© APR 2026 | IRE Journals | Volume 9 Issue 10 | ISSN: 2456-8880
DOI: https://doi.org/10.64388/IREV9I10-1716466

Misuse Of Criminal Law in India: A Comprehensive Study on IPC and BNS

ANUSHREE[1], DR. TARU MISHRA[2]
[1]*LL.B 6TH SEM, Amity Law School*
[2]*Assistant Professor, Amity University Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow*

Abstract- ***The misuse of criminal law in India stands as one of the most pressing challenges confronting the nation's legal order, manifesting as the deliberate weaponisation of penal provisions under the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC) and its successor, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (BNS), to advance personal vendettas, political agendas, and economic coercion rather than to vindicate genuine public wrongs. This paper undertakes a comprehensive doctrinal analysis of the principal forms of criminal law misuse, examining key provisions such as Sections 420, 498A, 153A, and 124A of the IPC alongside their BNS counterparts, with reference to landmark judicial decisions including Arnesh Kumar v. State of Bihar, State of Haryana v. Bhajan Lal, Sushil Kumar Sharma v. Union of India, and Lalita Kumari v. Govt. of UP. The study traces the colonial origins of over-criminalisation through Lord Macaulay's Indian Penal Code, evaluates the BNS reforms and their structural limitations, and assesses the socio-economic, constitutional, and institutional consequences of systemic misuse. The research identifies critical gaps in verification mechanisms, forensic infrastructure, and police accountability, and advances targeted recommendations for legislative, judicial, and administrative reform. The paper concludes that while the BNS offers meaningful procedural improvements, genuine transformation requires coordinated effort across legislative drafting, police culture, and judicial oversight to preserve the criminal justice system's foundational legitimacy.***

Index Terms- ***Misuse of Criminal Law; Indian Penal Code; Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita; Over-Criminalisation; Section 498A; Sedition; False FIRs; Judicial Safeguards; Police Reforms; Constitutional Rights.***

I. INTRODUCTION

Criminal law constitutes the backbone of any organised society, conferring upon the State the exclusive authority to define prohibited conduct, impose sanctions, and restore social order. In India, the Indian Penal Code of 1860 served as the cornerstone of this authority for over a century and a half, its 511 sections covering offences ranging from murder and treason to cheating and defamation. The Code's very comprehensiveness, however, embedded a dangerous elasticity: provisions framed in broad, value-laden language such as "dishonestly," "cruelly," and "wounding religious sentiments" invited subjective and frequently malicious application. The result, documented extensively in judicial decisions and crime statistics alike, is a pervasive culture of weaponisation wherein the penal machinery is deployed not to punish genuine wrongdoing but to settle scores, extract concessions, and harass adversaries.

The National Judicial Data Grid records over fifty million pending cases nationwide, a figure attributable in no small measure to the flood of frivolous First Information Reports (FIRs) registered under provisions such as Section 498A (matrimonial cruelty), Section 420 (cheating), and Section 153A (promoting enmity). The Supreme Court's landmark rebuke in Arnesh Kumar v. State of Bihar characterised the unchecked arrest of family members under Section 498A as "legal terrorism," a phrase that captures the systemic dimension of the problem. Acquittal rates exceeding seventy percent in these categories confirm that the criminal process itself, rather than its eventual outcome, operates as punishment.

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), enacted in 2023 and operative from 1 July 2024, promises a departure from colonial-era vagueness by streamlining the IPC's 511 sections into 358 across 20 chapters, introducing mandatory investigation timelines, expanding community service alternatives, and explicitly defining new offences such as mob lynching and organised crime. Yet early implementation data from Allahabad High Court

cause lists reveals that FIRs under BNS provisions substantially recycle IPC narratives, suggesting that definitional revision without cultural and institutional reform produces cosmetic rather than substantive change. This paper examines that gap systematically.

The methodology is doctrinal, drawing upon statutory analysis, judicial decisions spanning 2000 to 2026, National Crime Records Bureau data, Law Commission reports, and parliamentary materials. The paper proceeds as follows: Section 2 traces the historical evolution of criminal law from ancient foundations to BNS modernisation; Section 3 maps the principal forms and mechanisms of misuse; Section 4 analyses judicial responses and safeguards; Section 5 examines the broader impact; Section 6 evaluates BNS reforms; and Section 7 offers conclusions and recommendations.

II. HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF CRIMINAL LAW IN INDIA

2.1 Ancient and Medieval Foundations

Criminal law in ancient India was embedded within the concept of dharma, with kings and assemblies drawing from Vedic texts to prescribe graduated penalties for offences against social harmony. The Manusmriti codified a stratified penal system in which sanctions were calibrated by varna, a framework prone to elite manipulation and inconsistent enforcement across a patchwork of principalities. Medieval Muslim rule superimposed Sharia-based hudud punishments while tolerating indigenous panchayat adjudication, producing a dual legal mosaic that was simultaneously rigid and arbitrary. The absence of systematic verification procedures and the heavy dependence on royal discretion created structural vulnerabilities that prefigured the misuse patterns documented under colonial codification and persisting, in altered form, into the present day.

2.2 Colonial Codification and the IPC, 1860

Lord Macaulay's Law Commission, constituted in 1834, drafted the Indian Penal Code by blending Benthamite utilitarianism with English common law and French specificity. Enacted in 1860 and enforced in 1862, the Code introduced uniformity across a diverse subcontinent, replacing fragmented customary penalties with a singular framework encompassing 511 sections across 23 chapters. Yet colonial intent shaped its contours fundamentally: Section 124A on sedition, inserted in 1898, explicitly targeted nationalist agitators, while Section 420 on cheating provided elastic language allowing magistrates to criminalise ordinary commercial dealings. These provisions embedded misuse potential by design, their vagueness serving administrative control rather than individual justice. Post-independence India retained the IPC largely intact, amending it sporadically to address evolving social concerns, including the introduction of Section 498A in 1983 to address dowry cruelty, without resolving the foundational ambiguity that enabled misuse.

2.3 The BNS Reform and Structural Continuity

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 11 August 2023, received presidential assent on 25 December 2023, and came into force on 1 July 2024 alongside the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA). The BNS reduces the IPC's section count from 511 to 358, introduces dedicated chapters on organised crime and terrorism, replaces sedition with sovereignty endangerment offences under Section 152, and incorporates community service as an alternative sanction for six petty offences. Scholarly commentary, however, notes an approximately eighty-percent textual overlap with the IPC, and early enforcement data from Allahabad and Delhi High Courts indicates persistent recourse to omnibus family trawls under Section 85 cruelty provisions and elastic economic fraud clauses under Section 316, suggesting that decolonisation in nomenclature has not yet produced substantive change in operational practice.

III. FORMS AND MECHANISMS OF MISUSE

3.1 Matrimonial and Domestic Provisions

Section 498A of the IPC, introduced to shield married women from dowry harassment and cruelty, has paradoxically become one of India's most notorious misuse flashpoints. Acquittal rates consistently exceeding seventy percent in cases under this provision indicate systemic frivolity. The provision's elasticity around "cruelty", which encompasses any wilful conduct of a nature likely to

drive a woman to suicide or cause grave injury, permits complainants to implicate entire joint families on the basis of generalised allegations of mental harassment. Station House Officers, constrained by statutory obligations to register cognizable FIRs and discouraged from non-registration by departmental penalty, routinely dispatch arrest teams without the preliminary inquiries that the Supreme Court mandated in Lalita Kumari v. Govt. of UP.

The family welfare committee mechanism introduced by the Supreme Court in Rajesh Sharma v. State of UP mandating third-party vetting before arrests in Section 498A cases, and the Law Commission's 243rd Report recommending pre-registration inquiries in matrimonial matters, collectively represent the principal institutional safeguards against this form of misuse. The BNS consolidates matrimonial offences in Chapter V (Sections 69 to 90), demanding specific role attributions in harassment allegations. However, early 2026 data from Allahabad High Court reveals that FIRs under BNS Section 85 largely replicate the IPC 498A template, with identical narrative structures that judicial scrutiny subsequently exposes as post-divorce malice. Family welfare committees remain understaffed and under-resourced across rural Uttar Pradesh, where they cannot intercept complaints before the non-bailable arrest machinery is activated.

3.2 Economic Offences and the Criminalisation of Civil Disputes

Sections 420 (cheating) and 406 (criminal breach of trust) of the IPC have long served as preferred instruments for converting civil disputes into criminal prosecutions. A creditor seeking recovery of an unpaid invoice will routinely file a cheating FIR rather than a civil suit, gaining the strategic advantage of immediate police detention and asset attachment. The provision's legal threshold, requiring proof of dishonest intention at the inception of the transaction, is sufficiently ambiguous that police and magistrates frequently treat commercial non-performance as per se evidence of fraudulent intent. As the Supreme Court articulated in Paramjeet Singh v. State of Himachal Pradesh , mere breach of contract without proof of dishonest inducement from the outset does not attract penal liability, yet charge sheets exhibiting precisely this error continue to clog sessions courts across Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra.

The BNS retains Section 316 (cheating) with an identical maximum sentence of seven years. While organised crime thresholds under Section 111 in principle prevent elastic repurposing of economic provisions against single-transaction commercial disputes, the absence of mandatory civil-forum referral mechanisms leaves the fundamental pathology intact. FICCI surveys consistently cite the criminalisation of civil disputes as a primary deterrent to domestic and foreign investment. The economic damage is disproportionately borne by the MSME sector, which lacks the financial resilience to sustain prolonged criminal investigations and is least able to secure the high-profile legal representation that accelerates quashal proceedings.

3.3 Political Weaponisation and National Security Laws

Section 124A of the IPC on sedition was the quintessential instrument of political weaponisation. Upheld narrowly in Kedar Nath Singh v. State of Bihar as requiring an intent to disrupt public order rather than mere expression of disapproval, the provision was routinely misapplied by state police against opposition leaders, journalists, and civil society activists whose conduct fell well within the Kedar Nath threshold. The Supreme Court's suspension of fresh invocations in S.G. Vombatkere v. Union of India pending constitutional review reflected a judicial acknowledgement of this endemic misuse. The BNS replaces sedition with Section 152, which criminalises acts endangering sovereignty and extends to electronic incitement. Early enforcement data from Uttar Pradesh bypolls in 2025 reveals that police adapted pre-existing FIR templates to Section 152, targeting student leaders for social media posts, replicating the misuse susceptibility of its predecessor through elastic "intent to threaten" language absent an explicit public order causation requirement.

3.4 Cybercrime Provisions and Digital Vendettas

BNS expansions in cybercrime, intersecting with the Information Technology Act, 2000, have produced a new frontier of misuse in which personal vendettas

acquire the character of high-technology felonies. Morphed photographs of former partners are filed as extortion complaints under Section 316 read with IT Act Section 66D; e-FIR portals allow non-resident Indians to register zero FIRs from abroad over decade-old relationship disputes, activating pan-India non-bailable warrants without preliminary judicial scrutiny; and anonymous handles critiquing governance are pursued under defamation provisions read with electronic publication clauses. Digital forensic laboratories, overwhelmed by volume and under-resourced for deepfake and hash-verification analysis, cannot provide timely exoneration, meaning that devices are seized and professional careers are interrupted for months before fabrication is confirmed. The rapidity of the digital process amplifies harm in a manner that the IPC's paper-based ecosystem did not permit.

IV. JUDICIAL APPROACH AND SAFEGUARDS AGAINST MISUSE

4.1 Landmark Supreme Court Decisions

The Supreme Court has responded to the misuse epidemic with a body of jurisprudence that constitutes the primary safeguard against criminal law abuse. In State of Haryana v. Bhajan Lal, the Court catalogued seven categories of cases in which High Courts should exercise inherent powers under Section 482 CrPC to quash FIRs, including allegations that disclose no cognizable offence, proceedings manifestly attended with mala fide intent, and FIRs filed as counterblasts to pending civil litigation. This taxonomy remains the foundational analytical framework applied in thousands of quashal petitions filed annually in Allahabad, Delhi, Bombay, and Madras High Courts.

In Sushil Kumar Sharma v. Union of India, the Court branded Section 498A misuse "legal terrorism," recognising that omnibus implication of joint family members served not the interests of genuine dowry victims but of strategic litigants seeking bail leverage and maintenance ransoms. The consequent safeguard in Arnesh Kumar v. State of Bihar mandated that police follow a nine-point checklist under Section 41 CrPC before effecting arrests for offences carrying seven years or less, and that magistrates scrutinise checklist compliance before authorising continued detention beyond twenty-four hours. The ruling measurably reduced matrimonial undertrial admissions in urban courts, though rural Uttar Pradesh enforcement remains inconsistent.

In Lalita Kumari, the Court compelled preliminary inquiries before FIR registration in matrimonial, commercial, and corruption matters absent immediate public safety urgency, a safeguard that, if uniformly implemented, would prune a substantial proportion of frivolous filings at source. More recently, the Supreme Court in Aneeta Hada v. Godfather Travels and Inder Chand Bagri v. State reinforced the principle that dishonest intent must be demonstrated from the inception of the impugned transaction and cannot be inferred retrospectively from non-performance, providing important doctrinal clarity for trial courts adjudicating economic misuse cases.

4.2 High Court Inherent Powers and Anticipatory Bail

High Courts exercise expansive inherent powers under Section 482 CrPC and its BNSS successor Section 528 to quash FIRs, charge sheets, and summons where proceedings manifestly constitute an abuse of process. Anticipatory bail under Section 438 CrPC, liberalised by the Supreme Court in Siddharam Satlingappa Mhetre v. State of Maharashtra, serves as a first-line defence for professionals and business executives facing non-bailable clouds from adversarial filings. Allahabad High Court, which processes the largest volume of quashal petitions given Uttar Pradesh's high misuse incidence, routinely stays matrimonial arrests when spousal complaint timelines correlate with pending family court maintenance disputes, and dismantles economic fraud charge sheets that reduce to civil invoice recovery.

The doctrine of successive FIR abuse, crystallised in T.T. Antony v. State of Kerala which established that a second FIR on the same cognizable facts constitutes an abuse of process, provides an additional check against complainants who refile cruelty complaints with embellished taunts after bail grants. High Courts have increasingly imposed exemplary costs on serial filers, recognising that without financial deterrence the availability of inherent jurisdiction merely invites tactical delay by

well-resourced complainants who treat the penal process as a costless strategic resource.

V. IMPACT OF MISUSE ON INDIVIDUALS, SOCIETY, AND INSTITUTIONS

5.1 Individual and Familial Consequences

The immediate and most visceral consequence of criminal law misuse is the deprivation of personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution. Non-bailable arrests triggered by matrimonial or economic FIRs expose accused to custodial conditions that impose de facto punishment before any judicial determination of guilt. Undertrial populations in Uttar Pradesh correctional facilities regularly exceed one hundred fifty percent of sanctioned capacity, with the majority of inmates awaiting verdicts in frivolous matrimonial and economic matters. Acquittals, when they come, arrive too late to mend shattered professional reputations, fractured families, or liquidated business assets. Elderly in-laws, dragged from ancestral homes by midnight arrest teams on the strength of generalised cruelty allegations, face health crises in overcrowded facilities. Professionals lose placements when background checks flag pending cases, and children grow up with absent parents detained on fabricated charges. The psychological toll, including post-traumatic stress, clinical depression, and in documented cases suicide, constitutes a hidden cost rarely captured in official statistics.

5.2 Socio-Economic and Constitutional Consequences

At the societal level, misuse deepens existing class and caste inequalities. Affluent litigants secure swift High Court quashals through senior counsel while daily wage labourers endure district jail remands over identical charges, making the constitutional guarantee of equality before law under Article 14 aspirational rather than operational. Caste dynamics in rural Uttar Pradesh manifest in SC/ST Act retaliations that invert genuine boundary disputes into atrocity prosecutions, enabling dominant-group landowners to jail Dalit tillers at peak harvest periods. Gender relations are polarised by the paradox of matrimonial misuse: genuine dowry victims are disbelieved amid serial-filer scepticism, while false complainants exploit non-bailable arrest leverage to extract maintenance ransoms.

Economically, FICCI surveys and World Bank Ease of Doing Business assessments consistently identify the criminalisation of civil disputes as a structural deterrent to investment in India. Asset freezes and executive arrests pending adjudication destroy enterprises before charge sheets are framed, particularly in the MSME sector. The rule of law itself is corroded when citizens perceive that criminal machinery responds to power and influence rather than evidence. Judicial pronouncements progressively lose persuasive force when acquittal epidemics confirm fabrication floods yet stigma endures eternally, fuelling social media vigilantism that bypasses formal legal channels altogether.

5.3 Institutional Burden on the Judiciary

The judiciary bears a disproportionate institutional burden from misuse-driven litigation. Allahabad High Court processes thousands of Section 482 quashal petitions annually, consuming bench time that could otherwise address substantive constitutional matters, writ petitions in prison conditions cases, or appeals in serious offences languishing untried for decades. Magistrate courts in Lucknow district routinely forward unscrutinised station diaries to sessions under remand pressure, perpetuating undertrial misery through mechanical procedural momentum. Police morale is simultaneously undermined by dual accountability pressures: officers are penalised for non-registration of cognizable FIRs yet face vigilance inquiries when acquittals expose unverified diary forwards, creating a culture that rewards registration volume over evidentiary rigour and leaves frontline policing in a state of perpetual institutional contradiction.

VI. REFORMS UNDER THE BNS AND THEIR LIMITATIONS

6.1 Structural and Substantive Innovations

The BNS and its accompanying statutes introduce several structural changes that, if properly implemented, could meaningfully reduce misuse. The BNSS mandates ninety-day charge sheet deadlines triggering automatic statutory bail upon expiry, mandatory audio-video recording of crime scenes and

accused examinations, and a forensic collection obligation for all offences punishable by seven years or more. The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam elevates electronic records to primary evidence status, potentially enabling email and blockchain audit trails to disprove dishonest intent allegations in economic misuse cases. Community service for six petty offences under BNS Section 4, mob lynching as a distinct aggravated homicide under Section 103(2), and explicit organised crime definitions under Chapter VI represent genuine legislative progress. Victim compensation funds receive statutory reinforcement, addressing the injustice that left framed acquittees without remedy against malicious complainants.

6.2 Persistent Vulnerabilities and Implementation Gaps

Critics identify an approximately eighty-percent textual overlap between the BNS and the IPC, observing that provisions most susceptible to misuse have been substantially retained. Section 85 cruelty preserves the broad mental harassment threshold of its predecessor; Section 316 cheating carries an identical dishonest intent requirement that courts have historically applied loosely; Section 152 sovereignty endangerment extends beyond its IPC sedition model without the public order causation threshold established in Kedar Nath Singh. Parliamentary Standing Committee reports noted the absence of adequate transitional provisions, with rural Uttar Pradesh police stations continuing to apply inherited procedural habits to BNS sections while forensic mandates overwhelm cyber laboratories ill-equipped for deepfake and hash-verification analysis. Custodial torture concerns have intensified following BNSS provisions extending police custody to forty-five days, a period that human rights observers warn creates structural pressure for confession-extraction in the absence of independent forensic evidence, replicating in a modern technological context the very coercive investigative practices that Macaulay's Code was theoretically designed to constrain.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFORM

Effective reform requires intervention at three levels. Legislatively, Parliament should enact mandatory civil-forum referral provisions compelling investigating officers and magistrates to identify whether an FIR substantially alleges a civil wrong before entertaining penal cognizance, with automatic referral to civil courts or consumer forums in commercial, tenancy, and minor contract disputes. The definition of cruelty under BNS Section 85 should be tightened to require contemporaneous medical evidence or independent witness corroboration before cognizance is taken, with a mandatory fifteen-day preliminary inquiry period corresponding to the family welfare committee mechanism endorsed in Rajesh Sharma. A statutory cause of action for malicious prosecution with reversed burden of proof following acquittal where the Bhajan Lal criteria are satisfied would impose meaningful financial deterrence on serial filers.

Institutionally, the Prakash Singh mandates for fixed police tenures and investigative independence must receive statutory reinforcement to insulate Station House Officers from the political pressures that drive selective and retaliatory FIR registration. Forensic laboratories require urgent capacity expansion, prioritising mobile forensic van deployment to district-level clusters and dedicated cyber forensic units capable of deepfake detection, hash verification, and blockchain ledger analysis. Body camera footage of all arrests and searches should be preserved as chain-of-custody evidence mandatorily admissible in quashal petitions and malicious prosecution suits.

Technologically, e-FIR portals should incorporate AI-assisted timeline verification tools cross-referencing complaint metadata against family court filings, civil suit records, and prior FIR histories to flag fabrication patterns before station diary entries are formalised. Blockchain timestamping of all complaint chain entries would prevent the backdated diary entries documented in bypoll-season misuse patterns documented across Uttar Pradesh. Geofencing integrations should verify jurisdictional relevance to curb NRI zero FIR floods filed from abroad without verification buffers.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Misuse of criminal law in India is not a marginal pathology but a systemic distortion that erodes the

foundational principles of personal liberty, equality before law, and the rule of law that the Constitution of India guarantees. The IPC's colonial heritage embedded a structural predisposition toward over-criminalisation through vague, expansive language that served administrative control more than justice. The BNS, despite its reformist architecture, replicates sufficient IPC elasticity to sustain the principal misuse vectors documented in this study: matrimonial omnibus trawls, civil disputes criminalised for leverage, politically motivated national security invocations, and digital vendettas accelerated by frictionless e-FIR access.

The judicial branch has responded with a sophisticated and increasingly proactive jurisprudence. Bhajan Lal's quashal benchmarks, Arnesh Kumar's arrest safeguards, Lalita Kumari's preliminary inquiry mandate, and the succession of Supreme Court decisions refusing to countenance the criminalisation of civil defaults collectively constitute a formidable doctrinal architecture. That this architecture has not succeeded in stemming misuse at source reflects the structural inadequacy of reactive judicial intervention against proactive institutional failure at the policing stage, where registration culture, political pressure, and resource constraints combine to perpetuate a pipeline of frivolous prosecutions that the judiciary can only partially arrest.

Genuine reform demands coordinated action: legislative precision that closes definitional loopholes; institutional autonomy that insulates police from political pressure; forensic infrastructure that enables evidence-based investigation as practical reality; and technological gatekeeping that filters fabrication before the penal machinery inflicts irreversible harm. Without this coordination, the BNS risks becoming, as its predecessor did, a statute whose noble reformist intent is progressively subverted by the persistent cultural and institutional pathologies that have long made criminal law in India a weapon as much as a shield. India's constitutional promise of liberty, equality, and dignity demands nothing less than that full, coordinated commitment.

REFERENCES

A. Cases

[1] Arnesh Kumar v. State of Bihar, (2014) 8 SCC 273.
[2] Aneeta Hada v. Godfather Travels, (2012) 5 SCC 661.
[3] Bachan Singh v. State of Punjab, (1980) 2 SCC 684.
[4] D.K. Basu v. State of W.B., (1997) 1 SCC 416.
[5] Gian Singh v. State of Punjab, (2012) 10 SCC 303.
[6] Inder Chand Bagri v. State, SC (2025).
[7] Joseph Shine v. Union of India, (2018) 2 SCC 189.
[8] Kedar Nath Singh v. State of Bihar, AIR 1962 SC 955.
[9] Lalita Kumari v. Govt. of UP, (2014) 2 SCC 1.
[10] Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India, (1978) 1 SCC 248.
[11] Paramjeet Singh v. State of Himachal Pradesh, SC (2025).
[12] Prathvi Raj Chauhan v. Union of India, (2020) 4 SCC 727.
[13] Prakash Singh v. Union of India, (2006) 8 SCC 1.
[14] Rajesh Sharma v. State of UP, (2017) 8 SCC 821.
[15] S.G. Vombatkere v. Union of India, (2022) SCC OnLine SC 900.
[16] Siddharam Satlingappa Mhetre v. State of Maharashtra, (2011) 1 SCC 694.
[17] State of Haryana v. Bhajan Lal, 1992 Supp (1) SCC 335.
[18] Subhash Kashinath Mahajan v. State of Maharashtra, (2018) 6 SCC 454.
[19] Subramanian Swamy v. Union of India, (2016) 7 SCC 221.
[20] Sushil Kumar Sharma v. Union of India, (2005) 6 SCC 281.
[21] T.T. Antony v. State of Kerala, (2001) 6 SCC 181.

B. Statutes

[22] Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, No. 45 of 2023 (effective 1 July 2024).
[23] Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, No. 46 of 2023.
[24] Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, No. 47 of 2023.
[25] Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.
[26] Indian Evidence Act, 1872.
[27] Indian Penal Code, No. 45 of 1860.
[28] Information Technology Act, 2000.
[29] Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

C. Reports and Official Documents

[30] Bureau of Police Research and Development, Handbook on Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (2024).
[31] Law Commission of India, 243rd Report on Section 498A IPC (2012).
[32] Ministry of Home Affairs, New Criminal Laws Implementation Status (2026).
[33] National Crime Records Bureau, Crime in India Report 2024 (2025).
[34] National Crime Records Bureau, Prison Statistics India 2024 (2025).
[35] National Judicial Data Grid, https://njdg.ecourts.gov.in (last visited March 2026).
[36] Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, 229th Report on the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (November 2023).

D. Books and Articles

[37] Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Report on Criminalization of Civil Disputes (2024).
[38] J.D.M. Derrett, Religion, Law and the State in India (Faber & Faber, 1968).
[39] K.D. Gaur, Criminal Law: Cases and Materials (8th ed., 2024).
[40] P.S.A. Pillai, Criminal Law (15th ed., 2025).
[41] Ratanlal and Dhirajlal, The Indian Penal Code (36th ed., 2023).
[42] R.V. Kelkar, Criminal Procedure (9th ed., 2023).
[43] S.N. Misra, Indian Penal Code (22nd ed., 2025).
[44] Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, Criminal Law Reforms Critique (2025).
[45] World Bank, Ease of Doing Business India Report (2023).

E. Newspapers

[46] The Hindu, “BNS Implementation Challenges in UP Courts” (February 2026).
[47] Indian Express, “Police Reforms and BNS Critique” (December 2025).
[48] Times of India, “498A Misuse Patterns Post-BNS” (January 2026).