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# Balancing Justice and Rights: Protecting Juvenile in the Criminal Justice System

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SHRUTI<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT

*Juvenile delinquency refers to illegal or antisocial behaviour committed by a person under the age of 18. It includes a wide range of activities, from minor offenses to more serious crimes such as theft, assault, or drug-related activities. The major causes of juvenile delinquency are family issues and neglect by the family members, peer influence or belonging to a group of such person, poverty and lack of education as well as poor mental health of the person also leads to such activity.*

*The paper deals with the child delinquency, causes and prevention of juvenile delinquency. "The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015" and its aspects which protect the juvenile and bring reformation have been dealt with.*

*The paper further deals with the legal framework with respect to child delinquency. The provisions under "Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023"; "Constitution of India"; "The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015" and "The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Act, 2021" have been discussed.*

*It further discussed the role played by judiciary and criminal justice system in giving effect to "The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015". The shortcomings of the said Act as well as the international concern for juvenile justice have been dealt with. Juvenile delinquency is a serious problem so measures have been taken and more reforms are needed to protect the rights of juvenile and bring them at par with the normal footing.*

**Keywords:** *Juvenile, Delinquency, Causes, Rights and Justice.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The term *juvenile* originates from the Latin word *juvenis*, meaning "young." A juvenile refers to a child who has not yet reached the age of 18. In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in crimes committed by children, particularly those aged 16–18.

The underlying reasons for such behaviour often include factors like a lack of education, financial hardships, early-life upbringing, or family turmoil. Additionally, a growing concern is the exploitation of children for illegal activities, such as drug trafficking. Due to their innocence and limited understanding, children are more susceptible to manipulation and can be easily

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<sup>1</sup> Author is an Research Scholar Department of Law Central University of Haryana, in India.

coerced into participating in criminal activities.<sup>2</sup>

A pivotal incident that reshaped juvenile justice in India was the Nirbhaya Delhi Gang Rape case. The primary issue before the Supreme Court of India was whether one of the accused, who was six months shy of turning 18, could receive the same punishment as the other accused adults.

In response to this critical question, the Parliament introduced the Juvenile Justice Act of 2015. This legislation introduced significant reforms to address juvenile justice issues, including a provision allowing juveniles aged 16–18 to be tried as adults for heinous crimes under certain circumstances. This marked a significant shift in India's approach to handling juvenile offenders in serious cases.<sup>3</sup>

### **Who is a Juvenile?**

According to the “Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 (J.J.A. 2015)”, a juvenile is defined as a child under the age of 18. The Act specifies that juveniles should not be treated as adults for trial and punishment, even if involved in criminal activities. However, an exception is made for juveniles aged 16 to 18 who have committed heinous crimes. In such cases, the court has the discretion to determine whether the juvenile should be tried as an adult, but only in exceptional circumstances.<sup>4</sup>

### **Who is a "Child in Conflict with Law"?**

A "child in conflict with law" refers to a child who is accused or found guilty of committing an offense and has not yet reached the age of 18 at the time of the offense. This definition clearly establishes that any individual below the age of 18 is considered a minor.<sup>5</sup>

### **“The Juvenile Justice Care and Protection of Children Act, 2015”**

The **Nirbhaya tragedy** brought widespread attention to the juvenile justice system (JJS), an area previously unfamiliar to many. Following the incident, significant criticism arose regarding the court's decision, with demands for the harshest punishment, including the execution of the juvenile suspect involved.

In response to public and parliamentary outrage, India enacted “**The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015**”, replacing the earlier “**The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000**”. This legislation aimed to provide comprehensive

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<sup>2</sup> Zeba Darvesh, *Juvenile Justice System*, 4 Issue 4 INT'L J.L. MGMT. & HUMAN. 2587 (2021).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Rini Rastogi, *Critical Analysis of Juvenile Justice System in India*, 2 LEGAL LOCK J. 18 (2023).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

protection for two categories of children: those alleged or found to have violated the law and those in need of care and protection.

The Act retained the definition of "juvenile" as a person below 18 years of age, consistent with the previous law. It also set 18 years as the minimum age for considering the safeguarding and care of children. However, in cases involving heinous offences, the 2015 Act introduced a significant change: it allowed children aged 16 to 18 involved in such crimes to be treated and tried as adults.<sup>6</sup>

## II. JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

The terms Juvenile delinquency denotes antisocial behaviour by a minor; especially, behaviour that would be criminally punishable if the actor were an adult. The child offender is known as a "Juvenile Delinquent". Juvenile delinquency is, by and large, a product of social and economic maladjustment. Even if it is found that these juveniles have committed any offences, they cannot be allowed to be maltreated. They do not shed their fundamental rights when they enter the Jail. Moreover, the object of punishment being reformation, social objective cannot be gained by sending juveniles to jails where they would come into contact with hardened criminals and lose whatever sensitivity they may have to finer and nobler sentiments. That is the reason why Children Acts are enacted by States all over the country.<sup>7</sup>

### Causes of Juvenile Delinquency

Understanding the factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency is critical to preventing young individuals from engaging in harmful, inappropriate, or unlawful behaviour. Four primary risk categories-individual, family, mental health, and substance abuse-can help identify youths who are more likely to display delinquent tendencies. Often, these risk factors overlap, exposing a child to multiple influences simultaneously.

**Individual Factors:** Juvenile delinquency is strongly linked to several personal risk factors. Young people with lower intelligence or inadequate education are more likely to engage in delinquent acts. Traits such as impulsiveness, uncontrolled aggression, and an inability to delay gratification further increase this likelihood. These individual characteristics often play a significant role in leading youths toward risky, destructive, or unlawful behaviours.

**Family Factors:** Family dynamics are a significant contributor to juvenile delinquency. Key risk factors include poor parental supervision, persistent family conflicts, and instances of

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<sup>6</sup> Vartika Hansaria, *Juvenile Justice System in India*, 5 Issue 1 INDIAN J.L. & LEGAL RSCH. 1 (2023).

<sup>7</sup> Kumari Sweta, *Juvenile Delinquency in India with Special Reference to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015*, 24 SUPREMO AMICUS [860] (2021).

neglect or abuse—whether emotional, psychological, or physical. Children raised by parents who disregard laws and societal norms are more likely to adopt similar attitudes. Moreover, a weak relationship between a child and their parents or family often correlates with inappropriate behaviours and delinquent tendencies.

**Mental Health Factors:** Various mental health issues also play a crucial role in influencing juvenile delinquency. Mental health challenges can affect decision-making, impulse control, and behaviour, increasing the likelihood of involvement in delinquent activities.

By addressing these factors, preventive measures can be implemented to mitigate the risks of juvenile delinquency and guide young individuals toward more positive outcomes.<sup>8</sup>

Some young individuals begin using drugs at a very early age, with studies indicating that even elementary school children may experiment with potent illicit substances. To fund their substance use, these youths are often compelled to commit crimes, whether the substances are illegal or legally obtained but used unlawfully. Furthermore, those who engage in drug and alcohol use are significantly more likely to partake in risky, harmful, and unlawful activities.<sup>9</sup>

### **Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency**

Preventative measures are essential for addressing juvenile delinquency. Identifying at-risk youth and providing them with appropriate therapy is the first step. If timely intervention is not implemented, these individuals may develop habitual offending behaviours. Early support for children and their families has proven to be the most effective approach to preventing juvenile criminality. Many state programs focus on early intervention, and federal funding for community initiatives has empowered organizations to tackle the issue innovatively.

Successful programs typically incorporate key elements such as drug addiction education and treatment, family counselling, youth mentorship, parental education, academic support, and sheltering for at-risk youth. Jurists and criminologists have proposed various legislative measures to curb juvenile delinquency, many of which focus on the well-being and holistic development of young people. Governments are increasingly recognizing the importance of investing in delinquency prevention to ensure the welfare and positive growth of vulnerable children.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Aman Priya, *Causes and Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency in India*, 5 Issue 2 INDIAN J.L. & LEGAL RSCH. 1 (2023).

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

### III. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

#### **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023**

Section 20 of the “Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023”, states: *“Nothing is an offence which is done by a child under seven years of age.”* This provision establishes the presumption of *doli incapax*, signifying that a child below the age of seven is considered incapable of committing a crime and, therefore, cannot be held legally responsible for any offence.

Section 21 of the “Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023”, states: *“Nothing is an offence which is done by a child above seven years of age and under twelve, who has not attained sufficient maturity of understanding to judge the nature and consequences of their conduct on that occasion.”* This provision operates on the principle of *doli capax*, implying that a child within this age range is presumed to lack criminal responsibility unless proven to have the requisite maturity and understanding.

#### **Constitution of India**

The Articles 15(3) and 39(e) and 39(f) of the Indian Constitution.

#### **The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015**

This Act governs the treatment of all juveniles up to the age of 18 years, replacing the Juvenile Justice Act, 2000. It is specifically focused on children and takes precedence over the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in cases of inconsistency, as affirmed by the Supreme Court in *Independent Thought v. Union of India*.

Section 2(12) of the Act defines a child and juvenile as “a child who has not completed 18 years of age.” Section 21 of the Act provides that, “No child in conflict with law shall be sentenced to death or for life imprisonment without the possibility of release, for any such offence, either under the provisions of this Act or under the provisions of the Indian Penal Code or any other law for the time being in force.”

Section 15 of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, grants the Juvenile Justice Board the authority to assess whether a child involved in a heinous offence should be tried as an adult. If the Board determines that the child should be tried as an adult, the case is transferred to the Children's Court with jurisdiction to handle such offences under Section 18(3) of the Act. This provision was introduced following the widely publicized Nirbhaya Gang Rape case, where one of the offenders was 17 years old.

## **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Act, 2021**

To further strengthen the *Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015*, an Amendment Act was introduced in 2021. This amendment empowers District Magistrates, including Additional District Magistrates, to issue adoption orders under Section 61 of the Act, expediting the disposal of cases and enhancing accountability. Previously, the adoption process fell under the jurisdiction of the courts, resulting in significant case backlogs and lengthy delays. The amendment aims to establish a faster and more efficient adoption mechanism.<sup>11</sup>

### **International Instruments**

#### **(A) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

India demonstrated its commitment to protecting children's rights globally by signing the UNCRC in 1992. The convention emphasizes key principles such as the best interests of the child, equality, and the right to life, survival, and development.

The UNCRC has profoundly influenced juvenile justice laws in India, particularly the “*Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015*”, which underscores the child's best interests as a guiding principle. Juvenile Justice Boards and Child Welfare Committees adopt this approach, prioritizing the child’s well-being and rehabilitation in their decision-making processes.<sup>12</sup>

#### **(B) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**

The ICCPR safeguards civil and political rights, and India, as a signatory, aligns with its principles. However, this does not fully extend to juvenile offenders. Specifically, Article 10 of the ICCPR, which pertains to the treatment of young offenders, is subject to India’s reservation. By reserving its right to remain unaffected by this article, India has chosen to maintain a distinct juvenile justice system.<sup>13</sup>

India's juvenile justice reforms have also drawn inspiration from the Beijing Rules, which advocate for alternatives to detention and minimizing detention periods. These principles align with the Indian juvenile justice system's focus on rehabilitation and reform.

#### **(C) The Riyadh Guidelines (United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency)**

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<sup>11</sup> Sameera Khan, *A Study on the Juvenile Delinquency in India: Sociological Aspect and Judicial Response*, 28 SUPREMO AMICUS [478] (2022).

<sup>12</sup> Puja Singh, *An Analysis of the Juvenile Justice System and Order in India*, 7 Issue 2 INT’L J.L. MGMT. & HUMAN. 3165 (2024).

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

India's approach to addressing the root causes of juvenile delinquency has been significantly influenced by the Riyadh Guidelines, which emphasize preventive measures. These guidelines highlight the importance of tackling issues such as poverty, education, and family stability as critical factors in reducing juvenile crime.

India's commitment to safeguarding the rights and welfare of juvenile offenders is evident in its alignment with international human rights standards. This is reflected in its ratification of the UNCRC and its adoption of key principles from international recommendations. While India has chosen to maintain its juvenile justice system separate from the ICCPR's provisions for adult offenders, the UNCRC—particularly its focus on the best interests of the child—has profoundly shaped Indian law and policy.

This global framework ensures that juvenile offenders in India receive the care and attention they need, prioritizing rehabilitation and addressing the specific needs of the child within the juvenile justice system.<sup>14</sup>

#### **IV. JUDICIAL PRONOUNCEMENT GIVING EFFECT TO THE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE ACT, 2015**

The **Nirbhaya Case** stands as a landmark legal proceeding in India, involving six individuals, including one minor, who committed heinous acts of gang rape and murder. The brutality of the crime shocked the nation, sparking widespread protests demanding that the juvenile be tried as an adult.

Following the investigation, the Juvenile Justice Board noted that the minor was the most brutal among the six accused. However, under the prevailing law, minors could not be tried as adults. Consequently, the juvenile received the maximum penalty permissible under the law: detention in an Observation Home for three years.

The Supreme Court has reinforced the legal framework concerning juveniles in cases such as *Jodhbir Singh v. State of Punjab*<sup>15</sup>, ruling that if the accused was a minor at the time of the offence, they must be tried in a juvenile court. Similarly, in *Kulai Ibrahim v. State*, the Court held that an accused has the right to raise the question of juvenility even after the conclusion of the trial.

The judiciary in India has played a significant role in addressing issues of juvenile justice and ensuring the appropriate treatment of juveniles under the law. In *Jayendra v. State of Uttar*

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<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> 2012 AIR SCW 6470



*Pradesh*<sup>16</sup>, the Supreme Court mandated a medical examination of the appellant to determine his age. The examination revealed that the appellant was 23 years old at the time of the check-up, which placed his age at 16 years and 4 months at the time of the offence. Although the conviction was upheld, the Supreme Court ordered the appellant's release as he was a minor when the crime was committed. A similar principle was applied in *Bhoop Ram v. State of Uttar Pradesh*<sup>17</sup>, where the Court emphasized that the age of the offender at the time of the offence is crucial for determining their juvenile status.

In *Sheela Barse v. Union of India*<sup>18</sup>, the Supreme Court directed state governments to establish observation homes for juveniles awaiting trial. In another case, *Sheela Barse v. Secretary, Children's Aid Society*<sup>19</sup>, the Court took suo motu cognizance of allegations concerning conditions in observation homes. It ruled that juveniles should not remain in such homes for prolonged periods and emphasized the importance of activities aimed at fostering adaptability, confidence, and moral development among children.

In *Vishal Jeet v. Union of India*<sup>20</sup>, the Apex Court directed state governments and Union Territories to take measures to eradicate child prostitution and implement programs for the welfare, rehabilitation, and development of young victims. Similarly, in *M.C. Mehta v. State of Tamil Nadu*<sup>21</sup>, the Court issued directives for providing education, healthcare, and nutrition to child laborers.

The issue of age determination has been a recurring subject in judicial decisions. In *Raj Singh v. State of Haryana*<sup>22</sup>, the Court ruled that the offender's age must be assessed as of the date of the offence. However, this position was later overturned in *Arnit Das v. State of Bihar*<sup>23</sup>, where the Court clarified that the definition of "juvenile" under the Juvenile Justice Act specifies a clear reference point for determining age, ensuring consistency in its application. In the case of *Munney v. State of Uttar Pradesh*, the Additional Sessions Judge convicted the defendants under Sections 302 and 34 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, and sentenced them to life imprisonment. The High Court upheld the trial court's decision. However, during the appeal to the Supreme Court, the convicted respondent submitted an amended plea, asserting that he was a minor on

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<sup>16</sup> AIR1982SC685

<sup>17</sup> AIR 1989 SC 1329

<sup>18</sup> AIR 1986 SC 1773

<sup>19</sup> AIR 1987 SC 656

<sup>20</sup> AIR 1990 SC 1412

<sup>21</sup> AIR 1997 SC 699

<sup>22</sup> AIR 2015 SC (CRI) 1065

<sup>23</sup> AIR2001SC3575

November 11, 1978, when the crime was committed.

The Children Act of 1951, which was in effect at the time, provided protection to individuals below the age of 16. The appellant argued that he was 18 years old and enrolled in the 10+2 course at the time of conviction, suggesting he was around 17 years old at the time of the offence. Notably, the issue of juvenility had not been raised at either the trial court or High Court level. The Supreme Court evaluated whether the appellant possessed the mental maturity of a child at the time of the crime but found no evidence supporting his claim of juvenility.

Similarly, in *Pawan v. State of Uttaranchal*, the Supreme Court addressed the issue of juvenility raised for the first time. The Court considered whether the records of inquiry should be obtained, as no prima facie evidence of juvenility had been presented before the trial court, the High Court, or the Supreme Court. The Court ruled that in such cases, compelling and substantial evidence must be provided to establish that the accused was under 18 at the time of the offence to satisfy judicial conscience. As no such evidence was produced, the appeal was dismissed.<sup>24</sup>

In *Pawan Kumar Gupta v. State of NCT of Delhi* and *Ram Narain v. State of Uttar Pradesh*<sup>25</sup>, it was held that the claim of juvenility can be raised at any stage, even after the final disposal of the case. This claim may also be raised for the first time after the case has been concluded. However, if the accused has already raised the plea of juvenility before the trial court, the High Court, and the Supreme Court, and it has been rejected at all these levels, the accused cannot file a fresh application under Section 7A of the Juvenile Justice Act to revisit the claim of juvenility.

In *Satya Deo v. State of Uttar Pradesh*<sup>26</sup>, the court ruled that under Section 6 of the General Clauses Act, read with Section 25 of the 2015 Juvenile Justice Act, an accused cannot be denied the right to be treated as a juvenile if they were under 18 years of age at the time of the offence. This right, established under the 2000 Act, remains valid even if the offence was committed before the Act came into force on April 1, 2001. Furthermore, Section 25 of the 2015 Act ensures that the provisions of the 2000 Act continue to apply to cases that were pending at the time of the enforcement of the 2015 Act.

In *Shilpa Mittal v. State of NCT of Delhi and Ors.*<sup>27</sup>, a significant and intriguing legal issue arose: *Whether an offence prescribing a maximum sentence of more than seven years' imprisonment but not providing a minimum sentence, or providing a minimum sentence of less*

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<sup>24</sup> Hansaria, *supra* note 6.

<sup>25</sup> AIR 2020 SC 590

<sup>26</sup> AIR 2020 SC 4826

<sup>27</sup> AIR 2020 SC 405

than seven years, qualifies as a 'heinous offence' under Section 2(33) of the "Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015."

The Supreme Court ruled that an offence without a minimum sentence of seven years cannot be classified as a heinous offence under the Act. However, the Act does not address a fourth category of offences—those where the maximum sentence exceeds seven years but no minimum sentence or a minimum sentence of less than seven years is prescribed. The Court held that such offences should be treated as *serious offences* under the Act until Parliament addresses this gap.

In *Sattu Ram v. State of Rajasthan*, the Court ruled that individuals who have crossed the age of 18 years cannot be confined in a special home or fit institution. The Court found the orders issued by the Juvenile Justice Board and the Appellate Court in this case to be inconsistent with the specific provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act and contrary to established judicial interpretations. As a result, these orders were deemed unsustainable.

In *Re Exploitation of Children in Orphanages in the State of Tamil Nadu v. Union of India (UOI) and Ors.*, the Court strongly criticized the lack of implementation of Section 12 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, which pertains to granting bail to children in conflict with the law.

The Court emphasized:

*"All Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) across the country must adhere to the letter and spirit of the Act's provisions. The JJBs are not mere passive entities that act only when cases are brought before them. They must take cognizance of situations where it becomes known that a child has been detained in prison or police lock-up. It is the duty of the JJBs to ensure that the child is either immediately granted bail or transferred to an observation home or a place of safety. The provisions of the Act must be upheld, and any breach—especially by the police—will not be tolerated."*<sup>28</sup>

## V. CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND JUVENILE

India, like many other nations, has established legal provisions specifically designed to address juvenile delinquency and protect the rights of juvenile offenders. The Indian juvenile justice system is built on three key principles:

1. Young offenders should not be subjected to traditional court trials but instead should be provided opportunities for correction and rehabilitation through the most effective

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<sup>28</sup> Sweta, *supra* note 7.

means possible.

2. Rather than imposing punitive measures, the system emphasizes giving juveniles a chance to reform and reintegrate into society.
3. The trial process for children in conflict with the law should prioritize non-penal treatment, utilizing community-based social control mechanisms such as Observation Homes and Special Homes to ensure their welfare and development.<sup>29</sup>

The current juvenile justice system in India is founded on the belief that juvenile offenders have the potential for reform and rehabilitation. Placing them in bars or prisons risks reinforcing their identity and status as “criminals.”<sup>30</sup>

### **Shortcomings of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015**

- The Act permits juveniles to be tried as adults for heinous crimes, which may exacerbate the problem of juvenile crime and lead to the creation of more hardened criminals.
- It incorrectly assumes that children possess the capacity to stand trial as adults.
- Heinous offenses are defined as crimes punishable by more than seven years of imprisonment. This includes at least 46 offenses for which juveniles aged 16 to 18 could potentially be tried as adults, extending beyond murder and rape to laws such as the NDPS Act and MCOCA.
- Most offenses committed by juveniles are property-related, such as theft, criminal trespass, and housebreaking, with rape and murder being relatively rare.
- Subjecting children to the adult criminal justice system violates the constitutional guarantee of equality and international standards.
- The Act fails to specify the minimum age of criminal responsibility.
- The rationale behind the creation of the category of heinous offenses remains unclear.<sup>31</sup>

### **Challenges**

There are instances where issues arise in the administration of juvenile justice, including:

- Failure of police officers to act in accordance with the provisions of the Juvenile Justice (JJ) Act.

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<sup>29</sup> Ranchana, *Role of Juvenile Justice System in India*, 2 LEGAL LOCK J. 27 (2023).

<sup>30</sup> *Id.*

- Coercion or improper methods used to extract confessions from children during preliminary assessments.
- Gross negligence by public servants and NGOs responsible for managing shelter homes.<sup>32</sup>

### **International Concern for Juvenile Justice**

The United Nations Asia and Far East Institute made significant contributions to juvenile justice, leading to the adoption of the **Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice** by the Seventh U.N. Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders in September 1985. These rules were later endorsed by the U.N. General Assembly in November 1985, incorporating the following key principles:

- Juveniles in conflict with the law should be afforded carefully designed legal protections.
- Pre-trial detention should only be used as a last resort, and juvenile offenders should not be held in jails where they may be exposed to harmful influences from adult offenders.
- Incarceration of juvenile offenders should be avoided unless no other appropriate measures are available to ensure public safety and provide the juvenile with an opportunity to develop self-control.
- Member states should individually and collectively work to create adequate systems and resources, enabling every young person to aspire to a meaningful and valuable life.<sup>33</sup>

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

Juvenile Delinquency is the illegal conduct on the part of the child below the age of eighteen years. It is influenced by the social, psychological, and economic factors which result into illegal activity. Preventive measures such as education, community support, and family engagement are key in mitigating the future risk of such activity. Moreover, the criminal justice system plays an important role by focusing more on rehabilitation rather than punishment, aiming to reform and reintegrate young offenders into society. By collaborative efforts on the part of families, communities, and legal institutions, it is possible that a supportive environment be created that prevents delinquency and fosters positive growth thus ensuring a brighter future for the juvenile and society at large.

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<sup>32</sup> Kalyani Singh, *Contemporary Issues and Challenges of Juvenile Justice Administration in India*, 4 Issue 6 INDIAN J.L. & LEGAL RSCH. 1 (2022).

<sup>33</sup> Rastogi, *supra* note 4.