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# **JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND INFLUENCE OF TECHNOLOGY: A CRIMINOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This research paper explores the subject of juvenile delinquency, as a core subject matter with the influence of technology presenting both prospects for criminal behaviour and paths for prevention and intervention. The research paper has a deep study of what is juvenile delinquency is, who juvenile delinquents. The criminological theory that oversees juvenile delinquency and what are the statutes that governs for the crimes committed by minors. A brief discussion about factors that contribute in causes of juvenile delinquency. The paper has guided the reader through the history and evolution of juvenile delinquency in India. The paper highlights juvenile justice system in other countries like U.K, USA and including the Indian juvenile justice system. The paper caters the influence of technology on juvenile delinquents, Technology plays a crucial role in determining juvenile delinquency, influencing both youth involvement in criminal behaviour and the justice system's ability to respond. It serves as a double-edged sword facilitating innovative methods for intervention and rehabilitation, while simultaneously creating new opportunities for misconduct and cyber-related offenses. It elucidates the complex relationship between social media, technology and juvenile delinquency. The research paper concludes with critical analysis, recommendation and suggestions by giving policy recommendation for achieving a balance between rehabilitation and responsibility, thus ensuring that the law upholds juvenile rights while also effectively tackling the rising challenge of technology-driven juvenile offenses.*

**Keywords-** Juvenile Justice, Juvenile Delinquency, Deviant behaviour, Cyberbullying, Sextortion

## **Introduction**

In today's digital era, the relationship between technology and juvenile behaviour has emerged as a significant concern for criminologists, educators, policymakers, and parents. Juvenile delinquency commonly understood as unlawful or antisocial actions committed by individuals under the age of 18 has traditionally been shaped by social, psychological, and environmental

influences. However, the widespread integration of technology into everyday life has added new layers to how young people engage with the world. The ease of internet access, the anonymity provided by digital platforms, and the engaging nature of social media and online gaming have opened the door to new forms of deviant behaviour. These include activities such as cyberbullying, hacking, and involvement in online criminal communities.

It is essential to comprehend how technology either causes or lessens adolescent delinquency from a criminological standpoint. Theories that provide useful frameworks for examining how young people may be impacted by their digital environments include the social learning theory, routine activity theory, and strain theory. However, technology also brings with it new instruments for rehabilitation, intervention, and surveillance. This research aims to investigate the intricate connection between technology and juvenile delinquency, looking at how technological advancements influence young people's criminal behaviour, the theoretical underpinnings of this phenomena, and the consequences for prevention and policymaking.

Identity theft, hacking, cyberbullying, and online sexual exploitation are no longer crimes primarily committed by adults; instead, young people are becoming more and more involved, either as perpetrators or victims. Although Indian law provides a specialized framework for dealing with juvenile offenders, it was primarily designed before the explosion of social media and sophisticated cyber activities. The current legal framework struggles with unique issues posed by juvenile cybercrimes such as evidentiary challenges, cross-jurisdictional problems, and the need for specialized rehabilitation. There is thus an urgent need to examine whether existing laws are equipped to handle technology-driven juvenile offences effectively and to explore avenues for reform. Nations, like the USA, have recently chosen to shift from lenient and reformative principles to austere ones in response to the exponential increase in the brutality of crimes perpetrated by minors. India and the UK, however, are steadfast in their commitment to the reformative and rehabilitative paradigm and will not give up on these young people.

## **INTRODUCTION TO JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND WHO ARE JUVENILE DELINQUENTS ARE? AND TECHNOLOGIES ROLE**

### **Juvenile Delinquency**

The word “juvenile” originates from juvenis, (in Latin) i.e young. Delinquency is defined as a child's aberrant behaviour or divergence from the norm. A person who exhibits unlawful

activity and has strayed from the norms of their social life is typically referred to as a delinquent. When a young person under a certain age demonstrates unlawful and antisocial behaviour that could endanger society, they may be classified as a juvenile delinquent. Boys and females under the age of eighteen who commit any kind of offense are considered juvenile delinquents. A young person who is disobedient and defiant is considered a juvenile delinquent. The phrase refers to young people who engage in criminal or antisocial activities like violence, drug misuse, stealing, or graffiti. Since juvenile offenders frequently lack the mental and emotional maturity of adults, the juvenile justice system places more emphasis on rehabilitation than punishment. Nonetheless, the terms "conflict with law" and "delinquency" are sometimes identical or can be used interchangeably to refer to children who come into contact with the legal system because they have committed or are accused of committing a crime.

### **Who are juvenile delinquents?**

When someone under the age of eighteen does an act that would be a felony if they were an adult, they are labelled juvenile delinquents. These adolescent offenders are typically handled in a specialized juvenile court system, which differs from how other legal systems handle adult offenders. The majority of the causes of delinquency and neglect are widespread and connected, according to a number of hypotheses and research findings. The issue of adolescent delinquency is caused by a number of factors, including racial prejudice, poor environmental circumstances, socioeconomic instability, physical or sexual abuse, familial seclusion, broken homes, and a deficient educational system. Children who are neglected by their parents, families, and society as a whole suffer from problems that affect not just their mental and social development but also their general growth. Even the "UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice," also referred to as the Beijing Rules of 1985 and the UN Convention on the Rights of Child of 1989, are founded on international agreement and state that children who are in legal trouble should receive extra consideration. In view of the aforementioned, this study emphasized and concentrated on how India's juvenile justice system has expanded and developed through a number of legislative and constitutional laws.<sup>1</sup>

### **Juvenile Delinquency and Impact of technology**

Technology affects juvenile delinquency in a variety of ways, serving as a tool for more conventional crimes as well as a catalyst for novel ones. Young people, who are frequently

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<sup>1</sup> Black's Law Dictionary, 11th ed. (St. Paul, MN: Thomson Reuters, 2019), s.v. "juvenile delinquent."

more vulnerable to the harmful effects of the online world, face particular difficulties as a result of the digital age. The extensive use of social media and the quick development of technology have given adolescent delinquency new dimensions. In addition to altering the kinds and frequency of offenses, these modifications have also changed the underlying risk factors and necessitated the development of new preventative and intervention strategies. Technology has surpassed more conventional elements like peer groups and families as the most important factor affecting teenage criminality. Due to its popularity and ease of use among young people, technology is becoming a major factor in both the causes and symptoms of delinquent behaviour. Complexity of Challenges: When information technology is misused, it can result in actions that go against moral, ethical, and religious standards. Teenagers who are not guided when utilizing technology are more likely to become delinquent. Adolescent behaviour is significantly and intricately shaped by social media platforms. In addition to providing chances for constructive social connection and support, they can also raise the likelihood of undesirable behaviours like delinquency, dangerous behaviour, and emotional issues.

Exposure to Negative Ideas and Content: Glorification of Violence: Youth may be exposed to material on the internet and social media that normalizes or exalts crime, violence, and antisocial conduct. As a result, they may become less sensitive to the repercussions of their actions in the real world and be more inclined to commit similar crimes. Access to Criminal Information: Technology makes it simple and frequently anonymous to obtain information on a variety of illicit activities, such as hacking and drug production. It has the potential to "stimulate the curiosity of the juvenile to an unforeseen level" and give them the information they need to conduct crimes. Predator Grooming: Predators can target and groom emotionally susceptible youth because of the anonymity of the internet. Innocent online chats might turn into sexually explicit behaviour, leaving the young person traumatized and possibly triggering antisocial behaviour as a coping strategy.<sup>2</sup>

## **CRIMINOLOGICAL THEORIES AND THEIR ROLE IN JUVENILE THEORIES**

### **Social learning theory**

In the 1970s, Canadian psychologist Albert Bandura created one of these, the Social Learning Theory. It claims that kids and teenagers pick up new behaviours by watching others and then

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<sup>2</sup> Sameer Hinduja & Justin W. Patchin, *Cyberbullying: Identification, Prevention, and Response* (Cyberbullying Research Center, 2019).

imitating them. One aspect of it is watching these alluring virtual "characters" hundreds of times every day. Through social media, kids and teenagers can not only see how others behave, but also take it a step further and act it out themselves. Behaviour that may be antisocial or even criminal is not only glamorized but also promoted and rewarded on Instagram and other sites like Facebook and TikTok.

### **Strain Theory**

Robert Merton's Strain Theory, a critical sociological lens that can be used to explain the effects of social media on juvenile delinquency. These culturally constructed objectives, which are attainable but also unattainable for the typical young person in the social media age, frequently have to do with material prosperity, fame, and a specific way of life. According to the strain theory, which was first put forth by Robert Merton and then improved upon by Robert Agnew (as General Strain Theory), crime is a reaction to the tension and annoyance that a person feels when they are unable to fulfil culturally significant objectives through legal methods.

### **Social control theory**

According to the Social Control Theory of juvenile delinquency, which is most famously linked to Travis Hirschi, delinquent behaviour happens when a person's ties to society are weakened or severed. The idea contends that strong social ties support conformance to societal norms, which explains why people do not commit crimes rather than why they do. It is assumed that social control is what keeps people in check because they are naturally inclined toward transgression. Four essential components, or "social bonds," that bind an individual to society were recognized by Hirschi. A person's stake in conformity is diminished and they are more prone to act in a delinquent manner when these ties are weakened. Mostly linked to Travis Hirschi, adopts a distinct strategy. It asks why people don't commit crimes rather than why they do. According to the theory, strong social ties to traditional culture deter delinquency. A person is more inclined to act in a delinquent manner when these ties are weak or broken.

## **TECHNOLOGY AND THE CAUSES OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY**

Technology has a significant role in adolescent delinquency by facilitating new kinds of offenses and aggravating pre-existing risk factors. It mostly affects teenagers by exposing them to damaging material, encouraging crimes involving cyberspace, and heightening social pressures and feelings of loneliness. Juveniles are always individuals with innocence and curiosity that sustains with their age. Due to the fact that cyberspace offers lot of places to

explore irrespective of their good or bad characteristics, it stimulates the curiosity of the juvenile to an unforeseen level and offers him an escapade into the world of fantasy but it also causes an insurmountable damage to his views of reality and makes him numb towards the feelings of fellow brethren the society<sup>3</sup>.

### **Effect of Social media**

Adolescent behavior is significantly and intricately shaped by social media platforms. In addition to providing chances for constructive social connection and support, they can also raise the likelihood of undesirable behaviors like delinquency, dangerous behavior, and emotional issues. Adolescents who use social media are more likely to engage in dangerous behaviors, such as substance abuse, risky sexual activity, and, to a lesser extent, behaviors associated to violence. The younger teenagers and those using more recent sites than Facebook or Myspace had a stronger association. Exposure social media privacy violations, cyberbullying, and disinformation can make people more prone to engaging in delinquent behavior and experiencing mental discomfort. Extended usage (more than 4 hours daily) is linked to conduct issues, hyperactivity, inattention, low self-esteem, and poor emotional health. The majority of urban youth in India now cannot avoid social media, which follows global models but has some regionally particular subtexts that influence how this technology influences young people's behavior globally. India is one of the top social media-using nations in the world, with a sizable percentage of its users being under the age of 18, according to reports from digital insights companies. According to recent data, over 400 million Indians frequently use social media, with a significant portion of this user base being in the 10–24 age range.

### **New Form of Juvenile delinquency with advancement of technology**

The causes of juvenile delinquency have changed significantly, with technology now being a major factor. This trend emphasizes the need for revised preventative and intervention approaches and reflects broader societal shifts. Since adolescent delinquency is changing in the digital era, it is necessary to conduct ongoing study to find new risk factors, practical preventative measures, and the effects of new technologies.

- Cyberbullying: Involves using digital platforms to do recurrent, deliberate harm. It differs from conventional bullying because of its anonymity, accessibility, and

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<sup>3</sup> ROLE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN THE CAUSATION OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

disclosure hurdles. The most prevalent type is verbal abuse, which has high incidence rates worldwide and a notable overlap between victim and perpetrator.

- **Sexting:** Includes transmitting, receiving, or sharing content that is sexually explicit. Both cyberbullying and traditional bullying are intimately related to sexting, and over time, the behaviours tend to reinforce one another. Sext forwarding by third parties is especially linked to bullying behaviours.
- **Identity theft and Hacking:** Unauthorized access to digital systems or personal data is a component of these property-based crimes. Low self-control and abnormal peer relationships are closely linked to juvenile hacking, and participation is influenced by gender and the urban/rural setting.
- **Other Offences:** Crimes such as online sexual solicitation, voyeurism, child pornography, and cyberstalking are also significant threats, often overlapping with other forms of cyber deviance.<sup>4</sup>

## **LEGAL FRAMEWORK THAT WORKS FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM IN INDIA AND ITS GAPS**

- **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015<sup>5</sup>**

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, is a comprehensive legal framework enacted by the Indian Parliament to address the care, protection, and rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law, as well as those in need of care and protection. The Act was passed amidst significant public debate and controversy, particularly regarding its approach to serious offences committed by juveniles

### **Key Provisions and features:**

- **Child-Friendly Justice System:** In accordance with UN principles, the Act seeks to establish a justice system that is considerate of children's needs. Agreement on children's rights. In order to return children to their families whenever feasible, it prioritizes rehabilitation and reintegration over punitive measures.
- **Expanded Definitions:** In order to provide more comprehensive protection and care for vulnerable groups, the Act adds additional definitions, such as "orphaned," "abandoned," and "surrendered" children.

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<sup>4</sup> IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY ON JUVENILE CRIMES: A LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

<sup>5</sup> Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015

- **Timelines and Procedures:** It establishes precise deadlines for the Juvenile Justice Board's investigations and expedites the adoption process in an effort to create more effective and kid-centred procedures.
- **New Offenses and Safeguards:** To improve monitoring and accountability, the Act requires all child care institutions to register and adds new categories of offenses against children.
- **Participation Rights:** Although there is still limited practical application of this right, children in need of care and protection have the right to take part in and voice their opinions at every step of their interactions with the legal system.

The clause permitting minors between the ages of 16 and 18 who are charged with "heinous offences" to face adult trials is one of the most contentious features. This has sparked questions about whether it complies with international human rights norms, especially the best interests of the child and non-discrimination principles. Despite the Act's foundation in the concepts of rehabilitation and reform, others contend that the transfer of some minors to the adult.

Children may be exposed to harsher circumstances and these aspirations may be undermined by the criminal justice system. Restorative justice and diversionary programs are becoming more and more important in order to address the underlying factors that contribute to adolescent delinquency and aid in recovery. Despite advanced legal provisions, there are still issues with children's effective involvement, the operation of juvenile justice boards and child welfare committees, and the general ground-level implementation of the Act.

- **The Information Technology Act of 2000 <sup>6</sup>and How Juvenile Cybercrimes Are Affected by It**

India passed the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000, to combat cybercrimes and give electronic commerce legal status. Its importance has increased due to the sharp rise in juvenile cybercrimes, which call for targeted judicial and preventative actions.

India's main law against cybercrimes, particularly those committed by minors, is the Act. It includes offenses that are frequently connected to juvenile offenders, such as identity theft, hacking, and cyberstalking. The prevalence of juvenile engagement in cybercrimes is on the

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<sup>6</sup> The Information Technology Act of 2000

rise as a result of more access to digital gadgets and the internet. Many juvenile offenders are extremely tech-savvy yet emotionally immature, which leaves them open to illegal activity on the internet.

According to studies, young people frequently only have a basic comprehension of the IT Act, which results in careless or inadvertent legal infractions. Although the IT Act gives law enforcement organizations significant authority to combat cybercrimes, working with minors poses unique difficulties that call for striking a balance between punishment and rehabilitation. Alongside the IT Act, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, makes sure that children who are in legal trouble receive different treatment than adults, emphasizing rehabilitation over severe punishment.

- **Indian Penal Code 1860<sup>7</sup> Provisions Applicability on Juveniles**

Although the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 governs juveniles primarily, they may still be charged with technology-related offenses under several IPC provisions, but with procedures and sentencing tailored for kids.

The IPC's provisions on criminal breach of trust (Section 405) and cheating (Section 415) When minors commit crimes involving technology, they are subject to forgery (Section 463), identity theft (Section 419 for impersonation), and cyber defamation (Section 499). Juveniles, however, are decided in juvenile-friendly settings rather than in traditional courts. Cybercrimes (such as online threats, data theft, or spreading pornographic material) are also considered traditional offenses when they are performed by digital methods, such as theft (Section 378), criminal intimidation (Section 503), and obscenity (Section 292). Although the IT Act 2000 addresses certain cybercrimes, IPC provisions are frequently used in conjunction with IT Act provisions to guarantee thorough legal protection. When a minor is convicted of a cybercrime under the IPC, the Juvenile Justice Act's kid-friendly processes are followed, with an emphasis on reform and rehabilitation.

- **Examining the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012<sup>8</sup>, Act in relation to juvenile offenses involving technology**

The POCSO Act was created to protect kids from online and offline sexual exploitation. The

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<sup>7</sup> Indian Penal Code 1860

<sup>8</sup> Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012

Act now more broadly encompasses offenses like disseminating sexual content, online grooming, and child pornography because to the increase in juvenile internet use. Regardless of whether it is produced digitally or not, the POCSO Act makes it illegal to produce, distribute, or possess sexual content involving children. If minors engage in digital sexual offenses (such as sharing explicit photographs or engaging in sextortion), they may also face prosecution under POCSO. But the law mandates courts to adopt rehabilitative measures as necessary, taking into account the offender's age and mental maturity. Notwithstanding its extensive reach, the Act's efficacy in cases involving technology-based violations is diminished by problems including delayed court proceedings, social stigma, and investigators' lack of cyber-forensic training.

## **THE CASE DISCUSSION OF THE JAMES BULGER MURDER CASE AND THE NIRBHAYA CASE AND ITS IMPACT ON JUVENILE JUSTICE POLICY IN INDIA**

### **The Nirbhaya Case and Its Impact on Juvenile Justice Policy in India**

One significant turning point was the Nirbhaya Gang Rape case 2012<sup>9</sup>. Due to public outcry, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2015, which permits minors between the ages of 16 and 18 to be tried as adults for serious offenses, including cybercrimes, was passed after one of the accused was a minor. According to research, young people are increasingly committing crimes like hacking, internet abuse, and spreading pornographic content. Nonetheless, courts typically prioritize rehabilitation first, which reflects the idea that minors ought to receive alternative treatment unless their offense is really serious.

According to new theories, it's critical to comprehend the social and psychological backgrounds of young cybercriminals. It is advised to customize rehabilitation programs using ideas such as the Risk-Need-Responsivity model. According to a Northeast Indian study, the majority of juvenile crimes were physical offenses like theft or rape, but increasing internet access suggests that cybercrimes are becoming more common among educated young people. Particularly in light of the rise in tech-based offenses, judicial trends in India concerning juvenile cybercrimes show a move towards striking a balance between child protection and culpability.

Post-Nirbhaya Shift Toward Stricter Scrutiny: In the wake of the Nirbhaya case, judges became

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<sup>9</sup> Mukesh v State for NCT of Delhi (2017)

more stringent, permitting minors (16–18 years old) who commit horrible crimes, such as major cybercrimes, to face adult trials under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2015.

**Child-Centric Interpretation Still Predominates:** Despite stricter legislation, courts uphold the idea that children should have an opportunity at reform by favouring rehabilitation over punishment unless the offense is really serious.

**Interpretation in Ambiguous Cases:** The Supreme Court made it clear in the seminal case of *Shilpa Mittal v. State of NCT Delhi* that offenses that only call for the maximum penalty (without minimum limits) shouldn't be automatically classified as "heinous" under the Juvenile Justice Act, maintaining protections for minors in situations where there is ambiguity.

### **The case discussion of The James Bulger Murder Case**

The murder of James Bulger, a two-year-old toddler, in February 1993 shocked the British. The case revolved around the fact that the victim of the vicious crime was a toddler and that the crime was committed by two juveniles who were 10 years old at the time. The murder was regarded as one of the most horrific child crimes in history and a mirror of Britain's moral decline. This "senseless killing" lacked any sort of justification or motivation. According to the US Department of Justice, killings of Children and young people are considered the worst kind of juvenile victimization, which has garnered attention recently. The murder of James Bulger is regarded as a major case in British history and garnered international attention. There are two aspects of the case to investigate: the legal aspect and the psychological aspect. "Crimes" and "juvenile delinquency" are viewed as legal definitions rather than behavioural and mental health issues. In this essay, the author aims to provide an overview of the elements of juvenile homicide in relation to James Bulger's murder. Furthermore, the author expresses the idea that children's conduct is influenced by both nature and nurture.

#### **Nature or Nurture?**

The heinous deeds of Robert Thompson and John Venables raised several concerns about the motivations behind carrying out such a horrific crime. The emotional instability that drives a child to kill is directly influenced by their upbringing. In particular, the kids' deviant behaviour has been caused by the violent environment and their lack of financial security. There is a distinction between "nature" and "nurture," to put it simply. Criminal behaviour is seen to be more influenced by nurture than by nature. Children are greatly influenced by their parents and

relatives. Given that Robert Thompson was destined to live in a violent atmosphere, his circumstances were sad when compared to the situations experienced by the two offenders. He was subjected to his father's brutality and bullying on a regular basis. Thompson was raised without parental supervision since his mother was intoxicated and careless, making him the sixth son in a family of seven. Thompson's older brother beat and tortured him all the time. Venables had a quiet family life in contrast to Thompson's. But he had a tendency to intimidate people.

Law enforcement and the "doli incapax" theory

Harper, Justice in R (A Child) "No civilized society regards children as accountable for their actions to the same extent as adults," according to V. Whitty (1993). There is no denying the prudence of shielding young children from the full force of the law.

Since ten is the age of criminal culpability in England, children under that age may avoid prosecution on the grounds that they are too young to understand the repercussions of their actions. It is assumed that children are incapable of making mistakes or comprehending the gravity of their actions. The prosecution must demonstrate that the child understood that the behaviour was gravely wrong and not just mischievous in order to disprove the presumption. Four questions were addressed by the prosecution in Bulger's murder case. The four questions were, on the day of committing the crime, did they know the difference between right and wrong? Did they know that taking the child from the mother was wrong? Did they know that injuring the child is wrong? and did they know that leaving the child on a railway is wrong? All the questions of the prosecution were answered in the affirmative. However, after the conviction, Section 34 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 in the UK abolished the rebuttable presumption of doli incapax. However, the current law in England and Wales marks the age of criminal responsibility as 10 years. The children under 10 years are exempted from arrest whereas children between the ages of 10-18 years can be arrested. The approach of law to a case of a child between 10-18 age categories is prominently different from that of a case of an adult.

When it was discovered that John Venables and Robert Thompson, two ten-year-old youngsters, were the offenders, the case's seriousness increased. The toddler was kidnapped by the two child killers, who then tortured him with stones before abandoning his body on a railroad track to demonstrate that the death was an accident. Their cruelty and lack of regret

are demonstrated by the sequence of events that transpired during the murder. Genetics and environmental factors like the family environment, violence, psychopathy and mental problems, and poor parenting are likely to contribute to a child committing a crime. "Nature" also has a significant role in determining a person's criminal behaviour.<sup>10</sup>

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### Conclusion

Digital technology and social media's explosive growth have had a significant impact on young people's behaviour, opening them new avenues for delinquency such exposure to deviant communities, hacking, cyberbullying, and online harassment. Although legal institutions, such as the juvenile justice system in India, have acknowledged these new risks, they still struggle to completely adjust to the rapidly changing digital environment. Research indicates that although technology creates new avenues for criminal activity, peer pressure, online validation, inadequate parental supervision, and a lack of digital literacy are the main factors that influence young people to commit crimes with technology. Therefore, the legal strategy must balance accountability and rehabilitation, prioritizing early intervention, education, counselling, and restorative justice while modernizing legislation to effectively combat contemporary cybercrimes. For juvenile cyber offenses to be prevented, detected, and managed in a child-sensitive, future-ready legal framework, cooperation between schools, parents, the judiciary, and internet platforms must be strengthened. In the end, combating the influence of social media and technology on juvenile offenses necessitates not only stricter legislation but also a comprehensive system that shields, instructs, and rehabilitates young offenders in a digital environment that is evolving quickly. The pre-requisite mental state and thought process may potentially be etched and such offenders are irredeemable and recidivious, beyond help. Hence, certain nations like the USA has decided to change its approach in juvenile crimes, from a liberal and empathetic approach to a relatively stringent and draconian form. Most perversely, minors. Both the UK and India appear to be very firm about their stance on this issue. Even if statistics and evidence indicate that youth brutal crimes are on the rise, they refuse to alter their strategies and attitude to juvenile criminal problems. The children's confidence that they are properly protected by the law, which gives them the confidence to break the law, may be one of the causes of this growth. The heart-breaking case of Nirbhaya serves as an illustration of this, as a minor was not judged guilty in the eyes of the law even though there was tangible

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<sup>10</sup> A JUVENILE HOMICIDE: A CRIMINOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF THE MURDER OF JAMES BULGER

proof that his mens rea and actus reus amounted to guilt. Because of their age, juveniles who are capable of carrying out such acts after serious consideration and planning most definitely cannot be pardoned.

### **Suggestion**

- **Enhance Digital Literacy and Critical Thinking:** To assist young people in identifying manipulation, peer pressure, and online hazards at an early age, educational institutions must incorporate digital literacy and online critical thinking programs.
- **Better Social Media Governance and Monitoring:** To reduce the amount of dangerous content that young people are exposed to, governments should impose stronger rules on social media platforms regarding content moderation, transparency, and reporting procedures.
- **Early Intervention Through Community and Family Initiatives:** Reducing adolescent delinquency associated with technology requires early community initiatives, such as after-school programs, and parental supervision. Early indicators of aberrant behaviour can be effectively mitigated by family-focused programs.
- **Use Restorative Justice for Cyber Offenses:** To foster rehabilitation and responsibility, restorative justice approaches which involve mediating between victims and young offenders should be promoted for technology-related offenses in lieu of default punitive measures.
- **Revise the Law to Address Tech-Driven Crimes:** Emerging juvenile cybercrimes including online grooming, sextortion, and dark web activity should be specifically addressed by new legislation or revisions, with unique legal processes for children.
- **Support for At-Risk Youth's Mental Health:** Required Psychotherapy and Juvenile justice proceedings should include examinations, particularly for those involving tech-based offenses connected to mental health conditions like isolation or depression.
- **Integration of Global Best Practices:** To better address planned adolescent cyber offenses, Indian officials should think about locally adapting international models such as the "malicious age supplementation" system.

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