



CURRENT AFFAIRS



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POCSO ACT

POCSO Act

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "POCSO Act". The topic "POCSO Act" has relevance in the Polity section for the UPSC CSE exam.

Relevance of the topic "POCSO Act":

For Prelims:

What is POCSO Act?

What are the features of the POCSO Act?

For Mains:

GS 2: Polity and Governance

What is the significance of the POCSO Act?

Way forward

Why in the news?

The POCSO Act has been in the news recently related to the accusations levelled against a Lok Sabha MP.

What is POCSO Act?

The POCSO Act stands for the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

It is a law implemented in India in 2012. Its purpose is to provide a legal framework for safeguarding children from sexual abuse, exploitation, and pornography. The act was introduced due to the alarming increase in incidents of sexual offenses against children, with the aim of ensuring their safety and well-being.

The POCSO Act defines various forms of sexual offenses against children and specifies severe punishments for offenders. It encompasses acts like child molestation, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and child pornography. Additionally, the act also covers non-contact offenses, such as using a child for pornographic purposes or engaging in online sexual exploitation.

What are the features of the POCSO Act?

1. **Definition of Child:** In accordance with the Act, a child is defined as any individual below the age of 18 years. The Act emphasizes the rights of all children to be safeguarded from any form of sexual violence.
2. **Crimes:** The Act acknowledges that engaging in any type of sexual contact with a child is considered a criminal offense. The child's consent, deception, or coercion are irrelevant factors in determining the offense.
3. **Special courts:** The act mandates the establishment of special courts to handle cases related to child sexual offenses. These courts are expected to conduct speedy trials to ensure justice for the victims.

4. **Child-friendly procedures:** The act emphasizes child-friendly procedures during investigation, trial, and rehabilitation. It aims to create a safe and supportive environment for child victims or witnesses, including the provision of support persons and the recording of statements in a non-intimidating manner.
5. **Reporting:** According to the Act, it is obligatory for anyone who becomes aware of an offense under the Act to promptly report it to the police or a child welfare committee. Failure to do so may result in imprisonment for up to 6 months, a fine, or both.
6. **Protection of Victim's Identity:** The Act mandates that media personnel and others involved protect the identity and privacy of the child victim. Any disclosure of information that could potentially identify the child may lead to imprisonment for up to one year, a fine, or both.
7. **Penalties:** The POCSO Act prescribes stringent penalties for offenders. It includes imprisonment, fines, and the possibility of enhanced punishment for repeat offenders. The act also provides for the mandatory reporting of offenses, making it a legal obligation for individuals aware of such crimes to report them.
8. **Victim support and rehabilitation:** The act emphasizes the rehabilitation and support of child victims. It includes provisions for medical assistance, counseling, and other necessary support services to aid the physical, emotional, and psychological recovery of the child.

What is the significance of the POCSO Act?

1. **Protection of Children:** The act prioritizes the protection of children from sexual offenses, ensuring their safety and well-being.
2. **Increased Awareness:** The act has raised awareness about child sexual abuse and related offenses, promoting discussions and preventative measures.
3. **Deterrence:** Stringent penalties established by the act serve as a deterrent, discouraging offenders and creating a safer environment for children.
4. **Speedy Justice:** Special courts established under the act facilitate swift trials, ensuring timely justice for victims and reducing trauma.
5. **Child-Friendly Procedures:** The act emphasizes child-friendly procedures, creating a supportive environment during investigation, trial, and rehabilitation.
6. **Rehabilitation and Support:** The act mandates the provision of medical assistance, counseling, and support services for the physical and psychological recovery of child victims.
7. **Reporting Obligations:** Individuals are legally obligated to report child sexual offenses, promoting intervention, protection, and justice for victims.
8. **Holistic Approach:** The act recognizes the long-term impact of offenses and focuses on comprehensive rehabilitation and support for victims.
9. **Safer Environment:** The act contributes to the creation of a safer environment for children, promoting their well-being and protection.
10. **Legal Framework:** The act provides a dedicated legal framework for addressing child sexual offenses, ensuring accountability and justice.

Way forward

It has played a crucial role in addressing child sexual abuse and promoting a safer environment for children in India.

Source:

<https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/POCSO%20Act%2C%202012.pdf>

PRELIMS QUESTIONS

Q.1 POCSO Act stands for?

1. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences.
2. Prevention of Children from Sexual Obscenity.

3. Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences.
4. Protection of Children from Sexual Obscenity.

Select the correct answer from the code given below:

1. Option 1
2. Option 2
3. Option 3
4. Option 4

Answer: (c)

Q.2 Consider the following statements about the POCSO Act:

1. The POCSO Act stands for the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.
2. The purpose of the law is to provide a legal framework for safeguarding working women from sexual abuse and exploitation on work premises.

Select the correct answer from the code given below:

1. 1 only
2. 2 only
3. Both 1 and 2
4. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (a)

Mains Question

1. Discuss the significance of the POCSO Act in protecting children from sexual offenses in India. Examine its key provisions and their impact on raising awareness, ensuring justice, and providing support to the victims.

(Word limit: 250 words)

Rishabh

NARCOTICS PROBLEM IN INDIA

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Narcotics Problem In India". The topic "Narcotics Problem In India" has relevance in the Governance section of the UPSC CSE exam.

Relevance:

For Prelims:

GS 2: Governance

What are Narcotics?

What is the Golden Crescent?

What is the Golden Triangle?

For Mains:

Challenges presented to India by Narcotics?

Government efforts to deal with the Narcotics Problem?

Why in the news?

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has detected a novel modus operandi of smuggling of narcotics (Cocaine) into India via the courier route, wherein the cocaine was concealed within the thermocol balls, purportedly used to cushion the declared goods.

What are Narcotics?

Narcotics are drugs that have psychoactive properties and are known to produce analgesic (pain-relieving) effects. The term “narcotic” is often used to refer to a specific category of drugs, primarily opioids, but it can have broader or more specific definitions depending on the context. Here are the different interpretations of the term “narcotics”:

Opioids: In a medical and legal context, narcotics specifically refer to opioids, which are a class of drugs derived from or similar to opium. Examples of opioids include morphine, codeine, oxycodone, hydrocodone, fentanyl, and heroin. These drugs are potent pain relievers but also carry a high risk of dependence and abuse.

Illicit Drugs: In a broader context, “narcotics” can refer to a range of illicit drugs with psychoactive effects. This includes substances such as heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, MDMA (ecstasy), LSD, and marijuana (in some cases). These drugs may have different mechanisms of action and effects on the central nervous system.

Controlled Substances: The term “narcotics” is often used in the legal framework to categorize drugs with a high potential for abuse and dependence. Governments classify certain drugs as narcotics and regulate their production, distribution, and use through laws and regulations. This classification typically includes opioids and other controlled substances.

What is the Golden Crescent?

The Golden Crescent region, consisting of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, is one of the world’s largest producers of opium and heroin. Heroin production in this region relies heavily on opium cultivation, with Afghanistan being the primary opium-producing country. Narcotics traffickers exploit the porous borders of Pakistan and Iran to smuggle heroin into India.

What is the Golden Triangle?

The Golden Triangle, encompassing Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand, has long been known for its opium production and heroin trafficking. Although the production of opium has decreased in recent years, it remains a significant source of heroin for the global market. Heroin produced in the Golden Triangle often finds its way into India through illicit channels.

Challenges presented to India by Narcotics?

- **Geographical Location:** India’s geographical proximity to the Golden Crescent and the Golden Triangle regions makes it vulnerable to drug trafficking activities. The vast and porous borders, coupled with a long coastline, pose significant challenges in intercepting drug shipments and preventing their entry into the country.
- **Transnational Criminal Networks:** Narcotics trafficking in India is often orchestrated by transnational criminal networks with sophisticated operations and international connections. These networks exploit existing smuggling routes, corrupt officials, and weak law enforcement capacities, making it difficult to dismantle their operations effectively.
- **Drug Production in Neighboring Countries:** India shares borders with countries known for drug production, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Myanmar. The production of opium, heroin, and other narcotics in these countries has a direct impact on drug availability and trafficking patterns within India.
- **Growing Domestic Drug Market:** India has seen a rise in drug abuse and addiction within its own population. The demand for narcotics fuels the trafficking networks and contributes to the

expansion of the illicit drug market. Addressing domestic drug abuse requires comprehensive strategies that encompass prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation programs.

- **Money Laundering and Financing:** Narcotics trafficking generates substantial profits, and the laundering of illicit proceeds poses a significant challenge for India. Money laundering activities associated with drug trafficking complicate the efforts to trace and seize the illicit funds, hindering the disruption of trafficking networks.
- **Corruption and Insider Complicity:** Corruption among law enforcement officials, border guards, and other public servants undermines efforts to combat narcotics trafficking. Insider complicity allows drug traffickers to operate with relative impunity, bypassing security measures and facilitating the movement of drugs across borders.
- **Technological Advancements:** Drug traffickers exploit advancements in technology for their illicit activities. They use encrypted communication channels, dark web platforms, and other sophisticated techniques to coordinate drug transactions, making it harder for law enforcement agencies to track and intercept their operations.
- **Limited Resources and Capacities:** Indian law enforcement agencies responsible for combating narcotics trafficking often face resource constraints and capacity issues. Insufficient manpower, outdated equipment, and limited training can hamper their effectiveness in dealing with the complex and evolving drug trade.

Government efforts to deal with the Narcotics Problem?

- **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB):** The NCB is the primary agency responsible for coordinating and implementing anti-narcotics efforts in India. It conducts intelligence operations, carries out raids and seizures, and coordinates with international agencies to disrupt drug trafficking networks.
- **Strengthening Legal Framework:** The government has enacted and amended laws to strengthen the legal framework for tackling narcotics trafficking. The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985, provides the legal basis for controlling drug trafficking and abuse. Amendments have been made to enhance penalties for offenders and streamline legal procedures.
- **International Cooperation:** India actively cooperates with international organizations and neighboring countries to combat narcotics trafficking.
- **Border Management:** The government has prioritized improving border management to curb narcotics trafficking. This includes enhancing surveillance technologies, deploying specialized units, and establishing joint border control mechanisms with neighboring countries to prevent the entry of drugs into India.
- **Intelligence and Interagency Coordination:** Intelligence sharing and interagency coordination play a crucial role in combating narcotics trafficking. The government has focused on strengthening coordination between various law enforcement agencies.
- **Demand Reduction Programs:** The government recognizes the importance of addressing the demand side of drug abuse. It has implemented awareness campaigns, preventive education programs, and rehabilitation and treatment services to reduce drug demand and support individuals struggling with addiction.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** The government has encouraged partnerships with the private sector, civil society organizations, and community stakeholders to enhance efforts against narcotics trafficking. Collaborations involve initiatives such as awareness campaigns, capacity-building programs, and support for rehabilitation and reintegration of drug users.
- **Technology and Digital Initiatives:** The government has leveraged technology to strengthen anti-narcotics efforts. This includes the use of advanced surveillance systems, data analytics, and digital platforms for tracking drug trafficking patterns, identifying suspects, and disrupting illicit networks.

- **International Conventions and Treaties:** India is a party to various international conventions and treaties related to narcotics control, such as the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. The government actively participates in international forums to strengthen cooperation and compliance with international obligations.

Source:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1932729>

Q.1 Which of the following regions is known as the “Golden Crescent” in relation to narcotics production and trafficking?

- (a) South America, comprising Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia
- (b) West Africa, including countries such as Nigeria and Guinea-Bissau
- (c) South Asia, comprising Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan
- (d) Southeast Asia, including Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand

Answer: (c)

Q.2 Which of the following statements about the Golden Triangle is correct?

- (a) The Golden Triangle refers to the region in South Asia comprising Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, known for its significant opium production.
- (b) The Golden Triangle is an area in Southeast Asia consisting of Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand, historically recognized as a major source of illicit drugs.
- (c) The Golden Triangle is a term used to describe the golden hue of sunsets in the Thar Desert region of India.
- (d) The Golden Triangle is a global initiative aimed at promoting trade and economic cooperation among India, China, and Myanmar.

Answer: (b)

Q.3 “Discuss the challenges posed by the narcotic in India and evaluate the government’s strategies to address drug trafficking, drug abuse, and related social issues. Suggest policy measures to enhance the effectiveness of the government’s efforts in curbing the narcotics menace and its impact on society.”

Rishabh