

Globalisation, Social Media Ecosystem and Cyber-Delinquency: A Sociological Inquiry of Delinquency in Lucknow, India

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ABSTRACT: Globalisation has significantly transformed the contemporary styles of communication, interaction and information exchange, with social media emerging as a dominant force in shaping youth culture. These platforms facilitate unprecedented connectivity, cultural diffusion, and opportunities for innovation. However, alongside these benefits, they expose young users to vulnerabilities that transcend geographical boundaries. The rapid expansion of social media via internet has created fertile ground for cyber-crimes, misinformation, radicalisation and digital manipulation, raising serious concerns about its influence on children and youth, which at the end can make them victim of those digital manipulations and offenses leading their behaviour as delinquent. Cyber-criminals take advantage of borderless nature of digital networks to engage children in gamextortion, cyber-pornography, deep-fakes and illegal hacking activities, eroding trust in digital infrastructures. Social media algorithms and internet surfing are designed to maximise engagement of users, often expose children to harmful content, extremist propaganda and peer pressures that may encourage deviant behaviour. Equally troubling is the viral spread of misinformation and deep-fakes, which can intensify psychological distress fostering delinquent tendencies among children. This paradox of digital world promising inclusivity and progress while simultaneously amplifying risks of identity theft, data breach and most significant is social media addiction which is causing the cyber-delinquency among children in India

There is an urgent need to examine how children are navigating the digital spaces, this study adopts a qualitative research methodology, employing purposive sampling to gather their insights, experiences and phenomena responsible for cyber-delinquency, from juvenile delinquents who became victim of cyber-delinquency and were engaged in cyber-offences. This approach enables the identification of nuanced perspectives and lived experiences, offering a deeper understanding of how globalisation and social media functions both as a catalyst for integration and as a conduit for juvenile cyber-delinquency. Addressing these challenges requires a multidimensional strategy that integrates technological innovation, digital literacy, socialization and robust policy frameworks. By critically analysing juveniles' perspectives, the research calls to figure out proactive measures to harness the benefits of digital connectivity while safeguarding against its capacity to foster juvenile delinquency in the era of globalisation.

KEYWORDS: Globalisation, Cyber-Delinquency, Cyber-crimes, Cyber-culture, Social Media

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalisation is a multi-dimensional phenomenon with deep impact on every aspect of human society. It has fundamentally reshaped the human interaction, governance and economic structures across the world. And in this process of globalisation internet technological advancements made new ways of communications, data transfer and interactions. Technological advancement, particularly in 'Information and Communication Technologies' (ICTs), has been the driving force behind this transformation. The integration of 'digital networks across the globe and internet technology' into everyday life has resulted in unprecedented connectivity, efficiency and easy access to information. Globalisation is not merely a socio-economic phenomenon but now a days it is becoming more and more a cultural phenomenon driven by multiple forces especially by internet and social media. Internet has its own digital world and with the advent social media applications and communication based applications which enables the individuals to connect not only through voice communication but also through via video and image message facilities. However, alongside these benefits, globalisation has also facilitated the development of new forms of criminality by the interconnection of world through mechanism of internet and digital spaces, commonly referred to as cyber-crime. "Cyber-crime has become one of the most pressing challenges of the 21st century due to its transnational character, technological complexity, and rapid evolution" (Wall, 2007). In the era of globalisation, "Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become a cornerstone of social and

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cultural transformation. Globalisation is a multidimensional process that extends beyond economic integration to encompass cultural diffusion, technological progress, and social change.” ICT is not simply a technical innovation but a powerful instrument that reshapes modern social structures, giving rise to what Castells (1996) famously termed the “network society.” ICT is closely related to Information Technology (IT), “which permeates nearly every aspect of daily life, embedding itself into education, governance, commerce, and personal relationships”. As ICT continues to evolve, it influences cultural phenomena and alters the way individuals interact, communicate, and perceive their environment.

This interconnectedness of digital technology, internet and social media applications, across borders, enabling the rapid spread of ideas, innovations and emergence of new practices in everyday life. The internet world has its own rules, regulations and behavioural patterns, like as society has etiquettes, internet world has netiquettes. “The Internet is indeed a technology of freedom-but it can free the powerful to oppress the uninformed, it may lead to the exclusion of the devalued by the conquerors of value. In this general sense, society has not changed much.” (Castells, 2001, p. 275). However, this interconnectedness also introduces vulnerabilities, particularly in the realm of cyber-crime. The global reach of technology has created a digital environment where deviant behaviours can flourish, often transcending geographical boundaries. This digital environment powered by internet has created its own sort of culture called as “cyber-culture”, which is continuously evolving and adding new dimensions to it by its own. The reciprocal relationship between globalisation, digital technology and internet media has developed a new system of interaction and communication where, images, videos and all sort of data can be exchanged in real time across the borders creating a social media-ecosystem. ‘Boyd and Ellison’ (2007) define “social media platforms as web-based services that enable users to construct profiles and articulate social connections within a networked system.” This social-media ecosystem has its own principles which can’t be controlled and governed by a single phenomenon or authority giving both the opportunities and risks of this transformation for human society. This ecosystem consists of digital technologies and devices, communication applications and enormous of data and information, which is being facilitated via internet.

The concept of “Cyber-society or cyber-world” emerges from term “Cybernetics,” introduced by ‘Norbert Wiener’ in 1948’, which refers to “the science of communication and control between humans and machines”. This fusion of digital communication technologies, internet and social media applications with global connectivity has created a distinct ‘cyber world’, characterized by a new form of culture known as “cyber-culture”. Culture, defined as “the collective beliefs, practices, and traditions of a community, plays a pivotal role in shaping societal values and guiding the trajectory of development.” ‘It is the sum total of all the material and non-material aspects of human society’, thus, cyber-culture can be called as, “norms, behaviours and practices which are being guided, governed and facilitated by internet and internet technologies”. Further, “the set of techniques (material and intellectual), practices, attitudes, modes of thought, and values that develop along with the growth of cyberspace.” (Levy, 2001, p. xvi). The rise of cyber culture illustrates how technological progress fosters unique social environments, where digital interactions often replace traditional forms of communication. The development of cyber culture highlights the intricate and complex relationship between internet technologies, society and globalisation. It can act as a catalyst for innovation when it encourages openness and adaptability, or conversely, it can hinder progress when it clings to deviance, fake news and illicit activities. Society provides the structural context within which culture evolves, while development reflects the dynamic changes that occur within this framework. Understanding this triadic relationship is essential for creating policies that promote sustainable growth and safeguard. The expansion of cyberspace has diluted traditional notions of territorial jurisdiction and physical boundaries, thereby enabling criminal activities to be committed remotely and anonymously. As societies increasingly rely on digital platforms for communication, commerce, education and governance, vulnerabilities within these systems have expanded proportionately. Consequently, cyber-crime has emerged as a significant threat to individual security, social order, and national sovereignty. Cyber-crime refers to “any unlawful activity in which a computer, digital device, or network is used as a tool, target, or medium for committing an offence.” The Council of Europe’s Convention on Cyber-crime categorizes cyber offences into crimes against computer systems, computer-related crimes, content-related offences, and copyright violations (Council of Europe, 2001). Scholars argue that cyber-crime differs from traditional crime in terms of scale, speed, anonymity, and impact, often resulting in mass victimization with minimal physical effort (Yar, 2013). The increasing digitalization of society under globalisation has intensified the reach of cyber-crime, affecting not only financial institutions and governments but also vulnerable social groups such as children and youth. The complexity of cyber-crime necessitates an interdisciplinary understanding, combining legal, sociological, psychological, and technological perspectives. One of the most influential by-products of globalisation is the rise of social media platforms, which have revolutionized modes of communication and social interaction. Social networking sites allow individuals to create digital identities, form virtual communities, and engage in real-time interactions beyond geographical boundaries while social media promotes democratic participation, cultural exchange and freedom of expression, it has also created an environment conducive to cyber deviance. Together this globalisation and cyber-culture exposed our children and youth to global content, ideologies, and behaviours, which may influence their online conduct, sometimes resulting in unlawful activities. The absence of robust regulatory frameworks, combined with the ease of access and perceived anonymity, has made social media a significant facilitator of cyber-crime. Things

become more serious, if crime is being committed by minors or by children (those who have not completed the age of 18 years). Thus, when a minor commits an offence, they are termed as “juvenile delinquent”. “Delinquency is defined, by acts, the detection of which is thought to result in punishment of the person committing them by agents of the larger society.” (Hirschi, 1969, p. 47)

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research work is a qualitative and exploratory in nature and is focused on analysing children involvement in cyber-delinquency, with particular context to the role/involvement of social media. A qualitative approach has been adopted to gain an in-depth understanding of the behavioural patterns, lived experiences, motivations and socio-psychological dimensions of juveniles involved in internet-related offences. Since cyber-crimes among juveniles are an emerging and rapidly evolving phenomenon, an exploratory framework is considered suitable to uncover new insights and dimensions that are not adequately addressed in existing studies. The study is based on an exploratory research design, aimed at exploring deeper insights into the phenomenon of juvenile cyber-delinquency in the age of globalisation. The exploratory design allows flexibility in data collection and multi-dimensional interpretation of factors, which is essential for understanding complex social issues influenced by technological advancements and global digital culture. This design is particularly suitable where the primary objective is to explore underlying causes, perceptions, and experiences. This work focuses on juveniles who are in conflict with law in special context of Lucknow district of Uttar Pradesh, India. The respondents were children below 18 years of age at the time of apprehension by the law and were released from juvenile observation home. This research design facilitates an in-depth examination of real-life cases and provides a contextual understanding of how social media acts as both, an enabling and influencing factor in cyber delinquency among juveniles. The study does not binds on rigid statistical generalisation but seeks to generate qualitative analytical and conceptual insights that can inform policy formulation, legal reforms and rehabilitative strategies.

The study comprises 96 respondents who were released from ‘Boys’ Observation Facility’ at Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India, under the provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015, amended 2021. These juveniles were apprehended for various offences, including internet-related crimes facilitated through digital platforms and social media. The sample for the present study was selected using the purposive sampling technique, a non-probability sampling technique, all 96 respondents (juveniles) were interviewed and observed individually from March 2025 to July 2025 in Lucknow district of Uttar Pradesh, India. This technique was employed to deliberately select juveniles who had direct or indirect involvement in cyber-crime or had significant exposure to social media platforms for unlawful activities and were apprehended by the law. Purposive sampling is appropriate as it enables the researcher to focus on respondents who are appropriate to the objectives of the study and capable of providing rich, meaningful data. The selection of respondents was carried out with due consideration to age, nature of offence and digital exposure. The study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data was collected through personal interviews, discussions with respondents, (juveniles). These qualitative tools facilitated free expression and helped in understanding the respondents’ perceptions regarding cyber-crime, social media usage, peer influence, awareness of cyber laws, and personal circumstances leading to delinquent behaviour. Secondary data was collected from books, peer-reviewed journals, government publications, NCRB reports, legal statutes, policy documents, and previous research studies related to cyber-crime, juvenile justice, and role of globalisation.

Unstructured and semi-structured interview schedules along with discussions were used as the primary tools for data collection. These tools allowed flexibility and in-depth probing the sensitive issues related to juvenile behaviour, emotional vulnerability and digital exposure. Observational method was also used to understand the experience of institutional environment of the Observation Home. Responses were carefully examined, coded and categorised into major themes such as causes of cyber-crime, role of social media, awareness of legal consequences, family background and rehabilitation needs. The analysis focused on identifying patterns, relationships and emerging trends relevant to the research problem rather than statistical generalisation. Given the sensitive nature of the study and the involvement of juveniles, strict ethical standards were maintained throughout the research process. The confidentiality and anonymity of respondents were ensured and the emotional and psychological well-being of the juveniles was given utmost priority. The study strictly adhered to the ethical guidelines prescribed for research involving children.

The primary objective of the study is to examine the nature and patterns of juvenile involvement in cyber delinquency in the age of globalisation, with special reference to the influence of social media platforms. This objective seeks to analyse how digital exposure and global online interactions contribute to cyber delinquency among juveniles. The second objective is to identify and analyse the socio-economic, familial and psychological factors responsible for juveniles’ involvement in cyber delinquency. By studying juvenile involvement in delinquency and rehabilitation, the research aims to explore the interplay of peer pressure, lack of parental supervision, digital illiteracy, and limited awareness of cyber laws. The third objective of this study is to suggest preventive, corrective and rehabilitative measures to address juvenile cyber delinquency. This includes examining the role of family, educational institutions, social media regulation, counselling mechanisms, and the juvenile justice system in preventing cyber delinquency and promoting responsible digital behaviour among juveniles. With this, there are certain limitations and restrictions to this study that

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the respondents were the male juveniles, further this study was specifically focused only to the Lucknow district of Uttar Pradesh, India.

3. THEORETICAL ORIENTATIONS

The accelerated growth of internet technologies alongside globalization has fundamentally transformed social interaction, producing digital environments where opportunities and risks coexist, especially for younger populations. "Cyber-crime commonly understood as unlawful activity conducted through computers, digital systems or online platforms has become a central concern in contemporary discussions of deviance and crime, with social media emerging as a key space for both offending and victimization" (Sidana, 2024). Within this interconnected digital landscape, 'juveniles face heightened vulnerability, they represent a substantial share of global social media users while simultaneously encountering social and structural risk factors that increases their likelihood of exposure to or participation in cyber-criminal activities'. From a sociological perspective, the global circulation of communication technologies hastens the spread of norms, values, and behaviours that young individuals may internalize without sufficient critical judgment or emotional maturity, thereby increasing their susceptibility to cybercrime. Empirical studies examining youth engagement in cybercrime identify several mechanisms through which social media contributes to juvenile offending. "While not all online risks result in self-reported harm, a range of adverse emotional and psychosocial consequences is revealed by longitudinal studies" (Livingstone & Smith, 2014, p. 635). "Social learning theories argues that online spaces marked by anonymity, immediacy, and strong peer influence encourage the replication of harmful behaviours, such as cyberbullying and engagement in dangerous online trends". For instance, "adolescent participation in risky social media challenges or online aggression toward peers has been associated with de-individuation and diminished personal responsibility in digital networks". In a similar manner, research on adolescents indicates that "cyberbullying operates both as a form of juvenile cyber offending and as a source of victimization, highlighting the overlapping and dual roles that young users occupy within online environments" (Cai, 2025).

Existing literature also reveals significant deficiencies in cybercrime awareness and digital literacy among youth. Limited understanding of cyber risks is linked to increased exposure to online harassment, identity misuse, and digital fraud issues that are magnified by the transnational reach of social networking platforms (Ahmed et al., 2025). Moreover, sociological analyses underscore how regulatory gaps and weaknesses in online law enforcement expand opportunities for cyber offending, enabling juveniles to engage in risky online behaviours without fully recognizing their legal consequences or psychological impact. These insights co-joins with broader theoretical frameworks that explain social media driven deviances through processes such as routine activity patterns and peer reinforcement on digital platforms. Cyber-crimes are not only developed and furnished through a singular aspect but there are multiple factors and phenomenon like socialization, socio-economic condition, cultural practices, schooling and pressure from friends-peer groups and most significant and dynamic aspect is the role of internet and cyber-culture which is uncontrolled and un-guided. Now a days, people are equally conscious about their public physical world and about their virtual cyber-world that is, their social media profile and internet activity. Especially when it comes to children, who are in stage of development are highly prone to be a victim of bad, abusive and adult content available on social media and internet. Manuel Castells, in his prominent work, "The Rise of the Network Society" explored the socio- economic and technical dynamics of the informative internet age. He called the modern society an 'informative society'. He points outs that "we are transitioning from the industrial society into the information society. This shift is driven by the advent of new information technologies, particularly those for communication and biological technologies." While the society is capitalistic, the technological means by which it operates has shifted from the notion energy and money to information and data collection. The society which is now interconnected, he refers it as network society, here in this, information is central to determining economic productivity. According to him, "power and authority now rests in networks and information. Some networks, such as that of financial capital like trade and commerce organizations, are global in scale" (Castells, 1996). The notion of "netiquettes" furnishing and shaping a unique internet culture and influencing everyday life of children and youth in India. The geo-political implications of the internet are central to Castells' analysis. While the internet has the power to liberate, it can also marginalize and victimize those who are without access to cyber-security or lacks technological literacy. The digital divide in context of India especially for children and youth should be analysed from a multidimensional global perspective which are real-time challenges to the current network society. Castells discusses how 'individuals can engage in illegal activities such as hacking, identity theft, and online fraud while concealing their true identities behind digital avatars/profiles or anonymous/fake online identities.' This anonymity complicates the efforts to identify and prosecute cyber-criminals, as conventional methods of investigation and surveillance are not efficient in cyberspaces. Furthermore, he also examined the role of social networks and online communities in facilitating these cybercrimes. Castells highlighted the need for "greater transparency, strong and firm cyber-security measures and accountability in data collection practices to protect individuals' privacy and lessen the risk of cyber-crimes." (Castells, 1996)

Ankit Lal in 'India Social: How Social Media Is Leading the Charge and Changing the Country, examines major social-media campaigns in India and analyses how platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp have transformed political

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engagement, popular culture, social movements, and democratic life in India'. (Lal, 2017). Cyber-delinquents commits various offenses, such as hacking, phishing, cyberbullying, sexting, or accessing or distributing unlawful content, etc. Cyber-delinquency poses serious concerns for the legal, educational and all social systems. It is a contemporary sociological concern, arises from online deviant behavior which can harm the generations in a dire manner. It reflects the intersection of technology, culture and deviance, demanding a nuanced understanding for effective prevention and regulation in the age of digitalisation and social media applications. "Excessive or unguided internet use among children can have negative psychological consequences, including increased depression, stress and difficulties in academic, social and personal functioning in everyday life (Anand et al., 2021). "Social media's role in shaping self-esteem, particularly in adolescents is a serious concern", as use of internet in everyday life in each and every aspect is becoming a new normal however it develops stubbornness and arrogance among children, as here on social media children/youth can use fake identity which makes them anonymous (Gupta & Dubey, 2025). Covid-19 pandemic brought education on smartphones/laptops. "The transition to online education increased parental responsibilities and stress, as parents were required to assist and supervise their children's online classes, assignments, tests, and other digital learning activities" (Longjam, 2022). Social media addiction and flex on internet also raised the concern of "overuse of online gaming which is creating aggressive tendencies among children. Globalization and social networking technologies together create conditions in which juveniles are both disproportionately victimized and culprit in cybercrimes. Effectively responding to these challenges necessitates comprehensive strategies that promote digital literacy, reinforce regulatory and policing structures and integrate sociological perspectives into prevention and intervention efforts.

4. EXPLORING THE DYNAMICS OF DELINQUENCY

In the line of data collection, 96 respondents (juveniles) were interviewed individually in Lucknow district of Uttar Pradesh, India. All the juvenile respondents were earlier apprehended in Boys' Observation Home, officially known as "Rajkiya Bal Samprekshan Grah" located on Mohaan Road, Buddheshwar, Lucknow. Among them, the majority 62.5% (60 boys) were aged 16 years at the time of apprehension. Among all respondents majority of them that is 74% (71 boys), were from nuclear families, residing only with parents and siblings. Their caste-based distribution showed that 59.3% (57 juveniles) belonged to Scheduled Caste category, while 13.5% (13) were from Other Backward Classes, further 11.5% (11) represented the General category and 15.6% (15) were from minority Muslim families. When it comes to offences 16.7% (16 juveniles) were apprehended for petty offences, 38.5% (37) for serious offences and 44.8% (43) for heinous crimes. Digital exposure and use of internet was a common phenomenon among all. Out of 96 juveniles, 94 (97.9%) juveniles were familiar with smartphones and use of internet. All were fully familiar with use of smartphones and were actively engaged on social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp and various short-video applications. Looking down specifically 26% (25 boys) were highly active on Instagram, 25% (24 boys) preferred YouTube, while 17.7% (17 boys) used multiple platforms simultaneously. Ownership of smartphones was also notable: 59.4% (57 juveniles) possessed personal devices before apprehension, while 40.6% (39) relied on phones belonging to parents or siblings. Exposure to adult content was widespread, with 82.3% (79 juveniles) admitted that they watched pornographic videos, leaving only 17.7% (17 boys) who had not. Despite being at an age meant for education and constructive socialization, many had already fallen into the influence of pornography and explicit material. Except for two boys, nearly all 97.9% (94 juveniles) were actively engaged on social media platforms, underscoring the deep penetration of digital culture in their daily lives.

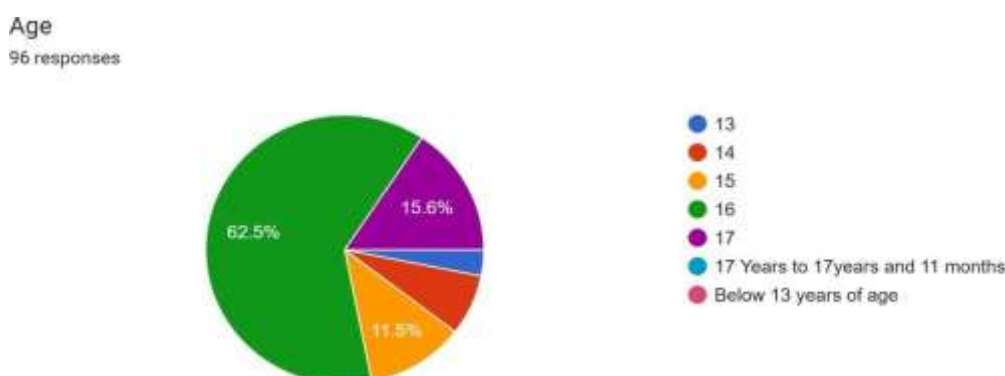


Fig. 1: The above pie-chart shows juvenile of different age groups

Family type

96 responses

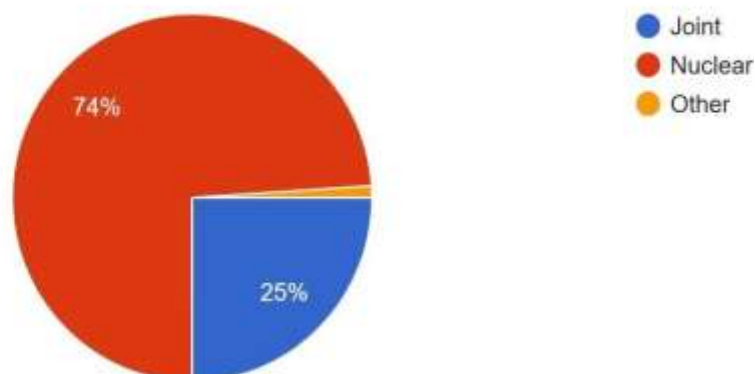


Fig. 2: The above pie chart shows family type of juveniles

Count of Caste Group of Juveniles

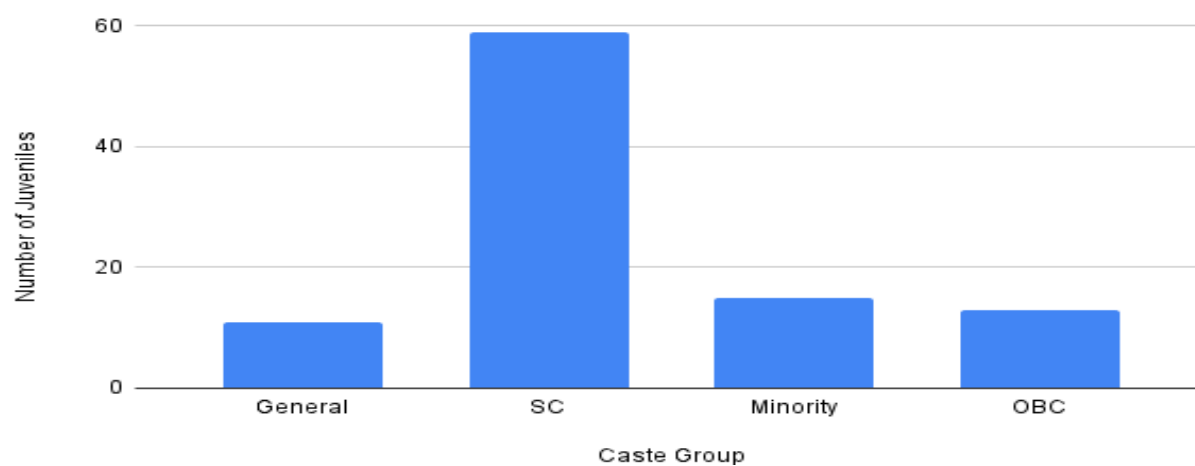


Fig. 3: The above graph shows caste dynamics of juveniles

Nature of Offence

96 responses

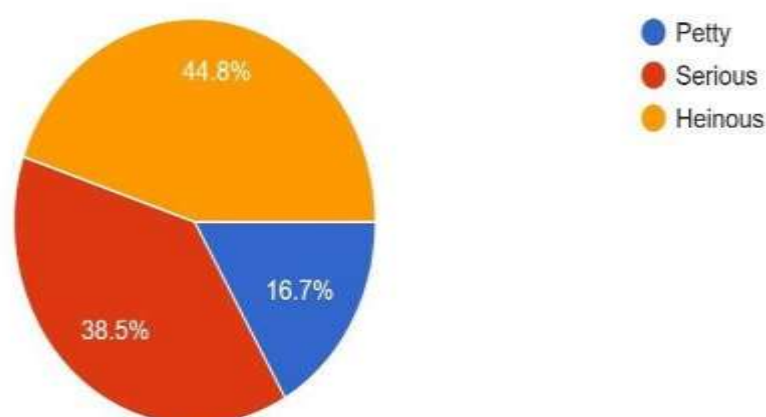


Fig. 4: The above pie chart showed the nature of offence committed by juveniles

Are you aware about use of smartphones and internet ?

96 responses



Fig. 5: The above pie chart shows the awareness about use of smartphones and internet among juveniles

Do you were having your own smartphone ?

96 responses

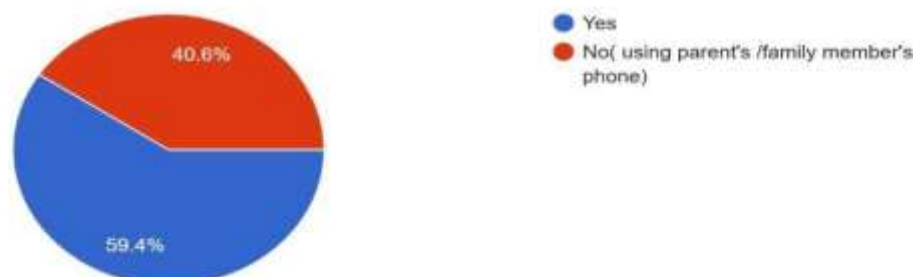


Fig. 6: The above pie chart shows count of juveniles having their own smartphones

Do you use, social media applications ?

96 responses

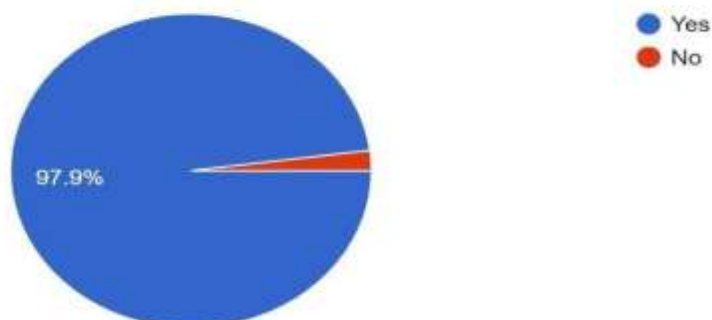


Fig. 7: The above pie-chart shows the count of juveniles who were active on social media applications

Which social media application you prefer most and highly active on it?

96 responses

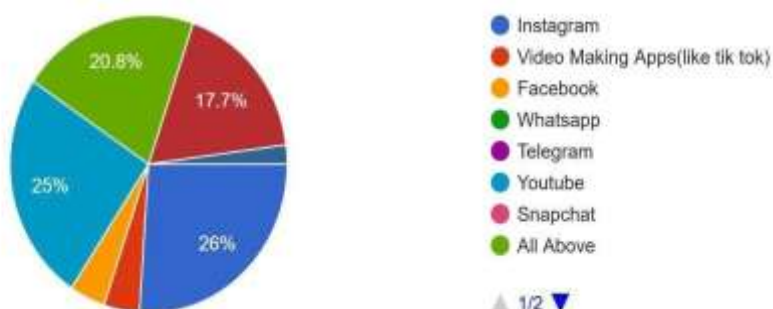


Fig. 8: The above pie chart depicts various social media platforms being used by among juveniles

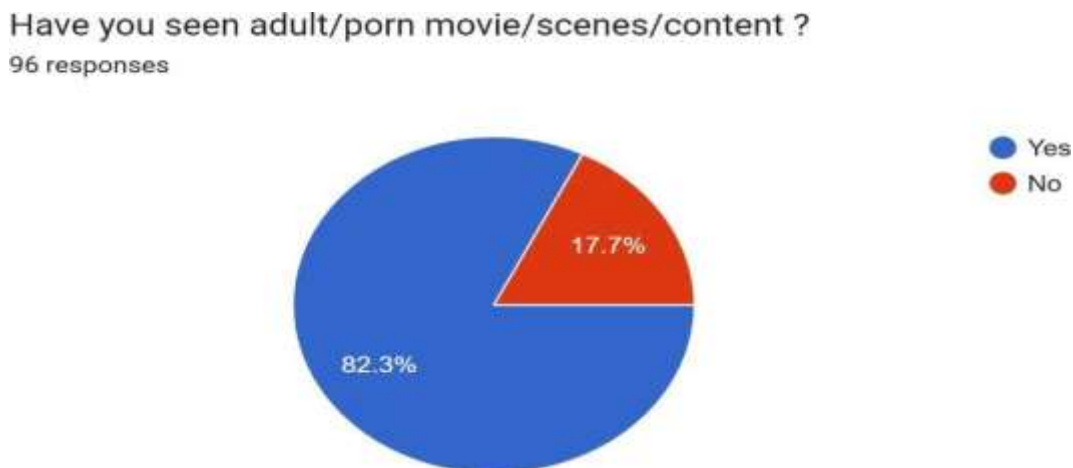


Fig. 9:: The above pie chart shows number count of juveniles who had seen porn/adult content on internet

It is not only a matter of delinquency or cyber-offences but also addiction to internet gaming platforms especially those where one has to pay for online games, is also responsible for making children both victim as well as culprit of cyber- offences especially related to money. Earlier due to increase adverse effect of internet gaming government of India banned certain online games viz. "Blue Whale Game Suicide Challenge" and "PUBG" and many other games which made many children victims as well as culprit of cyber- gamextortion are also the reflections that how due to lack of cyber-security and inefficient monitoring of internet world is destroying the tender lives of our children. It's a core concern that more than 82% of juveniles have already seen the porn content and are fully aware about social media applications regarding pornography. The cyber-culture has brought unprecedented access to information and connectivity, but it has also introduced challenges like AI generated deep-fakes, fake news and fake advertisements. In a globalized society which is not only connected through economic ties but also through the connections of internet, creating another virtual world within this physical world may lead to serious crime related concerns as remoteness and anonymity are key factors which can restrict to surveillance those activities. Internet addiction and excessive use of social media are among the most pressing concerns especially in context of Gen-z and Gen-alpha for not only India but across the world. If this internet addiction remains continue, children develops a dependency on virtual interactions, undermining their ability to form meaningful offline relationships. Unregulated access to online content exposes children to inappropriate material like pornography, deep-fakes and fake news. Early exposure to these explicit and adult content can distort perceptions of relationships, intimacy and self-realization. It can normalize unhealthy behaviors and attitudes, perpetuating cycles of exploitation and objectification of men/women. Social media platforms are designed to captivate users, often leading to excessive use among children. The constant comparison to curated online personas can erode self-esteem and foster feelings of inadequacy and inferiority.

Strong cyber surveillance and strict internet security protocols must be ensured in order to curtail the cyber-offences and to provide a clean and safe digital environment to our children and youth. Cyber-security is an urgent need of hour, as in nation like India, where internet is not only a source of communication, but also used for knowledge sharing, data transmission, data storage, entertainment and also a platform for generating income via multiple businesses. Since, Covid-19 human behavior and perception changed significantly especially in education sector. Nowadays smartphones and internet are becoming an integral part of school and university education, where many children are highly prone to be a victim as well as culprit of cyber-crimes. Data from NCRB shared in Rajya Sabha on dated 24-11-2024 shows a significant high rise in cyber-crimes in India.

Table. A: The above table shows state-wise cases registered under cyber-crimes in India

ANNEXURE-I
RS USQ. NO. 234 FOR 27.11.2024

STATE/UT-WISE CASES REGISTERED UNDER CYBER CRIMES DURING 2018-2022

SL	State/UT	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1	Andhra Pradesh	1207	1886	1899	1875	2341
2	Arunachal Pradesh	7	8	30	47	14
3	Assam	2022	2231	3530	4846	1733
4	Bihar	374	1050	1512	1413	1621
5	Chhattisgarh	139	175	297	352	439
6	Goa	29	15	40	36	90
7	Gujarat	702	784	1283	1536	1417
8	Haryana	418	564	656	622	681
9	Himachal Pradesh	69	76	98	70	77
10	Jharkhand	930	1095	1204	953	967
11	Karnataka	5839	12020	10741	8136	12556
12	Kerala	340	307	426	626	773
13	Madhya Pradesh	740	602	699	589	826
14	Maharashtra	3511	4967	5496	5562	8249
15	Manipur	29	4	79	67	18
16	Meghalaya	74	89	142	107	75
17	Mizoram	6	8	13	30	1
18	Nagaland	2	2	8	8	4
19	Odisha	843	1485	1931	2037	1983
20	Punjab	239	243	378	551	697
21	Rajasthan	1104	1762	1354	1504	1833
22	Sikkim	1	2	0	0	26
23	Tamil Nadu	295	385	782	1076	2082
24	Telangana	1205	2691	5024	10303	15297
25	Tripura	20	20	34	24	30
26	Uttar Pradesh	6280	11416	11097	8829	10117
27	Uttarakhand	171	100	243	718	559
28	West Bengal	335	524	712	513	401
	TOTAL STATE(S)	26931	44511	49708	52430	64907
29	A&N Islands	7	2	5	8	28
30	Chandigarh	30	23	17	15	27
31	D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu+		3	3	5	5
32	Delhi	189	115	168	356	685
33	Jammu & Kashmir *	73	73	120	154	173
34	Ladakh	-	-	1	5	3
35	Lakshadweep	4	4	3	1	1
36	Puducherry	14	4	10	0	64
	TOTAL UT(S)	317	224	327	544	986
	TOTAL (ALL INDIA)	27248	44735	50035	52974	65893

Source: Crime in India

Note : '+' Combined data of erstwhile D&N Haveli UT and Daman & Diu UT for 2018, 2019

*Data of erstwhile Jammu & Kashmir State including Ladakh for 2018, 2019

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

India has made significant strides in addressing cyber-crimes against children, yet legal shortcomings persist in ensuring their complete safety from cyber offences and digital exploitation. The multi-dimensional phenomenon of globalization with the everyday use of internet and social media creating a deep broad trench which is making a shift in thinking-learning processes for every children and youth especially in developing nation like India. Now, Internet and social media is becoming an integral part of everyday activity. However, up to an extent, if used positively in a controlled and guided manner, internet and social media is also

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providing multiple opportunities and new dimensions in gaining information, providing financial opportunities and creating new ideas rapidly. But in a developing nation like India, since Covid-19 pandemic, things changed drastically it is very difficult for parents and peers to keep away children from smartphones and social media applications and also to check and make strong surveillance on their children's internet activity. When it comes to children and juvenile delinquency, they are not only offenders or delinquents but on the same time they are victims too. Despite that India is having multiple laws and provisions to protect the childhood of our future generations like, the "Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act" and the "Information Technology (IT) Act", "JJ Act 2021(amended)" aims to curb online child abuse, but enforcement challenges and loopholes remain. They must sync together in a coherent manner so the dignity and rehabilitation of child must be ensured strictly. One of the major issues is the lack of stringent monitoring mechanisms for digital platforms while India mandates social media intermediaries to track the origin of explicit content, enforcement is inconsistent. Additionally, the legal framework does not adequately address evolving cyber threats, such as AI-generated child exploitation material. Another, concern is the criminalization of passive consumption of child pornography and adult gaming.

Furthermore, cyber-crime units in India lacks adequate infrastructure and technological resources to track offenders efficiently along with this it is also needed that police and judiciary should work in synchronization with IT Act, JJ Act and laws of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS).The government of India established Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) especially dedicated to cyber-security yet digital awareness and learning is still necessary from grass-root levels for each and every individual. Strengthening digital forensic capabilities and international cooperation is crucial to combat cross-border cyber-crimes. To ensure children's safety, we must upgrade our cyber laws, enhance enforcement mechanisms and invest in digital literacy programs from beginning starting from school level to university level, to protect vulnerable users from online exploitation. Government agencies must have to keep monitor the entire social-media ecosystem because social-media applications are the key platforms assisting the deviant behaviors where illicit and unlawful activities are being committed.

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed childhood experiences in India, providing unparalleled access to education, communication, and entertainment. However, alongside these benefits, significant mental health concerns have emerged. Internet addiction, exposure to inappropriate online content such as pornography, and inadequate cybersecurity measures pose serious threats to children's psychological well-being, leading to anxiety, depression, social isolation, and distorted perceptions of relationships. Without effective intervention, these challenges will continue to hinder children's cognitive and emotional growth. Excessive internet usage among children without proper training and learning of digital environment is now a growing issue, particularly with prolonged engagement in social media, gaming and scrolling. Unregulated screen time disrupts sleep patterns, impairs academic performance, and weakens interpersonal relationships. Many children experiencing internet addiction struggle with heightened stress levels and difficulty engaging in offline interactions. The addictive nature of digital platforms fuels a cycle of compulsive online behavior, making disengagement increasingly challenging. A lack of parental oversight and structured digital regulations further exacerbates dependence on virtual interactions, deepening the negative effects on mental health.

Another serious concern is children's exposure to explicit content online, particularly pornography, which remains widely accessible due to ineffective digital safeguards. Early exposure can lead to confusion, anxiety, and emotional distress, altering perceptions of relationships and intimacy. On a broader level, such content reinforces harmful stereotypes and unhealthy behaviors, influencing children's social understanding. India's legal framework regarding cybersecurity measures for children's internet activity is not adequate and up-to the mark. Many internet-users experiences harassment and abuse online without adequate legal protections, exacerbating mental health challenges. Furthermore, the absence of nationwide digital literacy initiatives limits children's ability to safely navigate the cyber-world. Strengthening regulations, increasing parental involvement and launching awareness campaigns are necessary steps to create a safer digital space for children. Addressing these urgent concerns requires a collective effort involving policymakers, educators, parents, and mental health professionals. Implementing comprehensive cybersecurity laws, enforcing digital safety protocols and prioritizing child-focused mental health programs are essential. Integrating digital literacy education into school curricula can empower children to use technology responsibly and safeguard their well-being. Without proactive measures, the unchecked effects of internet addiction and exposure to inappropriate content and weak cybersecurity will continue to threaten children's safe-sound socialization and learning. Addressing, these issues require a multi-faceted approach, including parental guidance, digital education and counselling support. By fostering awareness and promoting responsible internet use, society can mitigate the adverse effects of the cyber-world on children and youth.

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