

WHITE-COLLAR CRIMES AND ECONOMIC HARM IN PAKISTAN: A CRITICAL LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

White-collar crimes have a wide range having multiple types to commit these crimes and dishonest business practices, including commercial or business fraud, slander, embezzlement, money laundering, bribery, insider trading, computer fraud etc. These crimes are continuously evolving and deceiving individuals and the government resulting significant financial loss. Scholars argue that white-collar crimes have far higher economic costs compared to other street crimes. This study employs doctrinal and analytical methodologies to analyze existing legal frameworks and international agreements relevant to white-collar crimes in Pakistan and identifies the gaps and challenges in the existing legal framework in addressing the crimes related to white-collar crimes. This research paper also examines the prevalence and handling of white-collar crimes by law enforcement agencies in Pakistan, including the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), Police, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), and the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). The research examines the recent literature on white-collar crimes, presents characteristics, and concludes that in this specific group of economic criminals, the ties between the perpetrator and the society in which they live are very weak. Finally, the study touches on an alternative way to combat white-collar crimes.

INTRODUCTION

White-collar crime includes various dishonest and illegal business practices involving the misuse of power by corporate officials for personal gain, including bribery, embezzlement, fraud, forgery, and money laundering (Green, 2007). White-collar crimes are primarily committed by high-ranking corporate professionals. These individuals are seen as respected and well-educated in our society; however, they become involved in various offences committed within a commercial

environment (Stamevski et al., 2021). The concept of white-collar crime was first introduced by a renowned sociologist Prof. Edward Sutherland in the twentieth century. He proposed that white-collar crime is an offence committed by a person of high social status during their occupation (Sutherland, 1940). Examples of white-collar crimes include bank fraud, bribery, blackmail, cellular phone fraud, computer fraud, tax evasion, currency counterfeiting, money laundering, embezzlement, and insider trading. Individuals

involved in such offences often conceal their activities through the use of advanced technology-driven tools and by exploiting loopholes within the legal system. In many cases, direct or indirect political influence and institutional support further facilitate the commission of such crimes (Ligeti & Tosza, 2019).

Historically, perpetrators of white-collar crimes were not perceived as conventional criminals because these offences are generally non-violent in nature and are often committed by individuals holding respectable social and professional positions (Khan & Rafique, 2025). However, despite their non-violent character, corporate crimes cause severe economic, social, and institutional harm to society. These crimes have become a major concern in Pakistan because they not only violate public rights but also adversely affect the economy and social structure of the country (Cheema, 2022). One major area of occupational crimes in Pakistan is corruption in almost all departments. White-collar crimes adversely affect economic development, which indirectly contributes to issues such as unemployment, poverty, and reduced public welfare. At this moment, Pakistan ranks 136 out of 182 countries in terms of corruption, with a Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) score of 28 out of 100, which has resulted in a higher poverty rate (Transparency International, n.d.).

The increase in white-collar crime in Pakistan can be attributed to both internal and external factors, including lack of proper training in private and governmental institutions, low income, external powers, political instability, lack of accountability, opportunity to commit crime, peer support, greed, loopholes in the legal system, and lack of checks and balances in most of the sectors. Economic offences are among the most serious crimes due to their substantial yet often overlooked impact on the economy. These crimes increasingly depend upon technological literacy and digital expertise.

Owing to technological advancements, white-collar crimes are anticipated to increase in both frequency and sophistication as access to knowledge and digital tools expands (Parihar & Ghosh, 2023).

This research contributes to both academic scholarship and policy discourse by interrogating one of the most serious crimes and the critical gaps in the current legal system of Pakistan to deal with white-collar crimes. The primary objective of this research is to examine white-collar crimes, their causes and consequences, and the existing laws in Pakistan dealing with white-collar crime.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study addresses the following research questions:

- i. What are white-collar crimes, what types are prevalent in our society, and what are their causes and consequences?
- ii. What is the role of existing laws in Pakistan in controlling and preventing white-collar crimes?
- iii. How do different countries define, regulate and tackle white-collar crimes, and in what ways are their approaches similar or different?
- iv. What reforms or measures can be introduced to effectively control and reduce white-collar crimes in Pakistan?

METHODOLOGY

This study will primarily utilize doctrinal and analytical research methodologies to analyze and interpret existing legal frameworks, research papers, articles, and scholarly publications, related to white-collar crimes. The research will follow a systematic approach to review and synthesize legal sources to address the research objectives and questions outlined. Moreover, the research methodology will involve a comprehensive review of relevant legal literature, including academic articles, books, reports, and legal documents, to gain an understanding of the current legal

landscape concerning white-collar crimes. Furthermore, this research methodology will be employed to analyze the key legal principles, international agreements, and legal frameworks that are related to white-collar crimes at the international level and to identify any gaps, inconsistencies, or challenges in the existing legal framework and to examine relevant case law that has addressed issues related to white-collar crimes.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF WHITE-COLLAR CRIMES

The origin of white-collar crime can be traced back to the early development of modern society. The transition from agricultural to industrial economies is considered a main factor in the evolution of white-collar crime (Jacob, n.d.). This transformation has enabled corporate actors and economically powerful individuals to engage in fraudulent activities on a larger scale. Capitalism and the pursuit of wealth played significant roles in fostering conditions conducive to white-collar crime. The development of the business sector has further provided opportunities for individuals to exploit legal loopholes and deceive others for personal gain (Doherty et al., 2012). These developments contributed to the expansion of economic offences in modern societies. Conduct resembling modern white-collar crime existed in Europe during the Middle Ages. During this time, trade routes flourished, and the abuse of power and authority for personal gain grew (Myers, 2025). During the nineteenth century, the rise of capitalism further contributed to the growth of occupational crimes motivated by wealth and power.

White-Collar Crimes in the 19th Century

During the 19th century, crime was heavily influenced by urbanization and industrialization, leading to increased poverty, inequality, and social unrest among common people. During this

period, criminology emerged, providing a systematic framework for understanding crime and justice (Zehr, 2019). Early criminologists sought to understand criminal behavior and develop theories relating to crime prevention and punishment. They focused on various theories, such as the classic school of thought and the positivist school of criminology (Hough, 2017). Moreover, the 19th century saw advancements in criminal laws, and reforms were made to improve prison conditions and develop alternative methods of punishment (Grove, n.d.). The emergence of different theories and reforms during the 19th century laid the groundwork for the modern world's understanding of the criminal justice system.

White-Collar Crimes in the 20th Century

In the early 20th century, the term white-collar crime reflected the changing nature and understanding of illicit activities. For instance, the term "white-collar crime" was first introduced in the 20th century by Prof. Edward Sutherland in 1939 to describe offences committed by individuals of high social status during the course of their occupation. Over time, the concept of white-collar crime expanded to encompass a broader range of economic offences requiring legal and regulatory reforms (Gottschalk, 2016). As awareness of corporate and financial crimes increased, distinct terminology emerged to describe various forms of misconduct. Terms such as corporate fraud, insider trading, and money laundering became prominent, reflecting the specific nature and complexity of white-collar crime (Spann, 2022). The evolution of white-collar crime has enabled policymakers and legislatures to better understand such offences and develop stronger legal frameworks to address them.

White-Collar Crimes in the Modern World

The late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries saw dramatic changes in white-collar crime. Advancements in technology have made it easier for individuals to commit sophisticated economic offences while simultaneously making it difficult for the legislature to enact reforms and for enforcement agencies to detect and prosecute criminals committing white-collar crimes (Payne & Pitman, 2022). Even in a more inclusive and democratic way, the scope of white-collar crime is enormous and expanding. Despite continuous efforts made by lawmakers globally, white-collar crimes continue to pose a significant challenge both in Pakistan and worldwide (Mangrio & Abro, 2022).

WHITE-COLLAR CRIMES ITS CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

Economic Impact of White-Collar Crime

White-collar crime has profound economic consequences; it significantly affects businesses, financial stability, and corporate reputation. Fraudulent activities deplete financial resources, disrupt cash flow, and impair a company's ability to meet obligations. Economic offences directly affect national economies by destabilizing markets, undermining investor confidence, and discouraging foreign direct investment (Awadh, 2025). The fallout from white-collar crime extends beyond individual stockholders to institutional investors and financial markets. In Pakistan, both public and private sectors are characterized by widespread corruption, fraudulent practices, and tax evasion, all of which are damaging the economic system of the country. Due to the increasing ratio of corruption and tax evasion, the institutional integrity and economy of Pakistan suffer significantly, contributing to both social and economic instability (Yasir et al., 2021).

Impact on Society of White-Collar Crimes

White-collar crime can have devastating effects on society. Corporate actors and economically powerful individuals involved in white-collar crimes often receive less severe punishment than street offenders (Rao & Gupta, 2025). When individuals or organizations engage in fraudulent activities, they undermine the trust placed in them by society (Perales, 2015). White-collar crimes disproportionately affect vulnerable communities, including low-income individuals and marginalized groups, who are more susceptible to exploitation and financial harm. These crimes can lead to the loss of jobs and increase the cost of goods and services. Although white-collar crimes are generally non-violent, their long-term consequences can be equally or even more damaging than many conventional crimes. Numerous victims of white-collar crime have lost their financial resources, resulting in severe hardship for their families (Weatherby, 2016). Due to these crimes, the broader economy can suffer from market instability, reduced investment in businesses, and misallocation of resources. Unethical practices within organizations further contribute to the broader social and institutional harm caused by white-collar crime (Hamja, 2024).

Impact on Business and Industries

The impact of white-collar crime on businesses and industries can be devastating, and direct financial losses are often the most immediate and noticeable consequences for businesses and industries. Companies may face increased insurance premiums due to economic offences, and commercial entities involved in such crimes may spend vast sums on legal defenses and face hefty fines imposed by regulatory authorities. These expenses place significant financial strain on businesses and may threaten their long-term stability. Corporations involved in white-collar crimes can face severe legal consequences, and

penalties or sanctions from regulatory authorities can be financially crippling. They may include fines, asset forfeiture, or even business shutdowns. For instance, in the United States of America, the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, 1977, (FCPA) imposes strict penalties for bribery and corruption in order to promote corporate accountability and protect public trust, often resulting in settlements worth billions of dollars.

Damage to the Justice System's Integrity

White-collar crime also affects the legal justice system, as it requires a coordinated effort from legislatures, law enforcement agencies, and regulatory bodies, to prevent and combat corporate crimes. It requires specialized knowledge to effectively combat and investigate such offences. Investigation agencies may collaborate with regional, national, and international organizations to gather evidence, track financial transactions, and hold offenders accountable for their actions. Loopholes in the existing justice system may create opportunities for offenders to commit white-collar crimes easily and allow them to engage in corruption and fraudulent activities without any fear of detection and punishment. Policymakers must address financial misconduct and regulatory challenges to create a better environment and strengthen the legal and regulatory framework for preventing and combating white-collar crimes.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON WHITE-COLLAR CRIMES AND ITS ENFORCEMENT

Legal Reforms on White-Collar Crimes in Pakistan

Like other countries, Pakistan has enacted numerous laws that specify penalties and establish regulatory authorities to combat white-collar crime. Pakistan faces a wide range of white-collar crimes that penetrate the societal structure of the country and erode public trust, security, and

stability. Criminal activities such as terrorism, cybercrime, violent crime, and white-collar crimes have significantly hindered the development and evolution of the country. Each of the above crimes has different risks for public safety and, overall, for the welfare of society. Since its establishment, Pakistan has introduced various legal measures to address white-collar crime. These laws, among others, include the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947, the Public and Representative Office Disqualification Act, 1949, the Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2010, the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, and the Companies Act, 2017. In addition, several regulatory and investigative authorities play an instrumental role in combating economic offences and ensuring accountability. These authorities include the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency, the Anti-Corruption Department, and the West Pakistan Anti-Corruption Agency.

Role of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947

To address white-collar crimes, Pakistan has enacted voluminous laws and established several enforcement agencies, ranging from the Prevention of Corruption Act 1947 to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). Since the establishment of Pakistan, the Prevention of Corruption Act has played a significant role in combating white-collar crime, corruption, and other economic offences. The act holds public officials accountable and prescribes penalties for unlawful conduct. This act serves as a deterrent by discouraging individuals from engaging in corrupt and fraudulent practices.

Public and Representative Office Disqualification Act, 1949

The Public and Representative Office (Disqualification) Act, 1949, was promulgated by Liaquat Ali Khan in 1949 to control corruption in government departments and prevent the misuse of authority by public officials. Under this Act, any person found guilty of corruption could be disqualified from holding public office for a period of up to fifteen years. The Act was intended to ensure accountability within public institutions; however, critics argued that it was also used to suppress political opponents and dissenting voices within rival groups (Mehboob, 2017). In 1959, the Act was replaced during the regime of General Ayub Khan by the Public Offices (Disqualification) Order, 1959, which introduced a new framework for the disqualification of public office holders.

Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2010

Money laundering is one of the major forms of white-collar crime, and the Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2010 provides the legal framework for addressing such offences in Pakistan. The Act defines money laundering as the process of concealing, disguising, or legitimizing proceeds derived from unlawful activities. It requires financial institutions and investigating agencies to identify suspicious transactions and assess potential risks. If any suspicious transactions are identified, they must inform the relevant authorities. The Act plays a significant role in combating financial crimes by strengthening accountability, promoting transparency, and safeguarding the integrity of financial and public institutions.

Pakistan Penal Code, 1860

Several sections of the Pakistan Penal Code 1860 deal with various acts of dishonesty, fraud, abuse of trust, forgery, and corruption that are

commonly associated with economic and corporate offences. Although it does not specifically use the term “white-collar crime”. Some important offences under the PPC relating to white-collar crime include cheating and fraud (Sections 415-420), criminal breach of trust (Sections 405-409), forgery and fake documents (Sections 463-477A), criminal misappropriation of property (Sections 403-404), public servant misconduct and corruption, and, counterfeiting (Sections 230 onwards). Through these provisions, the PPC provides the foundational framework of criminal law for prosecuting white-collar crimes. Nonetheless, modern economic offences are mainly addressed through special laws.

Companies Act 2017

The Companies Act, 2017, was enacted to replace the Companies Ordinance, 1984, and to modernize corporate regulation in Pakistan. The Act was widely appreciated by all relevant laws to facilitate economic growth and strengthen the corporate sector. It is regarded as one of the most significant legal reforms in Pakistan’s corporate framework, bringing company law closer to international standards. Furthermore, the Act enhances corporate governance, transparency, disclosure requirements, and accountability mechanisms, thereby helping to prevent corporate fraud and other forms of white-collar crime.

National Accountability Bureau (NAB)

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) was established under the National Accountability Ordinance, 1999, to combat corruption and other forms of white-collar crime in Pakistan. NAB is regarded as one of the principal institutions responsible for investigating and prosecuting offences involving corruption, bribery, embezzlement, fraud, money laundering, and abuse of authority by public officials and private individuals. The Ordinance grants NAB extensive

powers to investigate allegations of financial misconduct, arrest suspects, and initiate prosecution proceedings before accountability courts. Through these functions, NAB plays a significant role in promoting accountability and deterring economic and financial crimes in Pakistan.

Federal Investigation Agency (FIA)

White-collar crimes pose a significant threat to the integrity, economic stability, and social prosperity of Pakistan. As the country grapples with various crimes such as money laundering, fraud, corruption, and financial embezzlement, the role of investigative agencies has become increasingly important. Among these agencies, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) serves as one of the principal institutions responsible for combating white-collar crime. The Federal Investigation Agency operates under the Ministry of Interior and was established through the Federal Investigation Agency Act, 1974, to investigate and prevent offences including corruption, financial fraud, cybercrime, money laundering, and embezzlement. The Agency also cooperates with national and international organizations to address transnational economic and financial crimes.

Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP)

Under the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, the commission was established in 1997, and the commission operates under the federal government and is responsible for ensuring transparency in the corporate sector of Pakistan and regulating the companies registered under the SECP. The commission plays a crucial role in ensuring smooth business and monitoring corporate fraud and insider trading under the Companies Act, 2017 and the Securities Act, 2015.

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR)

The Central Board of Revenue (CBR), now known as the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), was established under the Central Board of Revenue Act, 1924. Initially functioning under the Ministry of Finance, the institution later evolved into an autonomous revenue authority responsible for tax administration and customs regulation in Pakistan. Over time, various organizational reforms strengthened the powers of its chairman and senior officials to improve accountability and enforcement mechanisms. The FBR plays an important role in combating white-collar crimes such as tax evasion, customs fraud, financial irregularities, and money laundering by monitoring financial activities and ensuring compliance with tax laws.

GAPS AND CHALLENGES IN THE EXISTING LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Political Interference and Lack of Institutional Independence

One of the most significant gaps in the framework of anti-corruption institutions of Pakistan is the persistent interference in investigative and accountability by political actors. Agencies such as NAB and FIA are primarily designed to ensure transparency and accountability; nonetheless, their effectiveness is grossly undermined by the allegations of politicization, selective accountability, and external influence. These scenarios undermine public confidence in anti-corruption institutions and raised serious questions regarding the impartial enforcement of white-collar crime laws in Pakistan.

Weak Enforcement Despite Comprehensive Laws

At this moment Pakistan has enacted numerous legal frameworks to effectively combat with white-collar crimes, however, in spite of having such a comprehensive legal mechanism, the practical

enforcement remains inconsistent and ineffective. There are certain shortcomings which restrict effective utilization of present legal mechanisms, those defects include delayed investigations and prosecutions, low conviction rates, poor inter-agency coordination, and limited institutional resources usually reduce the effectiveness of these laws. Consequently, the mere existence of a comprehensive legal framework does not indicate or translate the effective accountability and deterrence.

Overlapping Jurisdictions of the Institutions

White-collar crimes are addressed by various agencies such as NAB, FIA, and FBR. These agencies possess authority to investigate different forms of economic offences. However, overlapping jurisdictions and inadequate coordination frequently result in duplication of efforts, institutional conflicts, and delays in investigations. This lack of cooperation reduces the overall efficiency of Pakistan's anti-corruption framework

Weak Technological and Investigative Capacity

Modern white-collar crimes increasingly involve digital transactions, cyber fraud, and sophisticated financial schemes. However, investigative agencies in Pakistan often face shortages of advanced technological tools, forensic facilities, and specialized expertise. These limitations hinder the effective detection, investigation, and prosecution of complex economic offences in an increasingly digital environment.

CHALLENGES FACED BY ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCIES

Major white-collar crimes are investigated by various anti-corruption agencies in Pakistan, which face many hurdles in combating white-collar crimes. Some of the hurdles faced by investigation agencies are as follows:

Impaired Operational Autonomy

Operational investigating agencies, such as the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), and Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE), are compromised by politicians and bureaucrats. Discriminatory practices in investigative agencies have eroded public confidence in these institutions. To adopt a top-tier approach and legal reforms is mandatory to handle these crimes for the betterment of society and the country.

Limited Resources and Technology

Investigating agencies of white-collar crimes have always faced issues due to limited sources and technology available in the country. One of the key challenges faced by investigating agencies is the lack of technology, especially in controlling cybercrimes and digital transactions. Investigation agencies need consistent investment in resources, technology, training, and equipment to keep pace with emerging threats.

Complexity of Cases

Offenders of white-collar crimes often involve sophisticated schemes and use high levels of technology to detect illegal transactions. Investors and prosecutors require specialized knowledge of accounting, cybersecurity, finance, and digital forensics to address these crimes. The complexity of crimes can prolong the proceedings.

High Profile Defendants

White-collar crimes are committed by high-profile individuals and people in high positions in society. They have unlimited resources to hide these crimes, hire top-tier legal teams to exploit legal loopholes, delay proceedings, and negotiate favorable settlements.

Public Perception and Corruption

Like many anti-corruption agencies, the Federal Investigation Agency, the National Accountability Bureau, and the Federal Board of Revenue struggle with public perception, especially in cases where corruption is alleged in their ranks. Investigating agencies must maintain transparency and accountability in their operations to gain public trust. New initiatives and legal reforms, including anti-corruption measures, are essential for enhancing the credibility of agencies.

THE IMPACT OF WHITE-COLLAR CRIMES ON THE SOCIETY AND ECONOMY OF PAKISTAN

Impact on the Economy of Pakistan

White-collar crimes are non-violent offenses committed by individuals and organizations. Those who dress in suits and ties commit white-collar crimes, but not with guns or violence; they commit these crimes in deceitful ways, manipulation, and financial expertise. White-collar crimes can be committed in different ways, such as bank fraud, corporate fraud, corruption, fake investment schemes, and illegal activities, and can harm the economy of the country. Pakistan is continuously facing economic issues due to corruption and fraudulent activities.

Financial Losses

White-collar crimes have always negatively impacted any country's economy, and Pakistan is also facing financial losses due to an increase in corruption and white-collar crimes. Due to corporate fraud and embezzlement, the people of Pakistan can lose millions of rupees, and the damage can be staggering. The country's private and public departments are infested with corruption, corrupt practices, corporate fraud, and illegal activities. Tax collectors collaborate with tax evaders for financial gain, significantly contributing to the deficit of the economy of

Pakistan and losing billions of rupees due to white-collar crimes, which cause economic instability. The increase in corruption also makes it difficult to do business in Pakistan, and public services are characterized by corruption.

Erosion of Trust

Beyond the economic consequences in Pakistan, white-collar crimes have also significantly impacted society, undermining the public's trust in the government and private sectors. The landscape of public trust in Pakistan has trembled due to the rise in white-collar crimes, which have become the backdrop of everyday life. As communities grapple with the pervasive increase in theft, robbery, corporate fraud, and white-collar crime. The continuous increase in corruption within politics, public administration, and the private sector has spread apathy among the public.

Job Losses

Corruption, corporate fraud, mismanagement, and embezzlement in every public or private sector have increased the unemployment rate in Pakistan. The fraudulent activities severely damage the corporate sector, including significant job losses, especially in the textile industry. Approximately one million people can lose their jobs due to the uncertainty of the economy of Pakistan, which can increase the unemployment rate in the country.

Impact on the Society of Pakistan

White-collar crime in Pakistan impacts the economy, politics, and society at large. There is also a significant misconception about the actual cost of white-collar crime in Pakistan. With growing illegal activities such as corporate fraud, corruption, bribery, and embezzlement, the people of Pakistan are facing many economic and societal issues, such as trust in public and private sectors and jobs. As people face abuse of power, they can

be led to societal disillusionment, and their faith in the government erodes, resulting in an increase in societal unrest and weakening the country's democratic structure. Political instability creates a better environment for individuals to commit white-collar crimes in the country. Middle-class people face immense financial strain due to the rise in living costs, leading to anxiety and stress among middle-class workers. White-collar crime has also impacted the quality of education and healthcare, and many middle-class families face issues with affording school fees and healthcare expenses, forcing them to compromise these necessities.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE ON WHITE-COLLAR CRIMES

The Impact of Technology on White-Collar Crime

The rapid growth in technology has made it possible for white-collar crime offenders to commit crimes easily. The rise in online transactions, online banking, cryptocurrency, and other online money transfer applications has created new opportunities for economic crimes such as cybercrimes and identity theft. The increase in technology and online banking systems has made it difficult for law enforcement agencies to combat financial crime.

The Role of Globalization in Facilitating White-Collar Crimes

Globalization has increased trade among other countries and commerce, creating more opportunities for financial crimes. The increase in the export and import of goods, services, and capital cross-border trade has made it easier for white-collar criminals to launder money, evade taxes, and engage in other illegal activities. Consequently, international cooperation is required to combat white-collar crime.

The Use of Specialized Task Forces and Agencies

To address these challenges, countries have established anti-money laundering agencies and laws to combat white-collar crime. These agencies often have advanced training in white-collar crimes and expertise in financial crimes. For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in the United States of America (USA) are tasked with prosecuting and investigating white-collar crimes in the United States. Similarly, the United Kingdom (UK) has the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) and the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to investigate and prosecute white-collar crime. Like the USA and UK, Pakistan has the National Accountability Bureau, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to investigate and prosecute white-collar crimes.

The Importance of International Cooperation in Cross-Border Cases

International cooperation is critical in preventing and prosecuting white-collar crimes, especially in cross-border cases. The lack of international cooperation and regulation in laws across countries can create challenges in investigating and prosecuting white-collar crimes. Organizations such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Egmont Group have been established to facilitate international cooperation among countries to share information related to white-collar crimes with investigating agencies and financial regulatory bodies.

The Role of Education and Awareness in Preventing Financial Crimes

Education and awareness among the public can be a main component to preventing white-collar crimes. Educating individuals and investigators of white-collar crimes can prevent these crimes in the first place. Training programs for Prosecutors,

Judges, Compliance Officers, and the public can help to build expertise and enhance the effectiveness of anti-money laundering and combating white-collar crimes and other illegal activities.

Emerging Trends and Technologies in White-Collar Crimes Prevention

Emerging trends and technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Blockchain are transforming the prevention of white-collar crimes. These technologies and trends have the potential to combat white-collar crimes globally. Artificial Intelligence has the power to analyze large databases to identify suspicious transactions, and Blockchain can provide a secure and transparent record of transactions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Legal Reforms & Strengthening Enforcement Mechanism

To address the white-collar crimes in Pakistan, it is mandatory to modernize and strengthen its legal reforms. Although there are many anti-money laundering laws such as, the National Accountability Bureau, the Federal Investigation Agency, and the Federal Board of Revenue, often they suffer from overlaps, outdated provisions and implementation gaps in these laws. Moreover, enforcement agencies in Pakistan should be shielded full support and independency from politics to control or investigate white-collar crimes. The appointment of investigating bodies and judiciary scrutiny mechanisms is necessary to combat these crimes.

Capacity Building and Technical Upgradation

The capacity building and upgradation in technology can help tackle white-collar crimes. Pakistan is lack in technical support and expertise among the investigators and it requires modernization to combat white-collar crimes. The

investment in training programs focusing on preventing corruption, cybercrime investigation, and training prosecutors is critical to combat economic crimes. In addition, investigation agencies must be equipped with modern surveillance and data analyzing tools to control corruption and other illegal activities.

Public Awareness and Institutional Integrity

Public awareness and zero institutional integrity regarding white-collar crimes contribute to normalization in society. The institutes such as the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and the Ministry of Law should start campaign to aware people about the impact of white-collar crimes on the society and economy of Pakistan. Furthermore, the ethical integrity of public sectors must be restored through training to control these crimes.

International Cooperation

It is mandatory for Pakistan to collaborate with international organization such as UNCAC, FATF and Egmont Group can enhance the effectiveness to control white-collar crimes. adopting a global approach and investigation procedure can help in combating these crimes.

Corporate Governance and Private Sector Compliance

The private sector of the country plays a pivotal role in perpetrating and preventing white-collar crimes within the state. Companies should follow the rules and regulations laid down by the government and adopt transparency compliance. The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan must be fully empowered to control the companies and their business practices.

CONCLUSION

White-Collar crimes are considered one of the most insidious and complex forms of criminal

activity, impacting both developed and underdeveloped countries. In Pakistan, these crimes are embedded in every private and public sector, severely impacting economic growth, social development, and public confidence. Unlike street crimes, white-collar crimes are characterized by many ways, such as deceit, manipulation, and abuse of power by individuals in positions such as government officials, corporate executives, and politicians. These offenders exploit legal loopholes and weaknesses in laws to commit these crimes openly. This thesis has explored historical perspective, evolution, and types of white-collar crimes, drawing attention to their growth in Pakistan. This research has highlighted that the root causes and consequences of white-collar crimes are both systemic and individual. Many factors have contributed to the growth of white-collar crimes in Pakistan, such as instability of politics, lack of accountability, low income, poor institutional transparency, loopholes in the legal framework, less punishment, and the desire for personal gain. This research paper has reviewed Pakistan's legal framework on white-collar crimes and investigating agencies such as the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), the Anti-Corruption Establishment, and the Federal Board of Revenue. Although these institutions are made to investigate corruption, their effectiveness is influenced by the politicians. Despite the availability of numerous laws on corruption, such as the Prevention of Corruption, 1947, the National Accountability Ordinance, 1999, the Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2010, and several other laws, the enforcement of these laws is inconsistent and limited. Globally, white-collar crime has also had a significant impact. Economically, it leads to massive financial loss and weakness of the economy, discourages foreign investment, and undermines the general public's trust in the public sector. White-collar crimes have

widened the gap between the poor and the rich, eroded the trust of people in public institutions, and increased public disillusionment with the legal system of Pakistan. Politically, white-collar crime has fueled instability and weakened democratic institutions. In conclusion, white-collar crime in Pakistan requires a strong legal framework to combat these crimes. The legal framework on white-collar crimes must be accompanied by the support of investigating agencies, technological advancement, public awareness campaigns, and capacity building for investigators, judges, and prosecutors. Collaborations with international organizations can create opportunities to prevent white-collar crimes at the earliest. By recognizing the severity of white-collar crimes and acting decisively to prevent them, Pakistan can restore the trust of public in the public sector, improve the economy, and uphold the rule of law.

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