

Culture, Silence, and the Law: Socio-Cultural Barriers to POCSO Implementation in Rajasthan

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Abstract

The research investigates how social and cultural factors along with institutional challenges blocked the implementation of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012 in Rajasthan. The researchers used a quantitative descriptive–analytical design to collect primary data from 150 participants who included parents, teachers, social workers, and community members. The SPSS statistical analysis showed that socio-cultural norms which included patriarchy and stigma together with family honor created a strong negative effect on reporting child sexual offenses. The existence of informal justice systems produced a measurable negative effect which hindered both POCSO case execution and case results. The study found that institutional capacity is directly linked to successful enforcement of laws but legal awareness together with support systems only gave justice access and rehabilitation a weak yet important effect. The research shows that cultural resistance and informal governance practices together with institutional weaknesses continue to block child protection efforts despite the existence of a strong legal system. The study concludes that POCSO needs full implementation through integrated legal, cultural, and institutional changes.

Keywords: *POCSO Act, Child Sexual Abuse, Socio-Cultural Barriers, Patriarchy, Informal Justice Mechanisms, Legal Awareness, Institutional Capacity, Access to Justice, Child Protection, Rajasthan*

1. Introduction

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act of 2012 established a crucial development in India's legal system to combat child sexual abuse. POCSO functions as an all-encompassing law which protects children's rights through its development of new procedures that handle child abuse cases beyond the existing Indian Penal Code regulations (Motiani 2025).¹ The operational success of legal frameworks depends on their statutory goals and their actual application in social environments. The implementation of law in India faces challenges because deep-seated cultural practices and patriarchal systems and community authority structures prevent its full application. Rajasthan stands as a useful case study because its cultural elements determine how people understand, report, and judge child sexual offenses.

The existing legal system fails to prevent the ongoing problem of child sexual abuse because people do not report these crimes. People from socio-culturally conservative areas experience the largest gap between legal requirements and their actual daily practices because they treat sexual matters as forbidden topics while their community values family honor more than personal freedoms. The implementation of POCSO in these contexts faces opposition because people refuse to speak about the law, and social stigma exists, while unofficial methods work to limit its effectiveness. The study uses POCSO assessment in Rajasthan to display

¹ Motiani, J., & Vora, K. (2025). Sexual offences against women in India: a critical analysis of legal frameworks, judicial trends, and societal impact. *VIDYA-A JOURNAL OF GUJARAT UNIVERSITY*, 4(2), 236-249.

how cultural elements and community silence and power structures work together to undermine child protection efforts.

1. Culture, Patriarchy, and the Silence Surrounding Child Sexual Abuse

Cultural factors determine the ways that different societies understand childhood, sexual matters and violent behavior. In Rajasthan, the response to child sexual abuse cases is determined by the combination of traditional value systems and established patriarchal norms that exist within the community. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012 operates as a child-centered rights-based law but cultural beliefs that link family honor with social reputation and community security above personal rights" control its application (Levett, 2003)." Silence functions as the primary public reaction toward child sexual abuse cases, which exists as both a cultural custom and a tool used to maintain social order.²

Rajasthan shows patriarchy through its enforcement of fixed gender roles, which protect male household power and control female sexual behavior. From their earliest years, girls are taught to follow rules while maintaining self-restraint and quiet behavior. Sexual abuse cases within this framework do not receive recognition as violations of child bodily autonomy because people view them as family moral stains (Sharma, 2013). People view abuse disclosure to reach justice, but they see it as something that brings shame, gossip, and social exclusion to the family. The cultural system transforms the victim into a dishonorable figure, which prevents them from reporting and makes them stay silent.³

The taboo against discussing sexuality creates deeper silence problems. Families and educational settings lack open discussions about sexual boundaries and consent, and abuse. Children lack the necessary words to describe abuse, while adults tend to overlook or misinterpret their disclosures because of their discomfort and denial (Moodie, 2006). People in the community who carry out abuse, especially family members, stay unrecognized for extended time periods. Social and legal authorities use delayed disclosure as a common practice in child sexual abuse cases to challenge the victim's credibility.⁴

In Rajasthan family structures people establish a hierarchical system which gives male elders control over decision-making. POCSO establishes child rights through its legal framework but adults must initiate legal proceedings to protect children. Mothers or female caregivers who support the child face restrictions because they depend on financial resources and fear domestic violence and lack power within their families. The decision to report abuse occurs because patriarchal systems determine social costs instead of considering what is best for the child. The law requires mandatory reporting which creates conflicts with family power structures and leads to socially accepted non-compliance.

The concept of family honor which people call izzat acts as the main force which determines how people will act. Conservative communities base their honor system on social norms which establish guidelines for determining whether girls maintain their sexual purity. The system faces a threat from sexual abuse recognition because it exposes hidden information that families work to keep confidential. Families choose to hide their complaints because they fear permanent effects which include marriage difficulties and social

² Levett, A. (2003). Problems of cultural imperialism in the study of child sexual abuse 1. In *New Feminist Stories of Child Sexual Abuse* (pp. 52-76). Routledge.

³ Sharma, P. (2013). Hearing the Hidden Voices of Feminine Sexuality: Folkloric Challenges to Patriarchic Traditions in Rajasthan. *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies*, 7(2), 37.

⁴ Moodie, M. C. (2006). *Culture or freedom? The gendered intimacies of modernization in Rajasthan, India*. University of California, Santa Cruz.

status loss and family member relationship problems (Crisma 2004). Victims receive direct orders which require them to maintain silence because their family must protect its future and its siblings.⁵

The community perceives this silence because it extends beyond family circles. Neighbors and teachers together with community leaders, discourage reporting when they present legal actions, which they consider to be either disruptive or unnecessary. The informal advice to resolve matters through quiet methods shows how people in society prefer to handle sexual violence cases without involving official institutions. The POCSO law actually works against its purpose because the existing societal beliefs protect offenders who hold power in their communities.

The silent treatment that patriarchal systems impose on society affects boys because it creates distinct impacts. Male child victims may face additional barriers because they must meet society's standards for masculine behavior which prevents them from showing weakness. The process of disclosure leads to people perceiving weakness which results in ridicule and disbelief. The existing legal framework under POCSO fails to address cases of sexual abuse against boys because it remains underreported by their victims, who are unable to demonstrate their plight.

The psychological effects on child victims who internalize silence demonstrate severe consequences for their mental health. When children perceive that disclosure will lead to blame, punishment, or disbelief, they may suppress their experiences, which results in long-term trauma. The lack of supportive environments increases the severity of feelings that force people to isolate themselves and take the blame. The legal systems face an obstacle through cultural practices, which create obstacles to their implementation because they prevent victims from receiving proper acknowledgment and validation of their experiences.

The legal system in POCSO faces two significant challenges, which arise from the conflict between progressive laws and the traditional social order of Rajasthan. The Act requires child-friendly procedures together with confidentiality measures and protection against secondary victimization, but these provisions become ineffective when families and communities refuse to participate in the legal process. Silence, therefore, functions as a cultural method to oppose legal operations that exist because people believe in authority, gender, and honor.

2. Social Hierarchies, Informal Justice, and Institutional Constraints

The social hierarchies which exist in Rajasthan and the functioning of unofficial justice systems have a strong impact on how the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act is enforced through its implementation because these two factors shape the proceedings of judicial processes. The POCSO law creates a standard legal system which applies to all children regardless of their social status but actual justice processes depend on societal hierarchies that include caste and class and gender and power relations (Kumar, 2023). The existing social order controls which individuals receive attention and which complaints receive validation and which behaviors will not face punishment. The legal system should treat all citizens equally yet its implementation creates situations which lead to unequal treatment of people.⁶

The caste system continues to serve as a major social organizing force that dominates the life of people in Rajasthan's rural and semi-urban areas. The economic difficulties and social isolation together with their limited access to protective services, make children from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other

⁵ Crisma, M., Bascelli, E., Paci, D., & Romito, P. (2004). Adolescents who experienced sexual abuse: Fears, needs and impediments to disclosure. *Child abuse & neglect*, 28(10), 1035-1048.

⁶ Kumar, S. (2023). *Access to justice and sexual violence against children in India: an empirical study of the reforms under the POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Act 2012* (Doctoral dissertation, Birkbeck, University of London).

marginalized groups more vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Their social status prevents them from effectively pursuing justice (Pradhan, 2022). Families from marginalized castes who file complaints face higher chances of their cases being treated with skepticism, delays and procedural neglect when the accused belongs to a socially or economically dominant group. The fear of facing retaliation through social boycott and violence creates a barrier that stops families from seeking legal protection, resulting in a cycle of silence and impunity.⁷

The existing challenges become more difficult to solve because of existing class-based inequalities. Families who rely on daily employment and unregulated work see criminal justice system participation as an unworthy economic venture. The legal process becomes impossible to maintain because of the expenses that arise from multiple required visits to police stations and hospitals and courts combined with the risk of losing work time. Families face pressure to choose informal settlement agreements which provide instant financial support even though these agreements prevent their child from receiving justice and permanent safety (Ezung 2026). Economic vulnerability functions as a fundamental obstacle that prevents effective POCSO enforcement.⁸

The existing system of inequality leads people to prefer informal justice mechanisms instead of using formal legal systems. In cases of child sexual abuse, panchayats and family elders and community leaders act as mediators who resolve disputes through their traditional authority. The language used to describe these interventions focuses on reconciliation and social harmony and practical problem-solving methods. The informal resolutions do not protect the child's rights or well-being. Social equilibrium restoration requires conflict suppression through payment and apology and forced silence.

The informal systems create serious problems because they operate outside the required procedures which POCSO established as mandatory. The law treats sexual offences against children as non-compoundable because these crimes represent public violations which exceed private matters and violate essential rights. The practice of community-based dispute resolution persists because local authorities both permit and sometimes help these mediations to take place (Carson, 2013). The justice system faces severe threats when perpetrators use extreme methods to force victims into changing their statements or withdrawing their accusations.⁹

The implementation process suffers from institutional limitations which exist in the formal system. Police officers, who serve as the first point of contact, may lack adequate training in child-sensitive procedures and trauma-informed practices. The recording and investigation process for complaints receives impact from social biases which exist between different caste groups and gender identities and social classes. The police system uses discouragement tactics to prevent victims from reporting incidents which they classify as "family matters" or "socially sensitive" situations. The POCSO law requires all cases to be reported while its zero-tolerance policy prohibits such discretionary practices.

Healthcare institutions, another crucial component of the POCSO framework, face similar challenges. The majority of medical facilities in Rajasthan do not have trained forensic experts who can perform child-friendly examinations according to established legal standards. Victims experience traumatization and evidence collection suffers because of inadequate infrastructure and the lack of privacy and because of

⁷ Pradhan, B., & Sethi, S. R. Social Exclusion of Marginalised Section: A Case Study of Scheduled Castes.

⁸ Ezung, S., Kumar, A. S., & Bhat, R. M. (2026). *Foundations of Indian Society: Family, Kinship, Religion and Economy*. LexArcheus Publications.

⁹ Carson, D. K., Foster, J. M., & Tripathi, N. (2013). Child sexual abuse in India: Current issues and research. *Psychological Studies*, 58(3), 318-325.

insensitive treatment. The trial process faces challenges because medical examination procedures contain flaws which lead to lower conviction rates and create public doubt about the effectiveness of official justice systems.

The judiciary system through its constitutional duty to protect children faces operational challenges because of excessive case assignments and slow legal processes together with insufficient expert knowledge. Special POCSO courts exist to conduct fast child-friendly legal proceedings that should run without interruptions, but these courts experience regular delays. The extended legal process results in increased emotional distress for victims and their families which creates pressure on them to stop pursuing their cases. The courtroom setting, which operates on an adversarial system creates fear in child witnesses because legal professionals do not know how to handle child psychology and communication skills.

The Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) and Special Juvenile Police Units (SJPU) serve as essential institutions that protect children but their ability to implement POCSO varies significantly among different districts. Most committees face two main problems that prevent them from delivering continuous support and monitoring and rehabilitation services. The response system suffers from disorganized collaboration between police officers and healthcare professionals and child welfare agencies which results in incomplete treatment for victims.

The existing social structure together with informal justice methods and institutional restrictions, establishes a system of governance that operates in competition with official legal processes. The system produces results that depend more on social standing and authority than on established legal rights. The law serves as an abstract commitment to marginalized children that they cannot experience in their actual lives.

3. Law, Awareness, and the Limits of Legal Reform

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 represents one of the most progressive child-protection statutes in India, grounded in principles of child rights, state responsibility, and zero tolerance for sexual violence against minors. The law establishes comprehensive rules which include multiple criminal offenses and require child-friendly methods while maintaining confidentiality and establishing mandatory reporting duties for both organizations and individuals (Damodharan, 2021). The legal system requires both statutory definitions and public knowledge together with institutional resources and citizen support for legal compliance to function effectively. The social reality in Rajasthan creates a legal gap which shows that legal reforms need cultural and structural transformations to succeed.¹⁰

The implementation of POCSO faces its major obstacle because essential stakeholders lack basic knowledge about legal matters which includes children and their parents and teachers and healthcare workers and basic police staff. Many families remain unaware of what constitutes sexual abuse under the Act, the age of consent, or the legal obligation to report offences involving children (Satyam, 2024). The public lacks knowledge about these cases, which results in either delayed reporting or complete failure to report when the situation does not match common stereotypes about sexual violence. The law considers non-penetrative abuse and online exploitation and abuse by known persons to be criminal acts, which POCSO enforcement officials treat as "minor" or "disciplinary" matters. The system prevents people from using legal protections because it allows violations to continue without any consequences.¹¹

¹⁰ Damodharan, D., Sravanti, L., KiragasuruMadegowda, R., & Sagar, J. V. (2021). The protection of children from sexual offences (pocso) act, 2012. *Forensic Psychiatry In India*, 66.

¹¹ Satyam Sinha, B. Y. (2024). The POCSO Act: Judicial Insensitivity and Implementaion Issues. *IUP Law Review*, 14(3).

Educational institutions serve as essential components of the POCSO child protection system which establishes mandatory educational facilities to report child abuse cases. Teachers and school administrators are legally bound to report suspected abuse, but in practice, many hesitate to do so. The underreporting problem results from three factors which include institutional reputation protection needs, uncertain reporting protocols, and fears about legal consequences. In rural and semi-urban areas of Rajasthan, where schools operate as vital parts of local communities, people consider reporting abuse to be a threat that will bring community retaliation. The schools choose to solve problems through informal methods which include counseling that does not involve reporting or they choose to take no action which results in educational spaces failing to protect children who depend on them for safety and help.

The complete absence of sexuality education programs hinders both awareness campaigns and their prevention initiatives. People who oppose discussions about bodily autonomy and consent and safe touch methods do so because they believe these topics violate their cultural values. The opposition prevents children from learning the words they need to understand their situation and seek help. Children need educational materials that match their age and rights-based content to help them understand their situation because adults who should help them might be restricted by their own fear or denial or social stigma. The POCSO system aims to eliminate educational silence, but it exists because people do not participate in their educational programs.

Healthcare systems share identical limitations with one another. Medical staff members lack consistent knowledge of POCSO requirements which demand instant medical treatment and child-oriented forensic death investigation methods. Healthcare providers in some situations choose to obtain parental permission before acting in ways that benefit the child while healthcare providers fail to educate families about their legal duty to report certain situations. The public learns about victims through two methods, which include casual sharing of information and two methods which include inadequate privacy protection. People who break confidentiality make unauthorized disclosures while failing to adequately protect privacy. They create social exposure, which prevents victims from helping through their legal proceedings. People who experience medical treatment with both respectful staff members and contradictory procedures will lose their trust in official systems. People will develop a belief that legal systems operate in ways that prevent them from accessing essential services.

Economic vulnerability functions as a primary factor that determines how families pursue their legal rights to legislative changes. The POCSO justice system requires Rajasthani households to spend extensive time and money because they depend on informal jobs and seasonal work. Legal proceedings typically require multiple court appearances which extend the case duration because people need to show up at police departments and medical facilities and judicial courts (Lvovsky 2017). The justice system becomes unworkable when people experience accumulated travel costs and lost income and mental health problems. People view legal reform as an abstract ideal in their social environments. They choose to remain silent or reach informal agreements which give them immediate help.¹²

The presented facts demonstrate that legal reform efforts face a fundamental problem because they believe that all people have equal access to justice. POCSO establishes formal rights for individuals but the law does not provide a system to ensure those rights will be accessible to them. (Ali, 2023) Legal aid services and victim compensation programs and rehabilitation services exist in official documents yet people lack knowledge about these rights and they face difficulties when trying to obtain these services. Families stop

¹² Lvovsky, A. (2017). The judicial presumption of police expertise. *Harvard Law Review*, 1995-2081.

trusting the legal system when protective support mechanisms do not function as expected during their interaction with the justice system.¹³

The adversarial design of the criminal justice system shows its fundamental shortcomings which legal reforms fail to solve. The courtroom process becomes frightening and re-traumatizing for children although the law requires child-friendly court procedures. Children have to endure multiple interviews which include hostile cross-examination and wait for a long time to find out what will happen. The legal process takes more time for both trial proceedings and conviction which results in extended trauma for victims and makes them more susceptible to social pressure and intimidation. When cases linger unresolved families may withdraw cooperation which creates the impression that legal processes function ineffectively and deliver unjust results.

The social standards that determine human behavior remain undervalued by legal reforms because they hold greater influence than legal frameworks. The people of Rajasthan base their judgment about honor and morality and authority on their community values rather than following the legal requirements. The POCSO law requires mandatory reporting because it helps identify cases at an early stage but the law conflicts with societal customs which protect family matters from public scrutiny. Professionals who have a legal duty to disclose information face ethical conflicts when their obligation to report endangers their social connections and personal safety. The public needs to accept the law's aims for effective legal enforcement because people will not follow the law without this acceptance.

The main role of civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations exists to establish links between legal systems and their associated social systems but their practical application faces challenges. The NGO activities in urban areas create public awareness through legal rights education while providing victim support services yet these organizations lack operations in remote and traditional areas. State institutions serve as the only available contact point in areas that lack these organizations which shows their operational boundaries. Public awareness and support services need to establish outreach systems that use local cultural practices through decentralized communication methods.

The legal system fails to achieve its purpose because secondary victimization remains active as a restriction on legal reforms. The legal system creates additional harm to victims and their families through protection agencies which treat them with institutional disbelief and institutional blame and institutional hostility. The experience creates a disincentive for individuals to report incidents while their communities face similar challenges. Informal storytelling allows communities to establish shared beliefs about justice failures which leads to increased distrust of judicial solutions. The POCSO implementation experience in Rajasthan shows that laws need to exist as social transformation tools which require additional resources to create effective change. Legal reform can establish social norms through institutional frameworks which demonstrate state commitment but it cannot dismantle deep-rooted cultural beliefs and economic obstacles. Legal intervention requires awareness with education and economic support and community engagement to work effectively.

POCSO needs legal reform to become part of a larger social change strategy which will help it achieve its goals. This initiative involves public education campaigns that continue through time and incorporation of child rights into educational programs and development of capacity for institutional stakeholders and systems that decrease financial burdens associated justice processes. The law needs public knowledge and community support to transform from mere symbolic changes into a practical tool for safeguarding children.

¹³ Ali, B. (2023). Access to Justice for Children: Challenges and the Way Forward. In *Human Rights and Legal Services for Children and Youth: Global Perspectives* (pp. 13-40). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.

2. Need of study

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012 establishes an extensive legal system that protects children from sexual offenses throughout India. The law shows forward-thinking goals for legislation; however, its actual application throughout different areas of the country shows inconsistent results. Rajasthan represents a vital situation which shows how legal systems fail to achieve their intended results. The study needs to take place because POCSO legal protection systems fail to match existing cultural practices which end up controlling how people report and investigate child sexual abuse cases throughout the state.

Researchers must investigate reasons for people not reporting crimes because mandatory reporting laws do not prevent underreporting and public knowledge about reporting requirements remains insufficient. The legal system in Rajasthan functions based on established patriarchal standards which connect with honor systems and caste social structures and community methods for settling disputes. People see sexual abuse as both a criminal act and an issue that impacts family reputation and social standing. This viewpoint results in people hiding information and solving disputes outside of court and dropping their legal cases. Policy solutions will remain ineffective without understanding how social and cultural elements function.

Existing research on POCSO implementation shows an orientation toward legal analysis and conviction rates and procedural efficiency while lacking examination of local cultural practices. The social structure of Rajasthan which includes its rural population base and strong family ties and its system of different power levels creates special problems for POCSO implementation. Research requires implementation through dedicated regional studies which should combine doctrinal legal analysis with sociological and cultural and institutional research methods.

The study will provide detailed knowledge about how social norms and economic vulnerabilities and institutional limitations work together to determine legal results. The study shows essential value because it assesses how POCSO institutional mechanisms function in Rajasthan. The law requires police departments and Special POCSO courts and Child Welfare Committees and healthcare organizations and educational institutions to work together while protecting children's needs. The institutions possess different levels of training and resources and social authority which leads to major differences in their operational capabilities. Organizations can find their development requirements through a cultural approach which identifies specific needs for training and system changes.

The study addresses an immediate requirement for justice systems which focus on children who cannot speak for themselves because adults block their attempts to communicate. In patriarchal settings, decision-making power about legal matters remains with adults whereas girls and boys from marginalized communities cannot select their own paths. The study of cultural norms which limit children's freedom to act will help create effective solutions that protect their rights and promote their health.

The research provides essential knowledge that will drive both policy changes and improvements at the community level. The study identifies socio-cultural obstacles that prevent POCSO from achieving its goals and then uses these findings to develop awareness programs and educational changes and community outreach efforts that suit Rajasthan's cultural environment. Child protection requires more than legal reform because it needs both cultural transformation and institutional development.

3. Literature Review

3.1 National Trends and POCSO Implementation Challenges

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, created a system which allowed national data trends to show both increased recognition of child sexual abuse cases and the ongoing difficulties that exist in their court processes. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) annual reports show that POCSO case registrations have increased every year for the last ten years. Experts believe that the rising rates of reported cases demonstrate increased public understanding of the issue, but they warn that the problem has reached dangerous proportions (Saini, 2013).¹⁴ Government reviews and civil society compilations demonstrate that increased registration numbers do not guarantee successful delivery. The system struggles with three main issues, which include investigation delays and court case backlogs and low conviction rates.

National analyses show that POCSO laws face implementation challenges because multiple structural deficiencies prevent their proper execution. The police need more time to complete their investigations which creates operational difficulties for them. The Act requires fast trials together with procedures that accommodate children yet district courts experience case backlogs while lacking sufficient trained staff to handle judicial duties. The research that studies special POCSO court operations shows that most courts fail to provide proper facilities and trained personnel which makes it impossible to implement the Act's child protection requirements (Bajpai 2019).¹⁵

The police and medical personnel lack the necessary training in this case. The research established that organizations know about POCSO but different states and districts have different levels of success in its implementation (Belur & Singh, 2015).¹⁶ Police officers require specialized skills which enable them to conduct interviews with child victims while performing their duties to collect forensic evidence and keep victim information secure. Medical professionals face challenges because they need to comply with consent requirements and conduct examinations according to trauma-informed protocols. The absence of standardized child-friendly spaces which need to have separate waiting areas and video-recording equipment and authorized support persons hinders the execution of statutory protections.

Scholars have studied conviction rates under POCSO as their area of research. The trial process shows evidence of high backlogs and dropouts according to NCRB data. Researchers cite hostile witnesses, damaged evidence, experimental errors and social pressure that causes complainants to withdraw as reasons for low conviction rates (Aggarwal, 2023)¹⁷. The adversarial nature of criminal proceedings, together with the social and cultural context that exists for sexual offences, results in witnesses either withdrawing their statements or refusing to take the stand. Government assessments have recognized these challenges, recommending improved training, appointment of support persons, and strengthening of victim compensation mechanisms. The guidelines need to be studied at the local level because different states implement them in different ways. The uneven application of guidelines across states shows the need for localized analyses of implementation barriers.

¹⁴ Saini, N. (2013). Child abuse and neglect in India: time to act. *Japan Medical Association Journal*, 56(5), 302-309.

¹⁵ Bajpai, A. (2019). Access to justice for child victims of. *Violence Against Children in the Criminal Justice System: Global Perspectives on Prevention*.

¹⁶ Belur, J., & Singh, B. B. (2015). Child sexual abuse and the law in India: a commentary. *Crime Science*, 4(1), 26.

¹⁷ Aggarwal, A. (Ed.). (2023). *Facets of International Law & Justice*. Alborear (OPC) Pvt. Ltd..

The data shows two simultaneous trends, which show that registration of offences has increased while there are ongoing systemic deficiencies. The literature suggests that while legislative reform was necessary institutional reform and social transformation remain incomplete. The national conditions established in this study serve as the base for investigating how particular socio-cultural environments in Rajasthan affect the results of POCSO implementation.

3.2 Socio-Cultural Determinants of Silence and Non-Reporting

Scholars argue that socio-cultural factors link to child sexual abuse reports and prosecution processes while identifying operational inefficiencies as a separate issue. Research across India identifies stigma, family honor, victim-blaming attitudes, and reliance on informal justice mechanisms as central barriers to disclosure (Jejeebhoy & Bott, 2003; Mathur et al., 2018).^{18 19} Sexual abuse is defined as both a criminal offense and a moral violation which harms the social standing of the victim's family. The families of victims tend to discourage them from making reports because they want to protect their social status which is especially common in conservative and rural communities.

The concept of honor which people refer to as *izzat* functions as a force that controls social behavior especially regarding girls. Feminist scholars demonstrate that patriarchal societies link female purity to family honor which results in their transformation of victims into people who bear shame (Chakraborty, 2018).²⁰ This cultural atmosphere creates victim-blaming narratives which examine children's actions and their clothing and their freedom of movement. The act of disclosure generates suspicion and leads to disciplinary action instead of providing protective support. People who hold such attitudes about reporting incidents create a direct barrier which results in continuous underreporting of abuse cases.

The socialization process for different genders strengthens the existing power structure through their enforced silence. Research about Indian adolescent health and rights shows that girls learn to keep sexual topics secret whereas boys experience social rejection for showing weakness (Santhya et al., 2015).²¹ The educational system suffers from operational difficulties because complete sexual education programs do not exist. Children frequently lack awareness about inappropriate touch, legal remedies, or support systems. The process of abuse disclosure begins after a significant time period which creates problems because court credibility becomes difficult to prove during this period of time.

The literature shows that informal dispute resolution methods become essential for resolving conflicts. The community elders and panchayats handle sexual violence cases by treating them as family disputes instead of criminal cases (Baxi, 2013)²². Informal settlements may result in three forms of resolution which include compensation and forced apologies and marriage arrangements when the family identifies the wrongdoers. The mechanisms function as a shortcut to bypass legal requirements established under POCSO while they

¹⁸ Jejeebhoy, S. J., & Bott, S. (2003). Non-consensual sexual experiences of young people: A review of the evidence from developing countries.

¹⁹ Mathur, S., Okal, J., Musheke, M., Pilgrim, N., Kishor Patel, S., Bhattacharya, R., ... & Pulerwitz, J. (2018). High rates of sexual violence by both intimate and non-intimate partners experienced by adolescent girls and young women in Kenya and Zambia: Findings around violence and other negative health outcomes. *PLoS one*, 13(9), e0203929.

²⁰ Chakraborty, T., Mukherjee, A., Rachapalli, S. R., & Saha, S. (2018). Stigma of sexual violence and women's decision to work. *World Development*, 103, 226-238.

²¹ Santhya, K. G., & Jejeebhoy, S. J. (2015). Sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescent girls: Evidence from low-and middle-income countries. *Global public health*, 10(2), 189-221.

²² Baxi, P. (2013). *Public secrets of law: Rape trials in India*. Oxford University Press.

prevent proper accountability. The research shows that informal justice systems which exist within cultural traditions actually maintain gender discrimination while they prevent victims from speaking out.

Research from socio-cultural scholarship demonstrates that non-reporting occurs because people understand their actions will lead to actual social consequences. Families assess the impact of legal action on their reputation and financial situation and their personal relationships before they decide to proceed with legal action. The assessment shows that social norms which discourage people to follow legal requirements create obstacles for legal requirements. The implementation gap of POCSO in Rajasthan arises from the persistence of deep-rooted patriarchal beliefs which shape its social and cultural practices.

3.3 State-Level Studies: Rajasthan's Child Protection System

The national policies show their operational behavior through state-level analyses which examine specific institutional environments. Child rights organizations and academic researchers conducted recent evaluations in Rajasthan to assess how POCSO laws operate across different districts. The reports published by HAQ: Centre for Child Rights and Child Rights and You demonstrate that police forces and Child Welfare Committees and Special POCSO Courts fail to establish effective collaboration. Some districts have established child-friendly courtrooms and support services but other districts face challenges because they lack essential infrastructure and staff members.

Empirical studies examining police responsiveness in Rajasthan reveal inconsistencies in FIR registration and investigative follow-through (Chaudhary, 2020).²³ The logistical challenges faced by rural districts include their distance from forensic laboratories and their limited transport options and their insufficient number of trained female officers. The existing limits on evidence collection process together with the existing limits on time which families can dedicate to legal matters act as barriers that prevent families from participating in legal procedures. The different judicial capacities found in various districts lead to different rates of case backlogs which remain unresolved.

The evaluations of school-based awareness programs show inconsistent results. The pilot programs in Jaipur and Udaipur which combine life-skills education with child rights awareness have increased student reporting confidence through their implementation. The program implementation in remote tribal areas faces challenges because literacy barriers and cultural resistance prevent outreach efforts. Engaging the community in one-off awareness effort implies that it is the procedure for generating belief alternatively transforming social perception, which experts argue is a necessity.

The lack of psychosocial support services creates an essential service gap. The POCSO framework provides rehabilitation and compensation methods but does not guarantee permanent counseling services and ongoing support for survivors in Rajasthan. The NGOs which operate in specific districts offer counseling and legal assistance but their services are not available to all areas (Singh, 2021). The absence of complete support systems leads to secondary victimization and social isolation for victims which decreases their chances of winning court cases.²⁴

The district comparative study results show that different districts have different conviction rates and case backlogs because institutional strength and local leadership abilities determine the results. The implementation of programs improves when district administrations work together with civil society

²³ Chaudhary, S. (2020). Reforms to the Legal Framework of Child Sexual Abuse in India: Legislative.

²⁴ Singh, G., Islamia, J. M., & Firdaus, A. (2021). Victim Compensation Scheme Under POCSO: Hidden Apathy Towards Non-Female Victims. *DME Journal of Law*, 2(01), 32-42.

organizations and provide training programs. POCSO protection systems in districts with inadequate monitoring and resources operate as standard procedures instead of transformative solutions.

4. Objectives

1. To analyze the relationship between socio-cultural norms (patriarchy, family honor, and stigma) and the reporting of child sexual offences under the POCSO Act in Rajasthan.
2. To evaluate the impact of informal justice mechanisms (panchayats, family mediation, and community pressure) on the implementation and outcomes of POCSO cases in Rajasthan.
3. To analyze the relationship between institutional capacity (police training, judicial infrastructure, child welfare services) and effective enforcement of the POCSO Act at the district level.
4. To evaluate the impact of legal awareness and support systems (school-based programs, NGO interventions, and victim assistance services) on access to justice and rehabilitation of child victims under POCSO.

5. Hypothesis

H1: There is a significant relationship between socio-cultural norms (patriarchal attitudes, family honor, and stigma) and the reporting of child sexual offences under the POCSO Act in Rajasthan.

H2: Informal justice mechanisms (panchayats, family mediation, and community pressure) have a significant impact on the implementation and outcomes of POCSO cases in Rajasthan.

H3: There is a significant relationship between institutional capacity (police training, judicial infrastructure, and child welfare services) and the effective enforcement of the POCSO Act in Rajasthan.

H4: Legal awareness and support systems (school-based programs, NGO interventions, and victim assistance services) have a significant impact on access to justice and rehabilitation of child victims under the POCSO Act in Rajasthan.

6. Methodology

The current research uses a quantitative descriptive–analytical research design to study how social and cultural factors together with institutional factors affect the implementation of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act in Rajasthan. The researchers used a structured questionnaire which they developed to meet their study objectives and research hypotheses as their primary data collection method. The instrument included demographic information together with Likert-scale statements which assessed cultural norms and informal justice system usage and institutional capability and legal knowledge and views about POCSO effectiveness. The research team used purposive and convenience sampling methods to select 150 respondents who included parents and teachers and social workers and community members who had experience with child protection matters. The research team conducted a pilot test of the questionnaire to determine its clarity and reliability and content validity before final administration.

The researchers used Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to perform their data analysis. The researchers used descriptive statistics which included frequency percentage mean and standard deviation to present the details of the respondents and the distribution of variables. The researchers used inferential statistical techniques through correlation analysis and regression tests to study the relationships and effects

between variables according to their developed hypotheses. The researchers assessed scale reliability with Cronbach's alpha while they applied appropriate significance levels to maintain statistical validity. The researchers used SPSS for data analysis which allowed them to systematically analyze the data and produce findings that were empirical and objective and matched the study's conceptual framework.

7. Result

- **Based on Demographics**

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	150	1	5	3.12	1.465
Gender	150	1	2	1.47	.501
Education	150	1	6	3.44	1.677
Occupation	150	1	7	3.93	1.939
Area of Residence	150	1	3	1.95	.763
Years of Experience	150	1	5	3.07	1.471
Valid N (listwise)	150				

The study used 150 actual study participants as its valid sample base. Respondents showed moderate age distribution with high age range variability according to the age distribution measurement which produced a mean score of 3.12 and a standard deviation of 1.465. The mean value for gender distribution reached 1.47 with a standard deviation of 0.501 which shows that respondents mostly represented two gender groups but one group received more representation. Participants showed diverse educational qualifications, which resulted in a moderate level of education that reached a mean value of 3.44 with a standard deviation of 1.677. Respondents from different occupational groups reached a mean score of 3.93 with a standard deviation of 1.939 which shows high variability in their distribution. The area of residence has a mean of 1.95 (SD = 0.763), indicating that participants are somewhat evenly distributed across residential categories, though with less variation compared to other variables. Respondents have moderate work experience which shows a wide range of experience levels according to years of experience measurement which shows a mean value of 3.07 and a standard deviation of 1.471. The data show that sample participants came from different demographic and socio-economic groups.

Table 2: Demographics Statistics					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age (Years)	Below 18	26	17.3	17.3	17.3
	18-25	32	21.3	21.3	38.7
	26-35	32	21.3	21.3	60.0
	36-45	18	12.0	12.0	72.0
	Above 46	42	28.0	28.0	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	
Gender	Male	80	53.3	53.3	53.3

	Female	70	46.7	46.7	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	
Education	No formal education	22	14.7	14.7	14.7
	Primary (up to Class 5)	32	21.3	21.3	36.0
	Secondary (Class 6–10)	23	15.3	15.3	51.3
	Higher Secondary (Class 11–12)	28	18.7	18.7	70.0
	Graduate	21	14.0	14.0	84.0
	Postgraduate	24	16.0	16.0	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	
	Occupation	Student	20	13.3	13.3
Homemaker		23	15.3	15.3	28.7
Farmer / Agricultural worker		23	15.3	15.3	44.0
Government employee		22	14.7	14.7	58.7
Private sector employee		24	16.0	16.0	74.7
NGO / Social worker		20	13.3	13.3	88.0
Legal / Police / Judicial personnel		18	12.0	12.0	100.0
Total		150	100.0	100.0	
Area of Residence		Rural	47	31.3	31.3
	Urban	63	42.0	42.0	73.3
	Semi Urban	40	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	
Years of Experience	Less than 1 year	33	22.0	22.0	22.0
	1–5 years	24	16.0	16.0	38.0
	6–10 years	25	16.7	16.7	54.7
	11–20 years	35	23.3	23.3	78.0
	More than 20 Years	33	22.0	22.0	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

The demographic profile of the 150 respondents reflects a diverse and well-distributed sample. The age distribution shows that 28% of people belong to the Above 46 years age group which is the largest group while 18–25 years and 26–35 years age groups both represent 21.3% of the population and 36–45 years age group has the smallest population size. The sample shows balanced gender distribution because 53.3% of

participants are male while 46.7% are female. The educational qualifications of the participants show wide variation because 21.3% have primary education which represents the highest educational attainment level and 18.7% have higher secondary education and 16% have postgraduate education and 15.3% have secondary education and 14.7% have no formal education. The respondents work in different industries but private sector employees make up the biggest group at 16% while homemakers and farmers each make up 15.3% and government employees make up 14.7% and students and NGO/social workers each make up 13.3% and legal/police/judicial personnel make up 12% of the sample. The area of residence shows that 42% of respondents live in urban areas while 31.3% live in rural areas and 26.7% live in semi-urban areas. The distribution of work experience shows equal proportions across different experience levels because 11–20 years of experience accounts for 23.3% of the population while both less than 1 year and more than 20 years experience each constitute 22% of respondents. The data shows that the sample consists of diverse people who can be studied through various socio-legal methods.

- **Based on Hypothesis**

H1: There is a significant relationship between socio-cultural norms (patriarchal attitudes, family honor, and stigma) and the reporting of child sexual offences under the POCSO Act in Rajasthan.

		Socio-Cultural Norms	Reporting of Child sexual Offences under POSCO in Rajasthan
Socio-Cultural Norms	Pearson Correlation	1	-.285**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	150
Reporting of Child sexual Offences under POSCO in Rajasthan	Pearson Correlation	-.285**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis shows that Socio-Cultural Norms establish a statistically significant negative relationship with child sexual offence reporting under POCSO in Rajasthan ($r = -0.285$, $p < 0.01$, $N = 150$). The Pearson correlation coefficient shows that more restrictive socio-cultural norms result in a decrease of child sexual offence reporting. The relationship between the two variables shows moderate strength but exists at a 1% statistical significance level which demonstrates that socio-cultural factors impact reporting behavior. The research demonstrates that existing social stigma and traditional beliefs together with community pressures create barriers which prevent victims and their families from reporting POCSO Act violations in Rajasthan.

H2: Informal justice mechanisms (panchayats, family mediation, and community pressure) have a significant impact on the implementation and outcomes of POCSO cases in Rajasthan.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.164 ^a	.027	.020	.66426	.027	4.080	1	148	.045

a. Predictors: (Constant), Informal Justice Mechanisms

The model summary demonstrates that Informal Justice Mechanisms account for a minimal yet statistically valid portion of the dependent variable's variance. “The correlation coefficient (R = 0.164) shows a weak positive relationship between informal justice mechanisms and the outcome variable. The R Square value of 0.027 shows that the model explains only 2.7% of the dependent variable's variation while the Adjusted R Square (0.020) shows that the explanatory power stays low after sample size adjustments. The F change value (F = 4.080, df1 = 1, df2 = 148) shows a significance level of p = 0.045 which proves that the model reaches statistical significance at the 5% level.” The analysis shows that informal justice mechanisms provide limited explanation for the dependent variable yet they still produce statistically significant effects.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1.800	1	1.800	4.080	.045 ^b
Residual	65.303	148	.441		
Total	67.104	149			

a. Dependent Variable: Implementation and Outcomes of POCSO Cases in Rajasthan
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Informal Justice Mechanisms

“The ANOVA results demonstrate that the regression model can effectively predict the Implementation and Outcomes of POCSO Cases in Rajasthan because it achieves statistical significance. The Informal Justice Mechanisms explain only a small portion of total variance which amounts to 67.104 as shown by the regression sum of squares 1.800 and the residual sum of squares 65.303. The F value of 4.080 with degrees of freedom (1, 148) and a significance level of p = 0.045 (p < 0.05) confirms that the model achieves statistical significance at the 5% level. The implementation and outcomes of POCSO cases in Rajasthan get affected by Informal Justice Mechanisms which produce a significant but restricted impact according to the results of this research study.”

Table 6: Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.569	.246		14.519	.000
	Informal Justice Mechanisms	-.161	.079	-.164	-2.020	.045

a. Dependent Variable: Implementation and Outcomes of POCSO Cases in Rajasthan

The coefficients table shows that Informal Justice Mechanisms have a statistically significant negative effect on the Implementation and Outcomes of POCSO Cases in Rajasthan. “The unstandardized coefficient (B = -0.161) indicates that for every one-unit increase in informal justice mechanisms, the implementation and outcomes score decreases by 0.161 units, holding other factors constant. The standardized coefficient (Beta = -0.164) shows a weak negative correlation between the two variables. The t-value (-2.020) with a significance level of $p = 0.045$ ($p < 0.05$) confirms that this effect is statistically significant at the 5% level. The constant value (B = 3.569, $p < 0.001$) shows the predicted implementation and outcome level when informal justice mechanisms do not exist.” The findings show that informal justice mechanisms lead to worse results in POCSO case implementation in Rajasthan because they require more time to complete.

H3: There is a significant relationship between institutional capacity (police training, judicial infrastructure, and child welfare services) and the effective enforcement of the POCSO Act in Rajasthan.

Table 7: Correlations			
		Institutional Capacity	Effective Enforcement of the POCSO Act in Rajasthan
Institutional Capacity	Pearson Correlation	1	.165*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.044
	N	150	150
Effective Enforcement of the POCSO Act in Rajasthan	Pearson Correlation	.165*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.044	
	N	150	150

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

“The correlation analysis shows that there exists a statistically significant positive relationship between Institutional Capacity and Effective Enforcement of the POCSO Act in Rajasthan which has a correlation coefficient of 0.165 and a p-value of 0.044 based on 150 study participants. The positive Pearson correlation coefficient shows that as institutional capacity increases the enforcement of the POCSO Act improves.” The relationship between the two variables shows weak strength but reaches statistical significance at a 5 percent level because institutional factors which include infrastructure and trained personnel and procedural efficiency and administrative support contribute to better enforcement results. The findings demonstrate that institutional capacity improvements will lead to better POCSO Act implementation and enforcement in Rajasthan.

H4: Legal awareness and support systems (school-based programs, NGO interventions, and victim assistance services) have a significant impact on access to justice and rehabilitation of child victims under the POCSO Act in Rajasthan.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.162 ^a	.026	.020	.67784	.026	3.987	1	148	.048

a. Predictors: (Constant), Legal Awareness and Support Systems

“The model summary indicates that Legal Awareness and Support Systems have a weak but statistically significant influence on the dependent variable. The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.162$) shows a weak positive relationship between legal awareness and the outcome variable. The R Square value of 0.026 indicates that the model explains 2.6% of the dependent variable variance which the Adjusted R Square value of 0.020 shows maintains low explanatory power after sample size adjustments. The F change value ($F = 3.987$, $df1 = 1$, $df2 = 148$) with a significance level of $p = 0.048$ ($p < 0.05$) shows that the regression model achieves statistical significance at the 5% level. The results show that Legal Awareness and Support Systems explain only a small part of the variation but they still produce a considerable and statistically valid effect on the dependent variable.”

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1.832	1	1.832	3.987	.048 ^b
Residual	68.001	148	.459		
Total	69.833	149			

a. Dependent Variable: Access to Justice & Rehabilitation of Child Victims
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Legal Awareness and Support Systems

“The ANOVA results show that the regression model which studies how Legal Awareness and Support Systems affect Access to Justice and Rehabilitation of Child Victims shows statistically significant results. The regression sum of squares (1.832) represents the variation explained by the predictor, while the residual sum of squares (68.001) reflects the unexplained variation out of the total variance (69.833). The F value of 3.987 with degrees of freedom (1, 148) and a significance level of $p = 0.048$ ($p < 0.05$) confirms that the model is significant at the 5% level. The research results demonstrate that legal awareness and support systems create a substantial effect which helps child victims access justice and achieve rehabilitation despite the explained variance being minor.”

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.529	.263		13.439	.000
	Legal Awareness and Support Systems	-.166	.083	-.162	-1.997	.048

a. Dependent Variable: Access to Justice & Rehabilitation of Child Victims

“The two programs show different outcomes because legal awareness and support systems thereby show a statistically significant negative connection between the two programs as shown in the coefficients table. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = -0.166$) indicates that a one-unit increase in legal awareness and support systems is associated with a 0.166 unit decrease in the dependent variable score, holding other factors constant. The standardized coefficient ($Beta = -0.162$) reflects a weak negative relationship. The t-value (-1.997) with a significance level of $p = 0.048$ ($p < 0.05$) confirms that the effect is statistically significant at the 5% level. The constant ($B = 3.529$, $p < 0.001$) represents the baseline level of access to justice and rehabilitation when the predictor is zero. The study results demonstrate that legal awareness and support systems produce a small effect on access to justice and rehabilitation outcomes, but their impact requires additional examination because of their negative relationship.”

8. Discussion

The research examined how socio-cultural and institutional elements affected the implementation of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012 in Rajasthan. The research results show that although the legal system provides complete and advanced regulations its operational effectiveness depends on social customs and informal judicial systems and the capacity of institutions and the public understanding of legal matters. The research results are combined with established academic research to create an interpretation of the studied relationships between variables.

The first hypothesis (H1) tested the relationship between socio-cultural norms and the reporting of child sexual offences. The correlation analysis discovered a statistically significant negative relationship because stronger patriarchal attitudes and stigma and family honor protection showed lower reporting rates ($r = -0.285$, $p < 0.01$). This discovery establishes strong support for feminist and socio-legal research that demonstrates culture functions as the fundamental obstacle which prevents people from reporting instances of child sexual abuse. Levett (2003) claims that cultural silence functions as a social control mechanism which prevents victims from identifying their abuse because they fear experiencing shame and losing their social standing. The Rajasthan study by Sharma (2013) shows how patriarchal customs shape female sexual behavior to function as family honor protection which results in victims being seen as sources of dishonor instead of being recognized as persons with rights. The research results confirm theoretical assertions by showing that socio-cultural restrictions function as concrete elements that hinder POCSO reporting.

The researchers assessed how informal justice systems affected their study of POCSO cases, which they investigated through their second hypothesis. The regression analysis produced results that showed a statistically important yet weak negative relationship with the variable panchayat family mediation and community pressure which the study used to measure formal legal processes. This research confirms Baxi's (2013) assessment of informal justice systems which he claims handle community-based dispute resolution by showing that social unity takes precedence over justice for victims, particularly in sexual violence

situations. The study by Carson et al. (2013) shows that informal settlements in child sexual abuse cases lead to less accountability while forcing victims to remain silent. The model demonstrates limited explanatory power through its results which show that 2.7 percent of variations in legal outcomes stem from informal mechanisms although it maintains statistical significance. The evidence shows that informal pressures keep influencing decisions while cases move through the formal system.

The third hypothesis (H3) assessed the relationship between institutional capacity and effective enforcement of the POCSO Act. The analysis established a positive relationship between the two variables which reached statistical significance at ($r = 0.165$, $p < 0.05$). The study found that police officers receive better training while judicial systems receive better infrastructure and child welfare services operate effectively to establish law enforcement. The research supports Bajpai's 2019 argument which asserts that child victims require judicial access rights that depend more on institutional readiness than on legal statutes. The research conducted by Belur and Singh 2015 shows that POCSO's child-centered approach suffers from three main weaknesses which include procedural mistakes and insufficient staff training and poor facility maintenance. The current study found a weak relationship between two variables yet the study results showed that institutional development remains essential for successful implementation despite its inability to function as a standalone requirement.

The fourth hypothesis (H4) explored the impact of legal awareness and support systems on access to justice and rehabilitation. The regression model showed statistical significance at ($p < 0.05$) but the coefficient demonstrated a weak negative relationship with ($B = -0.166$). The finding shows that people who become more aware of their rights will not experience better legal access or treatment results. People who become aware of their rights will face two different challenges according to the evidence. People who become aware of their rights will face two different challenges according to the evidence. Ali 2023 explains that people who know their rights need access to support systems which will empower them instead of creating more frustration. Families who know about legal options will face challenges that prevent them from taking legal action because they lack financial resources and social support and legal case processing takes too long.

The research results show that cultural factors have more influence on POCSO implementation than existing legal systems. The regression models show low effect sizes because social and legal systems have multiple factors which work together to determine results. Kumar (2023) emphasizes that access to justice in cases of child sexual violence is mediated by caste, class, and power relations, a conclusion echoed by the present findings. The study thus reinforces the argument that POCSO's challenges exist because of social cultural factors and institutional systems which operate in connection with the law.

9. Conclusion

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, represents a landmark commitment by the Indian state to safeguard children from sexual abuse through a comprehensive, child-centric legal framework. The study results indicate that three different elements which include socio-cultural factors and institutional elements and structural components that exist outside the legal system determine how POCSO regulations operate in Rajasthan. The research demonstrates that existing socio-cultural traditions which include patriarchy and stigma and the practice of protecting family reputation determine how people choose to report child sexual abuse cases.

The research demonstrated that social cultural standards established a direct negative relationship which proved that child sexual abuse victims remained silent about their experiences because of societal expectations. Families in Rajasthan choose to protect their social status rather than seek justice because they

think that sharing information about their case will damage their social status. The argument states that legal reform needs supporting cultural transformation to achieve complete effectiveness.

The research shows that informal justice systems control both the progression of POCSO cases and their final outcomes which they handle. The combination of Panchayats and family mediation and community pressure functions as a governance system that operates independently from official legal procedures. The total effect of these elements appears small in statistical terms but they establish a pattern that permits people to disregard essential legal requirements. The POCSO system does not achieve its protective and deterrent functions because it enables socially and economically powerful individuals to commit crimes without facing consequences.

The enforcement of POCSO requires institutional capacity as its fundamental requirement. The implementation process achieves positive results through institutional strength because trained police forces and functional courts and responsive child welfare services operate effectively. The weak correlation between variables shows that social resistance exists at a fundamental level that institutional reform cannot resolve. Victim protection mechanisms through trust from the community create empty institutional procedures which fail to accomplish any objectives.

The study shows that legal awareness programs need operational support services to deliver their full potential. The study found that legal awareness created an unexpected negative impact on access to justice because people learned about the justice system yet they lacked practical resources to support their needs. Organizations need complete solutions which include public knowledge programs and financial aid and mental health services and work facilitation processes.

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