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**A Criminological Study on White-Collar Crimes**

**Varun Alase**

## ABSTRACT

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*Crime is a major social issue that has several ramifications. It causes massive expenditures for a society annually. Countries must spend millions every year in maintaining their criminal justice system (courts of law, police forces, prisons), healthcare facilities, insurance agencies, etc. There is also a personal cost incurred by the victims of crimes. Along with the financial costs, victims also face emotional and psychological problems due to being exploited by crimes, including anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts. Crime is so prevalent nowadays that one can simply open the newspaper on a daily basis to find some instances of it. Furthermore, each one of us has a different image or idea of 'crime', based on some famous murder cases and offenders, or some personal incidents that have happened to us. The natural question that arises here is why do crimes occur, and what causes offenders to commit offences? These are the questions that the body of knowledge called **Criminology** aims to answer and explain. To be more specific, criminology deals with the nature and extent of crime, as well as the causes, consequences, reactions and prevention of crime. In this research paper, it is through the lens of criminology that **white-collar crimes** will be explained and discussed. Topics such as the causes behind white-collar crimes, its legal repercussions, a case study on the famous Bernie Madoff and many more will help in a comprehensive and thorough understanding of this topic.*

Keywords- White-collar crimes, corporate crime, financial loss, motivations, neutralisation, personality disorders, Ponzi schemes, fraud, social consequences, regulatory laws, economic safeguards, sentencing guidelines, proportionate punishment, defences, Indian legislations.

## WHAT ARE WHITE-COLLAR CRIMES?

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Firstly, the meaning of white-collar crimes must be established. White-collar crimes are basically non-violent crimes generally committed for the purpose of financial gain. The term 'white collar' refers to jobs performed in an office or a professional, corporate environment. Hence, white-collar crimes are those offences committed by person's working in these corporate jobs and environments. It is clear here that such crimes are usually committed by people who are from a higher social class and are salaried professionals. This is differentiated from blue-collar crimes, which are generally committed by people from a lower social strata and working-class jobs (manual labour/warehouse jobs). Some common white-collar crimes are; Fraud (securities fraud, mortgage fraud, health insurance fraud, etc.), embezzlement, money laundering, false corporate reporting, false bank loans, tax evasions and many more.

The term 'white-collar crime' was coined by *Edwin Sutherland*, an American sociologists and criminologist. His study of corporate environments in early 20<sup>th</sup> century America allowed him to identify and understand the rise in this different type of crime. He provided the earliest definition of white-collar crime as a "*crime committed by a person of respectability and high social status, in the course of his occupation.*"<sup>1</sup> The primary reason behind white-collar crimes being differentiated from more 'traditional' crimes is that white-collar crimes are not physically harmful or directly threatening in nature. Instead, it involves the use of guile, deceit, and concealment. Furthermore, it is a type of crime which can be committed only by a specific type of person. Such a crime is purely the result of human ingenuity and enterprise, with the growth of industries and corporations around the world. It is not the standard crime we have witnessed for centuries on end, but rather a more modern and sophisticated one.

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<sup>1</sup> Sutherland, E., 1945. Is "White Collar Crime" Crime? *American Sociological Review*, 10(2), p.132.



## FRAUD TRIANGLE

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“Fraud Triangle” *ebizzing.com*

When explaining white-collar crimes, criminological theories often use the fraud triangle to explain the thought process and rationale behind the commission of corporate fraud and other such offences. It follows the route of securing opportunities, identifying interests, and forming rationalisations<sup>2</sup>. Firstly, *opportunities* are those circumstances or situations that allow the commission of a fraud or make it easy for the same to occur. Once a white-collar offender spots an opportunity, he makes use of it to carry out some scheme or fraud. For example, there could be less internal control, lack of oversight or inadequate accounting policies that allow frauds to take place easily. Secondly, there is the *motivation or incentives*. Most often the best incentive for white-collar offenders is money. The earning of money allows for not only their own financial gain, but also meeting some requirements for a bonus or to meet the expectations of investors. Hence, some individuals commit fraud as a means to reach some larger end (promotion, increase in status, expansion of company, etc.). Finally, there is the *rationalisation*, a rather important step in this process. Rationalisation is when an offender justifies or even trivialises their crimes, so as to not feel remorse or regret about doing it. For example, a person might say “I was treated wrong” or “There is no other way for me to earn money.” In a way,

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<sup>2</sup> “Fraud Triangle” *Corporate Finance Institute*, 22 Aug. 2019, [corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/knowledge/accounting/fraud-triangle/](https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/knowledge/accounting/fraud-triangle/).

an offender neutralises the crimes he has committed by rationalising it in this way. This can be further explained by the process of Neutralisation.

## **NEUTRALISATION**

Neutralisation, as mentioned before, is the process by which offenders rationalise and justify the crimes they have committed, so as to negate their culpability or blame. In criminology, the ***Neutralisation Theory*** suggests that people in the society are aware of the differences between law-abiding and law-breaking behaviour, and also understand that law-breaking behaviour is prohibited and wrongful in nature<sup>3</sup>. However, even with the knowledge of law-breaking behaviour as being wrongful, some people commit crimes and later provide justifications so as to neutralise their crimes as being rightful in nature. The circumstances for some people are such that they feel compelled to commit crimes and then neutralise them because they know they have done something wrong. Some of the techniques of neutralisation are;

- *Denial of responsibility* (“I had no choice; I was forced to do it.”)
- *Denial of harm* (“No one was affected by my crimes, so it was fine.”)
- *Denial of victim* (“It was the victim’s fault, he deserved it anyway.”)
- *Appeal to higher loyalties* (“I did for my family/friend who was in dire need”)

These are some of many of ways in which offenders neutralize their crimes and explain why they committed their crimes. This discussion about neutralization is also very relevant with regard to white collar crimes also, since neutralization techniques are frequently made use of by white collar criminals so as to absolve themselves of guilt. In a study conducted in the USA, American researchers interviewed 40 offenders, 20 men and 20 women, all convicted for white collar crimes. It was found that every single one of them, regardless of the gender difference, neutralised their crimes in some way<sup>4</sup>. They made use of the neutralisation techniques when asked about their crimes, mostly the ‘appeal to higher loyalties’ and ‘denial of harm’ to someone else. Some of them even placed the blame on the victims of their fraud, saying they deserved it or had done something wrong themselves. The ‘denial of harm’ technique is often used by white collar criminals due to the nature of their crimes. It is almost as if white collar crimes are seen as less harmful, because it is not directly hurting or attacking

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<sup>3</sup> "Neutralization Theory in Criminology: Definition & Challenges." *Study.com*, 16 July 2016, [study.com/academy/lesson/neutralization-theory-in-criminology-definition-lesson.html](https://study.com/academy/lesson/neutralization-theory-in-criminology-definition-lesson.html)

<sup>4</sup> Paul M. Klenowski, Heith Copes & Christopher W. Mullins (2011) “Gender and White-Collar Crimes” *Justice Quarterly*, 28:1, 46-69 (Research)

someone. However, in today's day and age, financial wellbeing is almost as important as physical and mental wellbeing, and hence stealing from or defrauding an individual of his wealth is almost as serious an offence as directly hurting or injuring him.

### **PERSONALITY TRAITS AMONG WHITE COLLAR CRIMINALS**

The *American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic Manual* has defined some personality disorders which are common to many white-collar offenders. The two main ones are; ***Narcissistic Personality Disorder*** and ***Antisocial Personality Disorder***<sup>5</sup>. In the narcissistic personality disorder, one begins to develop the pathology to view things from the lens of their own personality. Narcissistic individuals are only concerned about what is good for them and what will benefit them or enhance their position. Bernie Madoff, the white-collar criminal discussed earlier, is said to have suffered from the narcissistic personality disorder. When asked about his feelings regarding the crimes, Madoff said: "F\*\*\* my victims, people just kept throwing money at me." This clearly shows that Madoff had no remorse and was clearly working towards increasing his own financial position and status. This leads onto the next disorder, which is the antisocial personality disorder. This consists of a complete disregard for a society's laws, and a person doing what he wants without caring about how other people are affected. The combination of these two disorders offers a fuller explanation of the ***Fraud Triangle***, more specifically the 'motivation' part of the triangle. Money and pecuniary gain are not the only motivating factor for many big fraudsters. Money is accompanied by the need for status, glory, prestige and satisfaction of some requisites of a person's personality (deriving from their personality disorders) that motivates them to commit such corporate frauds.

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<sup>5</sup> Ben-David, Sarah. "Personality Traits of White-Collar Criminals." *ResearchGate*, 1 Jan. 1991, [www.researchgate.net/publication/284142169\\_Personality\\_traits\\_in\\_White-Collar\\_criminals](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/284142169_Personality_traits_in_White-Collar_criminals).

## PONZI SCHEME – THE STANDARD WHITE-COLLAR CRIME

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The Ponzi scheme is an investment fraud and is one of the most infamous white-collar crimes in history. It is named after Charles Ponzi, the historical scammer who was best known for his financial crimes in the early 1900's. He was from Italy, but it was after he moved to America that he started his fraudulent activities. The scheme he developed involved conning investors into giving him millions of dollars, and then paying them returns with other investor's money. Investors were promised that in consideration of their investment, they would receive large returns of up to 50% in 45 days, or up to 100% in 90 days. Instead of paying these investors out of the actual profit of his business, Ponzi paid these investors by further borrowing from new investors. The investors were inclined to accept these deals as it was investment with seemingly high returns and little to no risk. In this way, Ponzi created a chain of borrowing and repaying from various investors, in the process pocketing some money from each transaction for himself<sup>6</sup>.

The Ponzi scheme seems to be the perfect con, with the scammer earning large amounts of money, and the unsuspecting investors also satisfied with their exponential returns. This 100-year-old scheme is so well planned that it is made use of even by today's white-collar criminals. The prime example is Bernie Madoff, who in 2008 was caught operating the largest Ponzi scheme in history. Not all the Ponzi scheme cases are big enough to make the headlines, as some white-collar offenders run this scheme to a small extent. However, it can be said without a doubt that this scheme is one of the most standard, but also effective white-collar crimes a criminal can commit. However, investors are now becoming increasingly aware of these schemes, and there are also several anti-fraud agencies monitoring investment activities. Some of the basic parameters investors must identify to avoid falling into a Ponzi scheme are<sup>7</sup>;

- High returns with little or no risk
- Overly consistent returns
- Unregistered investments
- Unlicensed sellers
- Issues with paperwork
- Secretive, complex strategies

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<sup>6</sup> Clark, Josh, and Jane McGrath. "How Ponzi Schemes Work." *HowStuffWorks*, 9 Feb. 2009, [money.howstuffworks.com/ponzi-scheme.htm](http://money.howstuffworks.com/ponzi-scheme.htm).

<sup>7</sup> "Ponzi Scheme." *Investor.gov*, 10 Feb. 2018, [www.investor.gov/protect-your-investments/fraud/types-fraud/ponzi-scheme](http://www.investor.gov/protect-your-investments/fraud/types-fraud/ponzi-scheme).

The presences of all these features means that there is almost certainly a Ponzi scheme being run. It is evident from these features that it is an investors dream to have such characteristics in a business, which is the primary reason why it is so tempting for many investors to fall prey to this scheme. However, over the years, corporate investors have come to realise that if it seems too good to be true, it often is.

### **BERNIE MADOFF CASE**

Many people are of the view that white-collar crimes are more serious than normal crimes committed on a day to day basis. Normal crimes are high-risk, low-reward situations such as shoplifting or robberies, wherein the perpetrator is taking a large risk in order to secure a relatively small reward. White collar crimes, on the other hand, are low-risk, high-reward situations. Such perpetrators commit crimes which generally go unnoticed for long periods of time, until some thorough investigation takes place or some questions are raised. In this time, they can earn exponential amounts of money as a result of their offences. We can take the example of *Bernie Madoff* here, one of the best-known white-collar offenders of all time. He committed the largest financial fraud in the history of the US, which involved around \$65 Billion. Madoff had been committing corporate fraud and it was going unnoticed, with his career continuing on for about 20 years even after he committed such serious offences. This is evidence to the nature of white-collar crimes as being low-risk, high-reward crimes. It was only in 2008 that he was apprehended by federal authorities, and pleaded guilty to 11 federal crimes. He also admitted to operating the largest private *Ponzi scheme* in history<sup>8</sup>. Hence, he was sentenced to 150 years in prison in 2009 (the maximum for a person his age), for spending 20 years of his career defrauding clients and committing other federal felonies (including securities fraud, wire fraud, mail fraud, money laundering, theft from employee benefit plan, and many more). In February of 2020, Madoff's lawyer pleaded for compassionate release of Madoff from prison, citing health and wellness issues (kidney failure and deteriorating health). However, this bid for release failed and Madoff continues to serve his prison time.

*Neutralisation* – Madoff did not sound remorseful when interviewed in the years after his crimes, but he does show some self-awareness. “It wasn’t like I was being blackmailed into doing something, or that I was afraid of getting caught doing it,” he continues. “I, sort of, you know, rationalized that what

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<sup>8</sup> Hayes, Adam. “The Bernie Madoff Story.” *Investopedia*, 8 May 2020, [www.investopedia.com/terms/b/bernard-madoff.asp](http://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/bernard-madoff.asp).

I was doing was OK, that it wasn't going to hurt anybody.” This is a prime example of neutralisation of crimes by a perpetrator.

## **DETECTION OF WHITE-COLLAR CRIMES**

As mentioned before, the perpetrators of white-collar crimes are often difficult to prosecute and they go on for years without facing any adverse consequences for their crimes. This is mainly because they conceal their criminal activities through sophisticated techniques and under a series of complex transactions. Hence, apprehending white-collar criminals takes a large amount of investigation and uncovering, so as to find out the offences they have been committing and punish them for the same. With regard to the detection of white-collar crimes, it was found that *journalists* are the primary detectors of white-collar crimes, even more so than the standard law-enforcement agencies<sup>9</sup>. This might be due to the fact that the law-enforcement agencies generally cannot spare the large amount of time or resources required to unveil such crimes, whereas it is the job of journalists and reporters to look into these matters and uncover any criminal activities. This involves studying accounting reports and financial statements thoroughly, interviewing the relevant authorities, and drawing information from important individuals. Investigative journalists spend weeks, months, and even years on a case to detect any white-collar crimes or fraudulent activities. Apart from journalists, *Whistleblowers* play an imperative role in alerting authorities of any criminal activities. Any individual who informs on a person or organisation engaging in immoral or unlawful activities, is called a whistleblower. Whistleblowers are very important sources of detecting white-collar crimes, as they are people working inside the company who possess first-hand information of the crimes or fraud taking place. Hence, any information given by the whistleblower will be reliable internal and useful information. It was the whistleblower *Harry Markopolos* who was responsible for Bernie Madoff finally being caught after running his Ponzi scheme for 20 years. Data produced from many countries around the world found that most white-collar offenders in the past 10 years were detected by whistleblowers, who then tipped off the journalists and other authorities about the crimes being committed by the offender<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Gottschalk, Petter, and Lars Gunnesdal. “White-Collar Crime Detection.” *SpringerLink*, 23 Mar. 2018, [link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-75292-1\\_10](http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-75292-1_10).

<sup>10</sup> “White-Collar Crime.” *Legal Information Institute*, Cornell Law School, 22 Aug. 2017, [www.law.cornell.edu/wex/white-collar\\_crime](http://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/white-collar_crime).

## LEGAL REPERCUSSIONS OF WHITE-COLLAR CRIMES

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A white-collar criminal case can impose significant penalties and punishment for the convicted individual. Although these crimes do not involve physical violence or harm, they are considered serious offences keeping in mind the importance of financial resources in the 21st century. Moreover, the cost to society due to white-collar crimes is immense, but it is not felt directly by the people. It is the normal crimes people want more security from, such as theft, robbery, assault/battery, murder, etc. These are tangible threats that people want to be safe from. However, there is little understanding of how much white-collar crimes influence the economy and have a significant impact on people's lives. Hence, white-collar crimes are treated with about the same respect as the other criminal offences, and punishments are granted proportionate to the nature and extent of the crime committed.

The standard criminal penalties for white-collar crimes include a monetary fine, a prison sentence, or a combination of the two. The courts of law, while adjudicating white-collar crimes, will often follow the *sentencing guidelines* in place, which differ based on the jurisdiction. These guidelines may authorise *maximum sentences*, which are quite severe and given for only the most serious offences. For example, Bernie Madoff was given the maximum sentence (150 years at his age). However, this maximum sentence is given in only select cases and most often, offenders are given smaller sentences for less serious crimes. The guidelines exist to ensure that there is some uniformity in sentencing white-collar offenders. It takes into account the crime that has been committed, as well as the prior criminal record of the offender so as to offer a fair sentence. Depending on the nature of the case, the judges may choose to differ from these guidelines and consider other relevant factors. Apart from imprisonment, the convicted may be asked to pay some fines, to perform restitution (compensate the victims for their losses), forfeit some assets as a penalty, etc. There also may be a government actions for *disgorgement* (giving up or returning the profits obtained to the government through legal compulsion)<sup>11</sup>.

However, like any other crime, the punishments given vary from country to country and is dependent on the individual rules and policies in place. For example, in the *USA* (where white-collar crime is most prevalent), the punishments include imprisonment, restitution, fines, community service, probation and many more. Eventually the punishments had to become more stringent in the USA due to the rising incidence of white-collar crimes in the country. For example, the prison sentences became stricter (especially when at least one victim of the crime suffered from substantial financial harm). In

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<sup>11</sup> "Penalties for White Collar Crime." *Frankrubino.com*, [www.frankrubino.com/Penalties-For-White-Collar-Crime.shtml](http://www.frankrubino.com/Penalties-For-White-Collar-Crime.shtml).

**China** however, it is possible for a white-collar criminal to be given a death penalty in case of serious offences. Large scale fraud, corruption, illegal fund raising and other such white collar-crimes can qualify a perpetrator as deserving of a death penalty in China<sup>12</sup>. Meanwhile in a country like **Canada**, a more liberal and lenient approach is taken, whereby the relationship between the accused and aggrieved parties is taken into consideration while deciding the punishment (whether there has been a breach of trust between them, if there has been deceit/misrepresentation, etc.).

## DEFENCES FOR WHITE-COLLAR CRIME

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The legal team representing the white-collar criminal will employ various strategies in their defence depending on the nature and circumstances surrounding the case. Regardless, there are certain commonly used defences for absolving the white-collar offender of his crimes. Some of these are<sup>13</sup>;

- *Entrapment* – This is a commonly used defence for white-collar crimes as it almost always ensures the exoneration of the accused individual. Under entrapment, the defence team attempts to prove that the criminal activity was induced or prompted by some law-enforcement officials. In other words, the offender committed the crime not due to his own motivations, but rather because he was induced or coerced by some government official. Hence, if this external provocation had not occurred, he would not have committed the crime. Proving that the offender's will was overborne by a government official due to which he was incited to commit the white-collar crime will effectively save the white-collar criminal from legal consequence.
- *Lack of Intent* – The aspect of criminal intent, or a guilty mind (*mens rea*) is essential in proving many white-collar crimes. The prosecutor must prove that the offender had ill-intent and meant to cause such legal and financial damage. On the other hand, the defence attorney must prove that the offender had no ill-intent and had made an unintentional mistake. For example, if there is a large lapse in tax filings by a person, the defence can be set up that the person simply forgot to or neglected to record the same, and he is not guilty of tax evasion.

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<sup>12</sup> Badkar, Mamta. "Death Sentence for White-Collar Crimes in China." *Business Insider*, [rb.gy/nldzlt](http://rb.gy/nldzlt).

<sup>13</sup> Chazin, Seth. "White-Collar Crime: Common Defences." *Bayarea-Attorney.com*, [www.bayarea-attorney.com/white-collar-crime-common-defenses-and-punishments](http://www.bayarea-attorney.com/white-collar-crime-common-defenses-and-punishments).



- *Intoxication* – In certain cases, if it can be proved that the defendant was intoxicated when committing the crime, meaning that he was not in full control of his actions or decisions, there may be a possibility to acquit him. However, such a defence is most often used only to bargain for a lesser sentence or punishment, and does not hold good for a standalone defence.
- *Incapacity*: This leads on from the previous point of intoxications. Under the defence of incapacity, the argument is made that the defendant was not capable of committing the any crimes, due to either some mental or physical incapacity. Hence, he was not able to comprehend the nature or severity of the accused criminal behaviour. If this is proved, then the accused criminal can be acquitted or his sentence can be reduced.
- *Plea Agreements* – This is regarded as the last line of defence. When the evidence against the defendant is overwhelming, and none of the other defences are viable, a plea bargain is suggested. Under a plea bargain, the defendant agrees to plead guilty to the charges against him, so as it avoid trial. In turn, he receives lesser charges and less severe punishment. Furthermore, if the defendant shows his full cooperation with the authorities, he may receive a lighter sentence.

## WHITE-COLLAR CRIME IN INDIA

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There is no shortage of white-collar crimes in India as well. Although these crimes are committed on a larger scale and on a much more frequent basis in developed economies like the USA and UK, a developing economy like India has also witnessed a large number of white-collar crimes over the last 15-20 years. In a report published by the newspaper *Business Standard* in 2016, titled 'The Changing Dynamics of White-Collar Crimes in India', it was found that the CBI (Central Bureau of Investigations) had identified 6,533 cases of corruption in the past 10 years<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, it was found that trading, worth around Rs. 4000 Crore, was carried out on the BSE utilising fake or duplicate PAN cards. Recently, it was also uncovered that the card data of around 32 million customers was being stolen from a network of *YES Bank* ATM's. This was the reason for their recent debacle and controversy. Hence, such white-collar crimes are in fact prevalent in India. In response to this, the government had to introduce some economic safeguards to protect against white-collar crimes. India's economy moved from the 85<sup>th</sup> rank to 76<sup>th</sup> in 2015 due to the introduction of several measures to tackle and curb white-collar crimes<sup>15</sup>. However, as the Indian economy is not yet consolidated and continues to develop, white-collar crimes cannot be completely controlled. Such white-collar crimes are a threat to the country's economic development and must be dealt with by the government through the implementation of strict laws and regulations.

The common types of white-collar crime in India include bank fraud, cybercrime (online fraud), bribery/corruption, money laundering, tax evasion, identity theft, counterfeiting, extortion, etc. The main reason for the growth in white-collar crimes in India is the rising middle-class. The burgeoning middle-class in India leads to an increase in the number of office-goers and professional workers in corporate environments. It also means that there are a large number of people working for the same resources, such that there exists competition among them. For example, in any given Indian company, all the white-collar workings are vying for promotions, raises, bonuses, etc. This competitive effect, along with a greedy mind-set, might compel some people to commit white-collar crimes just to gain an advantage and raise their standard of living<sup>15</sup>. This is what happens in the case of corruption, wherein officials succumb to greed and acquisitiveness, while compromising on good morals and law-abiding behaviour. Therefore, it is the ease, swiftness and prolonged effect that white-collar crimes

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<sup>14</sup> Bakshi, Ishan. "The Changing Dynamics of White-Collar Crimes in India." *Business Standard*, 22 Oct. 2016, [rb.gy/ymsvnb](http://rb.gy/ymsvnb).

<sup>15</sup> Asthana, Subodh. "White-Collar Crimes in India." *IPleaders*, 31 July 2019, [blog.ipleaders.in/white-collar-crimes/](http://blog.ipleaders.in/white-collar-crimes/).

have on a person's financial status that motivates people to commit them. As mentioned before, since these are low-risk, high-reward crimes, they are enticing for people looking for an easy way to make money. It is also important to mention that India has a large demographic of people in poor socio-economic conditions. Hence, it is out of necessity that some commit white-collar crimes and pull themselves from poverty.

There are many legislations in India regarding white-collar crimes and the punishment to be given for them. These were introduced after the end of the British rule, once India became more liberalised and was on the path to globalisation. The growth in the private sector necessitated the implementation of legal provisions to control any white-collar crimes that may occur. Such regulatory legislations dealing with white-collar criminality are; *Essential Commodities Act (1955)*, *Companies Act (1956)*, *Income Tax Act (1961)*, *Prevention of Corruption Act (1988)*, *Information Technology Act (2000)*, *Prevention of Money Laundering Act (2002)*, etc. Even the *Indian Penal Code, 1860* has provisions for dealing with white-collar crimes such as bank fraud, insurance fraud, credit card fraud, etc<sup>16</sup>. Money laundering, which is a prevalent crime in India, has been reduced by the government through issuing strict KYC (Know Your Customer) guidelines and also reviewing the record of monetary transactions of banks and other financial institutions. Similarly, other major white-collar crimes in India such as corruption and cybercrimes have been dealt with through the implementation of the corruptions act and information technology act respectively.

Hence, these and other legislations were, and continue to be, essential in keeping a check on white-collar crimes in this country and punish anyone for committing the same. However, it is generally well-known that in India, white-collar crimes many a time go unpunished or even undetected. Therefore, I believe that it is imperative to issue stricter guidelines and more through investigations into those entities suspected of white-collar crimes.

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<sup>16</sup> Mehra, Prakash. "White Collar Crime: Detailed Study." *Legal Service India*, 27 June 2015, [www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-530-white-collar-crime-detail-study.html](http://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-530-white-collar-crime-detail-study.html).

## CONCLUSION

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In conclusion, it can be said that white-collar crimes are in fact serious crimes that can have equally serious consequences. There is a certain stigma attached to these crimes, making it seem that it is not as serious or hurtful as other, more conventional crimes. In reality, these crimes can be as serious as the normal ones, especially when there is substantial loss in finances and other monetary assets. Governments around the world are trying to remove the notion that not only street crimes are existent and deserving of punishment, but also the lesser known white-collar crimes. This is why there are serious consequences for crimes like tax evasion and money-laundering. I believe that this progressive approach towards dealing with white-collar crimes in the same way as normal crimes will help countries in reducing the rate of overall crime in society. Furthermore, I think it is imperative to keep a check on white-collar crimes for the sake of the economy, as such crimes have the potential to cause significant economic damage. Especially in a country like India, the legal consequence should be strict and precise for white-collar crimes, as it is a developing economy and does not have the luxury to constantly battle white-collar criminals. Therefore, if a society is able to deal with white-collar crimes effectively and give them the same notoriety as normal street crimes, then it will be beneficial for its socioeconomic growth and well-being.

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