



## Bills on Parliamentary Sittings and POCSO Act, 2012

**For Prelims:** [Private members' Bill](#), [Rajya Sabha](#), [Lok Sabha](#), [Article 85](#), [Article 174](#), [National Crime Records Bureau](#)

**For Mains:** Reforms in Parliamentary Functioning, Issues Related to Children, Implementation of POCSO and child welfare laws

[Source: TH](#)

### Why in News?

[Private members' Bills](#) were introduced in the [Rajya Sabha](#), focusing on mandating a minimum number of **parliamentary sittings**, and amending the [Protection of Children from Sexual Offences \(POCSO\) Act, 2012](#).

### What is the Bill Regarding Parliamentary Sittings?

- **Objective:** Two Bills were proposed in [Rajya Sabha](#) to mandate a **minimum of 100-120 parliamentary sittings per year**, with **lost hours due to disruptions compensated in extended sessions** to **enhance productivity**, and improve government accountability.
  - The [General Purposes Committee of the Lok Sabha, 1955](#) explored the idea of a fixed parliamentary calendar, while the [2002 National Commission on Constitutional Review](#) recommended **minimum sittings of 100 days for Rajya Sabha and 120 days for Lok Sabha**.
- **Current Scenario of Parliamentary Sittings:** The [first Lok Sabha \(1952-1957\)](#), under [Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru](#), had an average of **135 sittings per year**, whereas the [17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha \(2019-2024\)](#) sat for only **55 days annually**, the lowest in history.
- **Constitutional Provisions:** The **Constitution does not mandate a fixed number of sessions or sitting days**.
  - However, [Article 85 \(Parliament\)](#) the President summons each House as needed, ensuring no more than six months between sessions. The President can also prorogue or dissolve the Lok Sabha.
  - [Article 174 \(State Legislatures\)](#) the Governor has powers to summon, prorogue, and dissolve the Legislative Assembly, ensuring a maximum six-month gap between sessions.

#### What is a Private Member Bill?

Click Here to Read: [Private Members Bill](#)

### What is the Bill Regarding Amending the POCSO Act, 2012?

- **Objective:** The **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2024**, introduced, aims to make the POCSO Act **more victim-centric** and improve its implementation.
- **Provisions of Bill: POCSO (Amendment) Bill, 2024 mandates a 24-hour reporting rule**, requiring police or the special juvenile police unit to present the child before the **Child Welfare Committee** and report the case to the **Special Court** (or Sessions Court, if unavailable).
  - **It strengthens victim support** by ensuring timely compensation and structured procedures.
  - **It calls for enhanced stakeholder training**, including **police, educational institutions, and child care personnel**, for better implementation.
- **Need for the Amendment:** According to [NCRB data](#), POCSO cases have increased by **94% since 2017**, with over **2 lakh registered cases** as of May 2024.
  - Lack of structured compensation procedures leads to **long delays for victims**.
    - There is a shortage of **Special Public Prosecutors** trained for POCSO cases, affecting the sensitivity and efficiency in handling child sexual abuse cases.
  - Many cases are **not reported or delayed** due to **fear, stigma, or lack of awareness**.
  - A key gap in the POCSO Act, 2012 is the lack of **"support persons"** for victims, with **96% of cases lacking necessary support**.
    - These support persons, either individuals or organizations, help guide survivors through the legal process and ensure their well-being.
    - Minors aged **16-18 engaging in consensual sexual activity** may be charged under POCSO, leading to legal consequences like prolonged detention and the potential denial of bail.
  - Additionally, the **insufficient designation of POCSO courts further delays justice**, as not all districts have these specialized courts.

## POCSO Act, 2012

- The POCSO Act, 2012 is a law aimed at addressing the **sexual exploitation and abuse of children**.
- The POCSO Act recognizes that **both boys and girls can be victims of sexual abuse**, and the **crime is punishable regardless** of the **gender** of the victim. It defines a **child as any person below the age of 18 years**.
- It mandates that the **identity of child victims must be kept confidential**, with no media disclosures about the victim's name, address, or family details.
- The Act mandates that individuals with knowledge of or reasonable suspicion of child abuse must report it to the relevant authorities.

### **Drishti Mains Question:**

**Q.** Evaluate the need for a minimum number of parliamentary sittings in the context of India's legislative accountability.

**Q.** What challenges are faced in the implementation of the POCSO Act, 2012, suggest measures to address?

### **Prelims**

**Q. Which of the following are envisaged by the Right against Exploitation in the Constitution of India?(2017)**

1. Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour
2. Abolition of untouchability
3. Protection of the interests of minorities
4. Prohibition of employment of children in factories and mines

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (b) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 1 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans: (c)

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**Mains**

**Q.** Examine the main provisions of the National Child Policy and throw light on the status of its implementation. **(2016)**

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