



Scheme to Support Pregnant Minor Victims of Sexual Assault

For Prelims: [POCSO Act](#), [First Information Report](#), [Nirbhaya Fund](#), [Child care institutions](#), [National Crime Records Bureau](#), [Mission Vatsalya](#), [Sustainable Development Goals](#), [Juvenile Justice \(Care and Protection of Children\) Act 2015](#).

For Mains: Schemes or Initiatives for Supporting Victims of Sexual Assault

Why in News?

The **Ministry of Women and Child Development**, Government of India has unveiled a new scheme aimed at **providing critical care and support to pregnant minor victims of [sexual assault](#)** who lack family support.

- The scheme, with an **outlay of Rs 74.10 crore**, will offer shelter, food, legal aid, and other necessary assistance to these victims across the country.

What are the Major Provisions of the Scheme?

- **About:**
 - The scheme seeks to **assist minor girls who have been abandoned by their families due to forced pregnancies** resulting from rape or gang rape.
 - It acknowledges the **physical and emotional trauma experienced by minor victims of [rape](#) and aggravated assault**, especially in cases where they become **pregnant**.
- **Eligibility Criteria and Documentation:**
 - **Victims below the age of 18**, who **become pregnant due to rape or assault as per the provisions of the [Protection of Children from Sexual Offences \(POCSO\) Act](#), 2012**, and are either orphans or abandoned by their families, will be covered under the scheme.
 - It is **not mandatory for victims to possess a copy of the [First Information Report \(FIR\)](#)** to avail the benefits provided by the scheme.
- **Provisions:**
 - It aims to provide **medical, financial, and infrastructural support** to such victims under the **[Nirbhaya Fund](#)**.
 - The funds will be **utilized to set up shelters dedicated to these victims**, either as standalone shelters or designated wards within existing **[child care institutions \(CCIs\)](#)**.
 - In the case of wards within CCIs, **separate safe spaces** will be provided for minor rape victims to cater to their specific needs.
 - The integrated support under the scheme aims to provide **immediate and non-emergency access to various services**, including **education, police assistance, healthcare, and legal support**.
 - **Insurance coverage will also be provided for the minor victim** and her newborn, ensuring access to justice and rehabilitation.
- **Implementation:**
 - The scheme will leverage the **administrative structure of [Mission Vatsalya](#)** in

collaboration with **State governments and CCIs** to actualise this support to minor victims.

- Also, **415 POCSO fast-track courts** are already established across India to **expedite justice for minor victims of rape**.

▪ **Need:**

- According to the [National Crime Records Bureau \(NCRB\)](#) data from 2021, 51,863 cases were reported under the **POCSO Act**.
- Out of these cases, **64% were reported under sections 3 and 5 of the Act**, which **pertain to penetrative sexual assault and aggravated penetrative sexual assault**, respectively.
 - The **majority of the victims were girls, and many of them became pregnant**, exacerbating their physical and mental health concerns when disowned or abandoned by their families.

Note:

▪ **Nirbhaya Fund:**

- The Nirbhaya Fund established in 2013, provides for a **non-lapsable corpus fund for safety and security of women**.
- It is administered by the **Department of Economic Affairs (DEA)** of the **Ministry of Finance (MoF)**.
 - **Also**, the **Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD)** is the nodal Ministry to **appraise/recommend proposals and schemes** to be funded under Nirbhaya Fund.

▪ **Mission Vatsalya:**

- It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme launched** by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to provide a roadmap to achieve development and child protection priorities **aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

▪ **Child Care Institutions:**

- They are defined under the [Juvenile Justice \(Care and Protection of Children\) Act 2015](#) as Children Home, Open Shelter, Observation Home, Special Home, Place of Safety, Specialised Adoption Agency and a Fit Facility for providing care and protection to children who are in need of such services.

▪ **National Crime Records Bureau:**

- NCRB, headquartered in New Delhi, was set-up in 1986 under the **Ministry of Home Affairs** to function as a **repository of information on crime and criminals** so as to assist the investigators in linking crime to the perpetrators.
- It was set up based on the recommendations of the **National Police Commission (1977-1981) and the MHA's Task Force (1985)**.
- The Bureau has been entrusted to maintain **National Database of Sexual Offenders (NDSO)** and share it with the States/UTs on regular basis.

What are Some Other Schemes or Initiatives for Supporting Victims of Sexual Assault?

- **Central Victim Compensation Fund (CVCF):** It provides financial assistance to victims of various crimes including rape/gang rape under **Section 357A of CrPC**.
- **One Stop Centers (OSCs):** It provide integrated services such as **medical aid, police assistance, legal aid/counselling, psycho-social counselling** and temporary shelter to women affected by violence under any circumstances.
 - **Usha Mehra Commission** recommended the establishment of a one-stop centre.
- **Mahila Police Volunteer (MPV):** It facilitates **public-police interface** at the grassroots level through women volunteers who act as a link between police and community and help women in distress.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Mains

Q. We are witnessing increasing instances of sexual violence against women in the country. Despite existing legal provisions against it, the number of such incidences is on the rise. Suggest some innovative measures to tackle this menace. **(2014)**

Source: TH

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