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REIMAGINING CSA RISK PREVENTION IN INDIA: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF GLOBAL MODELS AND THE ROLE OF VICTIM-OFFENDER PROFILING

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Abstract

Child sexual abuse (CSA) remains a critical issue globally, with one of the most pressing yet underreported crimes. India moreover witnesses a complex interplay of socio-cultural, psychological and cultural dynamics contributing to both the incidences and concealment of such offences. While legal frameworks focus on punitive and rehabilitative measures, there is a pressing need for a preventive and predictive approach to mitigate such crimes. This study is a systematic literature review to understand how profiling of the penal couple, i.e., both victims and offenders has evolved over time, with reference to criminology, forensic psychology and child protection frameworks.

By analysing both global and Indian studies, this study aims to identify key victim-centric risk factors like age, socio-economic status, gender, repeat victimisation, access to digital media, etc. that may be the causes for increase of a child susceptibility to CSA. Simultaneously, it shall also be exploring the development of offender profiling theories, typologies based on behavioral patterns, psychological traits, risks of recidivism, etc.

The review also evaluates how the conceptual frameworks of risk assessment models in various jurisdictions have been practically implemented for early intervention, law enforcement and policy planning. Through meta-analytical techniques, the study aims to map recurring patterns and data-driven indicators that can be adapted into predictive models for the Indian context- where challenges like underreporting, stigmatisation, and infrastructural limitations reduce the effectiveness of CSA policies. Emphasis is laid on integrating insights from Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, being the landmark legislation for CSA in India. Ultimately, the paper advocates for evidence-based approach to tackle CSA by leveraging offender-victim dynamics to create a data-driven risk assessment model to align with India's socio-legal environment.

Keywords: *Child sexual abuse (CSA), Victim vulnerability, Offender profiling, Risk assessment models, Systematic Literature Review, Indian context, Data-driven.*

BACKGROUND

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is one of the gravest yet persistently underreported violations of child rights across the globe, and India is no exception. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), CSA encompasses the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to consent to, or that contravenes societal norms or legal statutes. (Kalpana Srivastava, 2017) These acts range from non-contact offenses like voyeurism and child pornography to severe penetrative assaults, often inflicted by individuals in positions of trust or authority. In India, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 provides a comprehensive legal framework for identifying and prosecuting such offenses, defining CSA as any sexual activity involving a child under 18, regardless of consent or gender. (GOI, 2023)

A comprehensive government study in 2011 reveals that greater than 53% of children have reported experiencing some form of sexual abuse. A decade later, nothing has changed. Despite these alarming figures CSA remains massively underreported due to lack of awareness and fear of retaliation. Moreover, the misconception that only minor girls are at risk of abuse was also broken. 95% of the victims of CSA

are abused by someone they know. (Kiruba, 2023) The circulation of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) has increased by 250-300 % on social media platforms, highlighting the growing threat of digital exploitation. (NHRC, 2023) CSA has been seen linked to impaired physiological, psychological and neurological functioning that contributes to both short- and long-term consequences. E.g., meta-analyses and longitudinal studies indicate CSA to be associated with reduced educational achievement, alcohol and drug problems, impaired psycho-social functioning, etc.

NCTSM stands for, The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, created by the US Congress in 2000 under the American Children's Health Act, defines the scope of child sexual abuse, as any interaction between a child and another child or an adult where the former is exploited for the sexual stimulation of an observer or a perpetrator. Sexual abuse according to NCTSN can include non-touching like voyeurism, exhibitionism or child pornography or touching behaviors like touching private parts of the child over the clothes or skin to skin contact. Children of all races, ages, economic backgrounds or ethnicities maybe subjected to sexual abuse. It affects both minor boys and girls, in all kinds of communities and neighborhoods.

CSA in India is a pervasive issue and encompasses various forms of sexual victimization, including exploitation, molestation and assault. From a psychological standpoint, the abusive nature of the crime has a detrimental effect on the children's psychological well-being like depression, anxiety, PTSD, etc. (Sravanti, 2023) Cultural norms and stigma around sexuality, gender roles, and family honor contribute significantly to underreporting, silencing victims—especially boys—and obstructing justice (Virani, 2000). Culturally, the understanding of CSA can vary across different communities, even within India. In some cultures, certain behavior may not be recognized as abuse hence failing to identify or address CSA, hence underscoring the importance to consider cultural contexts before defining CSA.

Prevalence and Trends in India

According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, 2022 Report, crimes against children in India have increased by 8.7% since 2021. Out of 1,62,449 cases of crimes against children in 2022, 39.7% of the cases have been filed under POCSO. India reported 64,469 cases of child sexual abuse including 38,911 cases of penetrative sexual assault under POCSO, i.e., child rape. These numbers translate to approximately 7 children reporting sexual crime every hour, with 4 of them reporting rape. (NCRB, 2023) A study of NCRB data from 2016 to 2022, undertaken by child rights NGO- Child Rights and You (CRY) showed that improved public awareness has caused increase in the number of reported cases of sexual crimes against children. In the six-year period, cases of various forms of penetrative sexual assaults against children have increased by 96%. The analysis further showed a consistent upward trajectory in rape cases since 2016, with the exception of 2020. In the last two years alone, there was a 6.9% increase.

The cumulative number of POCSO cases awaiting trial, according to NCRB 2022, is 2,39,188 out of 2,68,038, which brings out the pendency rate of 89.2%. A lack of infrastructure and judges was the major cause of delayed justice. Since 2019, when Fast Track Special Courts for POCSO came into existence, though more than 2,90,000 cases have been disposed but in proportion to the new cases reported, the pendency case numbers still remain high. 747 fast track courts have been established in India, out of which 406 are exclusively for POCSO cases. (Dabhi, 2025) The conviction rate for the crime still remains a concern. According to a study by JALDI initiative, i.e., Justice, Access and Lowering Delays in India, more than 43% of the POCSO cases end with acquitting the accused and only 14% lead to conviction of the offender.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The assessment of risk—both of initial offending and recidivism—is central to contemporary child protection and forensic frameworks, demanding models that are culturally contextual, behaviourally grounded, and empirically validated. This paper proposes to bridge this gap by systematically reviewing global and Indian literature on two foundational concepts—victim vulnerability profiling and offender behavioral profiling—with the aim of developing data-driven risk assessment frameworks. Victim vulnerability refers to individual or contextual factors—such as age, gender, socio-economic background, and trauma history—that increase the likelihood of victimization. Offender profiling, on the other hand, involves analysing crime scene behaviors and psychological characteristics to infer patterns of offending and risk of reoffending, (Salfati, 2015). A study in the *Indian Journal of Psychiatry* emphasizes the urgent need for effective assessment and management of sex offenders, highlighting the potential of profiling in this context. (Sarkar, 2013) An article in *Dehradun Law Review*, discusses how improved profiling

techniques contribute to more efficient suspect identification, reducing investigative time and resources. Understanding victim profiles is equally crucial. A systematic review in *PLOS ONE* indicates that CSA is prevalent among both boys and girls in India, underscoring the need for targeted prevention efforts. (Vikas Coudhry, 2018).

The rationale of this study is hence anchored in the ability of risk assessments to refine predictions of reoffending by considering behavioral patterns alongside psychological evaluations. This dual approach addresses limitations in traditional risk assessments, which often struggle to reliably categorize offenders' likelihood of reoffending. Moreover, courts of law and correctional administration benefits from a strengthened rehabilitation plans customised on basis of comprehensive assessments of perpetrators. By identifying thematic patterns in vulnerability and offense behavior, and by examining existing global models, this review will offer a conceptual foundation for the development of predictive frameworks tailored to India's unique socio-legal context. (Raval, 2023) The scope of CSA is highly extensive and evidently one of the biggest challenges is the multifaceted approach to it across cultures and communities, hence, the need of a preventive rather than responsive mechanism.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

CSA in India as a crime is exacerbated by complex and multi-layered socioeconomic and cultural concerns. Despite the implementation of the landmark legislation of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012 for child safety, there still exists a lack of comprehensive, evidence-based risk assessment framework. POCSO and other legislations through do have preventive aspects are primarily reactive in nature. A proactive model that can be used for effective policy formulation and timely intervention can help prevent and predict the offence, allowing the trauma for the child to be minimal. A critical gap in India's approach to CSA is the absence of this standardised risk assessment and profiling system for victims and offenders- which otherwise is routinely used in several countries, viz. United States (e.g., the Sex Offender Risk Appraisal Guide), the United Kingdom (e.g. Structured Assessment of Risk and Need), or Canada (Static-99) etc. In India, law enforcement agencies, forensic psychologists and social workers, often work in isolation without access to such structured models. Hence this paper, intends to review the current practices and models being used worldwide in order to understand different aspects in them that can be incorporated for the Indian scenario.

PRIMARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To review global practices of victim and offender profiling and evaluating their relevance and adaptability within the Indian legal and socio-cultural context.
2. Secondary Research Objectives
3. To critically examine the preventive provisions and limitations of POCSO Act in addressing CSA from a risk assessment and profiling perspective.
4. To explore the judicial interpretations of existing legislations on CSA in India, to draw the basis of the current legal and social-cultural context of CSA in India.
5. Explore the evolution and practical applications of offender profiling across global jurisdictions.
6. Identify the existing victim vulnerability models in the field of CSA prevention to assess their suitability for adaptation in India.
7. Analyse global risk assessment tools with focus on their components and implementation mechanisms and its possible incorporation in the Indian forensic and judiciary systems.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is performed for undertaking a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology to understand and analyse the existing research on offender and victim profiling in child sexual abuse (CSA) cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. This process of SLR ensures a comprehensive and rigorous approach of gathering, analysing, and synthesizing relevant literature to help summarize the current world situation needed to create a model for assessing risks for CSA prevention.

This study follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines of SLR to guarantee transparency and reproducibility. The following steps were undertaken:

LITERATURE SEARCH STRATEGY

1. The study conducted extensive searches across multiple databases, including PubMed, Google Scholar, Scopus, JSTOR, PsycINFO, and HeinOnline.
2. Keywords such as "offender profiling in CSA," "victim profiling in child abuse," "risk assessment models in sexual crimes," "POCSO Act implementation," and "CSA prevention models in India" were used.
3. Grey literature, including government reports (NCRB, NCPCR), global agency annual reports (UNICEF, Amnesty International, etc.), legal case rulings and NGO reports, was also reviewed.

Selection of Relevant Studies

A total of 72 research papers and reports were initially retrieved based on keyword searches. Studies were screened based on their relevance, credibility, and empirical evidence. 35 of the most relevant articles were selected after applying inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Screening and Eligibility

1. Duplicates and non-English studies were removed.
2. Abstracts and full texts were reviewed to ensure they addressed key research questions related to CSA profiling and risk assessment models.

Data Extraction

1. Key themes such as relevance of POCSO for risk assessment, psychological traits of CSA offenders, victim vulnerability factors, and existing models for CSA prevention were identified.
2. Quantitative and qualitative data on CSA prevalence, recidivism rates, and risk factors were analysed and duplication was removed.
3. Legal frameworks and landmark judicial rulings under the POCSO Act were examined.

Interpretation

1. The extracted data were synthesized to create a structured framework for developing a CSA risk assessment model.
2. Comparative analysis of different profiling methodologies (clinical, actuarial, structured professional judgment) was conducted.
3. Findings were aligned with policymaking and child protection strategies in India.

Inclusion Criteria

Studies were selected based on the following parameters:

1. Studies that have relevant content for victim and offender profiling in CSA cases.
2. Researches containing statistical data, case studies and meta-analyses relevant to CSA risk assessment.
3. Priority was given to studies addressing CSA under the POCSO Act in India. However, global best practices were also considered.
4. Studies published between 2010-2024 were included to ensure up-to-date analysis.
5. Integrated research studies covering criminological theories, forensic psychology, behavioral profiling, and risk assessment models.
6. NCRB crime statistics, court rulings, and National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) reports.

Exclusion Criteria

The following studies were excluded:

1. Research published in languages other than English.
2. Only 2 outdated studies were taken, a book written in 2000, considered to be a milestone for CSA in India and a paper written in 1993, crucial for understanding offender profiling.
3. Editorials, opinion pieces, and non-peer-reviewed articles lacking empirical validation.

DATA ANALYSIS

The core objective of this review is not just to summarize existing research but to integrate, interpret and recontextualise global knowledge. **Meta-synthesis** as a n analysis allows for reinterpretation of qualitative studies, generate conceptual frameworks that go beyond individual studies for adaptation in

the Indian context. Thematic integration of similar context elements and their apt relevance with critical perspective was made possible by using this method.

SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Analysis of the POCSO Act, 2012: Through the lens of victim and offender profiling for Risk Assessment Modelling

Themes	Codes identified	Description of the theme	Relevance for Risk Assessment Models
Pre-POCSO Legal Gaps	• CSA laws scattered. • Lacked comprehensiveness • Gender-biased • Reactive in nature.	Child protection laws were scattered across IPC Sections 375, 354, 377, etc. which were at times insufficient and outdated leading to underreporting and limited legal accountability. POCSO as a comprehensive and superseding law, responded to this lacuna in legislation. (Aadya Ramesh Pattath, 2023)	Evolution from general provisions to a dedicated child protection law provides a legal foundation for integrating structured profiling techniques. CSA as a distinct crime and allows systematic tracking of patterns for victim vulnerabilities and offender profiling-crucial for risk assessment.
Gender-Neutral Definition of Child	• Individual under 18 years • Gender Equality • Inclusive protection	POCSO defined a child as any person below 18 years of age, regardless of gender or identity. This inclusivity in approaching children and equal protection to non-conforming children was codified in law for the first time. (Thangavel, 2023)	This allows collection of better organised and encompassing demographic data as it broadens the data pool. A standardised model for profiling needs to have strong inclusion and exclusion criteria, while accurately assessing vulnerability across different behavioral contexts and all child populations.
Comprehensive Classification of Offences	• Penetrative sexual assault • Aggravated sexual assault • Sexual assault • Sexual harassment • Use of children in pornography.	Any action that doesn't involve any touch to the child is harassment. Action that involves touching or fondling the private parts qualifies as an assault. Any action that involves insertion into the private parts qualifies as penetrative. Depending upon the nature of severity of the offence, they are classified as petty, serious or heinous offences. (Nagda, 2017)	Each category provides behavioural indicators critical to offender profiling. E.g. aggravated assaults, often involve power dynamics indicating predatory patterns, while voyeuristic acts may suggest grooming behaviours. Such classification helps define escalation patterns and victim targeting strategies.
Child centric and strict law	• Stringent punishment • Death penalty • Best interests of child	POCSO is child centric in nature where burden of proof is on the accused and consent of the child is not valid. 2019 amendment has	Variation in sentencing helps in raking the severity of risk behaviours. It helps in creating graded

		introduced death penalty and raised minimum sentencing thresholds. (GOI, 2023)	intervention protocols and create typologies for high risk individuals in terms of impulsivity, premeditation and recidivism.
Mandatory Reporting	• Section 19-22 of the act • Legal obligation • Non-reporting is punishable	Under POCSO, any person aware of CSA is legally obligated to report the offence. Failures to do so is a punishable offence. This can end up in creating legal and ethical dilemmas for the person willing to report as consent of the child is invalid. (Thangavel, 2023)	Mandatory reporting provisions enables early capture of CSA indicators allowing systemic collection of data w.r.t. victim background and first point of contact. This data can help create early warning systems at community level.
Child-Friendly Procedures	• Child-safety • Juvenile welfare officers • In-camera trials • Confidentiality	Act prioritises minimum trauma to child victims as well as children in conflict with the law. Testimonies are recorded at child's preferred location, juvenile welfare trained officers deal with the children, in-camera proceedings in courts followed and revealing the identity of the child is legally punishable.	These procedures further assure accurate and streamlined data collection and improve the reliability of victim vulnerability profiles. They further ensure safe environments for victims, which makes interviewing them easier for the purpose of the model.
Speedy Justice	• Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) • Compensation • NCPCR/ SCPCRs • POCSO E-Box	Special Courts have been created to mandate timely justice. Judiciary is legally obligated to complete the trials withing one year and compensation determined under the Legal Services Authority Act. National and State Commissions to oversee implementation. (Aadya Ramesh Pattath, 2023)	The FTSCs especially act as data hubs where offender history, legal interpretation and case metadata converge and can be easily obtained. Moreover, the speedy justice promises longitudinal tracking of offender behaviour and sentencing trends.
Provision for Support Persons	• Psychologists • Social Workers • Counselling	POCSO has provisions that legally encourage victim assistance by psychologists, counsellors and other welfare workers to support throughout legal procedures and recovery.	Support persons can ideally be positioned positively to collect qualitative data like behavioural shifts which helps feed the trauma-informed vulnerability scoring models. These are indispensable for identifying high victim vulnerability factors and repeat victimisation risks.

2. Landmark judgements interpreting POCSO: A victim-offender profiling perspective

Case Name	Themes and Codes	Description	Victim and Offender Profiling	Relevance to Risk Assessment Models
State v. Aas Mohammad (2013)	**Theme:** Age Dynamics **Codes:** • Adolescent Consent • Inducement through false promises	Court accepted withdrawal of complaint in a case involving a minor overruling in favour of the accused, citing marriage as a reasonable intent, undermining POCSO's protective nature. (Raval, 2023)	**Victim Profile:** Adolescent female, emotionally vulnerable, legally underage, dependent on adult male. **Offender Profile:** Adult male tenant, manipulated relationship under pretext of affection and future promises.	Supports inclusion of false consent and adolescent coercion as indicators in identifying traits of offenders in risk frameworks. Illustrates emotional confusion supporting need for models to include EQ for victims.
Gaya Prasad Pal v. State of Delhi (2016)	**Theme:** Custodial Abuse **Codes:** • Intrafamilial Abuse • Legal Oversight	High Court corrected the act of the crime to Aggravated PSA and reaffirmed POCSO's supremacy over IPC in CSA cases, hence making it a superseding law. (Suman, 2018)	**Victim Profile:** Minor child within custodial care, highly dependent and high domestic vulnerability. **Offender Profile:** Guardian figure exploiting position of trust within household.	Highlights need for familial and relationship based profiling. Also advocates for recognising high risk familial- abuse patterns on the basis of generational domestic abuse.
Independent Thought v. Union of India (2017)	**Theme:** Marital Rape **Codes:** • Marital Exceptions • Cultural Immunity	SC declared marital rape with minors illegal under POCSO, strengthening child protection over personal law exceptions. (Narayana, 2023)	**Victim Profile:** Child brides hidden under informal or customary marriages, vulnerable due to legal invisibility. **Offender Profile:** Adult spouse using traditional	This case helps understand the importance of diversity and inclusivity in models especially to be implemented in India. Inclusion of cultural and marriage based abuse is essential for risk assessment.

			norms for justifying sexual access to minor.	
State (NCT of Delhi) v. Hargovind (2018)	**Theme:** Age V/s Consent Codes: • Forensic age assessment • Romantic contexts	Court upheld acquittal; stressed need for accurate age verification. It also stressed upon importance of mutual affection in young adults and cautious consent interpretation. (Jakhmola, 2020)	**Victim Profile:** Adolescent minor emotionally attached to offender, confused between affection and abuse. **Offender Profile:** Young adult possibly unaware of implications under law but legally culpable.	Supports forensic and contextual tools to filter real consent versus legal incapacity. Stresses need for forensic age confirmation and building profiling metrics considering adolescent centric patterns.
Satish Ragde v. State of Maharashtra (2021)	**Theme:** Mens Rea of sexual nature **Codes:** • Skin-to-skin touch • Intent- driven interpretation	Supreme Court overruled HC clarifying that sexual intent and exploitation mattered more than direct contact (skin-to-skin). (Thangavel, 2023)	**Victim Profile:** Minor subjected to grooming and conditioned to breeching of personal boundaries. **Offender Profile:** Escalating and testing limits of the victim to condition them, before committing overt abuse	Reinforces intent-based profiling markers for offender assessment. Promotes behavioural red flagging of grooming acts in risk models.
Libnus v. State of Maharashtra (2021)	**Theme:** Non-Contact Sexual Exploitation Codes: • Grooming Tactics • Pre- abuse boundary violations	SC reaffirmed that intent-driven grooming acts which may not necessarily involve touch can also qualify as sexual assault, depending upon their severity, under POCSO. (Raval, 2023)	**Victim Profile:** Young child unable to interpret or articulate minor acts as abusive in nature. **Offender Profile:** Cautious offender, using loopholes in law to avoid	This case supported the need for grooming behaviour as an early-risk signal in offender typologies. Non-contact behaviour can play a huge role as an indicator of escalating intent in profiling.

			stringent punishments.
G. Vijayalakshmi v. State of Tamil Nadu (2021)	**Theme:** Adolescent Relationships **Codes:** • Legal Rigidity • Consent inclusion • Developmental stages	Court acknowledged emotional dynamics in consensual adolescent relations and quashed charges. (Aditi Priya, 2022)	**Victim Profile:** Teenage girl in consensual relationship, later recognised as victim. **Offender Profile:** Teenage boy unaware of legal consequences but no Mens Rea to cause hurt/ injury.	Calls for dual-tiered profiling with special consideration of developmental transgressions and consensual acts to help distinguish them from true CSA offences. Avoid criminalisation of adolescents in consensual relations.

3. Evolution of Offender Profiling and its relevance in Risk Assessment Models (in Indian Context)

Themes	Codes	Description	Relevance in the Indian Context
Historical Foundations of Offender Profiling	• Physiognomy • Phrenology • Biological Determinism	• Offender profiling has its roots in the pseudo-scientific work of Franz Gall (Phrenology) who believed skull shape reflected criminal tendencies. • Johann Lavater (Physiognomy) who linked facial features to character; and Cesare Lombroso's theory in 'L'Uomo Delinquente' positing that criminals are born with atavistic traits. (Ebisike, 2007) • Sheldon's Somatotype Theory later linked body types to criminality, while Charles Goring empirically disproved these deterministic theories. • These early ideas laid the conceptual ground for modern behavioral profiling. (David V Canter, 2009)	Though outdated, these theories highlight the evolution from physical determinism to behavioral science. In India, where cultural myths around 'born criminals' do still exist, our society still believes in reformation. In the Indian context, the concept of a 'serial killer' is not yet codified.
Development and of Behavioral Profiling	• Top-Down Approach • Mad Bomber Case • FBI-BSU • Bottom-Up Approach	• John Brussel's profiling in the 'Mad Bomber' case demonstrated early behavioural analysis, correctly predicting the bomber's clothing and personality traits. (Youngs, 2014)	India can adapt a combination of Canter's data-driven and Rossmo's geographic approach in state-specific models suiting better to its cultural diversity. The top-down FBI approach is useful in serial CSA cases,

		• The FBI's Behavioural Science Unit (BSU), led by Ressler and Douglas, used the 'Top-Down' model categorizing organized vs disorganized offenders. • David Canter's 'Bottom-Up' UK approach used statistical methods and introduced Investigative Psychology. (Bailey & Steven, 2016) • Rossmo developed Geographic Profiling, and Brent Turvey's BEA introduced evidence-based, case-specific profiling via his Behavioral Evidence Analysis Unit (BEAU).	where offender testimonies can be used to draw suspect profiles in future cases. The bottom-up model suits India's complex socio-demographic profiles as evidence from crime scene, can help build psychological profile. Turvey's BEA model should be adopted by Indian forensic psychologists for case-to-case profiling.
Specializing in profiling and its evolution	• UK's NCA • RCMP • Risk Assessment vs Profiling Terminology • COMPAS	• The UK's National Crime Agency introduced Behavioral Investigative Advisors (BIAs). • The RCMP's Y-class profiler programme later adopted in the UK. • The UK also transitioned from the term 'profiling' to 'risk assessment' to reflect ethical, legal, and scientific sensibilities. • Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions is a risk assessment model used in the US criminal justice system to assess the possibility of recidivism.	India can institutionalize profiling by training BIAs in national crime bureaus and state police. Replacing 'profiling' with 'risk assessment' aligns with India's legal system and mitigates bias and stigma associated with profiling. Models like COMPAS use various factors to generate risk scores and identify criminogenic needs that can be addressed through rehabilitative programmes. India can adapt such models, especially in the correctional administration to minimize recidivism.
CSA-Specific Offender Behavioral Traits	• Grooming • Cognitive Distortions • Recidivism • Typology	• CSA offenders often neutralize their actions to maximize the pleasure from the crime. • They indulge in grooming behaviors through prolonged manipulation. • Some offenders can be paedophilic, while some can be psychopathic in nature. They can be classified into: **i. Compulsive-** persistent urges along with psychosexual disorders	In India, CSA cases mainly go unreported due to the cultural taboos and stigma attached. Accurate data collection for profiling is hence difficult. These typologies can help police and psychologists identify and categorize offences with much ease, narrowing down the suspect pool. They can prioritize high-risk CSA offenders for monitoring. Training programs can teach identification of

		ii. Opportunistic- engage due to situational factors and not deep-seated compulsion **iii. Predatory-** Deliberately groom victims, enjoying the process rather than just the crime.	grooming and distortion patterns during investigation and interrogation.
Neuro-Criminology and AI-Driven Profiling	• Brain Markers • Hormonal Abnormalities • AI/ML Profiling	• Advances in neuroscience suggest brain dysfunction and hormonal imbalances (cortisol affecting the pre-frontal cortex-controls the planning, decision making, reasoning and regulating emotions) which can easily be correlated with deviance and no remorse or inability to develop morality. (Balogun & Zuva, 2018) • AI/ML now assists in processing large-scale behavioural and historical crime data to flag high-risk profiles. (e.g. the Golden State Killer Case where Joseph DeAngelo, evading capture for the past 3 decades, was identified using genetic genealogy and confessed to 13 murders & 50 rapes.	India should invest in research centres integrating neurocriminology and AI tools into forensic profiling. With the high advancements in India in medical sciences and the boost in growth of start-ups in the country, behavioral forensics as a concept needs to be evolved. Such skilled neuro psychologists can further help in solidifying these theories for risk assessment in India. Caution is needed to avoid data biases or ethical breaches, so frameworks should mandate safeguards.
Challenges in Profiling CSA Offenders	• Ethical Dilemmas • Legal Admissibility • Lack of CSA-Specific Expertise	• Profiling CSA cases faces challenges including false positives. • Lack of forensic evidence, limited scientific validation. • Lack of enough evidence for legal admissibility under Frye/Daubert/Turner rules (compelling scientific evidence needed to support opinions of psychological experts) (Ebisike, 2007) • Limited CSA-focused training in policing.	Risk assessment model like any other model should include the scope of errors or misdiagnoses as shown here. Legal reforms should establish thresholds for admissibility of behavioral evidence. India must create CSA-specific BIA training units. Multidisciplinary collaboration between police, forensic, and child welfare professionals is crucial.

4. Victim Vulnerability Factors identification and correlation to Risk Assessment

Themes	Codes	Description	Relevance to the Indian Context
Importance of Victim Profiling in CSA Prevention	• Proactive Prevention • Victim-Centric Models	Shifting the focus from solely punishing offenders to understanding victim vulnerabilities helps	For a comprehensive risk assessment, it is crucial to understand traits of the potential offender but also the factors that push a person to the

		build proactive and community-driven preventive strategies. These include strengthening protective environments, promoting awareness, and enabling early detection of risk factors. (Finkelhor, Epidemiological Factors in the clinical identification of child sexual abuse, 1993)	brink of victimisation. If the factors can be identified, it could help create extensive societal measures for control. India's CSA strategies are currently offender-centric. Integrating victim profiling helps stakeholders (schools, NGOs, child welfare services) in developing vulnerability-based early intervention models to reach children in high-risk environments before abuse occurs.
Moving Beyond Offender-Focused Strategies	• Environment-Based Risk • Empowerment through Education	CSA often occurs in familiar spaces and is perpetrated by trusted individuals. Hence, addressing broader environmental and psychological factors is essential. This includes teaching self-protection, empowering environments and enhancing societal awareness. (Collin-Vézina, 2019)	Victim empowerment programs in schools and Anganwadis can incorporate CSA education. Building open-dialogue frameworks in rural and urban settings can facilitate disclosures without fear, essential in India's culturally conservative society. Social-emotional learning, life skills and empowerment is crucial to be built for young adults, especially.
Key Victim Vulnerability Factors	• Age-Gender Risk • Family Dysfunction • Socioeconomic Disadvantage • Social Isolation	Children aged 8–12 years, are more vulnerable. Boys are equally as vulnerable as girls, rather than the gender their ethnicity and regionality is what puts them at a greater risk. Children with disabilities are more vulnerable. Family structures with neglect, mental health issues, or low parental supervision increase CSA risk. (Finkelhor, The Prevention of Childhood Sexual Abuse, 2009) Poor children and socially isolated kids are at heightened risk due to lack of protection and support.	Risk indicators such as age, gender, disability, household structure, and school attendance should be integrated into national child databases. This enables local governments and NGOs to focus awareness campaigns and safety audits in communities showing multiple vulnerability indicators. Such database can also help understand the kind of victims targeted more and specific to geographical profiling if any. This can help incorporate the same in risk assessment models to avoid such specific factors from developing in the first place.
Challenges in Identifying Prospective Victims	• False Positives Stigma • Resource Constraints • Trust Erosion	Labeling children as 'at-risk' could lead to social marginalization and emotional distress, as if they are considered to be more prone to abuse, it	In India, avoiding stigmatization is crucial, especially in joint family or conservative rural societies. Broad-based systemic changes

		might lead their community to devoid them of basic privileges in an attempt to keep them safe (e.g. sending to another city for better education). It may misallocate of limited resources and reduce children's trust in support systems. (Georgia M. Winters, 2020)	are more ethical and effective than individual prediction. Community-based risk mitigation through parental education, universal child safety education, and non-labelling support mechanisms should be prioritized in risk strategy design.

5. Risk Assessment Models developed globally and relevance to Indian context

Themes	Codes	Description	Relevance to the Indian Context
Purpose of Risk Assessment in CSA	• Early Identification • Prevention Tools • Evaluating recidivism	• Prevention is better than cure. Preventive measures are always better than punitive, especially in CSA as it can save the children from the trauma of the crime. • Risk assessment in CSA aims to predict future crimes by recognising high-risk offenders, assessing risks of recidivism and enhancing child protection through data driven policies. • It integrates characteristics of offender, victim vulnerability factors, environmental catalysts and situational triggers.	India needs to integrate risk assessment framework in the criminal justice system. The rising number of cases, increasing overburdening the courts and the corrections, is a never-ending concern. If the crime can be curtailed before it occurs, there wouldn't be a need for such extreme measures to rehabilitate. We can and child protection units to help target interventions more effectively before CSA escalates or reoccurs.
Actuarial Risk Assessment Models	• Static-99 • SORAG • VRAG	Actuarial models use historical data and statistical algorithms to predict CSA recidivism. They include tools like: • Static-99 (widely used for risk group categorization) • SORAG (assessing static and dynamic risk) • VRAG (initially for violence, adapted for sex offenders) (Morin, 2006)	Actuarial models are specific data based which make the adaptation convenient in India by national crime labs and NCRB. Specific to CSA as an offence, the specific data for CSA crimes, actuarial models can be used to build state-wide registries that can help in deciding in parole, sentencing and institutional risk classification.
Structured Professional Judgement (SPJ) Models	• SVR-20 • HCR-20 • ERASOR • SAPROF	SPJ combines empirical evidence with expert discretion. It accommodates customised, case-specific variables. The dynamic factors specifically are given a preference in such models like impulse control, social	India can adopt SPJ models for juvenile and CSA assessments by implementing a systematic, multidisciplinary contextualised approach. Institutionalised SPJ models can be a part of standard

		support, or grooming history. • SVR-20: Sexual Violence Risk- 20- Designed to assess the risk of sexual violence among adult offenders. • HCR-20: Historical, Clinical, Risk Management-20- Assesses general and violent recidivism, not just sexual offenses. • ERASOR: Estimate of Risk of Adolescent Sexual Offense Recidivism- Specifically for assessing sexual reoffense risk in adolescents (ages 12-18). • SAPROF: Structured Assessment of Protective Factors for Violence Risk- Used to assess protective factors that mitigate risk of future violence or sexual offense. It is more flexible but subject to evaluator bias and resource intensity. (Daniel Turner, 2014)	operating procedures in child protection and criminal justice. ICMR and NIMHANS can validate SPJ tools to identify India-specific dynamic and static risk factors in child welfare committees and forensic mental health centres, especially in nuanced cases where actuarial tools may lack cultural or case relevance. Pilot SPJ evaluation clinics can be of help in juvenile homes and special children's courts especially when the social inquiry report is being made for personal evaluation of children in conflict with the law.
Dynamic Risk Assessment Models	• Behavioral Tracking • Community Supervision • Technological Surveillance	• Dynamic models allow focusing on real time monitoring by allowing authorities to customise interventions based on risk level of the offenders. • These models evaluate real-time changes- emotional regulation, impulse control, empathy deficits, etc. through structured interviews. • It helps in monitoring changes in employment, residence and social relationships, etc. to detect red flags. It supports adaptive interventions based on the offender's current risk profile rather than fixed historical traits. (Morin, 2006)	Dynamic models in India can improve early intervention and tailored rehabilitation efforts. It can help monitor high-risk offenders for behaviour changes can be used in India. Though they are time-consuming to be evaluated but digitalisation of such behavioral traits if done for specific heinous offenders/ high severity offences it can assist in predicting potential psychopathic behavior or tendencies. AI-enabled dashboards can help local jurisdictions update offender status live.
Global Models Used in CSA and Behavioral	• COMPAS • Y-Class (RCMP) Y-CAP • UK BEA Integration	• COMPAS (Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions) uses machine learning to assess risk for sentencing and	India can pilot youth-centric assessment tools like Y-CAP in JJ Boards. AI-based tools like COMPAS can be tailored for Indian CSA data to assist

Risk Profiling	parole decisions. (Morin, 2006) • Y-Class (RCMP) and Y-CAP (Youth Criminal Assessment Protocol, US) focus on profiling youth sexual offenders using multi-axial risk frameworks. • UK's adoption of Behavioural Evidence Analysis for offender intervention promotes behavioural pattern profiling in place of typology assumptions.	courts and corrections with risk-based decision making. Adoption must ensure ethical safeguards and anti-bias calibration.

The Way Forward

As India continues to grasp at the end of straws with the multi-layered and deeply socially embedded issue of child sexual abuse (CSA), the findings and insights from this review paper offer a significant step toward developing an indigenous, evidence-based, and context-sensitive risk assessment framework. By synthesizing global best practices in risk assessment—ranging from actuarial and dynamic models to structured professional judgment (SPJ) systems—and integrating victim and offender profiling, this paper can be utilised for creating a more proactive, data-driven approach to CSA prevention in the Indian context.

1. Development of a Standardised Risk Assessment:

India currently lacks a standardized, nationally endorsed risk assessment model for CSA prevention and offender management. The review provides a comparative overview of globally recognized tools such as **Static-99**, **SVR-20**, **ERASOR**, **SAPROF**, and **HCR-20**, along with dynamic frameworks and AI-assisted systems. Future research must focus on localizing these models by incorporating:

- Culturally relevant risk indicators.
- Demographic traits (e.g. caste, gender, urban-rural differences)
- Victim vulnerabilities specific to Indian socialisation structures and familial bonds.
- Typologies of offenders, commonly observed in Indian case laws.

2. Integration of Victim and Offender Profiling into Risk Assessment

Unlike many traditional models that focus heavily on offender recidivism, this review highlights the potential of integrating victim vulnerability factors as well like -- age, gender, socioeconomic status, familial structure, psychosocial isolation—as a critical component for prevention. Accordingly, including behavioral patterns, psychological disorders, and grooming tactics, helps understand the root causes of CSA.

Going forward, integrating these two dimensions for creating a combined predictive framework is necessary to enhance early identification and support targeted intervention strategies, especially in high-risk environments like schools, orphanages, juvenile homes, and digital spaces.

3. Creating a national level database/ registry of multiple stakeholders of CSA:

Drawing inspiration from countries like the U.S. (Megan's Law databases), India can explore the feasibility of a centralised risk registry of offenders as well as a database of all stakeholders involved that integrates:

- Law enforcement records
- Forensic psychological evaluations
- Juvenile justice inputs
- Social worker reports
- School-based surveillance systems

Such a registry, informed by validated profiling models, can serve as a live database for dynamic risk evaluation, which can further be helpful in identifying and monitoring high risk recidivists or rehabilitating survivors.

4. Incorporation into Law Enforcement and Judicial Training

The use of SPJ and dynamic models should be gradually incorporated into the standard protocols of:

- Police Investigations under POCSO
- Prosecution decisions
- Judicial Sentencing and bail considerations

This would require cross-training of police, forensic psychologists, judicial officers and social workers in risk assessment principles, profiling techniques and ethical considerations (e.g., minimizing bias, avoiding stigmatization).

5. Leveraging AI and Big Data for predictive profiling

India should explore the integration of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in identifying latent behavioral patterns of CSA offenders and digital grooming activities. Considering how difficult and time-consuming it can be to personalise the inquiry reports for offenders and victims, this paper further informs, the Indian policy framers about how can we use large-scale data—such as NCRB case records, trial transcripts, and digital footprints to supplement human judgment in both prevention and rehabilitation.

6. Establishing a CSA Risk Monitoring and Policy Advisory Board

The paper also pushes and advocates for a national-level Interdisciplinary Advisory Board comprising forensic experts, behavioral scientists, child protection officers, and legal professionals can:

- Continuously update risk models based on empirical data
- Advise on new tools, indicators, and legal amendments
- Facilitate periodic risk audits in schools, child shelters, and NGOs

CONCLUSION

For POCSO to achieve its full potential, there is a need for concentrated efforts to streamline judicial processes, enhance victim support systems, and ensure that effective implementation mechanisms are available. Drafting legislations on paper is not enough, what is required is the correct mindset and societal acceptance that makes real implementation possible. Especially for cases of child sexual abuse, it is always better to have a preventive rather than a responsive approach. Risk assessment models are the correct beacons to lead the way to prevent child sexual abuse. The future risk assessment models for identifying the risks of CSA and predicting the act before it actually takes place, will require major advancements in offender and victim profiling techniques but we need to start somewhere. The researcher aims to delve into the same and try and create a robust framework for refining the accuracy in predicting and preventing child sexual abuse, hence, making our children safer everywhere.

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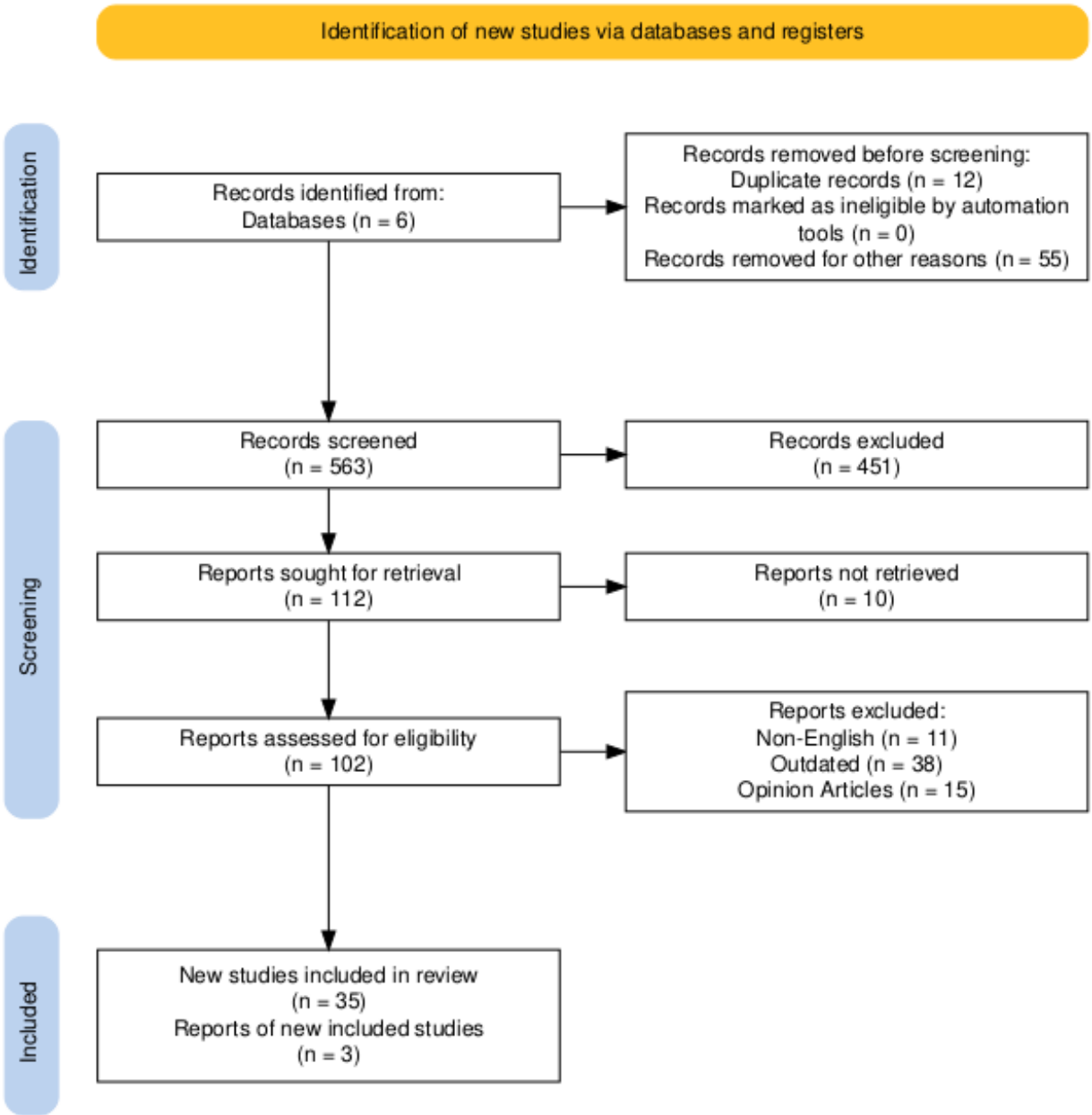
PRISMA Framework
Databases used = SCOPUS, Google Scholar, PubMed, JSTOR, HeinOnline*



Government Database = NCRB*
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