 DOI: https://doi.org/10.63108/IJLMH.12850

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES

[ISSN 2581-5369]

Volume 9 | Issue 5

2026

Section 111 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita: Substantive Centralization and Procedural Fragmentation in India's Organized-Crime Framework

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ABSTRACT

This article examines whether Section 111 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (BNS) creates a coherent national response to organized crime or merely transfers the vocabulary of special State legislation into the general penal code. It adopts a doctrinal method, analyzing the text and internal structure of Section 111, its relationship with the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act, 1999 (MCOCA), relevant Supreme Court jurisprudence, constitutional guarantees, and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The article finds that Section 111 achieves substantive centralization by defining organized crime, organized crime syndicates, continuing unlawful activity, derivative participation, and proceeds-based liability for the whole country. Yet it leaves procedure comparatively fragmented. Unlike the MCOCA model from which much of its terminology is drawn, the BNS does not itself create a tailored approval, sanction, evidentiary, interception, bail, or trial architecture. This asymmetry increases the risk that an enterprise offence will be used as an aggravated label for ordinary multi-accused crime. The article argues for a strict, element-by-element construction: the prosecution should establish a qualifying course of unlawful activity, a legally identifiable syndicate, a nexus between that enterprise and the accused, the use of specified unlawful means, and a material-benefit objective. It further proposes senior-level charging review, a written predicate-offence matrix, differentiated mens rea for secondary liability, coordinated financial investigation, effective witness protection, and reasoned prosecutorial election where special statutes overlap. These safeguards would preserve the national reach of Section 111 while protecting legality, proportionality, individualized responsibility, and fair procedure.

Keywords: *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, Organized Crime, Section 111, MCOCA, Continuing unlawful activity, Criminal syndicate*

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 [ISSN 2581-5369]

I. Introduction

Organized crime is difficult for conventional criminal law because the visible offence is often only the surface of a durable enterprise. A kidnapping, cyber-fraud, trafficking transaction, extortion demand, or act of land grabbing may be performed by one participant, financed by another, insulated by intermediaries, and converted into apparently legitimate wealth elsewhere. Liability rules centred only on the immediate actor can punish the completed incident while leaving intact the organization that planned, repeated, and profited from it. Section 111 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (BNS) responds to that problem by locating organized crime within India's general penal code for the first time.[1]

The reform is important, but its importance should not obscure its design problem. Section 111 borrows several organizing concepts long associated with the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act, 1999 (MCOCA), including the organized crime syndicate and continuing unlawful activity.[2] It also extends liability beyond the person committing the predicate offence to conspirators, knowing facilitators, members, harbourers, and persons holding criminally derived property. Yet the BNS is primarily a substantive code. It does not reproduce the complete procedural structure through which MCOCA regulates the invocation, investigation, sanction, evidence, bail, and trial of organized-crime allegations. India has therefore centralized the offence more fully than it has centralized the safeguards and institutional arrangements necessary to administer that offence.

This article addresses the resulting research problem: how should courts and investigators interpret Section 111 so that it reaches continuing criminal enterprises without converting every planned offence involving several accused into organized crime? The question is especially pressing because the provision prescribes severe minimum punishments, reaches preparatory and associational conduct, and creates liability connected with property for which an accused cannot satisfactorily account. The novelty of the enactment also means that its national jurisprudence is still developing. Earlier MCOCA decisions are indispensable, but they cannot be transferred mechanically because the statutory and procedural settings are not identical.

The article advances three arguments. First, Section 111 is an enterprise offence, not merely an aggravated version of the crimes listed in subsection (1). The prosecution must prove the statutory architecture as a whole: qualifying continuity, a syndicate, the accused's enterprise nexus, specified unlawful means, and the object of material benefit. Second, MCOCA

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[1] Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, No. 45 of 2023, India Code (2023), § 111.

[2] The Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act, Maharashtra Act No. 30 of 1999, §§ 2(1)(d)–(f), 3 (India).

jurisprudence should operate as a persuasive interpretive discipline, particularly on continuity, nexus, mens rea, and strict construction, while the differences between the enactments remain visible. Third, the procedural gap should be addressed through nationally consistent charging and investigation protocols, not by diluting the elements of the offence.

Methodologically, the study is doctrinal and comparative. It reads Section 111 internally, compares it with MCOCA and with the earlier offence-specific approach of the Indian Penal Code, and tests proposed interpretations against Articles 14, 20, and 21 of the Constitution. It also uses the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) as a functional comparator rather than as a substitute definition.[3] The analysis is limited to the offence of organized crime under Section 111; petty organized crime under Section 112 is considered only where necessary to clarify statutory boundaries.

II. From Fragmented Offences to a National Enterprise Offence

Before the BNS, the Indian Penal Code, 1860 could punish much of the conduct associated with organized crime through offences such as conspiracy, abetment, unlawful assembly, murder, kidnapping for ransom, extortion, cheating, and forgery.[4] Those provisions were not insignificant. Conspiracy, in particular, enabled criminal responsibility to attach before every contemplated offence was completed. Their organizing unit, however, remained the discrete offence or agreement. They did not supply a general national concept of a continuing criminal enterprise, nor did they make the durability and economic apparatus of a syndicate the centre of liability.

State special laws filled part of that gap. MCOCA framed organized crime around a continuing unlawful activity undertaken by a person, singly or jointly, as a member of or on behalf of an organized crime syndicate. It linked continuity to more than one charge-sheet for serious cognizable offences during the preceding ten years, coupled with cognizance by a competent court. Section 111 adopts materially similar threshold language.[5] This transplantation supplies continuity through objectively verifiable procedural events rather than through reputation, police intelligence, or a broad assertion that the accused is "habitual."

There are nevertheless significant changes. Section 111 expressly identifies activities including kidnapping, robbery, vehicle theft, extortion, land grabbing, contract killing, economic offences,

[3] United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime arts. 2(a), 5, Nov. 15, 2000, 2225 U.N.T.S. 209.

[4] Indian Penal Code, No. 45 of 1860, India Code (1860), §§ 107–120B, 141–149, 302, 364A, 383–389, 415–420, 463–477A (repealed 2024).

[5] Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, No. 45 of 2023, India Code (2023), § 111(1) expl. (ii).

cyber-crimes, and trafficking. It defines an organized crime syndicate as a group of two or more persons, whereas UNTOC's organized criminal group ordinarily requires three or more. It separately elaborates "economic offence" to include criminal breach of trust, forgery, counterfeiting, hawala transactions, mass-marketing fraud, schemes aimed at multiple victims, and conduct designed to defraud banks, financial institutions, or other institutions. The national provision therefore brings digitally mediated and market-facing criminality squarely within an enterprise framework.

The comparison also exposes a danger. The list of predicate activity is broad enough to include conduct frequently prosecuted under ordinary criminal law. The statutory threshold cannot therefore be satisfied simply by pointing to a listed offence and multiple accused. The words connecting that conduct to continuity, syndicate membership or action on behalf of a syndicate, specified unlawful means, and material benefit do the essential limiting work. If those connectors are treated as descriptive background rather than as elements, Section 111 would become an uncontrolled sentence enhancer. If they are treated as cumulative components, the provision is directed toward the distinct organizational harm that justified its enactment.

III. The internal architecture of Section 111

A. The base offence

Subsection (1) defines organized crime through a composite formula. There must be a continuing unlawful activity; it must be undertaken by a person or a group of persons acting in concert, singly or jointly, as a member of or on behalf of an organized crime syndicate; the activity must employ violence, threat of violence, intimidation, coercion, or another unlawful means; and it must seek a direct or indirect material benefit, including a financial benefit.[6] Each component answers a different question. Continuity distinguishes an enterprise from an episode. The syndicate requirement identifies the organizational unit. The nexus phrase connects the conduct to that unit. The means requirement captures coercive or otherwise unlawful operation. The benefit requirement identifies the enterprise objective.

B. Continuing unlawful activity

The statutory definition of continuing unlawful activity is both a safeguard and an interpretive difficulty. The activity must be prohibited by law, constitute a cognizable offence punishable by at least three years' imprisonment, be undertaken as a member of or on behalf of the syndicate, and be connected with more than one charge-sheet filed within the preceding ten years upon

[6] Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, No. 45 of 2023, India Code (2023), § 111(1) & expls. (i)–(iii).

which a competent court has taken cognizance. The charge-sheet and cognizance requirements should be treated as jurisdictional facts that must be identified in the prosecution record. A court should insist on the offence, the accused, the date, the court, the cognizance order, and the alleged syndicate nexus for every predicate relied upon.

Continuity should not be confused with prior conviction. Parliament chose charge-sheets and cognizance rather than completed convictions, presumably because complex cases take time and enterprises can persist during trials. That choice also increases the need for caution: an unproved accusation cannot be treated as substantive evidence of guilt in the present case. Predicate proceedings establish the statutory history required to invoke the provision; they do not dispense with proof beyond reasonable doubt of the charged organized crime. Nor should unrelated charge-sheets against loosely connected individuals be aggregated without proof that the alleged activity was undertaken through the same legally identifiable syndicate.

C. Syndicate and enterprise nexus

The definition of "organized crime syndicate" requires two or more persons acting as a syndicate or gang and indulging in continuing unlawful activity. "Syndicate" should carry functional content. The prosecution should identify continuity of association, coordination, allocation of roles, a common criminal objective, control or direction, shared resources, benefit flows, or other evidence demonstrating an enterprise beyond momentary co-offending. A rigid hierarchy is unnecessary; contemporary cyber and financial networks may be decentralized. But decentralization cannot eliminate the need to prove durable coordination.

The phrase "as a member of" or "on behalf of" the syndicate is equally important. It protects individualized criminal responsibility by demanding a connection between the accused's conduct and the enterprise. A person may know, communicate with, or conduct legitimate business with an alleged member without joining or serving the syndicate. Courts should require evidence that the accused consciously furthered, represented, benefited, protected, financed, or operationally assisted the enterprise. Such a construction avoids guilt by association and keeps ordinary accessory principles from being swallowed by the broader label of organized crime.

D. Material benefit and unlawful means

Material benefit is broader than the immediate receipt of money. It may include property, control of a market, access to accounts, operational resources, or an indirect advantage intended to sustain the syndicate. Yet the objective must be proved, not presumed from seriousness. This limitation distinguishes organized crime from ideologically motivated offences that may fall within terrorism legislation, although the same network can commit both kinds of offence on

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different evidence. Likewise, the phrase “other unlawful means” should be read in context with violence, intimidation, and coercion. It cannot make the means element redundant by equating it with the predicate offence itself in every case.

E. Extended liability and punishment

Section 111 creates concentric forms of liability. Commission of organized crime attracts death or imprisonment for life where death results, and a minimum of five years extending to life in other cases, in each instance with a substantial minimum fine. Subsection (3) covers abetment, attempt, conspiracy, knowing facilitation, and preparatory acts. Subsection (4) punishes membership of a syndicate. Subsection (5) addresses the intentional harbouring or concealment of an offender, subject to a spousal exception. Subsections (6) and (7) address criminally derived property and property held on behalf of a syndicate member that cannot be satisfactorily accounted for.[7]

The varying mental-state language must be respected. Parliament expressly used “knowingly” for facilitation and “intentionally” for harbouring. Although subsection (4) does not repeat either term, membership carrying a minimum five-year sentence should not be understood as status alone. Conscious and voluntary membership, proved through acts or reliable circumstances, is the constitutionally safer construction. Similarly, property liability requires foundational proof connecting the property or its possessor to organized crime before any demand for a satisfactory account arises. Otherwise, an ordinary wealth discrepancy could be transformed into an organized-crime offence without proof of the enterprise.

IV. Judicial principles for interpreting the new offence

A. MCOCA jurisprudence as persuasive discipline

MCOCA decisions provide the closest Indian jurisprudential foundation because Section 111 uses cognate concepts. In *State of Maharashtra v. Bharat Shanti Lal Shah*, the Supreme Court accepted the constitutional legitimacy of a special response to organized crime while examining the statutory scheme and its safeguards.[8] The decision supports the proposition that organized crime may be treated as a distinct legal category; it does not authorize the category to be invoked without proof of its defining elements.

Ranjitsing Brahmajeetsing Sharma v. State of Maharashtra is valuable for its insistence on a meaningful connection between the accused and the alleged organized activity and for its

[7] *Id.* §§ 111(2)–(7).
[8] *State of Maharashtra v. Bharat Shanti Lal Shah*, (2008) 13 SCC 5 (India).

careful approach to stringent statutory consequences.[9] *Zameer Ahmed Latifur Rehman Sheikh v. State of Maharashtra* examined the structure and reach of MCOCA in relation to other serious-offence legislation, illustrating that overlap does not erase the separate ingredients of each enactment.[10] *Vishwanath Maranna Shetty* and *Shiva alias Shivaji Ramaji Sonawane* further demonstrate that continuity and the statutory relationship among prior activity, the syndicate, and the charged conduct require disciplined analysis.[11]

Prasad Shrikant Purohit is particularly important to the enterprise orientation of the offence. It cautions against isolating the present act from the statutory conception of the syndicate and continuing activity, while treating the objective element (pecuniary benefit or, under MCOCA, promoting insurgency) as a distinct ingredient to be pleaded and proved.[12] The decisive question must remain the language, context, and institutional design of Section 111.

B. Strict construction and fair procedure

Stringent penal legislation is not unconstitutional merely because it is severe, but severity increases the importance of precise construction and procedural safeguards. *Kartar Singh*, although concerned with anti-terror legislation, remains relevant for the broader principle that exceptional powers and punishments must be accompanied by meaningful checks.[13] *Maneka Gandhi* requires any procedure impairing personal liberty to be fair, just, and reasonable.[14] These principles support element-by-element scrutiny at remand, charge, bail, and trial rather than acceptance of "organized crime" as a conclusory police label.

Article 14 also requires principled classification. Section 111 differentiates organized crime from ordinary offences because continuity, enterprise structure, unlawful methods, and material purpose generate a distinct social harm. An interpretation that omits those features would weaken the basis of the classification and expose similarly placed accused to radically different punishment based on charging discretion. Consistent written criteria for invocation are therefore not only administrative conveniences; they are safeguards against arbitrary application.

C. Privacy, surveillance, and digital attribution

Organized-crime investigations often require communication analysis, location data, financial tracing, device forensics, and network attribution. The privacy principles stated in *Justice K.S.*

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[9] *Ranjitsing Brahmajeetsing Sharma v. State of Maharashtra*, (2005) 5 SCC 294 (India).
[10] *Zameer Ahmed Latifur Rehman Sheikh v. State of Maharashtra*, (2010) 5 SCC 246 (India).
[11] *State of Maharashtra v. Vishwanath Maranna Shetty*, (2012) 10 SCC 561 (India); *State of Maharashtra v. Shiva alias Shivaji Ramaji Sonawane*, (2015) 14 SCC 272 (India).
[12] *Prasad Shrikant Purohit v. State of Maharashtra*, (2015) 7 SCC 440 (India).
[13] *Kartar Singh v. State of Punjab*, (1994) 3 SCC 569 (India).
[14] *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India*, (1978) 1 SCC 248 (India).

Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India require a lawful basis, a legitimate purpose, necessity, and proportionality when the State intrudes upon protected privacy.[15] Section 111 does not itself confer a general surveillance power. Investigators must rely on authority found elsewhere and comply with its conditions. The gravity of the suspected offence cannot cure an unlawful collection method.

Digital association deserves special caution. Shared chat groups, contact lists, transfers through mule accounts, common IP infrastructure, or possession of another participant's number can be probative, but none proves syndicate membership in isolation. Attribution should combine device integrity, account control, temporal correspondence, transaction flows, communication content, role evidence, and corroboration. This is how courts can recognize decentralized enterprises without treating technological proximity as criminal membership.

V. Substantive centralization and the procedural gap

A. What the BNS centralizes

Section 111 creates a common substantive vocabulary across India. It permits investigators and courts to address an enterprise as an enterprise rather than force every case into offence-specific fragments. Its coverage of cyber-crime, mass-marketing fraud, institutional fraud, trafficking, illicit goods, and land grabbing reflects contemporary criminal markets. Its derivative-liability provisions also recognize that organizers, financiers, facilitators, and custodians of proceeds may be more important to the survival of the enterprise than the person who performs the last physical act.[16]

B. What it does not centralize

MCOCA is not merely a definition and punishment provision. It contains special arrangements relating to interception, police confessions, presumptions, bail, and institutional approvals, including prior approval for recording information and sanction before cognizance.[17] Whether one approves of each device or not, the statute openly connects exceptional liability with a specialized procedural system. Section 111 does not reproduce that system. Investigation, evidence, and trial ordinarily proceed under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, subject to any applicable special law.[18]

[15] *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India*, (2017) 10 SCC 1 (India).
[16] Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, No. 45 of 2023, INDIA CODE (2023), §§ 111(3)–(7).
[17] The Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act, Maharashtra Act No. 30 of 1999, INDIA CODE (1999), §§ 14, 18, 21, 22, 23.
[18] Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, No. 46 of 2023, INDIA CODE (2023); Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, No. 47 of 2023, INDIA CODE (2023).

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This difference has two consequences. First, investigators cannot import MCOCA's exceptional evidentiary or coercive powers into a BNS prosecution by analogy. Substantive resemblance is not a source of procedural authority. Second, the absence of statutory approval gates makes charging discipline more important. Because adding Section 111 can substantially alter punishment, bail strategy, stigma, investigation scale, and trial complexity, invocation should follow a recorded review by a senior officer and a legally trained prosecutor.

C. Evidence, proceeds, and witness security

A credible organized-crime investigation should proceed on parallel evidentiary tracks: predicate-offence proof, enterprise structure, individual role, communication and digital attribution, and financial benefit or proceeds. Financial investigation is not collateral. It tests the statutory benefit objective, identifies controllers and beneficiaries, and enables the lawful restraint of assets under applicable legislation such as the Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, 2002.[19] But parallel financial proceedings should not be used to obscure the distinct elements that must be proved under each statute.

Witness intimidation is a structural feature of many criminal enterprises. *Mahender Chawla v. Union of India* recognized the national importance of witness protection and approved the Witness Protection Scheme, 2018.[20] Section 111 cases should trigger an early, individualized threat assessment; confidentiality and relocation measures where justified; secure handling of identity information; and periodic judicial review. Protection is not only a welfare measure. It is central to evidentiary reliability and to the accused's right to a trial based on testimony that has not been distorted by fear or coercion. *Zahira Habibullah Sheikh* similarly underscores the justice system's responsibility where intimidation compromises truth-finding.[21]

VI. Overlap, federal coherence, and transnational enforcement

A. Overlap with special legislation

The same facts may engage Section 111 and the statutes governing money laundering, unlawful activities, narcotic drugs, or State organized-crime laws.[22] Overlap is not automatically invalid, because each offence may contain distinct ingredients and protect different legal interests. It nonetheless creates risks of duplicated allegations, inconsistent theories, forum disputes, and

[19] Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, No. 15 of 2003, INDIA CODE (2003), §§ 3–5, 17, 19, 24.
[20] *Mahender Chawla v. Union of India*, (2019) 14 SCC 615 (India) (approving the Witness Protection Scheme, 2018).
[21] *Zahira Habibullah Sheikh v. State of Gujarat*, (2004) 4 SCC 158 (India).
[22] Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, No. 15 of 2003, INDIA CODE (2003), §§ 3–5, 17, 19, 24; Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, No. 37 of 1967, INDIA CODE (1967), §§ 15–18, 43D; Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, No. 61 of 1985, INDIA CODE (1985), §§ 27A, 29, 37, 53A.

punishment disproportionate to the accused's actual role. Prosecutors should prepare an offence-to-evidence chart explaining the separate ingredient served by each charge and should record why cumulative prosecution is necessary.

Article 20(2) prohibits a second prosecution and punishment for the same offence, but constitutional protection should not be reduced to a late technical inquiry after multiple proceedings have imposed their burdens.[23] Coordinated investigation, early disclosure of parallel proceedings, reasoned joinder or prosecutorial election where legally available, and sentencing attention to the total punitive effect are sound rule-of-law practices. They preserve legitimate statutory overlap while discouraging charge-stacking as leverage.

B. The boundary with petty organized crime and terrorism

Section 112 separately addresses petty organized crime by a group or gang, including specified forms of theft, snatching, cheating, unauthorized ticket sales, unauthorized betting or gambling, and comparable acts.[24] Its existence reinforces the need to preserve Section 111's higher enterprise threshold. Repetition and group participation alone do not necessarily satisfy Section 111; the continuity definition, syndicate nexus, specified means, and material-benefit structure must still be shown.

The boundary with terrorism turns principally on statutory elements and proved purpose, not on rhetorical descriptions of danger. A network may raise money through organized crime and apply it to terrorist activity, permitting separate charges when the evidence supports both. Courts should nevertheless identify the benefit-oriented enterprise conduct and the terror-related conduct separately. This prevents one grave label from substituting for proof of another and respects the Supreme Court's broader insistence that special offences retain their distinct legal ingredients.

C. Transnational cooperation

UNTOC directs attention beyond domestic criminalization to confiscation, mutual legal assistance, and law-enforcement cooperation.[25] Those functions are essential where servers, victims, proceeds, shell entities, or participants lie outside India. A Section 111 case with transnational features should therefore include an early jurisdiction and cooperation plan: preservation requests, chain-of-custody arrangements, beneficial-ownership inquiries, mutual legal assistance, extradition assessment, and coordination of asset restraint. International

[23] INDIA CONST. arts. 14, 20(2), 21.
[24] Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, No. 45 of 2023, INDIA CODE (2023), § 112.
[25] United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, *supra* note 3, arts. 12, 13, 18, 27.

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cooperation must still observe domestic admissibility and fair-trial requirements. Evidence lawfully obtained abroad is not self-proving; authenticity, reliability, disclosure, and the opportunity to challenge remain necessary.

VII. Recommendations for Effective and Rights-Compliant Implementation

Section 111 can be made both effective and constitutionally durable through a uniform implementation model. The first requirement is a written predicate-offence matrix. Before the provision is invoked, the case record should identify every charge-sheet relied upon, the cognizance order, the statutory punishment, the relevant dates, the accused or syndicate member concerned, and the alleged relationship to the same enterprise. Courts should be able to test the continuity threshold without reconstructing it from scattered files.

Second, investigators should prepare an enterprise-nexus statement. It should describe the alleged syndicate, its continuity, its decision or coordination structure, its resources, its benefit model, and the role attributed to each accused. For facilitators and members, the statement should identify evidence of knowledge and conscious participation. This requirement would not compel premature disclosure of sensitive operational detail; it would require the State to formulate a legally reviewable theory rather than rely on an undifferentiated association narrative.

Third, invocation should receive senior and prosecutorial review through executive guidelines until Parliament considers a statutory gate. The reviewer should certify that ordinary group offending is insufficient, that Section 111's cumulative elements are plausibly supported, that overlapping statutes have been assessed, and that the requested investigative measures are separately lawful and proportionate. Review should be reasoned and preserved for judicial scrutiny, not treated as a mechanical signature.

Fourth, liability and sentencing must remain role-sensitive. Commission, knowing facilitation, conscious membership, harbouring, and possession of proceeds are distinct pathways. Evidence sufficient for one pathway should not automatically establish another. At sentencing, courts should distinguish leadership, violence, profit, coercion of subordinate participants, duration, victim impact, cooperation, and actual control of proceeds. Mandatory minima do not eliminate the judicial duty to individualize punishment within the available range.

Fifth, capacity building should integrate criminal, financial, and digital expertise. Specialized teams need trained investigators, prosecutors engaged from the beginning, forensic accountants, cyber-forensic support, and reliable interstate coordination. Witness protection and privacy review should be embedded in the case plan. This institutional model is more likely to dismantle durable enterprises than a strategy measured only by the number of cases in which Section 111 is added.

Finally, appellate courts should develop a structured Section 111 jurisprudence. Charge and bail orders should separately address continuity, syndicate identity, individual nexus, unlawful means, and benefit objective. Trial judgments should state which evidence proves each element and each accused's liability pathway. A transparent element-based method will allow genuine doctrinal development, expose inconsistent charging, and give law-enforcement agencies clearer guidance than broad observations about the seriousness of organized crime.

VIII. Conclusion

Section 111 of the BNS is a major change in Indian criminal law because it brings organized crime into the national penal code and recognizes the harms produced by durable criminal enterprises rather than by isolated offenders alone. Its text is capable of addressing traditional syndicates as well as decentralized networks engaged in cyber-enabled fraud, trafficking, coercive land control, and complex economic crime. Its extended liability and proceeds provisions also permit attention to the planners, facilitators, members, and beneficiaries who sustain such enterprises.

The central finding of this article, however, is that substantive centralization has not been matched by a complete procedural architecture. Section 111 draws important concepts from MCOCA but operates within the ordinary national framework unless another special law applies. That choice does not make the provision ineffective. It makes careful interpretation and charging discipline indispensable. MCOCA jurisprudence should guide courts toward continuity, enterprise nexus, conscious participation, and strict proof, while its exceptional procedures cannot be imported without legislative authority.

The correct construction is therefore cumulative and enterprise-oriented. A listed serious offence committed by several persons is not enough. The State should identify a qualifying continuing unlawful activity, a legally cognizable syndicate, the accused's membership or action on its behalf, the statutory unlawful means, and the material-benefit objective. Secondary and property-based liability should require appropriate mens rea and foundational facts. These requirements give practical content to legality, equality, personal liberty, and individualized criminal responsibility.

A national predicate matrix, an enterprise-nexus statement, senior charging review, integrated financial and digital investigation, effective witness protection, and reasoned management of overlapping statutes would close much of the implementation gap. These measures would not weaken organized-crime enforcement. They would concentrate Section 111 on the enterprises for which its exceptional punishments are justified, improve the reliability of prosecutions, and reduce the risk that severity substitutes for proof. The provision's long-term legitimacy will depend on that balance.

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