



# Assault on boys punishable by death

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## **Assault on boys punishable by death-Cabinet approves changes to POCSO Act to protect all children under 12**

- The government on Friday approved amendments to the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, to bring punishments for sexual assaults on boys on a par with those against girls.
- These include the provision of death penalty when the child is under 12 years and when a penetrative sexual assault is committed by a relative.
- The amendments approved by the Union Cabinet will now have to be passed by Parliament.

### **Anomalies set right**

- However, the absence of these changes to POCSO Act , 2012, which deals with sexual crimes against both girls and boys, meant that same offences committed against boys carried lighter punishments.
- The Union Cabinet approved changes to Section 6 of the POCSO Act, which deals with punishments for aggravated penetrative sexual assault, enhancing the punishment of 10 years to life imprisonment and 20 years to imprisonment for remainder of a person's natural life or with death.
- This category of offence includes assault on a child under the age of 12 years, gang rape, assault on a mentally or physically challenged child or one that is committed by a relative or a custodian of a child.
- The government has also amended the definition of aggravated penetrative sexual assault to include an offence that causes the death of a child.
- The minimum punishment for penetrative sexual assault has been increased from seven years in jail to 10 years.

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