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ABOUT US

WHITE BLACK LEGAL is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed journal providededicated to express views on topical legal issues, thereby generating a cross current of ideas on emerging matters. This platform shall also ignite the initiative and desire of young law students to contribute in the field of law. The erudite response of legal luminaries shall be solicited to enable readers to explore challenges that lie before law makers, lawyers and the society at large, in the event of the ever changing social, economic and technological scenario.

With this thought, we hereby present to you

TECHNOLOGY AND CRIME: ANALYZING THE ROLE OF SURVEILLANCE AND PRIVACY

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LL.M Semester II Research Paper
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1. Abstract

This paper examines the growing intersection of technology and crime, focusing specifically on the role of surveillance as both a tool for law enforcement and a potential invasion of privacy. As digital surveillance technologies become increasingly sophisticated, the balance between public safety and personal privacy becomes more complex. This study explores the benefits and drawbacks of technological surveillance and evaluates its impact on crime prevention, civil liberties, and the rule of law.

2. Keywords

Technology, Crime, Surveillance, Privacy, Cybercrime, CCTV, AI, Human Rights, Digital Policing

3. Introduction

In the 21st century, crime and technology have become deeply interlinked. While technology helps reduce and detect crimes, it also opens up new avenues for criminal activities. Surveillance tools such as CCTV cameras, facial recognition software, GPS tracking, and digital data monitoring are widely used by governments and private organizations to monitor public spaces and online activity. However, these advancements also raise serious concerns about the right to privacy and misuse of personal data.

4. Research Objectives

- To analyze how surveillance technology affects crime detection and prevention.
- To study the impact of surveillance on individual privacy rights.
- To examine legal and ethical frameworks related to surveillance.
- To propose suggestions for balancing security and privacy in modern policing.

5. Hypothesis

H_0 (Null Hypothesis): Surveillance has no significant effect on crime prevention. H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): Surveillance significantly reduces crime but compromises individual privacy.

6. Literature Review

Several studies highlight the effectiveness of surveillance in reducing street crimes. A UK-based study showed a 16% decrease in crime rates in CCTV-covered areas. On the other hand, scholars like Michel Foucault have criticized surveillance as a method of social control, drawing parallels with his 'Panopticon' theory. Legal theorists also raise concerns about mass surveillance programs and their incompatibility with Article 21 (Right to Privacy) of the Indian Constitution, as upheld in the Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017) judgment.

7. Analysis

- Positive Impact: Use of AI and data analytics has improved real-time monitoring and helped catch criminals faster. Surveillance footage is often crucial evidence in court.
- Negative Impact: Citizens are often unaware of how their data is being collected and stored. Mass surveillance without consent can lead to misuse, discrimination, and profiling.
- Legal Gap: There is a lack of comprehensive data protection laws in many countries, including India, despite the existence of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.

8. Suggestions

- Strict regulations must be established regarding data usage and storage.
- Use of surveillance should be transparent and accountable through public oversight.
- Law enforcement must be trained to use surveillance ethically.
- Public consent and awareness campaigns should be initiated.
- Judiciary must continue to play a proactive role in protecting fundamental rights.

9. Conclusion

While surveillance technology can play a key role in combating crime, it must not override individual freedoms and privacy. A balanced approach — that includes legal safeguards, ethical standards, and public involvement — is essential to ensure that surveillance serves the people, not controls them. The future of justice lies in using technology responsibly.

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