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From Street to Screen: The Impact of Digital Platforms on the Evolution of Crime

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ABSTRACT

Cybercrime has become a significant component of the transnational threat landscape in recent years due to the growth of internet-based crime. Thanks to the rapid evolution of technology, criminals have gained access to new tools through online platforms such as social media, online marketplaces, and encrypted messaging apps. In addition to providing a convenient and anonymous communication and coordination space, these platforms facilitate numerous illicit activities. Criminal enterprises have expanded their reach and committed more crimes with the help of the internet, from cybercrime to terrorism and human trafficking. As a result of online platforms' anonymity, internet-enabled crime has increased dramatically. Consequently, law enforcement agencies have a very difficult time identifying and apprehending offenders. With the help of secure communication technologies, criminals can plan illegal activities, recruit others, and even plan their own crimes without having to disclose their identities. Cybercrime has increased as a result, with scams, identity theft, and online fraud becoming more complex and difficult to track. Financial transactions are manipulated, sensitive information is stolen, and victims are defrauded by cybercriminals who take advantage of vulnerabilities in digital systems. There have been drawbacks to computer technology as well as its benefits. Although computers make life so speedy and fast, without them, businesses and government operations would almost cease to operate, as they are being threatened by the most deadly type of criminality - cyber crime. As a result of this proliferation of cheap, powerful, and user-friendly computers, more and more people are able to rely on them for their everyday lives. As businesses, government agencies, and individuals rely more heavily and more on cybercrime, we can limit it by understanding their behavior and impact on different levels of society. This study aims to examine how digital platforms have influenced criminal behavior and how they have given rise to crime.

***Keywords**: Digitalization, Crime, Criminal behaviour and Cybercrime, Technology.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the century, there has been an increase in the frequency of crimes

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committed on the Internet. A major aspect of the transnational threat landscape is cybercrime, which encompasses a variety of nefarious and complex activities online. Criminals now have access to more tools and opportunities than ever before thanks to technological advancements. Various platforms have contributed to the facilitation of criminal activity, such as social media, auction sites, and encrypted messaging tools[3]. Platforms such as these provide criminals with a convenient and anonymous means of communicating, coordinating, and engaging in illicit activity. Criminal behavior is significantly affected by online platforms when it comes to communication and organization. Cybercrime and terrorist recruitment are some of the illegal activities that are carried out through the Internet. Criminals can also target and exploit individuals using such platforms since they have access to a wide range of potential victims and customers[4]. Law enforcement agencies also have difficulty identifying and apprehending offenders on online platforms because they provide anonymity. As cybercrime increases and online illegal activities become more complex, online platforms are clearly influencing criminal behavior. In analyzing white-collar crime in depth, it becomes clear that digitalization has greatly changed its nature. By providing insight into the impact of the digital revolution on financial transactions, communication, and data management, this study sheds light on how white-collar crimes have evolved. White-collar crimes, such as cyber fraud, identity theft, and online scams, have emerged and evolved in the digital age and are discussed in this article[5]. In addition to providing practical examples, it illustrates how criminals use tactics and how victims suffer the consequences. In addition, the study analyzes how networks such as Facebook and Twitter attract white collar criminals due to their anonymity and global reach. Additionally, it addresses these criminals' exploits of the vulnerabilities in digital systems. In cases such as human trafficking, technology acts as a risk multiplier, according to the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. From the planning stages to the recruitment, exploitation, and money laundering of victims, technology has changed every aspect of human trafficking[6]. To market their victims on various online platforms, traffickers advertise fake jobs, use communication apps to communicate anonymously, and use invitation-only deep web forums to communicate securely. Finally, traffickers are able to hide their illegal winnings anonymously thanks to cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin and Altcoin.

[3] Tundis, et al. "The role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in modern criminal organizations." *Organized Crime and Terrorist Networks*. Routledge, 60-77, 2019.

[4] Nurse & Jason RC. "Cybercrime and you: How criminals attack and the human factors that they seek to exploit." *arXiv preprint arXiv:1811.06624* (2018).

[5] Payne & Brian K. "White-collar cybercrime: white-collar crime, cybercrime, or both?." 19 *Criminology, Crim. Just. L & Soc'y*: 16 (2018).

[6] Barney & David. "Trafficking Technology: A look at different approaches to ending technology-facilitated human trafficking."45 *Pepp. L. Rev.*: 747 (2018).

(A) Research Objectives

Specifically, the research explores white-collar crimes and shifts in criminal behavior in light of the multifaceted impact of digital platforms. Using digital technologies to examine how digital technologies have impacted criminal activity, this study examines the factors that drive individuals to commit crimes online. This course focuses specifically on how digital platforms facilitate fraud, embezzlement, and cyber-theft, among other non-violent crimes. Additionally, the study aims to analyze preventative measures that can be taken to combat digital crime, such as regulations, technological safeguards, and public awareness campaigns. A better understanding of modern criminality is made possible by bridging the gap between new digital threats and traditional crime prevention measures.

II. IMPACT OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS ON CRIME EVOLUTION

Law enforcement can track and prevent criminal activity using online platforms even though they have created new opportunities for criminal behavior[7]. The development of online platforms and advanced technologies has made law enforcement more effective at monitoring and investigating criminal activities. With the advancement of technology, law enforcement has gained valuable insights into criminal behavior, been able to pinpoint patterns, and been able to track down perpetrators.

Information and best practices have also been shared online between law enforcement agencies around the world[8]. Collaboration and coordination have improved the fight against human trafficking, drug smuggling, and cybercrime. Thus, online platforms have also significantly augmented law enforcement efforts, which should be taken into account when assessing their impact on crime. Additionally, online platforms have also been used to prevent crime and raise public awareness about the issue. The public can be effectively engaged with law enforcement through social media in addition to receiving information about crime trends, safety tips, and dangers. These direct engagements with the public have resulted in increased public safety and a reduction in crime.

As a result, law enforcement agencies are using artificial intelligence and big data on online platforms to identify patterns and predict criminal activity[9]. This proactive approach, many criminal acts have been prevented and many more have been detected. The growth of online

[7] Mateescu, et al. "Social media surveillance and law enforcement." 27 *Data Civ Rights*: 2015-2027(2015).

[8] Hollywood, et al. *Improving Information-Sharing Across Law Enforcement: Why Can't We Know?*. Rand Corporation, 2015.

[9] Pramanik, et al. "Big data analytics for security and criminal investigations." 7.4 *Wiley interdisciplinary reviews: data mining and knowledge discovery*: e1208 (2017).

platforms does not only present new challenges for law enforcement in preventing and prosecuting crimes, but has also enabled them to develop innovative strategies and collaborate with one another to do so. Cyberbullying, online scams, and identity theft have also increased due to online platforms. Law enforcement must cooperate and incorporate expertise across national and international borders to combat these digital crimes. In addition to making criminal activities easier to commit, online platforms provide anonymity and accessibility[10]. A few examples of these activities are illegal trading, fraud, and the distribution of illicit materials.

These emerging threats have been effectively combated by adapting their investigative techniques and developing new strategies[11]. In order to stay ahead of criminals' use of technology, law enforcement has increased its investment in cybercrime and digital forensics units. Keeping online platforms resilient to criminal misuse has become more important than ever thanks to partnerships with tech companies and cybersecurity experts. With the continuous evolution of online platforms, criminal activities that use them become more complex. Effective countermeasures can only be achieved by law enforcement remaining vigilant and adaptable.

III. IMPACT OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS ON WHITE COLLAR CRIME

White-collar crime patterns are evolving in different ways in response to digitalization. Cyber fraud, online investment scams, and Ponzi schemes have arisen as a result of the ease with which fraudulent financial transactions can be conducted online[12]. Criminals exploiting the anonymity and global reach of digital platforms are part of this new wave of white-collar crime. A criminal breach of trust is often referred to as a criminal offense in BNS section 316[13], cheating is referred to as a criminal offense in BNS Section 318[14], and trying to commit an offense is referred to as a criminal offense in section 5. These crimes are, however, combated primarily through the IT Act[15].

Computer damage is defined by Section 43 of the statute, dishonestly receiving stolen computer resources is covered by Section 66B, and cyberterrorism, an emerging type of digital crime, is covered by Section 66F.

(A) Crimes committed by white-collar criminals

- **Telemarketing Fraud:** A person or company places telephone calls to individuals and

[10] Jain, et al. "Online social networks security and privacy: comprehensive review and analysis."7.5 *Complex & Intelligent Systems*: 2157-2177 (2021).

[11] Holt, et al. *Cybercrime and digital forensics: An introduction*. Routledge, 2022.

[12] Levi & Michael. "Frauds in Digital Society." *Digital Society*: 480 (2023).

[13] THE BHARATIYA NYAYA SANHITA, 2023 NO. 45 OF 2023

[14] Id

[15] THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ACT, 2000 ACT NO. 21 OF 2000

corporations requesting donations for a reputable charity or requesting funds for a purpose other than the one stated.

- **Weights and Measures:** When a product is sold at one price, but the customer is charged a higher price or short weighed when the label indicates a higher weight.
- **Insider Trading:** When a trader gains access to this information and uses it to make trades that capitalize on imminent changes in the making, they are said to trade with an insider[16]. The following example illustrates how an insider trader might conduct his or her business. Employees at investment banking firms know the chances of Company A acquiring Company B. As the employee has confirmed information, the firm's share prices rise to unjustifiable values once the acquisition process begins, so he would buy shares from Company B as well.
- **Medical Professionals:** Medical professionals are commonly found to commit white-collar crimes, including issuance of false medical certificates, assistance with illegal abortions, providing expert opinions that led to dacoits' acquittals, and selling samples of medicine to dacoits.
- **Money laundering:** Cash transactions are facilitated by money laundering to satisfy the creature's needs. Several different accounts are used to deposit cash into legitimate companies through numerous transactions. The company generates genuine money as well as money deposited in it. It is therefore impossible to distinguish the latter money from the money used to begin the crime.
- **Counterfeit:** Creating, distributing, or selling counterfeit products or services is a way to deceive consumers or sell goods without legal authorization or authorization. Consumers are deceived into believing they are buying a legitimate brand when they purchase counterfeit products. Counterfeit products are often packaged, branded, and otherwise resemble genuine goods. In spite of this, counterfeit products are inferior in quality and are often substandard[17].
- **Cyber Crime:** Criminal activities that involve computers, networks, or networked devices are referred to as cybercrime. Cybercrimes are primarily conducted against computers or devices for the purpose of causing harm or disabling them, although most of them aim to make money through them[18]. In addition to spreading malicious software,

[16] Nagy & Donna M. "Insider trading and the gradual demise of fiduciary principles."94 *Iowa L. Rev.*: 1315 (2008).

[17] Mniwasa & Eugene Emmanuel. *The regulation of the counterfeit goods trade: the case of Tanzania*. University of Kent (United Kingdom), 2014.

[18] Sabillon, et al. "Cybercrime and cybercriminals: A comprehensive study."*4 (6) International Journal of*

illegal information, and photographs, hackers use computers and networks to spread other materials as well. In some cybercrimes, the virus is spread by infecting computers so that it can spread to other machines or even whole networks, depending on the circumstances.

- **Bank Fraud:** Fraud occurs when someone misleads another in order to gain an unfair advantage. A bank fraud is a financial scam. The fraud is committed by fraudulent companies who make false representations[19]. A check bounce, securities, bank deposits, and other negotiable instruments are also handled. There is a relationship of trust between banks and governments that makes bank fraud a concern to the general public. This is a type of corporate crime and a type of white-collar crime. Neither the public nor the government are untouched by this. Financial services are highly vulnerable to fraud despite having a strong regulator. As a result of technology misuse, bank access is used for overpayments to vendors or self-banking accounts, information could be shared, and the company's technology resources could be misused for unauthorized purposes, including conflicting business relationships. Customers and financial institutions are also at risk due to inadequate knowledge of security requirements for mobile and social media platforms. Fraud remains a constant threat to businesses due to the shortcomings in India's law enforcement system when it comes to investigating and prosecuting fraudsters[20]. Due to the numerous scams that have surfaced over the past two years, international investors and domestic entrepreneurs have lost confidence.
- **Ponzi scheme**: An investment fraud that promises its participants overwhelming rewards, a Ponzi scheme can be defined as such. Profits are repaid by using fresh deposits received from the participants. The scam will collapse when the fraudster cannot recruit enough new clients to offset the losses from the old ones.
- **Tax Evasion:** The act of cheating the government by not paying or filing taxes. Due to the complexity of tax laws, taxpayers have been able to evade taxes to a certain extent[21]. Persons who have influence, such as traders, businessmen, lawyers, doctors, engineers, contractors, are more likely to engage in tax evasion. Professionals face a lot of difficulty in proving their true and exact income before the Income Tax Department. These

Computer Networks and Communications Security, 2016, (2016).

[19] Reurink & Arjan. "Financial fraud: A literature review." 32.5 *Journal of Economic Surveys*: 1292-1325 (2018).

[20] Agarwal & N. A. N. D. I. N. I. "Legal Aspects of Corporate Fraud in White Collar Crimes in India." 4.2 *INDIAN JOURNAL OF LEGAL REVIEW*: 728-739 (2024).

[21] Slemrod & Joel. "Cheating ourselves: The economics of tax evasion." *Journal of Economic perspectives* 21.1 (2007): 25-48.

individuals are often accused of paying only a fraction of their income in taxes, and the rest goes into black market circulation.

IV. Impact of digital platforms on criminal behavior

Criminal activity has undoubtedly flourished in the digital landscape, with online interactions contributing to the shaping and perpetuation of illegal activity[22]. It is possible to manipulate, coerce, and influence people to commit crimes through social media, online forums, and virtual communities. This digital incubation has a number of concerns, including anonymity and false identity which can be exploited by criminals. Consequently, radicalization is on the rise, resulting in individuals being exposed to extremist ideologies and committing criminal offenses. As criminal organizations become more adept at recruiting, planning, and disseminating their activities online, law enforcement has a more difficult time monitoring and intervening. An increasingly common phenomenon, online grooming, targets vulnerable individuals and minors in particular, illustrating how predators rely on social media to coerce their victims. Increasingly, exploitation, trafficking, and abuse are taking place due to the ease with which trust is established and individuals can be manipulated in the digital realm. Radical ideologies, hate speech, violent content, and radical ideologies have led to radicalization and criminalization[23]. Defeating radicalization and terrorism requires the dissemination of extremist materials, which is unprecedented. In the digital sphere, social engineering tactics have been used as a means of eliciting sensitive information from people and organizations. This study shows a strong connection between criminal behavior and online interactions. Law enforcement must develop proactive strategies for preventing and intervening cyber-influenced criminal behavior, which is multifaceted.

A comprehensive approach to mitigating the impact of online influence on crime must include technical solutions, psychological insights, and community engagement[24]. To address the evolving landscape of cyber-influenced criminal activity, law enforcement authorities must adopt a vigilant and adaptive approach as a result of the digital incubation of criminal behavior. In order to minimize the risk of online manipulation and coercion into criminal activity, law enforcement must understand the complexities and nuances of online interactions. Several studies have found that online platforms influence criminal behavior significantly. The impact

[22] Lageson & Sarah Esther. *Digital punishment: Privacy, stigma, and the harms of data-driven criminal justice*. Oxford University Press, 2020.

[23] Dal Santo, et al. "Relationship of online hate, radicalization, and terrorism." *Indoctrination to Hate: Recruitment Techniques of Hate Groups and How to Stop Them* 152 (2022).

[24] Smith, et al. "The challenges of doing criminology in the big data era: Towards a digital and data-driven approach." 57.2 *British Journal of Criminology*: 259-274 (2017).

of online platforms on criminal behavior must be addressed by law enforcement, policymakers, and technology.

Online interactions influence criminal activities in more ways than one. Recruitment and planning are just the tip of the iceberg. The psychological effects of virtual engagements are examined in this book, providing an environment that promotes criminal activity[25]. In addition to enabling exploitation of external parties, anonymity and false identity are common in online spaces, which contribute to the adoption of criminal personas. With the digital transformation of identity, people may be motivated to engage in illicit behaviors they would not normally engage in in a physical setting, blurring the lines between accountability between online and physical actions and blurring accountability between online and physical behavior. Individuals can also become desensitized to criminal acts and their consequences when continuously exposed to extremist ideologies, hate speech, and violent content. Criminal behavior becomes normalized within online communities as a result of desensitization and reinforcement of criminal behavior[26]. For developing targeted interventions that disrupt criminal behavior, it will be necessary to understand the underlying psychological mechanisms and the way digital influences manifest themselves outwardly. Online coercion can be prevented by integrating psychological insights, behavioral analysis, and ensuring early intervention and deradicalization resources. It is important to adopt a multifaceted approach to intervention and prevention to counter the incubation of criminal behavior online, which encompasses not just recruitment and planning but psychological transformation of individuals as well[27].

(A) Factors responsible for crime committed digitally

Cybercrimes can be made easier by several factors. As a result, there is the possibility of attacks due to these factors that are diverse. Cybercrimes can be made more likely by the following factors:

1. **Vulnerabilities in Security Systems:** Security systems often have vulnerabilities or loopholes that allow cybercrime to occur[28]. The importance of security is not always prioritized, and many people neglect to update security systems regularly. It is possible for cybercriminals

[25] Karvonen, et al. *White-collar crime in cyber time: the role of opportunity in committing financial crime online*. MS thesis. Handelshøyskolen BI, 2018.

[26] Helfgott & Jacqueline B. "Criminal behavior and the copycat effect: Literature review and theoretical framework for empirical investigation." 22 *Aggression and violent behavior* : 46-64 (2015).

[27] Ebers & Axel. "Evaluating digital policy interventions: studies in violence prevention, deradicalization, and investor protection." (2022).

[28] Aslan, et al. "A comprehensive review of cyber security vulnerabilities, threats, attacks, and solutions." 12.6 *Electronics*: 1333 (2023).

to exploit specific security vulnerabilities in software or operating systems if they are not updated regularly. Cybercrime becomes more difficult to prevent as a result.

2. **Unawareness of Security:** The dangers of the digital world remain unknown to many people to this day. Individuals and organizations can overlook basic security practices if they are not aware of and do not understand digital security practices. For example, updating passwords can be overlooked by individuals or organizations. The risks associated with unknowingly clicking on suspicious links are not always known to individuals or organizations. Cybercriminals usually target individuals like these because they unknowingly facilitate their actions[29].

3. **Advancements in Technology:** Modern technology offers significant benefits and is advancing rapidly. Unfortunately, technological advancements also provide opportunities for cybercriminals, despite the many benefits they provide. A sophisticated and difficult-to-detect attack can be developed with the help of artificial intelligence and other technologies. It is also possible that cybercrime will continue to grow in the absence of corresponding developments to address these attacks[30].

4. **Anonymity on the Internet:** Cybercriminals may act without fear of repercussions because of the anonymity provided by the internet. It is difficult to trace them because they are able to hide their identities. Despite the fact that it is nearly impossible to capture cybercriminals, it will undoubtedly take a long time if it is possible at all.

5. **Human Weakness Exploitation (Social Engineering):** Individuals or employees are often manipulated by cybercriminals into providing confidential information or gaining access to secure systems by using social techniques. Attacks like these are more likely to succeed if the attacker is not aware of social engineering techniques.

6. **Inadequate punishment:** It is undoubtedly a consequence of the weakness of existing laws that cybercrimes are so prevalent and easy to commit. It is illegal to commit these crimes in Indonesia, and there are specific articles related to them. The handling of such cases, however, remains inadequate in practice. As a result, cybercriminals are not liable for arrest or punishment if they continue to commit their crimes[31].

[29] Grispos & George. "Criminals: Cybercriminals." *Encyclopedia of Security and Emergency Management*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 84-89, 2021.

[30] Malik, et al. "A Brief review on Cyber Crime-Growth and Evolution." 9.3 *Pramana Research Journal*: 242 (2019).

[31] Habib & Jessica. "Cyber crime and punishment: Filtering out Internet felons." *Computer Crime*. Routledge, 463-504, 2017.

7. The reliance on technology: As organizations and individuals become increasingly reliant on digital technology, cyber attacks are more likely to occur. In order to gain financial gain or cause harm, cybercriminals target these dependent systems.

8. Identities of users: User identities are also a contributing factor to cybercrime. Users with malicious intent often exploit social media features that facilitate privacy manipulation. Cybercriminals can also manipulate or commit crimes against victims based on other user data that is vulnerable to theft.

9. Information Asset Replication: Users of social media can easily duplicate and replicate information assets, providing opportunities for cybercrime[32]. The reason for this is that there is no delete button on the internet, also known as the 'delete button'. Playing games or using social media should therefore be done with caution. Cybercriminals or harm can be caused by the misuse of personal information.

10. Location: In addition to your location being easily detectable on social media, you can also face cyber threats. Providing easy access to forgery and cybercrime is the same thing. You can easily be located and your home address can be found by strangers with the help of this location. Cybercriminals can then misuse this information to commit crimes.

11. Motivation based on finances: An additional factor contributing to cybercrime is financial motivation. Due to the fact that many cyber attacks are conducted for financial gain, this is to be expected. Hackers and cybercriminals commit cybercrimes including stealing personal information, hacking bank accounts, and deploying ransomware[33]. Regardless of the losses experienced by their victims, these cybercriminals are only concerned with gaining financial gain. Cybercrime can result in significant losses for victims because of this reason.

12. Changing Digital Environment: New security vulnerabilities are constantly emerging in the digital environment, which provides cybercriminals with an opportunity to exploit them[34]. It is for this reason that cyber crimes are becoming more prevalent and more difficult to prevent. The importance of understanding these factors in the development of more effective security strategies and the reduction of cybercrime risk cannot be overstated. Moreover, individuals should protect themselves from cybercrimes by taking proactive measures.

(B) Measures that can be taken to prevent crime

[32] Almansoori, et al. "Analysis of cybercrime on social media platforms and its challenges." *The International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Computer Vision*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021.

[33] Id.

[34] Aslan, et al. "A comprehensive review of cyber security vulnerabilities, threats, attacks, and solutions."12.6 *Electronics*: 1333 (2023).

A number of recommendations can be made in light of the information presented in order to reduce the influence of online platforms on criminal behavior: Establish programs to teach individuals to evaluate information objectively, identify biases, and think critically. Develop digital literacy and critical thinking skills. As well as initiatives and studies exploring the impact of online platforms on criminal behavior, it is crucial to develop effective strategies for combating and preventing it. In order to combat criminal activity and ensure user safety on online platforms, government and regulatory agencies should work together to develop guidelines and regulations. Partnership with online platforms will enable information sharing, detection and prevention of criminal activity, and accountability for perpetrators. In order to minimize the influence of online platforms on criminal behavior, we must implement these recommendations and create a safer, more responsible online environment. The issue of online platforms potentially becoming breeding grounds for criminal intent and perpetuating and reinforcing criminal behavior should be addressed by stakeholders through proactive measures. Statistically, we confirmed perceptions of cybercrime risk influenced the use of all three categories of online services, and cybercrime experiences influenced online crime.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this comprehensive exploration sheds light on India's dynamic technological landscape and the intricate connection between crime and digitalization. While referencing the relevant legal frameworks, we have explored the profound effects of digitalization on financial transactions, communication, and data management. Increasingly interconnected digital worlds have created new opportunities for criminals to exploit. The digital era has transformed the nature of crime. A number of cybercrimes and financial crimes have become prevalent in recent years, each of which has its own regulatory framework and legal provisions. As a result of this evolution, there is an urgent need to adapt the legal and regulatory frameworks so that they can effectively address these emerging threats. Also discussed are the multifaceted factors that facilitate digital crime, including anonymity, global reach, automation, access, and vulnerability. The development of proactively countering digital crimes requires a deep understanding of these factors. Digital crime detection and prevention present formidable challenges to law enforcement agencies. There are numerous factors involved in these crimes, including the sophistication of the perpetrators, the fact that these crimes cross borders, the fact that jurisdictional hurdles exist, and the rapid pace of technological advancement. Efficaciously combating these crimes requires intergovernmental cooperation, improved legal frameworks, and adequate resources. Digital crime is becoming increasingly prevalent in India as it undergoes significant digital transformations. In order to protect individuals, organizations, and the digital economy as a whole, policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and businesses must adapt rapidly. There are a lot of opportunities and risks associated with the digitization of Indian economies and societies. In order to secure our nation's digital future, we need to stay one step ahead of digital criminals. There is a need for immediate action in this endeavor as a result of the findings presented here, which provide valuable insights.

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