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**DIGITAL FINANCIAL ABUSES THAT AFFECTS SENIOR CITIZENS AND
PREVENTING MEASURES**

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ABSTRACT:

Digital financial inclusion refers to “deployment of the cost-saving digital means to reach currently financially excluded and underserved populations with a range of formal financial services suited to their needs that are responsibly delivered at a cost affordable to customers and sustainable for providers. Digital financial inclusion has emerged as a pivotal strategy to empower individuals and communities by ensuring universal access to and effective use of digital financial services. This abstract explores the transformative potential of digital technologies, such as mobile banking, digital payments, and electronic money transfers, in extending financial services to underserved populations worldwide.

INTRODUCTION:

Digital financial inclusion refers to the process of ensuring that all individuals and businesses, particularly those traditionally underserved or excluded, have access to and can effectively use digital financial services. These services encompass a wide range of offerings facilitated through digital technology, including mobile phones, the internet, and other digital platforms. The goal of digital financial inclusion is to empower individuals, improve financial literacy, enhance economic opportunities, and promote inclusive economic growth.

In recent years, the rapid advancement of technology has transformed the landscape of financial services, making them more accessible, affordable, and convenient. Digital financial inclusion leverages these advancements to reach populations that have historically been marginalized due to factors such as geographic isolation, lack of infrastructure, or limited financial literacy. Key components of digital financial inclusion include mobile banking, digital payments, electronic money transfers, online lending platforms, and digital insurance services.

The rapid expansion of digital infrastructure and mobile connectivity has revolutionized the accessibility, affordability, and convenience of financial services, particularly in remote and marginalized communities. Key components of digital financial inclusion include enhancing financial literacy, promoting consumer protection, and fostering regulatory environments conducive to innovation and stability. Despite its promises, challenges such as digital literacy gaps, cybersecurity threats, and regulatory complexities remain significant barriers to achieving comprehensive digital financial inclusion. Collaborative efforts among governments, financial institutions, technology providers, and civil society are essential to overcome these challenges and realize the full potential of digital financial inclusion in driving inclusive economic growth and improving livelihoods globally.

DIGITAL FINANCIAL ABUSES

Digital financial abuses targeting senior citizens have unfortunately become more prevalent with the increasing adoption of digital financial services. The following common forms of digital financial abuses that affect senior citizens:

Phishing and Scams:

Senior citizens are often targeted with phishing emails, messages, or phone calls that impersonate legitimate institutions (like banks or government agencies). These scams aim to trick them into revealing sensitive financial information or making fraudulent payments.

Identity Theft:

Cybercriminals may steal senior citizens' personal information (such as Social Security numbers, bank account details, or passwords) to commit identity theft. This can lead to unauthorized access to their financial accounts or fraudulent applications for loans and credit cards.

Fake Investment Schemes:

Seniors are sometimes lured into fake investment opportunities promising high returns or guaranteed profits. These schemes often use sophisticated websites and persuasive sales tactics to deceive victims into investing their savings.

Tech Support Scams:

Scammers posing as tech support representatives may contact seniors claiming their computer or device is infected with a virus. They then request remote access to "fix" the problem, allowing them to steal personal and financial information.

Social Engineering:

Some scammers exploit the trust and vulnerability of senior citizens by befriending them online (through social media or dating sites) and gradually manipulating them into sharing financial information or sending money.

Unauthorized Transactions:

In cases where seniors are not familiar with digital banking or payment apps, they may unintentionally authorize transactions or subscriptions that deplete their savings.

Misuse of Power of Attorney:

In cases where seniors grant someone power of attorney over their finances, there is a risk of misuse or unauthorized transactions without the senior's knowledge or consent.

PREVENTING DIGITAL FINANCIAL ABUSES:

Preventing digital financial abuses against senior citizens requires awareness, education, and proactive measures.

Education and Awareness:

Encourage seniors to stay informed about common scams and fraud tactics. Provide them with resources and guidance on how to identify and avoid potential threats.

Secure Passwords and Authentication:

Advise seniors to use strong, unique passwords for their online accounts and enable two-factor authentication whenever possible.

Verify Requests for Information:

Remind seniors to verify the identity of anyone requesting personal or financial information before sharing any details.

Monitor Financial Accounts:

Regularly review bank statements, credit card transactions, and other financial accounts for any unauthorized or suspicious activity.

Report Suspected Fraud:

Encourage seniors to report any suspected fraud or abuse to their bank, local authorities, or relevant consumer protection agencies promptly.

Seek Help from Trusted Sources:

Recommend that seniors seek assistance from trusted family members, friends, or financial advisors if they are unsure about a financial decision or suspect they may be a target of fraud.

CONCLUSION:

Digital financial abuses targeting senior citizens represent a significant and growing concern in today's digital age. The vulnerabilities of elderly individuals, including limited familiarity with technology and trusting dispositions, make them prime targets for various forms of digital fraud and scams. Common abuses include phishing attacks, identity theft, fake investment schemes, and social engineering tactics, all of which can lead to devastating financial losses and emotional distress. To mitigate these risks, proactive measures are essential. Educating senior citizens about common scams and fraud tactics, promoting digital literacy programs tailored to their needs, and encouraging them to verify requests for personal or financial information are critical steps.

By raising awareness and implementing protective measures, we can help safeguard senior citizens from digital financial abuses and empower them to safely navigate the digital financial landscape.

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