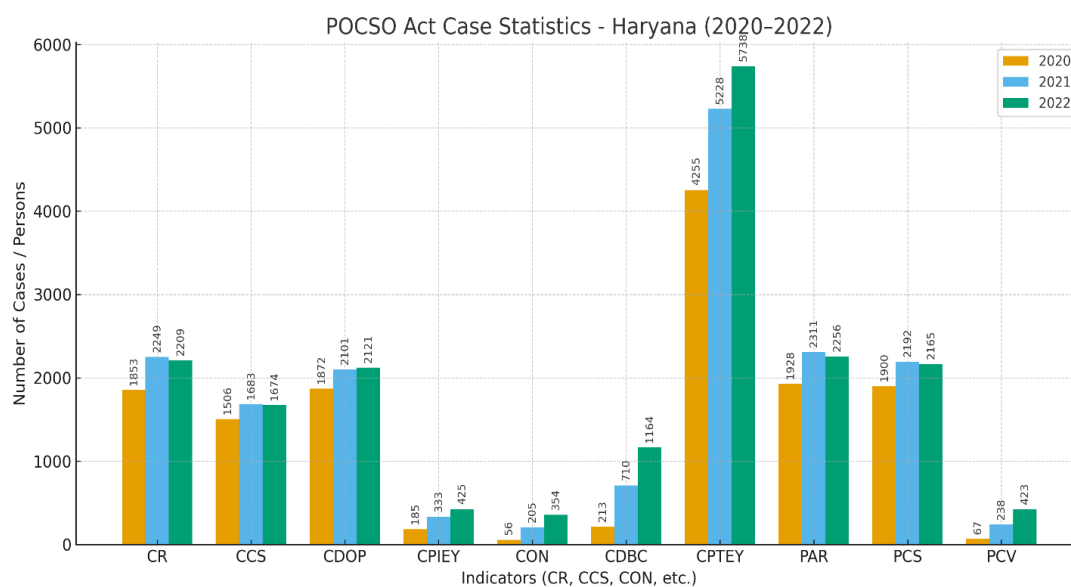
Keywords: POCSO; Children sexual offences; Implementation challenges of POCSO; POCSO Act Amendments; POCSO Haryana

Introduction

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 is considered a pioneering law in India to protect those under 18 years of age from sexual assault and exploitation. It establishes robust obligations for reporting, investigating, and prosecuting child sexual offence charges [4]. Monitoring trends of POCSO-related offences and the results of judicial processes has been a priority since the passing of the POCSO Act to evaluate success in victim protection and in and of the criminal justice system. The National Crime Records

Bureau (NCRB) collects extensive information on POCSO-related cases and reports it under different heads (registered, charge sheeted, disposed by police, disposed by courts, pending, etc.) as well as annual or special reports. In December 2023, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (Government of India) provided specific state- and union-territory-wise data from the years 2020-2022 in response to a parliamentary question [4][1]. This report analyzes exclusively POCSO Act statistics for Haryana against the all-India figures covering the years 2020, 2021, and 2022. Haryana is a northern state with a little more than 30 million residents (approximately 2.2% of India) [5] and it has been characterized as having a relatively high rate of crime against women and children. The "all-India" data incorporates total data for all states and UTs. We consider several indicators:

(1) Case Registration (CR) - total number of cases registered under POCSO, meaning new cases; (2) Chargesheets (CCS) - cases in which a chargesheet has been filed by police; (3) Cases Disposed by Police (CDOP) - cases that are closed at the investigatory stage; (4) Cases Pending Investigation (CPIEY) - investigations that are incomplete; (5) Convictions (CON) - cases that end in a conviction; (6) Cases Disposed by Court (CDBC) - cases that are completed, meaning cases have been concluded; (7) Cases Pending Trial (CPTAY) - cases that are still pending trial; (8) Persons Arrested (PAR); (9) Persons charge sheeted (PCS); (10) Persons Convicted (PCV). These indicators combined indicate how law enforcement and the judiciary are functioning overall. The goals of this report are to identify trends that exist for the three-year period, compare Haryana's performance against the national average and provide interpretation. In this way, we examine both the good news and bad news with regard to tackling the prevalence of child sexual abuse. We also provide background (given the national increase in reported cases under POCSO and counter-similarity with NCRB 2022) [6] and other previous studies. Finally, policy recommendations aim to address identified gaps in investigation efficacy, prosecution rates, and conviction outcomes under the POCSO framework.



Source: Sansad.in

Abbreviation: -

Cases Registered	(CR)
Cases Charge-sheeted	(CCS)
Cases Disposed off by Police	(CDOP)
Cases Pending Investigation	(CPIEY)
Cases Convicted	(CON)
Cases Disposed off by Court	(CDBC)
Cases Pending Trial	(CPTEY)
Persons Arrested	(PAR)
Persons Charge-sheeted	(PCS)
Persons Convicted	(PCV)

POCSO Cases Details Statical Haryana Vs. All India										
2020										
Title	CR	CCS	CDO P	CPI EY	CO N	CD BC	CPTE Y	PAR	PCS	PC V
Haryana	1853	150 6	1872	185	56	213	4255	1928	1900	67
All India	4722 1	447 09	4722 8	191 43	368 6	962 2	170271	5900 2	5576 3	454 2
2021										
Haryana	2249	168 3	2101	333	205	710	5228	2311	2192	238
All India	5387 4	511 29	5390 7	191 30	515 6	164 77	205034	6666 5	6302 6	615 0
2022										
Haryana	2209	167 4	2121	425	354	116 4	5738	2256	2165	423
All India	6341 4	597 66	6375 9	199 42	890 9	288 50	239188	7575 2	7472 8	104 29

Source: Sansad.in

Data and Methodology

The research is based on secondary statistics from official public sources provided by government agencies. In particular, the Ministry of Women and Child Development produced a tabulated collection of statistics on cases of the POCSO Act for each state/UT and for India as a whole for the calendar years (2020-2022) [1][2]. These statistics are drawn from the NCRB

database of reported crimes and annual reported outcomes for each year. For each indicator, we pulled the relevant numbers to Haryana, as well as the overall numbers for India. The data were imported and adjusted for consistency (raw values are shown in Table 1 below). Trends were evaluated by calculating year-to-year percentage changes, and were useful, per-capita (rate per capita, using Haryana's population of 29-30 million [5]).

To visualize the data, key indicators were presented in either line or bar charts that outline trends and difference between Haryana and India. Measures of the data were taken as well (rates, share of national totals) as a way to interpret how much of a burden an indicator or measure was relative to the others. Qualitative interpretation is based on these quantitative measures, and made as a richer interpretation using material for published reports and news accounts when useful. All references refer to official tables (as noted in footnotes) or to academic, public, and otherwise commentary it appears on NCRB (official) data. There is no human subjects or ethical data collection issues involved, as this is analysis of statistics that are publicly available and aggregated.

Results and Data Analysis

Trends in Case Registration and Chargesheets. The total number of Cases Registered (CR) under POCSO increased nationally from 47,221 in 2020 to 53,874 in 2021 (+14.1%) and increased further to 63,414 (+17.7%) in 2022[1][7]. The CR figures in Haryana initially showed sharper increases: 1,853 in 2020 to 2,249 in 2021 (+21.3%), then decreased slightly to 2,209 in 2022 (-1.8%) [1][2][3]. Therefore, in 2021, the registered case volume in Haryana (2,249) was about 3.9% of the national total for that year (53,874), and was about 3.5% in 2022, given Haryana's 2.2% share of population [5]. This shows that the per-capita POCSO case registration rate in Haryana is significantly higher than the national average. (Figure 1 shows the diverging paths: Haryana's steeper line from 2020 to 2021.)

Bullet points to highlight:

Share of Case Registrations from Haryana to India overall: 3.9% in 2021, versus population of HC: 2.17% [5][2].

Case Registrations were up year-after-year in India (total of +34%) and in Haryana (total +19% for 2020-22), which means more reported case incidents and/or overall case reporting increased [1][3].

Example of Figure: Miles Scale; The marks that indicate the actual meaning and position of the actual case registered cases, is shown greater in number than the national case registered cases curve increased positively steeper (2020-21). The type of charge sheeting rate remained high, first. All Cases Charge sheeted (CCS), if anything, also increase; In India, with 44,709 CCS in 2020, increased to 51,129 in 2021, and then it continued to climb, to 59,766 CCS (33.6% cumulatively increased) [1][3]. There are 1,506 CCS for 2020 (Haryana), 1,683 CCS for 2021, and 1,674 CCS for 2022 now - a total increase of +11.7% (2020-22) but slight decrease for 2022[1][3]. Overall, the charge sheeting rate (with CCS/CR) remained high, as Haryana filed chargesheets in 81% of cases in 2020-21, to 76% in 2022; India averaged 95% year-long with CCS to CR for all three years.

Police Disposals and Pending Investigations. As for Cases Disposed by Police (CDOP) – whether through closure or otherwise – were almost equal to or slightly greater than number of registered cases each year, indicating that we could caution that possibly registering cases late could result in closures of previous closed cases, even the previous years. In Haryana, the CDOP values were: 1,872 (2020), 2,101 (2021), and 2,121 (2022) [1][3]. And what's interesting for one case in 2020, when Haryana CDOP was 1,872, it was slightly greater than that original CR - 1,853, which would mean Columbus only disposed or cleared some cases that might have been pending from 2019 or maybe prior to 2019 and were able to dispose of them. All of India showed CDOP all the same way (47,228 CDOP in 2020, 53,907 CDOP in 2019, and lastly in 2022 a total of 63,759 CDOP [1][3]). Cases *Pending Investigation at Year-End (CPIEY)* trended upward. Haryana had a very low pending count initially (185 in 2020) but it increased to 333 (2021) and 425 (2022)[1][3]. India had 19,143 (2020), 19,130 (2021), and 19,942 (2022) pending, reflecting a marginal accumulation (especially into 2022) [1][3]. Despite robust charge-sheets, rising *pending* suggests more new cases than are being cleared.

Court Disposals, Convictions, and Pendency. Two relevant outcomes are cases Disposed by Court (CDBC) and Cases Convicted (CON). There was a substantial increase in court disposals and convictions in Haryana: CDBC in Haryana increased from 213 in 2020, to 710 in 2021, to 1,164 in 2022[1][3]. Convictions (which are a type of disposals) increased considerably from only 56 in 2020, to 205 in 2021, and 354 in 2022[1][3]. Nationally, disposals increased from 9,622, to 16,477, to 28,850 (2020–2022) [1][3]. CON increased from 3,686, to 5,156, to 8,909 respectively. These marked increases indicate better case disposal rates and higher convictions over these years in both contexts.

However, the number of Cases Pending Trial at Year-End (CPTEY) also increased during the same time period. Police cases pending trial in Haryana were 4,255 (2020), 5,228 (2021), 5,738 (2022) [1][3]. All-India, pending trial cases were 170,271, 205,034, and 239,188 respectively [1][7]. Thus, although DCBC and CON both increased, it appears that CPTEY fell is rising faster due to the consistency that registering new cases continues to outpace the throughput of the courts. (For example, [39] reported NCRB statistics of CPTEY rising from 170k in 2020, to 205k in 2021[8], supporting our observation of increases in discharges.)

Bullet highlights:

Trends in adjudications: The increase in adjudications in Haryana CON has been much greater than with CR (from 56 to 354; over a 6-fold increase; from 2020-22) [1][3]. The conviction rate (CON/CR) has also improved (from 3.0% to 16.0%). Across India, CON terms were 3,686 (2020) to 8,909 (2022) [1][3] corresponding to an increase in conviction rates of 7.8% and 14.0% respectively.

Disposals vs. Pendency: Both Haryana and India suggest that even though there was an increase in disposals (CDBC) (Haryana +447% from 2020 to 2022), the absolute number of cases and trials pending increased (Haryana; +35%, nationally +40%) [1][3]. This implies that the disposals did not keep pace with new crime/charges, or were insufficient to offset new registrations.

Persons arrested and convicted: Persons arrested (PAR) in Haryana were 1,928 (2020), 2,311 (2021), 2,256 (2022); persons convicted (PCV) were 67, 238, 423[1][3]. In India, PAR was 59,002; 66,665; 75,752 respectively and PCV were 4,542; 6,150; 10,429 respectively. PCV have increased in parallel (Haryana +531%, India +130% over 2020-22) as have cases disposed; but there remain low absolute numbers.

Figure 2 (below) displays persons arrested (PAR) and persons convicted (PCV) in Haryana vs India and illustrates the continued gap between those arrested and successful prosecutions, particularly nationally.

Discussion

The above trends yield several noteworthy insights:

1. Increase in reported/incidents of POCSO: The ongoing increase of reported POCSO cases throughout the country (+34% over the last three years, on an average) is consistent with wider trends towards a very large increase in child sexual offence incidents. For instance, a comparison of NCRB 2022 figures in news discovered a 94% rise in reported POCSO crimes in six years (i.e. 2017-2022) [6], suggesting that the rate of increase observed between 2020-2022 has larger foundations. Haryana data reflected similar findings overall as reported POCSO cases increased in the state, 19%. Factors contributing to the rise may include heightened awareness, improved victim services/institutional ability to report, or potentially an increase in true incidence. Evidence of a slight statewide decline in number of cases (2,249 to 2,209) in 2022 in Haryana may be statistical noise or fluctuations in short-term enforcement priorities at the start of the year. However, overall, the trend in cases reported annually was positive.

2. Disproportionately high share POCSO cases in Haryana: Even though Haryana comprises only 2.2% of the population of India [5], they contributed roughly double that share of POCSO cases (e.g. 3.5-4.0%). Thus, either there was a higher rate of per capital incidence or there are just better reporting capabilities in Haryana. In other terms, the rate of child sexual offences (or at least reporting) likely is meaningfully higher than the all-India average. The validity of this latter assertion is supported by recent analyses that identified Haryana as one of the few states with high rates.

3. Advancement in Conviction rates: The data reveals a significant increase in convictions in Haryana, and in India, in 2021-22. For example, regions in Haryana saw an increase of more than six times in convictions, and in 2022, its overall conviction rate surpassed the national average. This growth likely reflects the effects of policy initiatives, as since 2019, there were additional Fast-Track Special Courts (FTSC) assigned for POCSO cases [10]. By Dec 2023, 412 POCSO courts were created across the country [10] with the purpose of expediting the trial process. The increase in the year 2022 is certainly a response to cases which were resolved in FTSCs. However, the absolute conviction rate is still low. In 2022, even at 16% (Haryana) or 14% (India), most cases do not result in a conviction. (Alternatively, other analyses estimate average conviction rates are around 10-15% [11][6].) There is a gap to fill in conviction rates which may reflect evidentiary issues in prosecution, delays leading to acquittal and complainants who retract their initial complaints.

4. **Backlog of cases:** That cases pending at the end of the year (i.e., investigation and trial) increased signals the systemic stress. The volume of cases, with over 23,000 pending court trials nationally by the end of 2022[12], signals that most victims will wait a long time before justice is served. In Haryana the number of pending trials grew to 5738 trials in 2022, a 35% increase since 2020. The growing volume of pending trials is an obstacle to achieving timely justice, as is the promise of the POCSO Act to ensure that justice is expeditious. Some contributing factors are:

5. **Gender and Context (not just numbers):** Although our analysis utilizes numeric data, we think understanding context remains important. National reports have consistently shown that the vast majority of POCSO victims are female children, and most offenders are known to the victim [6]. Haryana's own reports suggest that in around 98 percent of the state's child rape cases, the offender was known to the victim [13]. This is consistent with the overall POCSO findings. In our data, gender breakdowns do not exist; however, we safely assume that the pattern in Haryana is similar. These social factors reiterate the need for awareness, interventions at the family level, and child protection measures.

Implications and Key Findings

Based on the above, several key findings emerge:

- **High reports but low convictions:** Haryana has high case registration but comparatively low convictions. The number of cases and increasing convictions substantiate an active law enforcement agency. However, a low conviction rate occurs in comparison to levels expected to deter future crime. There is clearly an opportunity to improve investigations, evidence collection, and prosecution support.
- **Justice delayed:** There are serious delays in both Haryana and India. The increase in the pending caseload pushes many cases into years of waiting as victims go through the trial. Longer waits can reburden victims and allow perpetrators to remain free as the system lags. The pending cases issue needs to be addressed as a systemic bottleneck.
- **Resources:** The data indicate that the law-and-order resources are stressed. Because Haryana has higher-than-average crime rates, the resources will likely require more special courts and forensic/investigative support. Some context can be given by comparing Haryana's case load to shared resources and distributing the case load per capita to national norms. Finding the case load for Haryana or each special court per capita shows the stress of the current situation.
- **Policy in progress:** The improvement in conviction numbers in 2021-22 likely clearly reflect policy work (i.e. FTSCs), suggesting targeted goals can expedite case resolution in the courts. However, the ascent in case registration growth has now outpaced case disposal in courts, indicating a need for further expansion.
- **Need for victim support:** The minimal conversion from arrests to convictions suggest victims are dropping their cases or the evidence was inadequate. Strengthening victim support systems (counseling, witness protection) may lead to greater success at trial.

Overall, Haryana's POCSO numbers reflect positive indications (increase in filing and conviction) alongside ongoing challenges (on-going cases, low conviction rate). The state's trends closely follow a national-level pattern but with amplified rates due to its greater reporting rate.

Policy Recommendations

We recommend the following actions to close the gaps that have been found?

- **Improve FTSCs (Fast-Track Special Courts):** Encourage Haryana to establish more specialized POCSO courts. Even though there are already many FTSCs [10], more would cut down on trial length and pendency, particularly in districts with high burdens. It is imperative that these courts have a sufficient number of judges, prosecutors, and support personnel.
- **Drench Police Investigation:** The quality of investigations and chargesheets can be improved by providing police with training on POCSO case investigation techniques, such as sensitive child interviewing and evidence preservation. To strengthen cases, forensic analysis support (both laboratory and medical) must be provided promptly. For this reason, child welfare police officers must be stationed in every district.
- **Increase Victim Support Services:** Providing robust legal aid, trauma counseling, and kid-friendly environments can encourage witnesses and victims to pursue cases. Dropouts can be avoided, for example, by having female officers and providing psychological support during investigations and in court.
- **Education and Public Awareness:** Public education aimed at de-stigmatizing child abuse reporting can sustain high registration rates. Reporting will be strengthened by POCSO rights education initiatives in schools and the community. Making conviction rates public could boost systemic trust.
- **Accountability and Data Tracking:** For every POCSO case, Haryana needs to have a state-level tracking system that complies with NCRB. Senior police and judicial officials are able to identify bottlenecks by periodically reviewing cases. Accountability can result from regular, transparent reporting on case outcomes.
- **Inter-Agency Coordination:** A comprehensive strategy can be produced by multidisciplinary committees that include representatives from the police, courts, education, and child welfare departments. For example, schools may be required to report and may be involved in court cases. Ongoing cases can be followed up on by local social workers. Both financial support and political will are needed to put these ideas into action. Haryana can take inspiration from national initiatives such as the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for FTSCs [10]. Haryana has the potential to improve POCSO case outcomes and set an example for other states by focusing on resources (like courts and investigating units) where the data show the greatest burden.

Limitations: -

The present study is based upon secondary data largely obtained from official statistics from the Ministry of Women and Child Development, which, in turn, obtained its statistics from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). A main limitation of this study is that comprehensive statistics were provided for only the years 2020, 2021, and 2022. Even after extensive searches of online and printed resources for additional statistics for the years 2023 and 2024, complete validated data were not found. In some instances, partial or preliminary figures for 2023 were found, but these were not consistent with each other or valid data sources and were not suitable for an inclusive comparative statistical assessment. Therefore, the present paper focuses solely on the years 2020-2022. The limitation restricts the researcher's ability to assess more recent trends, for example, national and international policy initiative outcomes to examine the prospective increase of fast-track special courts (FTSCs), or an uptake of individual or home state-level policy initiatives that may have increased the number of reported cases, convictions, and case resolution times from 2023 to the present. Future studies would benefit from the addition of future data sets as they become available from the Ministry or The NCRB or other agency to provide and assessments that are more current and comprehensive.

Conclusion

The POCSO Act case statistics for India and Haryana from 2020 to 2022 have been thoroughly examined in this report. As a result of increased scrutiny of child sexual offenses, the figures indicate a rise in both the number of cases registered and conviction rates. However, rising numbers of pending cases and comparatively low conviction rates suggest that many cases are either acquittals or remain pending. The severity of the issue in the state and the prompt reporting environment are both highlighted by Haryana's case registration rates per capita, which are significantly higher than the state's population share. The results highlight the significant gaps in the investigation and prosecution process, even though legal initiatives like POCSO and special courts have had some success. The need to close these gaps becomes urgent. Crucial actions include strengthening the specialized courts, improving the efficiency of investigations, and assisting victims in the legal system. Such data-informed insights must be used by practitioners and policymakers to improve strategy and establish priorities for resource use. In short, to deliver on POCSO's promise of timely and certain justice to victims of child sexual offenses in Haryana and India, consistent efforts utilizing legal, administrative, and social interventions over time are required.

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Conflict of Interest: None

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