

TRAINING MODULE ON

RECENT CHANGES IN INDIA'S CRIMINAL LAWS:

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



POPULAR EDUCATION & ACTION CENTRE
(PEACE)

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ON RECENT CHANGES
IN INDIA'S CRIMINAL LAWS

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MARCH 2025

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Published by Popular Education and Action Centre
(PEACE)

March 2025

CONTENTS

- 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE MODULE**
- 2. INTRODUCTION TO NEW LAWS**
- 3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND & NEED FOR CHANGE**
- 4. RIGHTS OF VICTIMS AND ACCUSED UNDER THE NEW LAW**
- 5. NEW LAWS' RESPONSE TO CRIMES**
- 6. ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: NEW OFFENSES AND STRICTER PUNISHMENTS**
- 7. CHALLENGES & FUTURE PROSPECTS: PARTICIPATORY TRAINING MODULE**

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE MODULE

WHY THIS TRAINING MATTERS?

India's criminal justice system has undergone a historic transformation with the replacement of three colonial-era laws:

- The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 – Replacing the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860
- The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023 – Replacing the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), 1973
- The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA), 2023 – Replacing the Indian Evidence Act, 1872

These new laws introduce sweeping changes—from redefined crimes and police procedures to digital evidence and victim protections. However, marginalized communities—Dalits, Adivasis, women, religious

minorities, and the urban poor—often remain unaware of these changes, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and injustice.

This training module is designed for activists and social workers to conduct one-day (6-hour) workshops explaining these legal reforms in simple, accessible language. Each chapter is structured as a one-hour interactive session, ensuring grassroots communities understand their rights under the new system.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS MODULE?

This training is for:

- **Community activists** working with oppressed groups (SC/ST, minorities, women, laborers)
- **Social workers** assisting victims of police harassment and wrongful arrests
- **Legal aid volunteers** simplifying laws for non-lawyers

- **Grassroot educators** conducting awareness programs in rural and urban areas
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WHY IS THIS TRAINING URGENT?

Marginalized communities often face:

- **Unawareness of new offences** (e.g., vague "terrorism" definitions leading to wrongful arrests).
- **Delayed justice due to complex procedures** (despite promises of faster trials).
- **Police misuse of expanded powers** (longer custody periods, mandatory digital evidence).

Activists must **demystify these laws** to ensure:

- Communities **know their rights** (e.g., zero FIR, victim compensation).
- They **recognize legal risks** (e.g., harsher penalties for protests).
- They can **demand accountability** if laws are misused.

HOW TO USE THIS MODULE EFFECTIVELY?

- **Use real-life examples** – Link laws to everyday struggles (e.g., land rights, domestic violence).
- **Interactive methods** – Role-plays, case studies, and Q&A sessions.
- **Local language explanations** – Avoid legal jargon; focus on practical implications.

LET'S BEGIN!

CHAPTER 2: INTRODUCTION TO NEW LAWS

OBJECTIVE OF THE TRAINING:

By the end of this section, participants will be able to:

- Understand the purpose of the training.
- Recognize how the new laws impact legal and law enforcement practices

TRAINING METHOD:

- **Icebreaker Activity (5 min):** Ask participants, “*What comes to your mind when you hear ‘criminal law’?*” Write responses on a flipchart.
- **Group Discussion (5 min):** Discuss key challenges in criminal justice today. Connect these to the need for training on new laws.

→ Key Discussion Points

- Why are we updating our criminal laws?
- How will this training help community members and grassroots activists?

IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING NEW CRIMINAL LAWS:

By the end of this section, participants will be able to:

- Recognize the significance of legal updates.
- Identify how the new laws impact various stakeholders.

TRAINING METHOD:

- **Case Study (10 min):** Present a scenario where outdated laws led to delays or injustice. Ask participants: *“How could updated laws change this outcome?”*

- **Brainstorming (10 min):** Split into small groups. Each group lists three key reasons why understanding new laws is important. Present findings.
- Key Discussion Points
 - Laws must evolve with societal changes.
 - New laws aim to improve justice delivery, reduce delays, and enhance efficiency.
 - Professionals/ Stakeholders (lawyers, police, judges) need updated knowledge to perform effectively.

OVERVIEW OF RECENT LEGAL REFORMS:

By the end of this section, participants will:

- Have a basic understanding of the three new laws replacing IPC, CrPC, and the Evidence Act.

TRAINING METHOD:

- Short Presentation (10 min): Brief explanation on:
 - Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 – Replaces IPC
 - Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023 – Replaces CrPC
 - Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA), 2023 – Replaces the Indian Evidence Act
- **Interactive Quiz (10 min):** Ask simple questions about key legal changes. Reward correct answers.
- **Role-Play (10 min):** Assign roles (police officer, victim, lawyer) and enact a case under both old and new laws to highlight differences.
- Key Discussion Points
 - Why were these laws changed?
 - How will these laws affect day-to-day legal proceedings?

NOTES ON THE CONTENT OF THE TRAINING

New Laws Replacing Old Ones

- **Old Laws:** The Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), and Indian Evidence Act were over 150 years old.
- **New Laws:** These have been replaced by:
 1. **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS):**
Replaces the IPC (deals with crimes and punishments).
 2. **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS):** Replaces the CrPC (deals with how police and courts handle criminal cases).
 3. **Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA):** Replaces the Indian Evidence Act (deals with rules for evidence in court).

2. WHY WERE THESE CHANGES MADE?

- The old laws were outdated and didn't address modern problems like cybercrime, terrorism, or women's safety.
- The new laws aim to make the legal system **more efficient, transparent, and fair**.
- They also focus on **speedy justice** and reducing the backlog of cases in courts.

. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

- If you're a victim of a crime, you can expect faster updates and better support from the legal system.
- If you're accused of a crime, your rights are better protected, and minor offenses may not lead to jail time.
- Everyone needs to be more careful about online behavior, as cybercrimes are now taken very seriously.
- The introduction of the new criminal laws in India—Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)**, and **Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA)**—brings significant changes that directly impact citizens.

Training Guidelines for the Facilitator/Trainer

→ Maintain an Interactive Approach

Avoid one-way lecturing. Instead, engage participants using real-world examples and encourage them to share their experiences.

→ Encourage Critical Thinking

Ask open-ended questions:

- Why do you think the old laws needed change?
- How will these new laws impact justice delivery?

→ Adapt to Audience Needs

- If training police officers, focus on procedural changes.
- If training lawyers, highlight implications for legal arguments and case handling.
- If training activists and human rights defenders, highlight the basic procedural changes using simple and relatable examples.

→ Use Simple Language & Real-Life Scenarios

Avoid complex legal jargon. Relate concepts to common situations.

CHAPTER 3: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND & NEED FOR CHANGE

OBJECTIVE OF THE TRAINING:

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Understand the evolution of criminal laws in India.
- Identify the shortcomings of previous laws.
- Recognize the key factors driving legal reforms

TRAINING METHOD:

→ **Icebreaker Activity:** "Then vs. Now" (10 min):

Divide participants into two groups: Group A lists old legal practices (colonial laws, outdated procedures, etc.). Group B lists modern challenges (cybercrime, terrorism, delays in justice).

- **Discussion:** Connect past legal structures to present-day needs.

EVOLUTION OF CRIMINAL LAWS IN INDIA:

Understand how criminal laws evolved from British rule to present-day reforms.

TRAINING METHODS:

- **Storytelling Approach (5 min):**

- The trainer narrates the history of criminal laws in India, from pre-colonial to British-era IPC, CrPC, and Evidence Act (1860-1872).
- **Highlight key milestones** (e.g., amendments post-independence).

- **Timeline Activity (10 min):**

- Participants arrange historical events (written on slips of paper) in the correct order.
- Discuss the impact of these laws on society.

→ **Key Discussion Points**

- Laws inherited from British colonial rule.
- Post-independence legal amendments.
- Why the criminal justice system remained largely unchanged.

SHORTCOMINGS OF PREVIOUS LAWS:

Identify gaps in previous criminal laws and recognize why reforms were necessary.

TRAINING METHODS:

→ **Case Study (10 min):**

- Present a real-life legal case where old laws led to delays or injustice.
- Ask: How could new laws have changed the outcome?

→ **Debate (5 min):**

- Divide participants into two groups: Group A argues that "Old laws were still relevant" and Group B argues, "Old laws needed urgent reform."

→ **Key Discussion Points**

- Colonial mindset in IPC, CrPC, and Evidence Act.
- Delayed justice system (long trials, high pendency).
- Limited technological adaptation (no clear digital evidence laws).
- Sedition laws and their misuse.

KEY FACTORS DRIVING THE REFORMS:

- Understand why criminal law reforms were introduced in 2023.
- Recognize societal and technological influences.

TRAINING METHODS:

→ **Brainstorming (5 min):**

- Ask: *What are the biggest crime-related challenges today?* (e.g., cybercrime, terrorism, women's safety).
- Write responses on the board

→ **Role-Play (10 min):**

- Assign roles (e.g., victim, police officer, lawyer, judge). Simulate a case involving digital fraud under old vs. new laws.
- Discuss how reforms help speed up justice

→ **Key Discussion Points**

- Modern crimes (cybercrime, digital evidence).
- Victim-centric approach in new laws.
- Fast-track justice and procedural efficiency.
- Global legal trends (how other countries updated their laws)

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR FACILITATORS ON THE NEED FOR CRIMINAL LAW REFORMS

WHAT WERE THE MAJOR CRIMINAL LAWS INHERITED FROM BRITISH COLONIAL RULE?

India's criminal justice system was largely shaped by three British-era laws:

- Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860 – Defined crimes and punishments.*
- Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), 1861 (revised in 1973) – Set rules for investigations, trials, and arrests.*
- Indian Evidence Act, 1872 – Outlined rules for presenting evidence in court.*

These laws were designed for colonial control rather than justice, leading to outdated and rigid legal structures.

WHAT MAJOR AMENDMENTS WERE MADE TO CRIMINAL LAWS POST-INDEPENDENCE?

Several amendments addressed specific issues, including:

- *1973: CrPC was overhauled to improve trial procedures and bail provisions.*
- *1983: Dowry deaths were criminalized (Section 304B IPC).*
- *2005: Domestic Violence Act provided better protection for women.*
- *2013: Nirbhaya Act introduced stricter rape laws and punishments for sexual offenses.*
- *However, these were patchwork reforms, and the core structure of criminal laws remained unchanged.*

WHY DID THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM REMAIN LARGELY UNCHANGED?

- *Key reasons include:*
- *Over-reliance on colonial legal structures.*
- *Bureaucratic and political inertia—reforming laws is a slow process.*
- *Lack of technological adaptation—legal systems failed to keep up with modern crimes.*

HOW DID COLONIAL MINDSET INFLUENCE IPC, CRPC, AND THE EVIDENCE ACT?

- *Focus on state power over individual rights.*
- *Harsh penalties for offenses like sedition (Section 124A IPC).*
- *Police had excessive control over arrests and detentions.*
- *Justice system was designed to delay rather than resolve cases efficiently.*

WHAT CAUSED DELAYS IN JUSTICE DELIVERY?

- *Case backlog: Over 4.4 crore cases pending in Indian courts.*
- *Low judge-to-population ratio.*
- *Outdated procedures: Manual documentation, complex filing systems.*
- *Weak investigation system: Lack of forensic and digital tools.*

WHY WAS TECHNOLOGICAL ADAPTATION SLOW IN INDIAN CRIMINAL LAW?

- *Indian Evidence Act (1872) didn't recognize digital evidence.*
- *Cybercrimes and digital frauds lacked clear legal definitions.*
- *Courts and police had limited capacity for handling online offenses.*

HOW WAS THE SEDITION LAW (SECTION 124A IPC) MISUSED?

- *Originally introduced by the British to suppress dissent, it was often:*
- *Used against activists, journalists, and political opponents.*
- *Criticized for violating free speech.*
- *In 2023, it was replaced by a more defined national security law under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023.*

WHAT MODERN CRIMES REQUIRED LEGAL UPDATES?

- *Cybercrimes: Online fraud, identity theft, data breaches.*
- *Digital evidence cases: Fake news, deepfakes, cyberbullying.*
- *Terrorism and organized crime: Cross-border digital financing, money laundering.*

WHAT IS THE VICTIM-CENTRIC APPROACH IN NEW LAWS?

- *Stronger protections for women, children, and vulnerable groups.*
- *Simplified processes for reporting crimes (e.g., online FIRs).*
- *Compensation for victims and faster case resolutions.*

HOW DO NEW LAWS IMPROVE FAST-TRACK JUSTICE AND EFFICIENCY?

- *Time-bound investigation deadlines for serious crimes.*
- *Increased use of digital case management.*
- *Reduced procedural delays in court hearings.*

HOW HAVE GLOBAL LEGAL TRENDS INFLUENCED INDIA'S REFORMS?

- *UK and USA: Emphasis on digital evidence and cyber laws.*
- *European countries: Focus on victim rights and speedy justice.*
- *India's new laws align with global standards by:*
 - *Recognizing electronic evidence.*
 - *Introducing specialized fast-track courts.*
 - *Replacing outdated British-era legal provisions*

CHAPTER 4: RIGHTS OF VICTIMS AND ACCUSED UNDER THE NEW LAW

OBJECTIVE OF THE TRAINING:

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Understand the rights of victims under the new law.
- Recognize the rights of accused individuals and the principle of a fair trial.
- Discuss the balance between victim protection and accused rights in justice delivery.

TRAINING METHODS:

- **Icebreaker Activity:** “Justice for All” (10 min) Ask participants: "What do you think are the most important rights for a victim? What about the accused?" Write their responses on a board and

categorize them into two columns: Victim Rights and Accused Rights.

→ **Discussion:** Highlight the importance of balancing justice for both parties.

RIGHTS OF VICTIMS UNDER THE NEW LAW:

— Understand the enhanced rights of victims under the new legal framework and recognize how new laws ensure victim protection and participation.

TRAINING METHODS:

→ **Case Study Discussion** (10 min): Present a case of a victim of violence or fraud under old vs. new laws. Ask: How did the new law improve justice for the victim?

→ **Role-Play** (10 min): Divide participants into victim, police officer, lawyer, and judge. Simulate how a case is handled under the new laws, emphasizing victim's rights.

KEY RIGHTS OF VICTIMS UNDER THE NEW LAW

Right to Participate – Victims can actively be part of the legal process.

Right to Protection – Safeguards against intimidation, especially for women & children.

Right to Compensation – Government-mandated compensation for victims of serious crimes.

Right to a Speedy Trial – Cases involving victims have time-bound resolutions.

Right to Legal Aid – Free legal support for economically weaker victims.

RIGHTS OF ACCUSED UNDER THE NEW LAW:

- Recognize that accused individuals also have legal rights.
- Understand the importance of fair trials in the justice system.

TRAINING METHODS:

- **Debate (10 min):** Group A argues: "Victims' rights should be prioritized over accused rights." Group B argues: "Accused persons are innocent until proven guilty." Trainer moderates the discussion, ensuring both perspectives are considered.
- **Mock Investigation (10 min):** Participants act as police officers & defense lawyers. They must ensure a fair investigation while protecting the accused's rights.

KEY RIGHTS OF THE ACCUSED UNDER THE NEW LAW

**Right to Presumption of Innocence – No one is
guilty until proven so.**

**Right to Legal Representation – Access to a
lawyer at all stages.**

**Right to Fair Trial – A neutral judge must hear
both sides.**

**Right Against Self-Incrimination – Cannot be
forced to confess.**

**Right to Appeal – Opportunity to challenge an
unfair decision.**

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR FACILITATOR ON RIGHTS OF VICTIMS AND ACCUSED UNDER THE NEW LAW

IF YOU'RE A VICTIM OF A CRIME

The new laws prioritize victims' rights and aim to make the legal process more supportive and efficient. Here's how this affects you:

→ **Faster Updates and Transparency:**

Under the new laws, victims of serious crimes like rape, assault, or trafficking are entitled to regular updates on their case within 90 days. For example, if you're a survivor of sexual assault, you no longer have to repeatedly follow up with the police or court for information. The system is now obligated to keep you informed about the progress of the investigation, charges filed, and trial status. This reduces the emotional burden on victims and ensures they are not left in the dark.

→ **Victim Impact Statements:**

Victims can now submit a victim impact statement to explain how the crime has affected them physically, emotionally, and financially. For instance, if you've been a victim of a violent assault, you can describe the trauma, medical expenses, and loss of income caused by the crime. This statement will be considered during sentencing, ensuring that the court understands the full extent of the harm caused.

→ **Compensation for Victims:**

Courts can now order the accused to pay compensation to victims for medical expenses, trauma, or loss of livelihood. For example, if you've been injured in a hit-and-run accident, the court can mandate the offender to cover your hospital bills and rehabilitation costs. This provision ensures that victims are not left financially devastated by crimes committed against them.

IF YOU'RE ACCUSED OF A CRIME

The new laws also focus on protecting the rights of the accused while ensuring fairness in the legal process:

→ **Better Protection of Rights:**

Police must inform you of your rights in writing, including your right to legal aid and the right to remain silent. For example, if you're detained for questioning in a theft case, the police must provide you with a written document explaining your rights. This prevents coercion and ensures transparency.

→ **Community Service for Minor Offenses:**

For less serious crimes like petty theft or public nuisance, the court can now order community service instead of jail time. For instance, if you're caught stealing a small item from a store, you might be asked to perform community service, such as cleaning public spaces or planting trees, rather than serving time in prison.

→ **Easier Bail Provisions:**

The new laws make it easier for accused individuals to get bail, especially for minor offenses or if they are first-time offenders. For example, if you're charged with a minor altercation that didn't result in serious injury, you're more likely to be granted bail quickly, allowing you to continue your daily life while the case is being processed.

CHAPTER 5

NEW LAWS' RESPONSE TO CRIMES

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW LAWS' RESPONSE TO CRIMES

- Identify major crimes addressed under the new laws.
- Understand key legal changes and their significance.

TRAINING METHODS:

- **Case Study Discussion** (10 min): Present 2 short cases: Cybercrime (Online fraud, digital harassment) and violent crime (Sexual assault, organized crime).
- **Discussion Questions:**

- What were the challenges under old laws?
- How do new laws offer better solutions?

→ **Group Activity** (10 min): Divide participants into small groups. Each group picks a crime and lists the legal changes under new laws. Each group presents their findings.

Key Legal Changes:

Cybercrime Laws Strengthened – **Digital evidence now fully recognized.**

Stricter Laws Against Sexual Crimes – **Faster trials & stronger victim protection.**

Organized Crime & Terrorism – **Expanded definitions and stronger penalties.**

Fast-Track Justice – **Deadlines for investigation and court trials.**

→ **Role-Play: “Law in Action”** (20 min): Setup:
Participants take on roles of victim, police, accused, lawyer, and judge in a mock crime scenario.

→ **Scenario Examples:**

- A person is scammed online—how do the new laws help?
- A sexual harassment case—how is justice delivered more efficiently?

→ **Debrief:**

- What changed in handling these cases under the new laws?
- Do the new laws ensure faster and fairer justice?

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION POINTS FOR THE FACILITATOR

INCREASED FOCUS ON CYBERCRIME

With the rise of digital technology, the new laws take cybercrime very seriously. Here's what this means for you:

- **Stricter Punishments for Online Harassment:**
If you're a victim of cyberbullying, such as receiving threatening messages or explicit content without consent, the new laws provide stronger protections. For example, sending unsolicited explicit images or messages can now lead to criminal charges against the perpetrator.

- **Deepfakes and Fake News:**
Creating or sharing deepfake videos or fake news to harm someone's reputation is now a punishable offense. For instance, if someone creates a morphed image of you to spread false information, they can be held accountable under the new laws.

→ **Electronic Evidence:**

Emails, text messages, and social media posts are now considered valid evidence in court. For example, if you're involved in a dispute where threatening messages were sent, those messages can be used as evidence to support your case.

CHANGES IN SEDITION LAW

The old sedition law has been replaced with provisions that focus on acts threatening national security, unity, and integrity. Here's how this affects you:

→ **Freedom of Expression:**

Simply criticizing the government is no longer a crime. For example, if you post a critical comment about a government policy on social media, you cannot be charged under the new laws. However, inciting violence or hatred against the country or its institutions remains punishable.

CHAPTER 6

ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: NEW OFFENSES AND STRICTER PUNISHMENTS

UNDERSTANDING NEW OFFENSES AND STRICTER PUNISHMENTS

- Identify key new offenses under the legal reforms.
- Understand the rationale behind harsher penalties.

TRAINING METHODS:

→ **Icebreaker Activity:** “Justice or Excess?” (10 min)

Write down different punishments (e.g., life imprisonment, fines, death penalty) on the board.

Ask: “Do harsher punishments always lead to lower

crime rates?" Participants vote **YES or NO** and briefly explain their views.

→ **Discussion:** Introduce the idea that accountability in the justice system isn't just about punishment but also about fairness, efficiency, and transparency.

→ **Case Study Discussion** (10 min): Present 2 short case examples:

- A violent mob attack (lynching) – How does the new law treat this offense?
- A case of false evidence or police misconduct – How is accountability ensured?

→ **Discussion Questions:**

- What was the punishment under old laws?
- How do new laws address accountability better?

→ **Group Activity** (10 min): Divide participants into 3 groups. Each group picks a new offense and explains:

- What changes were made in the law?

- How will these changes improve justice?

Groups present findings in 2-minute summaries.

→ **Role-Play:** “Accountability in Action” (20 min)

Setup: Participants take on roles of victim, police officer, lawyer, and judge in a mock case scenario.

→ **Scenario Examples:**

- A police officer ignores a victim’s complaint—how does the system hold them accountable?
- A fake criminal case is filed against an innocent person—how do the new laws prevent such misuse?

→ **Debrief:**

- How do stricter punishments improve the system?
- How can we balance justice without over-criminalization?

Key Changes in the New Laws

FOCUS ON JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS

→ **Victim-Centric Approach:**

The new laws prioritize the rights and needs of victims. For example:

- Victims of crimes like rape, assault, or trafficking will now receive **regular updates** on the progress of their case within **90 days**.
- A **victim impact statement** can now be recorded, allowing victims to explain how the crime has affected them physically, emotionally, and financially.
- **Compensation for victims:** Courts can now order the accused to pay compensation to the victim for medical expenses, trauma, or loss of livelihood.

→ **Community Service for Minor Offenses:** For less serious crimes like petty theft, public nuisance, or minor altercations, the court can now order **community service** instead of jail time.

Key Changes in the New Laws

- This could include cleaning public spaces, planting trees, or working in shelters.

This change aims to reduce overcrowding in prisons and give first-time offenders a chance to reform.

STRICTER PUNISHMENTS FOR SERIOUS CRIMES

→ **Crimes Against Women and Children:**

- **Rape of a Minor:** The punishment for gang rape of a girl below 18 years has been made stricter, with the possibility of the **death penalty**.
- **False Promise of Marriage:** If someone makes a false promise of marriage to exploit a woman sexually, it is now a punishable offense.
- **Sexual Harassment:** The definition of sexual harassment has been expanded to include **online harassment** (like sending explicit messages or images without consent).

Key Changes in the New Laws

→ **Mob Lynching:**

— Mob lynching, which was not explicitly defined in the old laws, is now a specific crime with severe punishments, including life imprisonment or the death penalty.

→ **Terrorism and Organized Crime:**

— The new laws introduce stricter provisions for tackling **terrorism** and **organized crime**.

For example:

- Acts like smuggling, illegal arms trade, and human trafficking are now classified as **organized crime**.
- Terrorist activities are defined more broadly, and punishments are more severe.

Key Changes in the New Laws

TACKLING MODERN CRIMES

→ **Cybercrime:**

The new laws address crimes committed online, such as:

- **Hacking:** Unauthorized access to computer systems or networks is now a punishable offense.
- **Cyberbullying:** Harassing or threatening someone online is a crime.
- **Deepfakes and Fake News:** Creating or sharing fake news, deepfakes, or morphed images to harm someone's reputation is now punishable.

→ **Electronic Evidence:** Emails, text messages, social media posts, and digital records are now considered valid evidence in court.

Key Changes in the New Laws

→ **Economic Offenses:**

Crimes like **fraud**, **money laundering**, and **counterfeiting** are now dealt with more strictly. For example:

- The punishment for **financial fraud** has been increased, and courts can now order the seizure of assets acquired through illegal means.

FASTER JUSTICE

→ **Time-Bound Investigations and Trials:**

Police must file a charge sheet within **90 days**, and courts must deliver judgments within **45 days** after the trial ends. For example:

- if you're involved in a property dispute, the case is more likely to be resolved quickly, reducing the stress and financial burden of prolonged litigation.

Key Changes in the New Laws

→ **Video Conferencing for Trials:**

Courts can now conduct trials and record evidence through video conferencing. This is especially useful for cases where witnesses or accused persons are in different locations.

— For instance, if you're a witness in a case but live in another city, you can testify without traveling long distances.

→ **Zero FIR:**

A Zero FIR can now be filed at any police station, regardless of where the crime occurred.

— This ensures that victims can report crimes without delay.

Key Changes in the New Laws

CHANGES IN SEDITION LAW

→ The old **sedition law** (Section 124A of the IPC) has been removed. Instead, the new laws focus on acts that threaten India's **sovereignty, unity, and integrity**.

— For example, inciting violence or hatred against the government or the country is now punishable, but simply criticizing the government is not a crime.

RIGHTS OF THE ACCUSED

→ **Protection of Rights:**

- Arrested individuals must be informed of their rights in writing, including the right to legal aid and the right to remain silent.
- Medical reports of the accused must be prepared within **24 hours** of arrest to ensure they are not tortured or mistreated in custody.

Key Changes in the New Laws

→ **Bail Provisions:**

- The new laws make it easier for accused persons to get **bail** in certain cases, especially if the offense is minor or the accused is a first-time offender.

NEW OFFENSES ADDED

→ **Hit-and-Run Cases:**

If you're involved in a hit-and-run accident, fleeing the scene is now a specific offense with stricter punishments. For example, if a driver causes an accident and leaves without helping the victim, they can face severe penalties, including imprisonment.

→ **Cruelty to Animals:**

Acts of cruelty to animals, such as poisoning or harming stray animals, are now punishable. For instance, if someone is caught intentionally harming a stray dog, they can be held accountable under the new laws.

Key Changes in the New Laws

→ **False Complaints:**

Filing false complaints or giving false evidence is now a punishable offense. This discourages misuse of the legal system. For example, if someone falsely accuses you of a crime to settle a personal vendetta, they can be penalized under the new laws.

CHANGES IN EVIDENCE RULES

→ **Forensic Evidence:**

— The new laws emphasize the use of forensic science in investigations. For example, forensic experts must visit crime scenes for serious offenses like murder or rape.

→ **Witness Protection:**

— Witnesses in sensitive cases (like terrorism or organized crime) can now request protection, and their identities can be kept confidential.

CHAPTER 7: CHALLENGES & FUTURE PROSPECTS – PARTICIPATORY TRAINING MODULE

OBJECTIVE:

This module aims to help participants understand the key challenges in implementing new criminal laws and explore potential amendments and future legal developments.

Through interactive activities, discussions, and case studies, participants will critically analyse real-world implementation issues and propose practical solutions. By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify key challenges in implementing new criminal laws.
- Discuss potential solutions to address these hurdles.

Recognize the role of stakeholders in ensuring effective implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION HURDLES

- **Brainstorming & Discussion** (30 minutes): Ask participants to share examples of legal reforms they are familiar with and discuss their success or failure in implementation.
- **Group Discussion:** Divide participants into small groups. Assign each group one of the key hurdles:
 - Awareness and Training
 - Resource Constraints
 - Resistance to Change
 - Interpretation Challenges
 - Public Awareness and Compliance

Each group should discuss the challenges and propose at least two solutions.

Groups will present their findings, followed by a discussion on feasibility.

→ **Case Study Analysis** (30 minutes)

- Present a real-world case where a legal reform faced significant implementation challenges.
- Ask participants to analyze the case and suggest strategies for overcoming obstacles.

Facilitate a discussion on how similar challenges can be addressed in the context of the new criminal law

SCOPE FOR AMENDMENTS & FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Recognize the importance of periodic legal review and amendments.
- Explore emerging trends in criminal law reforms.

- Propose future enhancements in law enforcement and judicial processes.
- **Future Legal Reforms Debate** (40 minutes): Split participants into two groups: one advocating for stricter laws, the other advocating for more rehabilitation-focused reforms.

Provide discussion points:

- Should punishment be deterrent-based or rehabilitation-oriented?
- How can technology enhance criminal investigations?
- What role should international human rights play in shaping domestic criminal law?

Groups will present their arguments, followed by a structured debate.

- **Policy Drafting Exercise** (30 minutes): Assign each group a specific area for legal improvement, such as:
 - Periodic Review Mechanisms

- Technological Integration
- Victim-Centric Reforms
- Sentencing and Punishment Reforms
- Harmonization with International Laws

Each group drafts a brief policy recommendation on their assigned topic.

Groups present their recommendations, and the trainer facilitates discussion on feasibility and potential impact.

→ **Conclusion & Wrap-Up (15 minutes)**

- Recap key takeaways from the session.
- Encourage participants to reflect on how they can contribute to improving criminal law implementation.

Open floor for final questions and discussions.



TRAINER'S NOTES

- Encourage active participation and critical thinking.
- Ensure all voices are heard, especially from diverse professional backgrounds.
- Provide real-life examples to make discussions more relatable.
- Facilitate an open-ended discussion on future amendments and challenges.

Popular Education and Action Centre (PEACE)

Popular Education and Action Centre (PEACE) is a collective dedicated to strengthening grassroots social action through popular education. We challenge the superficial use of participation in dominant development paradigms, emphasising true empowerment for marginalised communities. Our approach equips people with knowledge and capacity to reclaim agency, challenge entrenched power structures, and transform their realities.



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