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VICTIMS OF CORPORATE CRIME AND IT'S EFFECT: A SOCIO LEGAL STUDY

AUTHOR – ANKIT KUMAR YADAV* & DR. DEO NARAYAN SINGH**

* LL.M. SCHOOL OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH BIHAR 2025-26.

** ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, SCHOOL OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE, CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH BIHAR

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Abstract

Corporate crime has serious and far-reaching consequences for people, communities and the environment. Corporate crime is often perceived as a non-violent, technical form of misbehaviour. The main focus of the article is on the victims of corporate crime who are usually ignored and highlights how harm is often hidden, mitigated and delayed. Unlike the traditional crimes, corporate misconduct does not usually have immediate or identifiable victims, therefore identification and remediation are more difficult. The study addresses a number of groups of victims, such as communities affected by environmental degradation, workers subjected to abusive working conditions and consumers exposed to dangerous products. Furthermore, this paper examines some categories of corporate crime such as consumer deception, labour abuse, environmental crimes and financial fraud. The study also reveals the pervasive and multifaceted harm caused by corporate wrongdoing in these categories.

Keywords

White-Collar Crime, Consumer Crime, Corporate Crime, Labour Exploitation, Consumer Protection, Corporate Liability, Environmental Crime, Regulatory Framework, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Social Impact Economic Loss, Legal Enforcement, Public Awareness and Corporate Ethics

1.Introduction

Corporate crime is frequently regarded as a fiscal or technical offense, an act divorced from normal human experience. Its impact, however, is by no means abstract. Unlike traditional crimes, corporate crimes do not necessarily involve violence. However, they can have a large and complex effect on a large number of people. Real victims of corporate malfeasance are communities exposed to environmental destruction, workers exposed to unsafe working conditions and consumers harmed by unsafe products.What makes corporate crime scary is the opacity of its victims. The damage is often extensive, chronic and difficult to clearly attribute to a single act. This lets corporations with considerable resources and power avoid or delay accountability. This often leaves victims unheeded and uncompensated[1282].

As Edwin H. Sutherland pointed out, the crimes of the powerful can be far-reaching, not only in terms of their magnitude, but also in terms of their social impact.[1283]. For this reason, it is necessary to recognize corporate crime as an important social problem, to be able to appreciate the magnitude of the damage it causes and the need to alleviate the plight of its victims.

[1282] Edwin H. Sutherland, *White Collar Crime* 9-13 (Dryden Press, New York, 1949).

[1283] Edwin H. Sutherland, *White Collar Crime* 4 (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1949).

2. Understanding Corporate Crime

Corporate crime is the illegal or unethical activity of a corporation or its agents in order to make money (e.g. fraud, environmental violations, and labour abuse). These crimes are hard to detect and enforce against, largely because they are so closely tied to legitimate corporate behaviour. A key feature of corporate crime is the diffusion of responsibility, in that the harmful effects are the result of organisational rather than individual decisions. And that makes it harder to hold people accountable and less effective law. Furthermore, the damage is often diffuse and latent, making its victims effectively invisible within dominant legal and social frameworks.

. Edwin H. Sutherland noted that white-collar crimes are committed by persons of high social position in the course of their work. It argues further that corporate crime stems from systemic issues such as profit maximization, weak regulation and institutional culture[1284]. Additionally, it has been observed that regulatory bodies frequently struggle to adequately regulate big businesses, which permits these crimes to continue[1285].

3. Who Are the Victims of Corporate Crime

Corporate crime victims are usually more numerous and much less visible than victims of traditional criminal offending. The damage is not only to individuals but to communities and even entire ecosystems. One of the nearest victims are the consumers who may incur financial loss, health hazards or even death causing damage from dangerous goods, fraudulent advertisements or poor service delivery. Workers are equally and seriously affected. Most often, there is no adequate legal recourse for an unsafe occupational environment, wage infractions and denial of basic rights, leaving workers exposed to physical and financial injury[1286].

When corporations act in ways that damage the environment, displace people or create public health emergencies, it is the communities themselves that are the victims. Hazardous waste disposal and industrial contamination disproportionately impacts vulnerable people[1287].In the end, it's the ecosystem that takes the hit, in silence. Corporate environmental damage translates into human suffering through resource depletion, climate change and proliferation of associated health risks[1288]. "Diffuse victims" are created by corporate crime, meaning the harm is spread over large populations making it harder to identify and settle specific complaints, jurist stresses[1289].This diffusion systematically contributes to under-recognition and inadequate compensation for those affected.

4. Types of Corporate Crimes

Contingent on the type of company activity, corporate crimes manifest across a wide spectrum of forms. Although these forms frequently overlap in practice, they fall into the following categories.

4.1 Financial Fraud

Financial fraud refers to Accounting manipulation, insider trading, and embezzlement constitutes prominent manifestation of financial fraud. Investors may sustain substantial losses as a result of these crimes, which also erode confidence in the integrity of financial systems[1290].It covers banking fraud, securities fraud, money laundering. These crimes are mainly dealt under Companies Act,2013,PMLA 2002,SEBI Act 1992 and RBI Act. According to National Crime Record Bureau over 193,000 economic offences were registered in India in 2022 this shows 11% increase from

1284 Marshall B. Clinard and Peter C. Yeager, *Corporate Crime* 16 (Free Press, New York, 1980).
1285 Sally S. Simpson, *Corporate Crime, Law, and Social Control* 12 (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002).
1286 David Weil, *The Fissured Workplace* 45 (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2014).
1287 Michael J. Lynch and Paul B. Stretesky, *Corporate Crime, Corporate Violence* 78 (Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, 2014).
1288 Rob White, *Crimes Against Nature: Environmental Criminology and Ecological Justice* 22 (Willan Publishing, Cullompton, 2008).
1289 *Ibid*,96
1290 John C. Coffee Jr., "Understanding Enron: It's About the Gatekeepers, Stupid" 57 Business Lawyer 1403 (2002).

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2021[1291]The RBI Annual report shows that Fraud value rose from approximately ₹12,230 crore (FY 2023-24) to ₹36,014 crore (FY 2024-25). And 17,574 fraud cases were registered across Indian banks[1292].The NCRB 2024 report noted that Fake currency with face value exceeding ₹55 crore was confiscated nationally[1293].

4.2 Environmental Violations

Environmental crimes occur when corporations contravene rules to cut expenses, which results in pollution, ecological harm, and significant threat to public health.[1294]. and it degraded the environment which resulted in multiple type of loss to living creature and affected human health and growth.these crimes are mainly regulated through ,Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 ,Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 ,Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, Hazardous Waste Management Rules ,National Green Tribunal Act, 2010 in the year 2023 total 68994 cases related to environmental crimes were registered and in 2024 this no. decreases upto 7% with 57,670 cases[1295] with the conviction rate of general SLL conviction rate (2024) 79.3%, General SLL Pendency rate (Policy stage)(2024) is 28.4%[1296] More than 92% of many categories of criminal cases remained pending before courts A Central pollution control board submission,2024 before the National Green Tribunal concerning air pollution in Indian cities found Approximately 33,000 annual deaths linked to poor air quality in major Indian cities. Due to Industrial emissions, power plants, and transport sectors identified as major contributors[1297]. And also Air pollution levels exceeded WHO guidelines in multiple cities. "The major land fill cases which affect environment hazardously are Ghazipur Landfill,85 lakh metric tonnes of waste remained in 2025.,NGT monitored methane emission and leachate control measures.,Bandhwari Landfill Over 70 landfill fires reported.,CPCB studies found groundwater contamination. ,NGT ordered environmental safeguards"[1298] In Buddha Dariya Industrial Pollution Case (Punjab),Around 105 million litres/day of industrial dyeing waste discharged[1299].

4.3 Labour Exploitation

Inadequate remuneration, hazardous working conditions, and the denial of fundamental worker rights constitute defining features of labour exploitation. These actions exposes workers to considerable financial and physical harm[1300]. Major Labour exploitation as a form of white-collar or corporate crime in India includes: Wage theft ,Bonded and forced labour as Recent Rescue Data (2025),26 tribal labourers from Madhya Pradesh were rescued from forced labour conditions in Maharashtra's sugarcane sector[1301].,Unsafe working conditions ,Exploitative contractual employment ,Gig-worker exploitation ,Corporate overwork culture ,Migrant

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1291 National Crime Records Bureau, *Crime in India 2022*, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, available at: https://ncrb.gov.in/uploads/nationalcrimerecordsbureau/custom/1701607577CrimeinIndia2022Book1.pdf (last visited May 29, 2026).

1292 Reserve Bank of India, Annual Report 2024–25, Reserve Bank of India, available at: https://rbidocs.rbi.org.in/rdocs/AnnualReport/PDFs/0ANNUALREPORT202324_FULLDF549205FA214F62A2441C5320D64A29.PDF (last visited May 29, 2026)

1293 NCRB: Fake Notes with ₹55 Crore Face Value Confiscated in 2024", *Times of India*, May 7, 2026, available at: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/ncrb-fake-notes-with-rs-55-crore-face-value-confiscated-in-2024/articleshow/130874027.cms (last visited May 29, 2026).

1294 Supra note 7 at 3

1295 National Crime Records Bureau, *Crime in India 2024*, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, as reported in "57,670 Environment and Pollution-Related Crimes in 2024, Most Were under Anti-Tobacco Law", *Times of India*, May 11, 2026, available at: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/57670-environment-and-pollution-related-crimes-in-2024-most-were-under-anti-tobacco-law/articleshow/131017435.cms (last visited May 29, 2026).

1296 National Crime Records Bureau, *Crime in India 2024*, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, as reported in "57,670 Environment and Pollution-Related Crimes in 2024, Most Were under Anti-Tobacco Law", *Times of India*, May 11, 2026, available at: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/57670-environment-and-pollution-related-crimes-in-2024-most-were-under-anti-tobacco-law/articleshow/131017435.cms (last visited May 29, 2026)

1297 Central Pollution Control Board, Reply filed before the National Green Tribunal in O.A. No. 1228 of 2024 concerning "Lancet Study Links Alarming Mortality Rates to Poor Air Quality", November 4, 2024, available at: https://www.greentribunal.gov.in/sites/default/files/news_updates/Reply%20by%20CPCB%20in%20OA%20No.%201228%20of%202024.pdf (last visited May 29, 2026).

1298 National Green Tribunal proceedings concerning Ghazipur Landfill remediation, as discussed in "Ghazipur Landfill", available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghazipur_landfill (last visited May 29, 2026).

1299 Shut Dyeing Waste Outlets Polluting Buddha Dariya: Activists to PPCB", *Times of India*, January 4, 2026, available at: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ludhiana/shut-dyeing-waste-outlets-polluting-buddha-dariya-activists-to-ppcb/articleshow/126326065.cms (last visited May 29, 2026

1300 Supra note 5 at 72.

1301 Times of India "26 Tribals Rescued from Forced Labour", January 1, 2026, available at: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bhopal/26-tribals-rescued-from-forced-labour/articleshow/126258961.cms (last visited May 29, 2026).

labour abuse ,Child Labour according to UNICEF & Indian Labour Data Recent research identified, approximately 11.8 million child labourers were found in India (5-17 years category)[1302],These offences are governed by: Code on Wages, 2019 [1303],Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 ,Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 ,Child and Adolescent Labour Act ,Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act.

4.4 Consumer Deception

Consumer Deception refers to Misleading advertising, deceptive product labelling, and the sale of defective goods are examples of consumer-related crimes. e-commerce fraud, greenwashing, and manipulative digital marketing practices Consumers may suffer financial losses and health risks as a direct result of such conduct.The impact of these types of corporate crime is increased by the scale of corporate operations, and they are frequently linked and motivated by profit maximization[1304]. These offences are regulated under: Consumer Protection Act, 2019 ,Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) Guidelines ,Competition Act, 2002 ,Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 ,Drugs and Magic Remedies Act ,Information Technology Act, 2000

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) intensified enforcement against deceptive advertisements and unfair trade practices between 2024-25 notices issued by CCPA against misleading advertisements 2022-25 is 400+ and penalties imposed of 100+ core cumultively[1305]

Recent pan masala misleading advertisement case, A consumer complaint challenged: allegedly false saffron-content claims in pan masala advertisements, celebrity endorsement liability, and deceptive advertising practices.[1306]

5. Invisible Victims: Why They Are Often Ignored

The fact that victims of corporate crime are sometimes invisible is one of its most concerning features. In contrast to traditional crimes, the harm inflicted is not necessarily instantaneous or obvious, which results in underrecognition and inadequate punitive response.

5.1 Diffused and Widespread Harm

Corporate crime is usually a crime of many people at the same time. The harm is distributed amongst consumers, employees and communities rather than being concentrated in a recognizable victim. It is difficult to pinpoint specific suffering[1307].

5.2 Delayed Impact

The consequences of corporate misdeeds often lag behind the misdeeds themselves, unlike the case with ordinary crimes. The full impact of financial fraud, dangerous products or environmental degradation may take years to manifest, reducing public awareness and the urgency to respond to such crimes [1308].

5.3 Lack of Awareness

Many victims don't know they have been hurt. For example, customers may not be aware that a product is defective or that their rights have been violated, which in turn limits reporting and accountability [1309].

5.4 Power Imbalance

Big corporations have the money and the legal resources to influence investigations and stall the judicial process. This inequality makes it very

1302 UNICEF Innocenti, *Child Labour and Schooling in India*, 2024, available at: https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/media/9356/file/UNICEF-Innocenti-Child-labour-schooling-India-Report-2024.pdf (last visited May 29, 2026)
1303 The Code on Wages, No. 29 of 2019, India.
1304 Supra note 5 at 23
1305 Gaurav Yadav et al.,"Consumer Protection against Misleading Advertisements and Deceptive Branding: Interplay between Consumer Law and Intellectual Property Rights in India", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 2, Issue 5 (2025), *available at*: https://acr-journal.com/article/consumer-protection-against-misleading-advertisements-and-deceptive-branding-interplay-between-consumer-law-and-intellectual-property-rights-in-india-1660/ (last visited May 29, 2026)
1306 Yogendra Singh v. J.B. Industries & Ors., Complaint before the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, Jaipur-II, 2025 (unreported)*; "Consumer Court Issues Notice to Shah Rukh Khan, Ajay Devgn and Tiger Shroff Over Misleading Pan Masala Advertisement", The Indian Express*, Mar. 8, 2025, *available at:* https://indianexpress.com/article/india/jaipur-notice-shahrukh-ajay-devgn-tiger-shroff-misleading-pan-masala-ad-9875932/ (last visited May 30, 2026).
1307 *Supra* note 5 at 15.
1308 *Supra* note 8 at 82.
1309 *Supra* note 4 at 261.

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difficult for victims to seek justice [1310]. It also contended that corporate crime is characterized by this invisibility since it suppresses social reaction and permits detrimental behaviours to persist unchecked[1311].

6. Impact on Victims

Beyond just causing immediate damage, corporate criminality generates far-reaching consequences. Its effects are frequently multidimentional impacting people socially, physically, and monetarily.

6.1 Economic Loss

Financial injury is often experienced by victims as a direct consequence of fraud, defective goods, or involuntary unemployment. Investors may lose the entirety of their accumulated assets, while consumers may be compelled to bear the cost of dangerous or deceptive goods[1312]. The most affected class is the general public and due to which they have to phase financial hurdles and grave loss. The Victims of white-collar crimes often suffer severe monetary losses through banking fraud, investment scams, deceptive e-commerce practices, and corporate misconduct. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Annual Report 2024-25 said that the fraud amounts in banking have increased significantly with the fraud amounts crossing ₹36,000 crore in the recent reporting periods. These crimes have a negative impact on savings, employment, investments and economic security and, as such, undermine public confidence in financial and corporate institutions[1313].

6.2 Physical and Health Consequences

Exposure to hazardous products, unsafe working conditions or industrial environmental contamination can result in serious health problems including chronic diseases and even death. Such damage reduces quality of life and is often irreversible[1314]. The Supreme Court proceedings in the Patanjali misleading advertisement case emphasized that deceptive medical claims may compromise public health and exploit vulnerable consumers. Labour exploitation and unsafe working conditions additionally expose workers to occupational injuries, hazardous environments, and chronic health complications, particularly in informal sectors such as construction, brick kilns, and manufacturing industries[1315].

6.3 Psychological Impact

Particularly when harm originates from reputable institutions, victims may experience anxious, stressed, and a sense of betrayel.The erosion of trust and security can have long-lasting psychological repercussions[1316].White-collar crime, from a socio-legal perspective, has psychological effects that erode public confidence in corporate governance, financial institutions and regulatory authorities. Victims often do not report such crimes because they fear stigma, do not know how to report or face procedural obstacles. Thus, in spite of its widespread social effects, psychological victimization remains one of the least understood facets of white-collar crime in India[1317].

6.4 Social Consequences

Corporate crime that leads to environmental degradation, unemployment or displacement, has the capacity to destroy entire communities. It can also increase social inequality, as the most vulnerable populations are often the most affected. Researchers generally agree that corporate crime has a greater impact than

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1310 Laureen Snider, "Corporate Crime", in Maggy Lee (ed.), *Criminology and Social Theory* 392 (Routledge, London, 2010).

1311 Steve Tombs and Dave Whyte, *Corporate Crime* 14 (Routledge, London, 2015).

1312 *Supra* note 4 at 279

1313 Reserve Bank of India, *Annual Report 2024–25*, Reserve Bank of India, available at: https://rbidocs.rbi.org.in/rdocs/AnnualReport/PDFs/0ANNUALREPORT202324_FULLDF549205FA214F62A2441C5320D64A29.PDF (last visited May 29, 2026).

1314 *Supra* note 7 at 3

1315 "India Court Bars Yoga Guru's Patanjali from Publishing Some Medicine Ads", *Reuters*, February 27, 2024, available at: https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-court-bars-yoga-gurus-patanjali-publishing-some-medicine-ads-2024-02-27/ (last visited May 29, 2026).

1316 Supra note 18 at 57.

1317 "EY Worker's Death Spotlights India's Unprotected White-Collar Labour", *Reuters*, December 11, 2024, available at: https://www.reuters.com/world/india/ey-workers-death-spotlights-indias-unprotected-white-collar-labour-2024-12-11/ (last visited May 29, 2026).

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conventional crime due to its scope and long-term consequences[1318].

7. Cases related to Corporate Crime

Empircal cases demonstrate unequivocally how victims of corporate crime suffer severe, enduring harm on a considerable scale.

7.1 The Bhopal Gas Tragedy

The Bhopal Gas Tragedy powerfully illustrates corporate criminality in the form of egregious negligence and a failure to ensure industrial safety. Deficient safety precautions, chronic maintenance failure, and disdain for recognized hazards, Union Carbide's factory leaked hazardous gas establishing corporate accountability for extensive damages Legally speaking, the case exposes structural obstacles to multinational firms accountability particularly with regard to jurisdiction and parent company liability[1319]. In response to such industrial catastrophes, the concept of absolute liability emerged which was subsequently strengthened in Indian jurisprudence, stressing that businesses involved in risky operations must bear unqualified accountablity for any resultant harm. Due to the victims protracted legal battles and inadequate compensation the tragedy also brought attention to flaws in compensation systems. In order to protect victims of corporate crime, it emphasized the necessity of more robust regulatory frameworks and efficient enforcement . The disaster is a lasting reminder of how corporate negligence can devastate entire communities, with victims still struggling to cope decades later[1320].

7.2 The Enron Scandal

The company's executives used high-tech accounting tricks to fake financial records hiding debt and inflating earnings and fooling regulators and investors The case exposed serious shortcomings in corporate governance, auditing practices and regulatory oversight in terms of case law. It raised professional liability and accountability issues by highlighting the role of gatekeepers, particularly auditors, in failing to detect or report fraudulent activities [1321].The scandal had severe legal repercussions, including criminal charges against senior executives and the implementation of more rigorous regulations, such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 in the US, which was specifically created to enhance corporate transparency and institutional accountability. Most importantly, this case revealed the financial loss caused by corporate fraud and the direct impact on the victims especially shareholders and employees, highlighting the need for more vigorous enforcement of corporate regulations and improved protection systems. This landmark case demonstrates the destructive consequences of financial manipulation[1322].

7.3 The Volkswagen Emissions Scandal

The Volkswagen was found to have intentionally rigged emissions test results to cheat regulators and customers. The controversy harmed the environment and undermined public trust in corporate responsibility [1323].One notable instance of corporate criminality including purposeful regulatory evasion and consumer deception is Volkswagen Emissions Scandal. The business violated environmental rules and misled regulatory authorities by installing "defeat devices" in diesel automobiles to falsify emission test results. Legally, the lawsuit brought to light fraudulent misrepresentation as well as violations of consumer protection and environmental standards. It raised questions about efficacy of regulatory monitoring by demonstrating how companies might purposefully evade compliance procedures.[1324] Significant legal repercussions of the incident included heavy penalties, civil liabilities and criminal prosecutions against the corporate

[1318] Supra note 12 at 4.
[1319] *Union Carbide Corporation* v. *Union of India*, (1991) 4 SCC 584
[1320] Upendra Baxi and Amita Dhanda, *Valiant Victims and Lethal Litigation: The Bhopal Case* 45 (N.M. Tripathi, Bombay, 1990).
[1321] Bethany McLean and Peter Elkind, *The Smartest Guys in the Room: The Amazing Rise and Scandalous Fall of Enron* (Portfolio, New York, 2003)
[1322] Supra note 9 at 4.
[1323] Jack Ewing, *Faster, Higher, Farther: The Volkswagen Scandal* 112 (W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 2017).
[1324] United States Environmental Protection Agency, *"Learn About Volkswagen Violations," available at: https://www.epa.gov/vw/learn-about-volkswagen-violations (last visited May 30, 2026)*

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officials in several jurisdictions. It also renewed the emphasis on corporate transparency and rigorous regulatory enforcement. The case demonstrated from the victims' perspective that corporate crime can affect not only consumers by way of deception but also the general public by environmental damage. This highlighted the need for stronger accountability systems to avoid such violations [1325].

Such examples show that corporate criminality is not merely regulatory violations. It has real human consequences greatly affecting people's lives, livelihoods and the trust they place in the public[1326].

8. Legal Framework and Challenges in Justice

Although the legal system pertaining to corporate crime is intended to control the corporate behaviour and provide accountability, its practical efficacy is frequently restricted. In India, regulations like "The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 is of great significance in the context of white-collar and corporate crime, particularly through Sections 15,[1327] and 16 of the Act. Section 15 lays down penal sanctions for contravention of the provisions of the Act, rules, orders or directions issued thereunder, thereby criminalising corporate non-compliance with environmental standards. More importantly, Section 16 provides for corporate criminal liability by stipulating that where an offence is committed by a company, every person who was in charge of and responsible to the conduct of its business, and any director, manager, secretary or other officer whose consent, connivance or neglect contributed to the offence shall be deemed guilty and liable to prosecution. These provisions are a statutory embodiment of the principle of corporate accountability"[1328]

Prevention of Money Laundering Act,2002, The Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 is a major legislative tool for combating white collar and corporate crime. The offence of money laundering, defined and criminalised in section 3, consists in the concealment, possession, acquisition, use or projection of proceeds of crime as untainted property. Section 4 prescribes punishment for the offence. Section 5 and 8 provides for attachment and confiscation of properties derived from criminal activities. Section 70 also provides for the liability of companies by making every person responsible for the conduct of the business of the company and officers whose consent, connivance or neglect has enabled the commission of the offence,thus establishing corporate criminal accountability for money-laundering activities[1329].Prevention of Corruption Act,1988,Information Technology Act,2000,SEBI Act,1992 and Companies Act of 2013 offer ways to deal with problems including corporate mismanagement, environmental damage, and fraud.[1330]. Even with these clauses, enforcing culpability is still quite difficult. Since corporate decision-making is usually collaborative, it is challenging to assign criminal blame to certain members of a company[1331].

Furthermore, the enforcement agencies sometimes struggle with a lack of power, resources, and competence, which makes it harder to enforce current laws[1332]. Justice is further delayed by the length and complexity of legal proceedings in corporate crime cases. High litigation expenses, ignorance, and procedural obstacles make it much harder for victims to obtain justice[1333]. So, even with a formal legal structure, systemic wrongs and enforcement failures often obstruct meaningful accountability, enabling corporate crime to flourish[1334].

[1325] *Ibid*
[1326] Supra note 18 at 67.
[1327] The Environment Protection Act ,1986 sec.15,
[1328] *Ibid*,s.16
[1329]The Prevention of Money Laundering Act, No. 15 of 2003, sec.3, 4, 5, 8 & 70 .
[1330] The Companies Act, 2013 (Act 18 of 2013); The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (Act 29 of 1986).
[1331] Supra note 12 at 4.
[1332] John Braithwaite, *Corporate Crime in the Pharmaceutical Industry* 21 (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1984).
[1333] Upendra Baxi, "Mass Torts, Multinational Enterprise Liability and Private International Law" 276 Recueil des Cours 321 (1999)
[1334] Supra note 17 at 89.

9. Role of Government and Regulatory Bodies

Government and regulatory bodies are important in preventing and controlling corporate crime by establishing legal norms and enforcing statutory compliance. In India Institutions such as Ministry of corporate Affairs and Securities and Exchange Board of India are charged with monitoring the corporate conduct, safeguarding the interests of investors and require transparency in commercial transactions[1335]. These institutions set rules, audit business conduct and respond to contravention through fines, penalties or judicial processes. However, these institutions are still constrained in their operations by resource constraints, regulatory capture and the increasing complexity of corporate structures[1336]. Large corporations often have considerable political and economic leverage that can undermine strong enforcement. Moreover, lack of coordination between various regulatory authorities could lead to gaps in oversight [1337].

Governments need to improve transparency, strengthen regulations and more rigorously enforce laws to effectively combat corporate crime. Academics say proactive governance accompanied by accountability and public awareness are needed to protect victims and reduce corporate wrongdoings[1338].

10. Corporate Responsibility and Ethics

Corporate responsibility and ethics are important in stopping corporate crime by leading corporations to lawful and socially responsible behaviour. Corporations have the duty to observe ethical standards that emphasize accountability, transparency and respect for stakeholder interests above mere compliance with the law. The doctrine of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was introduced by the Companies Act, 2013. It reflected the belief that business should be concerned with the welfare of society and not solely with profit maximization [1339].

But where profit imperatives trump moral commitments, ethical failures are inevitable. Poor internal controls, lack of transparency and unethical company culture do harm to communities, workers and customers It is also found that dealing with these risks implies having a strong ethical company culture with strong leadership, compliance mechanisms and sound corporate governance[1340].

Ultimately corporate responsibility is both a moral and a legal obligation. Strengthening ethical standards in institutions can help restore public trust, prevent harm, and ensure that commercial activity is consistent with broader social goals [1341].

11. Preventive Measures and Awareness

Only strong legal enforcement, effective corporate governance and increased public awareness can prevent corporate crime. Regulatory bodies should enforce the law strictly and impose penalties promptly to deter wrong doing. Moreover, enhancing corporate internal compliance mechanisms (audits, whistleblower policies and transparency initiatives) can do much to reduce the likelihood of illicit conduct.[1342].

Public awareness is also needed: educated customers are better able to recognize and report unethical behavior. Education and media are crucial for uncovering corporate malpractices and demanding accountability from institutions [1343].Further, an organisational culture of accountability and ethical business practices can greatly reduce the risk of harm[1344].

Academics say prevention is better than post facto punishment in the fight against corporate crime and protecting future victims. A

1335 Umakanth Varottil, "Evolution and Effectiveness of Independent Directors in Indian Corporate Governance" 6 Hastings Business Law Journal 281 (2010).
1336 Supra note 5 at 167
1337 Supra note 29 at 33.
1338 Supra note 18 at 102.
1339 The Companies Act, 2013 (Act 18 of 2013), s. 135.
1340 Supra note 5 at 189.
1341 Archie B. Carroll, "The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility: Toward the Moral Management of Organizational Stakeholders" 34 Business Horizons 39 (1991)
1342 Supra note 29 at 41.
1343Supra note 18 at 118.
1344 Supra note 5 at 209.

cooperative strategy involving the government and corporations and society is necessary[1345].

12. Conclusion

Corporate crime is not only the breach of the law but also a grave social issue that impacts the individual, community and environment greatly. Its victims are often invisible, dispersed and uninformed, identification and compensation difficult. The effect of these crimes has long term physiological, psychological and social effects as well as monetary losses. Regulatory agencies and a legislative framework exist, but effective accountability is still hampered by challenges such as weak enforcement, delayed justice and power imbalances. A comprehensive strategy involving strong legal enforcement, ethical business practices and increased public awareness is required to tackle corporate crime. Corporations need to go beyond profit and adopt responsible behaviour that puts the welfare of individuals and the environment first. Governments and regulatory bodies must simultaneously guarantee more stringent compliance and offer victims easily accessible remedies.it also emphasis that in addition to regulations, a dedication to justice, transparency, and social responsibility is necessary for effective management of corporate crime[1346].

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