Dear Prime Minister Modi,

Please introduce policies that will ensure the effective implementation of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act. Thousands of children are being raped each year in your country. These children face long term physical and psychological damage and community ostracism through no fault of their own.

India is party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of Child. Your governments at the central and state level must therefore adopt measures to prevent and punish children’s human rights abuses. This includes enforcing policies that will prevent sexual violence against children and support victims of such abuse.

I call on you and your government to:

* Make available resources for survivors of child rape through which they can access coordinated medical, legal, psychological, and other services.
* Provide training to police to sensitively handle complaints of child sexual abuse so that they do not re-traumatize victims by aggressively questioning the child or family members. Establish a policy that under no circumstances should the police attempt to dissuade or intimidate a complainant or refuse to register and investigate rape claims. Discipline officers who do not follow this policy.
* Adopt and implement a protocol for the medical treatment and examination of victims of child sexual abuse, in accordance with guidelines developed by the World Health Organization. Train physicians and other medical staff to respond to cases of sexual abuse in a sensitive manner that minimizes invasive examination and provides access to continued reproductive, sexual, and mental health services. Ensure all medical staff understand the rehabilitation procedures and the medical and psychological needs of the child.
* Treat cases of child rape as a priority so that victims do not wait over six months for the trial and make arrangements whereby children can testify without having to confront the accused.
* Amend the Juvenile Justice Act to require registration and the meeting of specified standards by children’s residential care facilities before they open. Establish penalties for facilities that fail to register. Ensure that all institutions housing children are subject to regular and periodic inspections, part of which involve children being independently interviewed in a safe environment.
* Introduce programmes that break down the stigma associated with rape and make it easier for children who have been abused to talk about the incident and their suffering. Ensure that no child is forced to marry their rapist or leave school as a result of being raped.
* Ensure that states properly and promptly utilize the resources allocated to them to prevent sexual violence against children and support victims of such abuse.

Yours Sincerely,