

# SYSTEMIC CORRUPTION AND ORGANIZED CRIME: INSTITUTIONAL FAILURES IN PROTECTING WOMEN AND CHILDREN

**AUTHOR** – KAMALABHARATHI S\* & V. SREE LEKHA\*\*

\* STUDENT AT VELS INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ADVANCED STUDIES (VISTAS)

\*\* ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT SCHOOL OF LAW, VELS INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ADVANCED STUDIES (VISTAS)

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## ABSTRACT

*The problem of organized crime, especially when it comes to exploiting women and children, isn't just because laws are inadequate. It's also because institutions are failing in a big way, and this is made worse by corruption that's deeply ingrained in the system. To understand this better, let's look at how laws work in different countries like India, the US, and Italy, and examine cases like what happened in Muzaffarpur and Deoria, as well as the Jeffrey Epstein case. When we do this, we can see some patterns that keep happening. First, institutions don't work properly, and this isn't just an accident – it's how they're set up. When power is concentrated in a few hands, it can distort how laws are applied. Also, when laws are fragmented, it's hard to enforce them, which makes it easier for organized crime to thrive. The way things are set up can also make victims more vulnerable. Instead of stopping crimes before they happen, we usually only react after they've occurred. And when institutions don't work well, people start to lose trust in them. To really fix these problems, we need to rethink how our institutions are designed. This means creating laws that apply everywhere in the country to deal with organized crime, making sure there's independent oversight to keep an eye on things, having special teams to enforce laws, and protecting victims and witnesses better. Just making more laws won't solve the problem – we need to change how things work from the ground up.*

**Keywords:** Systemic Corruption · Organized Crime · Institutional Failure · Elite Capture · Comparative Law · POCSO Act · RICO · Women and Children

## I. Introduction

The question of why comprehensive legal systems so consistently fail the people they are most urgently designed to protect is not a peripheral one in contemporary legal scholarship. It sits at the centre of any serious engagement with organized crime, trafficking, and the exploitation of vulnerable populations. This article's answer to that question is institutional rather than purely legislative: the persistent failure of law in this domain reflects not the absence of prohibition but the

degradation of the environments through which law must act.

India has a lot of laws to fight corruption and organized crime. There's the Prevention of Corruption Act from 1988, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act from 2012, and the Immoral Traffic Act from 1956, among others. Some states even have their own laws, like Maharashtra's Control of Organized Crime Act from 1999. All these laws together are supposed to stop a lot of bad things from happening. But despite all this, human

trafficking is still a big problem. Places that are meant to be safe for people, like shelter homes, sometimes become places where people are exploited. When victims complain, their complaints are often put off, made weaker, or just ignored. Investigations don't happen until someone from outside, like the media, a judge, or a civil society group, puts pressure on the authorities to take action. This is a big problem because it means that the people who are supposed to be helping are not doing their jobs. The laws are in place, but they are not being used effectively to stop corruption and organized crime. As a result, victims are not getting the help they need, and the people who are committing these crimes are not being held accountable. This needs to change so that India can really start to fight corruption and organized crime.

The reason for this gap isn't found in the actual laws themselves. Instead, it's about the conditions that decide whether these laws actually lead to real protection. When the systems that hold people accountable are weak, when power is held by a few without being properly checked, and when the job of enforcing laws is split among many agencies that don't work well together, it creates an environment where organized crime can thrive. This isn't because there aren't laws against it, but because the institutions responsible for enforcing these laws lack the will and ability to do so effectively. As a result, the laws that are meant to protect us are undermined by the very systems that are supposed to uphold them. This highlights the importance of having strong, accountable institutions that can ensure laws are enforced in a way that truly keeps people safe.

This article is structured into several parts. First, it sets the stage by looking at the basics of systemic corruption, focusing on how it's a problem that's built into systems rather than something caused by individual actions. Then, it uses real-life examples - like the Muzaffarpur and Deoria shelter home cases in India and the Epstein case in the US - to show how this works

in practice. After that, it digs deeper into the findings from these examples, highlighting seven key points that came out of the analysis. Next, it compares how different legal systems handle these issues, looking specifically at Italy's approach to fighting mafia groups and the US's RICO laws. The article then suggests some ways to reform the system to better deal with corruption. Finally, it wraps up with some concluding thoughts.

## II. Conceptual and Legal Background: Corruption as Structure, Not Incident

Conventional legal discourse treats corruption as individual misconduct – an identifiable actor performing an identifiable prohibited act, amenable to prosecution and deterrence through well-designed criminal law. This framing is not wrong; it is incomplete. When corrupt conduct ceases to be an exception and becomes a normalized feature of institutional practice – when officials expect inaction, when oversight bodies anticipate capture, when complainants presuppose dismissal – corruption has shifted in character from individual deviation to systemic condition.

The way governments are set up can lead to corruption. This is because those in power may have too much freedom to make decisions without being held accountable. They may also have complete control over certain areas, which can make it hard for others to compete or challenge them. Additionally, it can be difficult to get accurate information about what's really going on, which makes it harder to catch corrupt behavior. Two experts, Susan Rose-Ackerman<sup>556</sup> and Robert Klitgaard<sup>557</sup>, have looked into this issue. They both agree that the main problem is not that individuals are morally flawed, but rather that the systems they work within are flawed. Klitgaard has a simple formula to explain this: corruption happens when you have a monopoly on power, plus the freedom to make decisions, minus any real

<sup>556</sup> Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences and Reform* (Cambridge University Press 1999).

<sup>557</sup> Robert Klitgaard, *Controlling Corruption* (University of California Press 1988).

accountability. So, it's not about the people in charge being good or bad, it's about how the system is designed. If the system is set up in a way that allows corruption to happen easily, then it will be a common problem. But if the system is designed with accountability and transparency in mind, then corruption will be much less likely.

Organized crime is the one that gains the most from the fact that institutions are getting weaker. These criminal groups don't just accept weak governance, they actually need it to survive. According to Mark Galeotti, corrupt officials are a crucial part of organized crime, providing protection, information, and leniency in legal procedures in exchange for money – they're not just on the sidelines, they're essential to how it all works<sup>558</sup>. Louise Shelley has shown that globalization has made this problem even worse, as it allows criminal groups to find and take advantage of the differences in how laws are enforced in different areas<sup>559</sup>. The basic idea behind how organized crime operates is simple: find the gap between what the law says and what the institutions can actually do, and use that gap to your advantage.

The idea of elite capture is pretty simple – it's when powerful people use their influence to change the way institutions work, so they can get what they want<sup>560</sup>. This concept is really important because it helps us understand how the system can be unfair, even if it doesn't look that way on the surface. When powerful people can control what gets investigated, what gets prosecuted, and who's in charge of overseeing things, it's easy to predict that the law won't be applied equally to everyone. The result is that the law might technically apply to everyone, but in reality, it only really applies to people who don't have any power – those who do have power can often get away with things, or at least get treated more leniently. This isn't about the law being officially changed, it's just that it's

not enforced in the same way for everyone, which is a big problem.

### III. The Evidence Base: Three Cases, One Pattern

The point being made here isn't just an idea – it's actually shown to be true by looking at many different cases from various legal systems and real-life situations, and this is happening in a way that's consistent and somewhat unsettling.

#### A. The Muzaffarpur and Deoria Shelter Home Cases (India, 2018)

In 2018, a shocking discovery was made in a state-funded shelter home in Muzaffarpur, Bihar<sup>561</sup>, where a social audit, commissioned by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, uncovered evidence of systematic sexual abuse of minor girls. The investigation that followed confirmed the allegations, revealing that the abuse had been going on for a long time, right under the nose of the government, which was supposed to be supervising the facility. Despite regular official inspections, the abuse had gone undetected and unresponded to, raising serious questions about the effectiveness of the supervision and inspection processes. The Supreme Court's decision to transfer the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation was a clear indication that the local investigative processes were not independent enough to ensure credible accountability<sup>562</sup>, and that a more thorough and unbiased investigation was needed to get to the bottom of the matter. This disturbing incident highlights the need for more robust mechanisms to prevent and detect abuse in such facilities, and to ensure that those responsible are held accountable. The fact that the abuse was allowed to persist for so long, without being detected or responded to, is a stark reminder of the failures of the system, and the need for urgent reforms to prevent such incidents in the future.

<sup>558</sup> Mark Galeotti, *Global Crime Today* (Routledge 2005).

<sup>559</sup> Louise Shelley, *Dirty Entanglements: Corruption, Crime, and Terrorism* (Cambridge University Press 2014).

<sup>560</sup> Michael Johnston, *Syndromes of Corruption: Wealth, Power and Democracy* (Cambridge University Press 2005).

<sup>561</sup> Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), *Social Audit Report on Shelter Homes in Bihar* (2018).

<sup>562</sup> *Re: Exploitation of Children in Orphanages in the State of Tamil Nadu v Union of India*, Supreme Court intervention orders.

The Deoria case in 2018 is another example of this. A shelter home for women in Uttar Pradesh, which was officially registered, was found to be involved in trafficking and exploiting the women. It wasn't until a young girl who lived there managed to escape and tell the authorities what was happening that the truth came out<sup>563</sup>. Like in Muzaffarpur, a place that was supposed to be safe and supervised by the state was actually being run like a criminal operation. The systems that were supposed to be in place to prevent this kind of thing from happening either failed or, in some cases, it seems like they were deliberately ignored.

What's really important about these two cases isn't just how serious the crimes were, but what they show us about the system that's supposed to be watching over everything. These things didn't happen in secret, without any rules or regulations in place. Instead, they happened right under the noses of the institutions that were meant to stop them, and it was the failures of those institutions that allowed them to keep going.

### **B. The Jeffrey Epstein Prosecution (United States, 2008–2019)**

The case of Jeffrey Epstein is a good example of how things can go wrong in a different place, but in a way that's similar to other cases. Epstein was a wealthy man with many important friends, but he was accused of doing some very bad things, like exploiting young girls for sex over a long time. In 2008, the people in charge of prosecuting him in Florida made a deal that let him get away with pleading guilty to lesser crimes in state court<sup>564</sup>, instead of facing more serious federal charges. This deal was made without properly telling the victims, which was a mistake that broke the law, specifically the Crime Victims' Rights Act. Many legal experts have looked at this case and said that the prosecutors were too easy on Epstein, considering how bad his alleged crimes were.

<sup>563</sup> Deoria Shelter Home Case Reports, Uttar Pradesh (2018), FIRs and investigative findings.

<sup>564</sup> United States v Jeffrey Epstein, Non-Prosecution Agreement (2008), Southern District of Florida.

This is a problem because it shows that sometimes, people with power and connections can get special treatment, even when they're accused of doing terrible things. The way Epstein's case was handled has been widely criticized, and it raises questions about how fair and just our legal system really is.

This case highlights two key points that are crucial to understanding the issues discussed in this article. Firstly, it shows how informal influence can have a significant impact on legal outcomes. This happens when powerful individuals have close social and institutional ties to those who make legal decisions, allowing them to shape the outcome without necessarily leaving behind any clear evidence of wrongdoing. In other words, just because something isn't formally corrupt, doesn't mean it can't be influenced in unfair ways. Secondly, the case demonstrates what happens when responsibility is spread out across different agencies, such as local law enforcement, state prosecutors, and federal authorities. This creates a situation known as accountability diffusion, where each part of the system can point to another when questions are raised about how well they responded to a situation. Essentially, when everyone is in charge, no one is really in charge, and it becomes easy for problems to fall through the cracks. This makes it difficult to hold anyone accountable, as each agency can claim that the responsibility lies elsewhere.

### **IV. Findings: Seven Patterns of Structural Failure**

When you look at the cases we've studied, and combine them with the information from the National Crime Records Bureau, the National Human Rights Commission, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, you start to see some important patterns. There are seven key points that stand out, and they all work together to show us the underlying issue that this article is trying to tackle. These points aren't separate ideas, but rather they support and

reinforce each other, creating a clear picture of the problem at hand.

### **Finding 1: Institutional Failure is Systemic, Not Accidental**

The most fundamental finding is also the most important: where failure occurs in cases of this kind, it is rarely attributable to a single lapse by a single actor. It is characteristically layered – occurring simultaneously across multiple nodes of an oversight architecture that, formally considered, ought to have provided redundant protection.

At Muzaffarpur, inspection bodies, local authorities, and administrative supervisory systems failed concurrently. At Deoria, similar simultaneous failures permitted a trafficking operation to function within a state-registered welfare institution. In the Epstein case, multiple agencies with access to relevant information across multiple years did not produce coordinated and decisive action. This pattern – consistent across jurisdictions and factual contexts – indicates that the failure is architectural rather than individual. It is built into systems that lack genuine independence, sufficient resources, and effective coordination.

The impact on the law is huge. When the whole system fails, we need to change the system, not just punish individual people for making mistakes. We still need to hold people accountable, but we also need to rebuild the way we watch over things so that one weak spot can't bring down the whole system. This means looking at how we oversee things and making sure we have a strong framework in place to prevent failures. By doing this, we can make sure that the system as a whole is working properly and that we're protecting everyone involved.

### **Finding 2: Concentrated Power Distorts Legal Outcomes**

When you look at the different cases, you can see a clear connection between how much power or status someone has and how the legal system responds to them. This doesn't always

mean that there's obvious corruption, like bribes or direct interference. Instead, it often works through what you might call a lack of confidence in the system: a tendency for agencies and courts to handle complaints about powerful people with more caution, doubt, or flexibility than they would with ordinary people. This can be seen in many different areas and jurisdictions, and it's not always easy to spot. But it's there, and it affects how the legal system works. For example, when a powerful person is involved in a complaint, the system might be more likely to give them the benefit of the doubt, or to follow procedures that are more favorable to them. This can be a problem, because it means that the legal system isn't always treating everyone equally. And that's something that needs to be addressed, if we want to make sure that justice is really fair and impartial.

The Supreme Court made a significant decision in the *Vineet Narain v Union of India* case, emphasizing that the rule of law demands investigative agencies to perform their duties without being swayed by the status or influence of those being investigated<sup>565</sup>. What's notable is that the Court had to explicitly state this principle, which should be obvious, because it had been violated often enough to need correction from the judiciary. This highlights the challenges in upholding the rule of law, where frequent departures from this principle necessitate judicial intervention to reaffirm its importance. The Court's judgment serves as a reminder that investigative agencies must operate impartially, regardless of the individuals involved, to ensure that justice is served and the law is applied equally to all.

The result of this imbalance is not just unfair treatment of individual complainants, but it also gives organized crime a big advantage. This is because criminal networks with connections to powerful people or money can avoid getting in trouble with the law more easily than those without such connections. So, when the

<sup>565</sup> *Vineet Narain v Union of India* (1998) 1 SCC 226 (SC).

powerful and wealthy have too much control, it's not just a problem with how the government works – it's also a tool that helps organized crime operate.

### **Finding 3: Fragmented Legal Frameworks Reduce Enforcement Effectiveness**

In India, the laws that deal with organized crime, corruption, and the exploitation of women and children are spread across many different statutes. These include the Prevention of Corruption Act from 1988, the POCSO Act from 2012, the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act from 1956, the Indian Penal Code from 1860, and the MCOCA from 1999. Each of these laws has its own specific goals, rules, and areas where it applies. On their own, each law might be good for what it's meant to do. But when you look at all of them together, they don't form a clear and cohesive plan to tackle these issues.

Organized criminal networks are not organized around statutory categories. A trafficking operation may involve predicate offences falling under the IPC, POCSO, the Immoral Traffic Act, and MCOCA simultaneously, yet enforcement agencies operating under different mandates may investigate each element separately, share information incompletely, and approach prosecution without coordination. The result is not the sum of five enforcement regimes but something considerably less – the gaps between them creating operational space that experienced criminal networks exploit systematically.

The difference between the US RICO framework and India's approach is quite interesting. What makes RICO unique is that it views organized crime as a whole entity, rather than just a bunch of separate crimes. This means that prosecutors need to go after the entire organization, not just individual actions<sup>566</sup>. India doesn't have a similar framework, which is a major flaw that lawmakers should fix. By not having a way to tackle organized crime as a single unit, India is missing out on a crucial tool

<sup>566</sup> Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO), 18 USC §§ 1961–1968 (United States).

to combat this issue. This weakness in the system needs to be addressed through legislative reforms to make it more effective.

### **Finding 4: Victim Vulnerability is Structurally Reinforced**

The vulnerability of women and children in the cases examined is not accidental. It is the predictable outcome of the intersection between pre-existing social and economic disadvantage and the specific failures of the institutional systems charged with providing protection.

The girls in the Muzaffarpur and Deoria cases were living in state-run homes because they had nowhere else to go. They were counting on the state to take care of them, but it failed them. This failure was not just something that the people who hurt them did, it was also the state not doing its job to protect them. A report by the UNODC found that more than 60% of the people who are trafficked are women and girls. This is not just because the people who do the trafficking prefer to target women and girls, but also because of the way society is set up, which makes it easier for them to be exploited<sup>567</sup>.

When people are already at a disadvantage, it's even harder for them to get help when they need it. The Supreme Court pointed this out in the case of Bachpan Bachao Andolan v Union of India, where they said that the system is not doing enough to stop child trafficking and that the state needs to take action. This shows that just having rights on paper is not enough – if people can't actually use them, then they're not really rights at all<sup>568</sup>. The court is saying that the system needs to change so that people can get the help they need, and that just having laws in place is not enough to protect people's rights.

### **Finding 5: Enforcement Gaps Enable the Continuity of Organized Crime**

Organized crime is still a problem because it's good at adapting and finding ways to get

<sup>567</sup> UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons (latest edition) <<https://www.unodc.org>>.

<sup>568</sup> Bachpan Bachao Andolan v Union of India (2011) Supreme Court of India.

around the law. But it's also because the systems in place to enforce the law have weaknesses that criminals can exploit. If we look at the numbers from the National Crime Records Bureau, we can see that the rate of convictions for trafficking-related crimes is really low – less than 30% in many cases. This isn't just because these cases are hard to crack, but also because there are deeper issues with how investigations are carried out, how evidence is collected, and how different agencies work together<sup>569</sup>.

The Supreme Court's ruling in the Lalita Kumari case against the Government of Uttar Pradesh is significant – it says that the police must register a First Information Report when they get information about a serious crime<sup>570</sup>. This decision was necessary because many people's complaints were being rejected or put off indefinitely. When the first step in the legal process is denied to some people, it creates a gap in enforcement that starts right from the beginning, when they first try to contact the legal system. This means that the problem isn't just with the investigation, but with getting the complaint registered in the first place. The court's direction is a step towards making sure that everyone has equal access to the legal system, and that no one is unfairly denied the chance to have their complaint heard.

The NHRC's report on trafficking in women and children and multiple UNODC assessments converge on a common observation: trafficking networks in India operate with a degree of continuity and geographic scale that reflects not only criminal organization but reliable enforcement failure<sup>571</sup>. The gap between legal prohibition and operational reality is not random; it is structural, and it is exploited as such.

### **Finding 6: Accountability Mechanisms are Reactive, Not Preventive**

In most of the cases that were looked at, it was outside forces like media attention, court intervention, or independent audits that led to real accountability, rather than the oversight systems working properly on their own. For example, the Muzaffarpur case only became public because of a social audit done by TISS. The Deoria case only came to light when one of the victims managed to escape. And it took persistent investigative reporting, followed by a federal prosecution, to bring new attention to the Epstein plea agreement. This shows that often, it's external pressure that pushes for accountability, rather than the systems in place to prevent wrongdoing.

This pattern reveals a fundamental design failure in accountability architecture. Systems that respond to crisis are not the same as systems that prevent it. Where accountability is external and reactive, the deterrent effect on potential future misconduct is attenuated: the relevant calculation for those contemplating institutional failure shifts from 'will this be detected through routine monitoring?' to 'will this become sufficiently visible to attract external attention?' That calculation creates an obvious incentive to suppress visibility rather than to comply with legal obligations.

The idea that investigative agencies should be free from political pressure, known as the Vineet Narain principle<sup>572</sup>, is a good starting point. However, just because an institution is independent, it doesn't mean it's effective. To really work, these agencies need to be able to monitor things closely, have enough resources, and know who's in charge. Without these things, independence is just a word – it doesn't mean anything in practice. You can have institutions that are technically free from interference, but if they're not proactive and don't have what they need, they're not going to get much done.

<sup>569</sup> National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Crime in India Reports (latest editions) <<https://ncrb.gov.in>>.

<sup>570</sup> Lalita Kumari v Government of Uttar Pradesh (2014) 2 SCC 1 (SC).

<sup>571</sup> National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Report on Trafficking in Women and Children in India <<https://nhrc.nic.in>>; UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons.

<sup>572</sup> Vineet Narain v Union of India (1998) 1 SCC 226 (SC).

### Finding 7: Erosion of Institutional Trust Perpetuates Underreporting

The last discovery ties everything together. When people who have been hurt or those who might report a problem think that their complaints will be ignored, put off, or that they will be punished for speaking up, they are less likely to report what happened. This means that there is less evidence to support taking action against the people responsible. The UNODC and the Indian government have both said that not enough people are reporting these kinds of crimes, and that the official numbers do not show the true extent of the problem<sup>573</sup>.

The breakdown of trust in institutions is a two-way street – it's both a result of and a contributor to the failures of the system. On one hand, it's a result because it's rooted in past experiences where institutions have fallen short. On the other hand, it's a contributor because it creates an environment where problems are hidden, evidence is scarce, and victims are hesitant to come forward, making it even harder to hold people accountable. This cycle of distrust can become a self-sustaining loop, where once it takes hold, it's hard to shake off unless there's a deliberate and systematic effort to address it. As a result, it's crucial to recognize the significance of trust in institutions and take concrete steps to rebuild and maintain it, lest we perpetuate a system that's prone to failure. By acknowledging the interconnectedness of trust and institutional effectiveness, we can begin to break down the barriers that prevent us from creating a more just and equitable society.

The witness protection system, as seen in the case of *Mahender Chawla v Union of India*, is just one part of the solution to this problem<sup>574</sup>. However, protecting witnesses only deals with a specific part of the legal process. To really rebuild trust in institutions, we need to see consistent and accountable performance at

every stage, from when a complaint is first made to the end of the proceedings. This means that all parts of the system, not just witness protection, need to work well and be transparent. Only then can we start to rebuild the trust that has been lost.

### V. What Comparative Law Tells Us

When you look at the Italian and American systems side by side, you can see how they turn ideas into real results – and how far India still has to go to make its own system work effectively.

Italy's response to organized crime, developed through direct engagement with the Sicilian Mafia and allied criminal confederations, is distinguished by three features that the findings above identify as critical: legislative integration, institutional specialization, and preventive rather than reactive strategy. Anti-mafia asset confiscation legislation targets the economic infrastructure of criminal networks rather than focusing exclusively on individual liability – an approach grounded in the recognition that organizations are more durable than individuals, and that disrupting funding disrupts operations<sup>575</sup>. The Direzione Nazionale Antimafia provides a specialized prosecutorial architecture with coordination capacity that generalist institutions cannot replicate. Witness protection mechanisms, developed specifically for the risks of organized crime prosecution, have enabled the cooperation of insiders that would otherwise have been impossible to secure.

RICO's impact on the American system is just as much about ideas as it is about procedures. By focusing on the whole criminal organization, rather than individual crimes, it made the legal process fit the real problem. Criminal groups don't see themselves as committing separate crimes, they see themselves as running a business. A law that only deals with individual crimes doesn't match up with how these groups actually work. This change in approach helped

<sup>573</sup> UNODC Reports and Ministry of Women and Child Development findings on underreporting.

<sup>574</sup> *Mahender Chawla v Union of India* (2018) 14 SCC 501 (SC).

<sup>575</sup> Italian Anti-Mafia Laws, including Law No. 575/1965 and subsequent amendments on preventive asset confiscation.

to align the legal system with the reality of organized crime, making it more effective in addressing the issue. By looking at the bigger picture, RICO helped to create a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to fighting crime.

India's approach to dealing with crimes is different, it mainly focuses on individual crimes and uses many different laws to handle them. One law, MCOCA, is a bit of an exception, but it only applies to certain areas, which is a weakness. What we can learn from comparing India's system to others is not that we should copy them exactly, but that we need to change the way we think about crime – we should focus on holding organizations responsible, not just individuals, and try to prevent crimes from happening in the first place, rather than just punishing people after the fact. We also need to simplify our laws and make them work together better. This is important if we want to solve the problems that were identified earlier.

## VI. Reform Proposals

### A. Unified National Legislation on Organized Crime

The fragmentation identified in Finding 3 requires a legislative remedy: comprehensive national legislation that treats organized crime as a coordinated enterprise and provides enforcement agencies with the integrating framework their current statutory environment denies them. Such legislation should provide for the recognition of criminal organizations as entities, enable prosecution of networks rather than isolated actors, and include enhanced penalties for enterprise-level offences. Asset confiscation provisions, adapted from the Italian model, should enable the targeting of criminal infrastructure rather than only individual proceeds of specific offences.

### B. Independent and Proactive Oversight of Welfare Institutions

The cases of shelter homes clearly show the terrible things that can happen when no one is watching. We need to change the way we check

on these places to make sure they are really independent from the people who run them. This means we need outside groups to check on them, a way for people to report problems directly to someone who can do something about it, and clear rules about what happens when something goes wrong – including making the people in charge responsible for their actions, even if it means they could go to jail. Just having the people who run the place check on themselves is not enough, as we have seen.

### C. Specialized Enforcement Capacity and Inter-Agency Coordination

To tackle organized crime, we need a strong and coordinated approach. This means having special teams that focus on specific areas like trafficking, exploitation, and abuse. These teams should have trained investigators, enough resources, and a clear plan for working together. They should be set up at the national level and supported at the state level. We also need a central system for sharing information, which would help prevent organized crime groups from taking advantage of gaps between different agencies. If we have specialists who don't work together, we get experts who can't make a big impact. On the other hand, if we have coordination without specialization, we get a wide reach but not enough depth. We need both to be effective.

### D. Strengthened Victim and Witness Protection

The idea that protecting witnesses is crucial for a fair trial and access to justice, as seen in the Mahender Chawla case, needs to be put into practice. To make witness protection programs work, they need to have their own funding, be independent, and be a normal part of how organized crime cases are handled, not just something that happens in special cases. Services that support victims, like legal help, counseling, and rehabilitation programs, need to be expanded and made available as a right, not just something that might be offered. If these things aren't in place, the legal process will keep being a source of more problems for

vulnerable victims, rather than a way to keep them safe. This means that witness protection should be a standard part of how the legal system works, and it should be funded and run in a way that makes it strong and independent. It's also important to make sure that victims have access to the help they need, like lawyers, counselors, and rehabilitation programs, so they can get through the legal process without being hurt more. Without these protections and services, the legal system will keep failing the people who need it most, and it will be hard for them to get the justice they deserve. So, it's time to make some changes and make sure that witness protection and victim support are a priority, so everyone can feel safe and get the help they need.

#### **E. Transparency, Whistleblower Protection, and Trust Rebuilding**

Addressing the trust deficit identified in Finding 7 requires sustained institutional performance over time – but it also requires structural measures that create the conditions for that performance. Mandatory digital tracking of complaint registration, investigation progress, and prosecution outcomes would reduce the opacity that currently shields institutional inaction from scrutiny. Strengthened whistleblower protections, with genuine rather than nominal anonymity guarantees and effective retaliation remedies, would expand the information available to oversight systems. These measures do not themselves rebuild trust; they create the transparency that makes trust, gradually, a rational response to institutional behaviour.

#### **VII. Conclusion**

The main point of this article is that organized crime and corruption are closely linked – they rely on each other to survive. Organized crime gives corrupt systems the money and power they need, while corruption provides organized crime with protection from being caught. They work together, and if you try to stop one without stopping the other, it won't make a difference. In other words, organized crime and corruption

are like two sides of the same coin – they need each other to keep going. If you want to break the cycle, you have to tackle both problems at the same time. This is because organized crime uses its financial resources to influence politics and protect its interests, while corrupt systems use their power to shield organized crime from law enforcement. As a result, they create an environment where institutional weakness allows them to thrive. By understanding how organized crime and corruption are interconnected, we can develop more effective strategies to combat them.

The abuse of women and kids is the most obvious and pressing issue here. When something bad happens to them, it's not just the person who did it that's to blame – it's also the systems that are supposed to protect them. This isn't just a one-time mistake, it's a deep-seated problem that keeps happening over and over. And if you look closely at how these systems are set up, you can actually see that this kind of failure is almost inevitable.

India has the laws it needs to deal with its problems, but what's missing is a strong system to put those laws into action. The country needs institutions that are free from interference, have enough resources, work well together, and make sure everyone is treated equally under the law, regardless of their position or status. The ideas for change presented in Part VI aim to make this happen by transforming the institutions. Looking at how other countries have done it shows that it's possible. And when we look at the cases that have been studied, it's clear that this change is not just wanted, but needed.

In the end, what really matters is not how complex a legal system's laws are, but how well it actually protects the people who need it most. When you look at it that way, the systems we've been discussing have a long way to go.

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