Polity & Governance · GS - II

Evaluate the role of the POCSO Act, 2012, in strengthening child protection and access to justice in India.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 24/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Child rights, gender-neutral protection, mandatory reporting, Special Courts, victim confidentiality, child-friendly procedures, implementation gaps

Model Answer

Introduction

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, provides a comprehensive legal framework to protect children below 18 years from sexual assault, sexual harassment and exploitation. It seeks to ensure child-sensitive investigation and speedy judicial proceedings.

Key Provisions Strengthening Child Protection

1. **Comprehensive Coverage:** The Act recognises different categories of sexual offences against children and provides graded punishments. Its provisions are gender-neutral.

2. **Mandatory Reporting:** Section 19 requires reporting of information about the commission or apprehension of a POCSO offence, helping bring cases to the attention of law enforcement agencies.

3. **Special Courts:** Section 28 provides for Special Courts to facilitate speedy trials and reduce delays in the administration of justice.

4. **Child-Friendly Procedures:** The Act incorporates safeguards during recording of statements, medical examination and court proceedings to minimise trauma.

5. **Victim Confidentiality:** Section 23 restricts disclosure of identifying information to protect the dignity and privacy of child victims.

Implementation Challenges

1. **Judicial Delays:** Pendency and inadequate institutional capacity can undermine the objective of speedy trials.

2. **Low Awareness:** Limited awareness among children, parents and communities may discourage timely reporting.

3. **Investigation Gaps:** Inadequate training and sensitivity among investigating personnel can affect evidence collection and victim support.

4. **Rehabilitation Needs:** Survivors require sustained psychological, educational and social assistance beyond the completion of criminal proceedings.

Way Forward

1. Strengthen Special Courts and appoint adequately trained personnel.
2. Improve coordination among police, child welfare institutions and support services.
3. Ensure age-appropriate awareness and prevention programmes.
4. Provide accessible counselling, compensation and rehabilitation mechanisms.

Conclusion

The POCSO Act has strengthened India's child-protection framework, but effective implementation requires timely justice, sensitive institutions and comprehensive survivor support. Protection of children must remain central throughout the legal process.