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CJI Chandrachud calls for international collaboration to combat juvenile cybercrimes

Children do not merit same treatment as adults, says CJI; cites studies showing that poor children, those with disabilities have been exploited, ensnared by criminal gangs; says swift resolution key to ensuring justice and rehabilitation

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THE HINDU BUREAU



Chief Justice of India D. Y. Chandrachud (File Photo) | Photo Credit: PTI

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud termed it crucial to shift the focus from debating whether juveniles should be tried as adults to understanding the circumstances that drive children to commit crimes in the first place.

“While children may make wrong decisions during their developmental journey, they do not merit the same treatment as fully grown adults,” Chief Justice Chandrachud said in his address at the National Symposium on Juvenile Justice in Nepal on Saturday.

Poor children exploited

He highlighted the reality of systemic neglect perpetuating the marginalisation and disenfranchisement of youth in impoverished settings.

The CJI referred to a study titled ‘Rights of Children: A Case Study of Child Beggars at Public Places in India’, which said that approximately 44,000 children were ensnared by criminal gangs in India every year. These children were coerced into engaging in begging, trafficking, smuggling, and other criminal activities.

The CJI also drew attention to the 2020 report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on the exploitation of visually-impaired children in India.

Justice and rehabilitation

Chief Justice Chandrachud said that a swift resolution of cases involving juveniles should be prioritised, to minimise trauma and ensure justice and rehabilitation.

Juvenile justice systems must improve international cooperation mechanisms and share best practices to address the transnational nature of digital crimes involving juveniles.

“This includes establishing protocols for extradition and repatriation, as well as facilitating information sharing and cooperation between law enforcement agencies,” the Chief Justice said.