# AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF WILDLIFE OFFENCE IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

India is known for its rich biodiversity and diverse wildlife, encompassing numerous species of animals, birds, and plants. Recognizing the importance of preserving this natural heritage, India has implemented various laws and regulations to protect its wildlife. However, despite these efforts, wildlife offences continue to pose a significant threat to the country's flora and fauna. To highlight the prevalence of wildlife offences in India and raise awareness about their detrimental effects on biodiversity. To examine the legal framework and enforcement mechanisms in place for combating wildlife offences in India. For the purpose of this study Empirical research is used. It is a way of gaining knowledge by means of direct and indirect observation or experience. This empirical study includes a self tested questionnaire which contains yes or no questions and other choices accordingly by using the survey sampling method. The sample size is 200.This is a non- doctrinal study. This paper depends on both primary and secondary data. The primary data for the present study is collected using sampling techniques. Random sampling is used to collect the primary information from the respondents. A random sample selected from the parliamentary form of government and presidential form of government.The primary data which has been analysed using Graph and Bar Chart. The secondary data is collected from books, journals, articles and e-sources. The researcher has also utilised books, articles, notes, comments and other writings to incorporate the various views of the multitude of jurists, with the intention of presenting a holistic view. The independent variables are age and educational qualification. The dependent variables are Is it illegal to hunt wildlife without a permit in India, Can someone be fined for buying or selling wildlife products in India, whether the Indian laws protect endangered species from poaching, Are you aware about the penalties for harming or killing protected wildlife in India. Wildlife offences in India are serious violations that are governed by the Wildlife

Protection Act, 1972. These offences include poaching, illegal trade, wildlife trafficking, habitat destruction, unauthorised possession or transportation, use of prohibited methods, and hunting in protected areas. The penalties for such offences can be severe, including imprisonment, fines, or both. It is

important to abide by the laws and regulations in place to protect India's rich biodiversity and contribute to the conservation and preservation of its wildlife.

**Keywords**: Wildlife offences, biodiversity, India, legal framework, enforcement mechanisms.

## INTRODUCTION

India is known for its rich biodiversity and diverse wildlife, encompassing numerous species of animals, birds, and plants. Recognizing the importance of preserving this natural heritage, India has implemented various laws and regulations to protect its wildlife. However, despite these efforts, wildlife offences continue to pose a significant threat to the country's flora and fauna.

Wildlife offences in India encompass a wide range of illegal activities that directly or indirectly harm wildlife and their habitats. These offences can include poaching, illegal hunting, smuggling of wildlife and wildlife products, encroachment on protected areas, destruction of habitats, and trafficking of endangered species.

The conservation and protection of wildlife in India are primarily governed by the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, which was enacted to provide legal provisions for the protection, conservation, and management of wildlife. Additionally, other relevant laws and regulations, such as the Indian Forest Act and the Forest Conservation Act, play a crucial role in safeguarding wildlife and their habitats.

Despite the legal framework in place, wildlife offences continue to persist due to various factors. Poaching, driven by the demand for animal parts in the illegal wildlife trade, remains a significant concern. The illegal trade in wildlife products, including ivory, tiger parts, and exotic pets, poses a severe threat to endangered species and their populations.

Encroachment on protected areas and illegal logging also contribute to habitat loss and fragmentation, affecting the delicate balance of ecosystems. Moreover, the rapid urbanisation and human population growth in India further exacerbate these challenges, as it leads to increased human-wildlife conflicts and encroachment on wildlife habitats.

To combat wildlife offences, the Indian government has been implementing various strategies,

including strengthening law enforcement, increasing patrolling efforts, creating specialised wildlife crime units, and raising public awareness about the importance of wildlife conservation. International collaborations and partnerships with organisations dedicated to wildlife protection are also crucial in addressing transnational wildlife crimes.

While progress has been made in tackling wildlife offences, there is still a long way to go. Continuous efforts, both at the governmental and societal levels, are essential to curb wildlife offences and preserve India's unique and diverse wildlife for future generations. By safeguarding wildlife and their habitats, India can maintain its ecological balance, promote sustainable development, and contribute to global conservation efforts.

**OBJECTIVE:**

1. To highlight the prevalence of wildlife offences in India and raise awareness about their detrimental effects on biodiversity.

2. To examine the legal framework and enforcement mechanisms in place for combating wildlife offences in India.

3. To explore the factors contributing to wildlife offences in India and assess their impact on endangered species and ecosystems.

4. To analyse the effectiveness of existing strategies and initiatives aimed at curbing wildlife offences in India.

5. To propose recommendations and measures for strengthening wildlife protection efforts and promoting sustainable conservation practices in India.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

1. Sharma, et al. (2019) analysed the patterns and motivations of wildlife offenders in India, revealing the influence of economic factors and cultural beliefs on illegal wildlife trade.

2. Singh (2017) examined the effectiveness of law enforcement strategies in combating wildlife offences, emphasising the need for improved coordination among enforcement

agencies.

3.  Mishra and Behera (2018) explored the impact of habitat destruction on wildlife crimes, highlighting the interplay between deforestation, human-wildlife conflict, and poaching.

4.  Ghosal and Basu (2016) investigated the role of local communities in wildlife conservation and the challenges they face in preventing wildlife offences.

5.  Kapoor and Shrotriya (2015) assessed the socio-economic implications of wildlife crimes, emphasising the need for alternative livelihood options for communities engaged in illegal activities.

6.  Karanth and DeFries (2011) analysed the spatial patterns of wildlife offences in India, highlighting hotspots of poaching and illegal wildlife trade.

7.  Naha and Behera (2019) reviewed the legal framework and policy measures for wildlife conservation in India, discussing the strengths and weaknesses of existing legislation.

8.  Kumar et al. (2016) examined the role of technology, including remote sensing and GIS, in monitoring and combating wildlife offences in protected areas.

9.  Sharma and Panwar (2013) studied the impact of climate change on wildlife crimes, focusing on the changing behaviour and distribution of species and its implications for law enforcement.

10. Chakraborty and Chakraborty (2018) explored the involvement of organised criminal networks in wildlife trafficking and the challenges posed to law enforcement agencies.

11. Basu et al. (2017) investigated the socioeconomic drivers of wildlife offences, highlighting poverty, lack of education, and inadequate law enforcement as contributing factors.

12. Mukherjee et al. (2014) assessed the effectiveness of anti-poaching strategies in Indian national parks, including the use of informants, surveillance, and community engagement.

13. Choudhury and Singh (2019) examined the role of forensic science in wildlife crime investigations, emphasising the importance of DNA analysis and forensic techniques in evidence collection.

14. Agrawal and Chakraborty (2017) analysed the impact of wildlife offences on biodiversity conservation, focusing on the decline of endangered species and ecosystem disruption.

15. Sharma and Prasad (2015) reviewed the challenges and opportunities of using social media and online platforms to monitor and combat wildlife offences in India.

16. Srivastava and Mishra (2012) investigated the linkages between wildlife trafficking and transnational organised crime, highlighting the need for international cooperation to address the issue.

17. Tripathi et al. (2018) explored the role of traditional ecological knowledge in wildlife conservation and its potential contribution to preventing wildlife offences.

18. Parihar et al. (2016) examined the economic valuation of wildlife and ecosystem services as a tool for raising awareness about the significance of wildlife conservation.

19. Kapoor and Virani (2012) assessed the role of education and awareness campaigns in reducing wildlife offences, emphasising the need for targeted outreach programs.

20. Dasgupta et al. (2017) reviewed the impact of urbanisation and infrastructure development on wildlife crimes, emphasising the need for sustainable development practices.

## Materials and Methodology:

For the purpose of this study Empirical research is used. It is a way of gaining knowledge by means of direct and indirect observation or experience. This empirical study includes a self tested questionnaire which contains yes or no questions and other choices accordingly by using the survey sampling method. The sample size is 200.This is a non- doctrinal study. This paper depends on both primary and secondary data. The primary data for the present study is collected using sampling techniques. Random sampling is used to collect the primary information from

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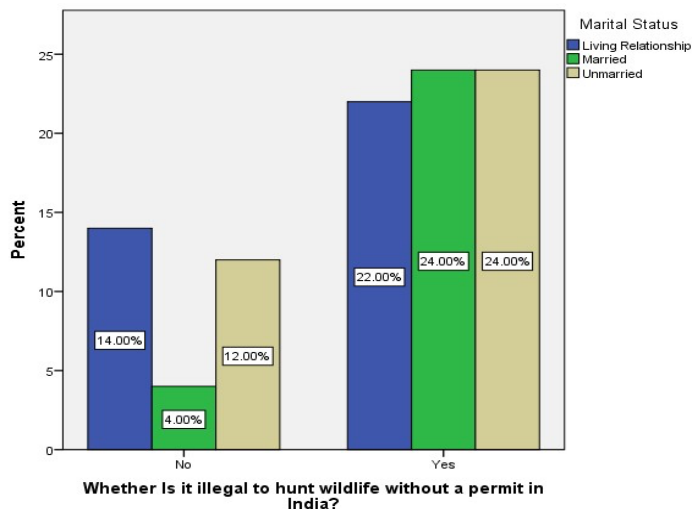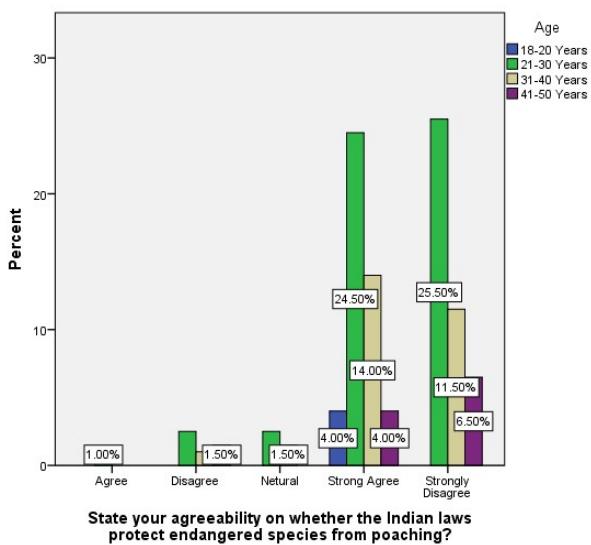
**ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION:**

**FIGURE 1**
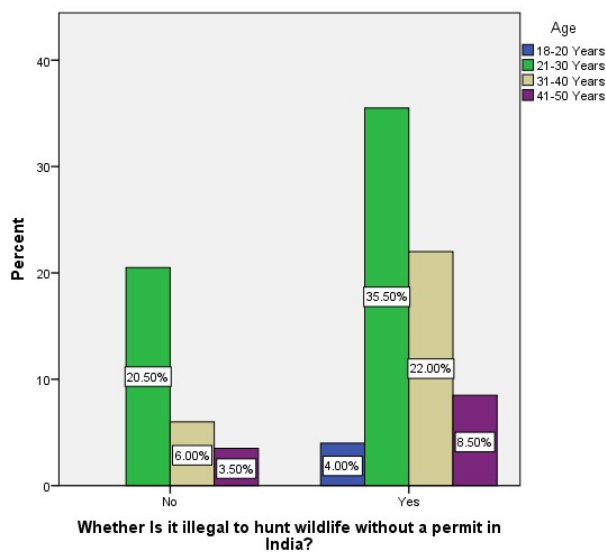


**Legend:** The figure 1 represents the distribution of age on legality of hunting in India.
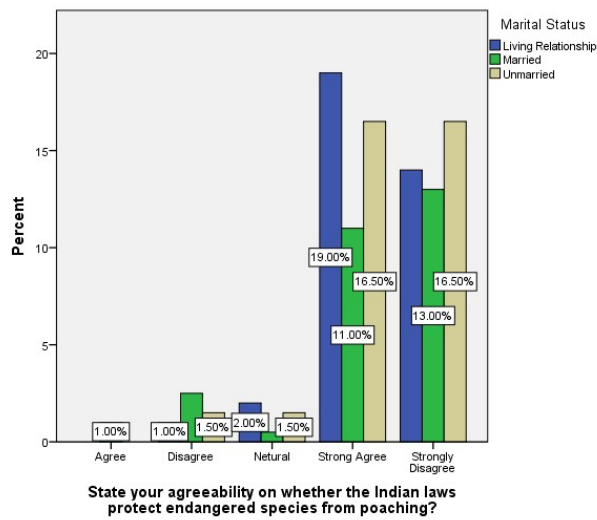
**FIGURE 2**



**Legend:** The figure 2 represents distribution of gender on legality of hunting in India.
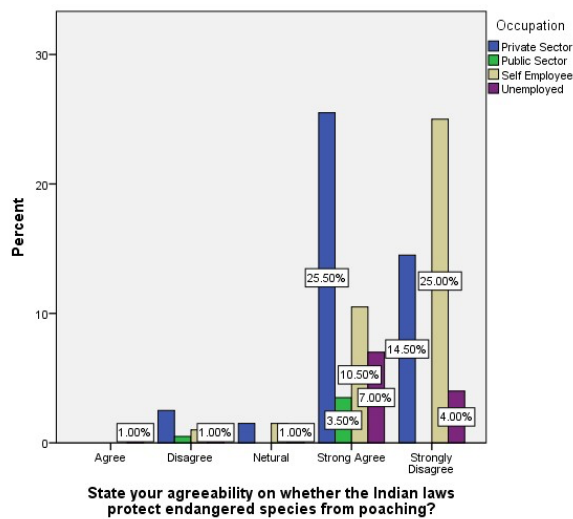
**FIGURE 3**



**Legend:** The figure 3 represents the distribution of age on protection of endangered species from poaching.

**FIGURE 4**



**Legend:** The figure 4 represents the distribution of marital status on protection of endangered species from poaching.
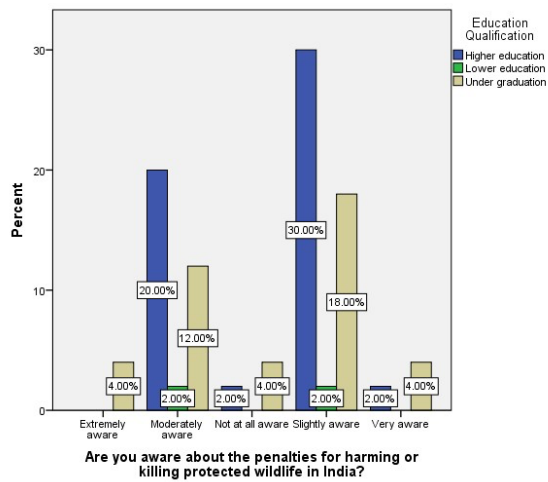
**FIGURE 5**



**Legend:** The figure 5 represents the distribution of occupation on protection of endangered species from poaching.
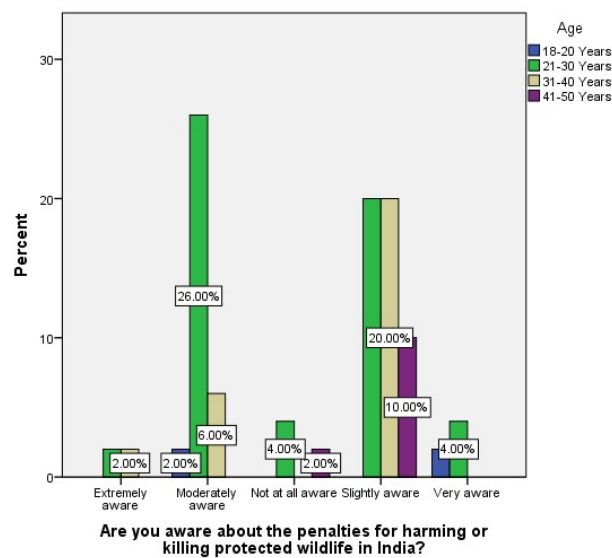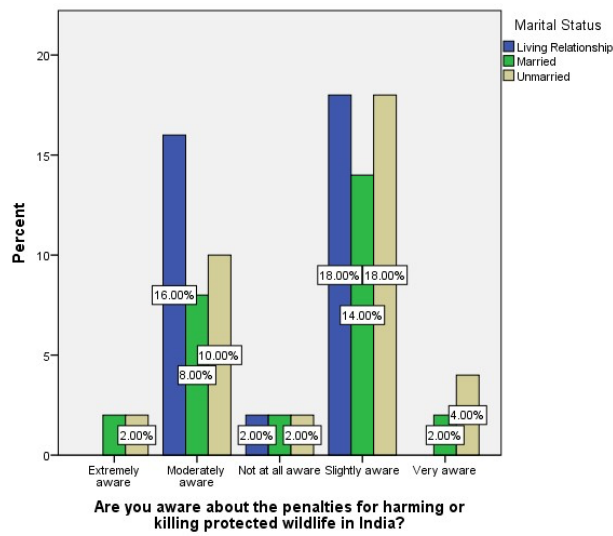
**FIGURE 6**



**Legend:**The figure 6 represents the distribution of education on awareness of penalties for killing wildlife.
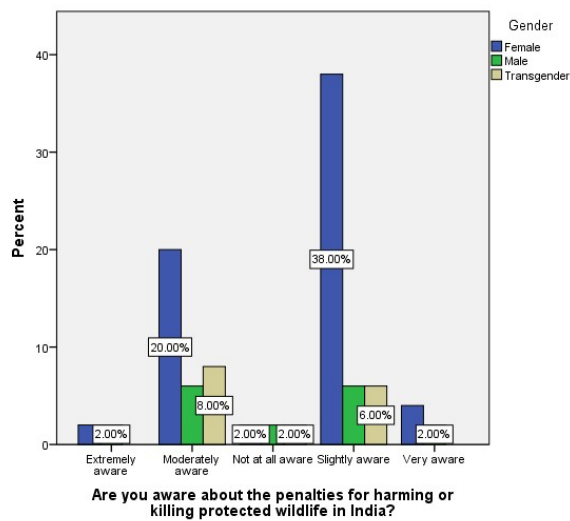
**FIGURE 7**



**Legend:** The figure 7 represents the distribution of age on awareness of penalties for killing wildlife.
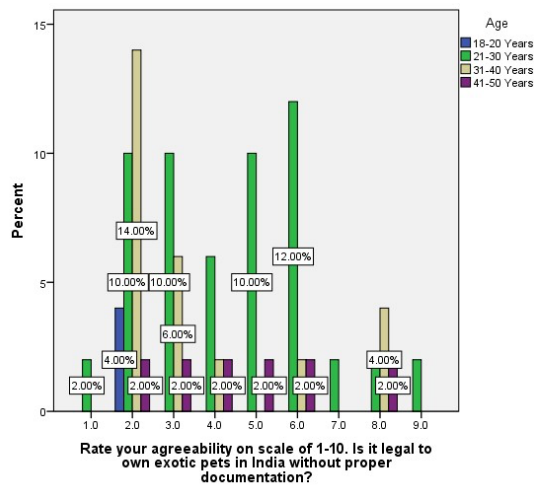
**FIGURE 8**



**Legend:** The figure 8 represents the distribution of marital status on awareness of penalties for killing wildlife.

**FIGURE 9**



**Legend:** The figure 9 represents the distribution of gender on awareness of penalties for killing wildlife.

**FIGURE 10**



**Legend:** The figure 10 represents the distribution of age on legality of owning exotic pets.

**RESULTS:**

This graph shows whether it is illegal to hunt wildlife without a permit in India and many of the respondents from age 21 to 30 said Yes and some from age of 21 to 30 and 31 to 40 responded No. This graph shows whether it is illegal to hunt wildlife without a permit in India and many of the respondents who are living in relationships and unmarried said Yes and many married responded No. This graph shows that whether Indian laws protect endangered species from poaching ,many of the respondents strongly disagreed and next to that many have strongly agreed and some have selected the option neutral. This graph shows that whether Indian laws protect endangered species from poaching, many of the respondents strongly disagreed and next to that many have strongly agreed and some have selected the neutral option and only very few selected the option. This graph shows Indian laws on protecting endangered species from poaching. Many of the respondents working from the private sector strongly disagreed and many of the respondents working as self-employed strongly agreed to the question. This graph shows awareness of penalties for killing wildlife. Many of the respondents who were highly educated selected the option that they strongly agree with and very few selected the option neutral. The majority of respondents of age between 21-30 responded to moderately aware the age between 31-40 responded slightly aware the age between 41-50 also responded to slightly aware about the penalties. The majority of respondents of marital status of unmarried responded to slightly aware the married respondents responded to moderately aware that they are aware

about penalties and harming of wildlife. The majority of respondents of gender male responded to slightly aware the female responded to slightly aware that they are aware about penalties and harming of wildlife. The majority of respondents of marital status unmarried responded to slightly aware the Married responded to slightly aware that they are aware about penalties and harming of wildlife.

## DISCUSSION:-

The public opinion on the age 21 to 30 said Yes and some from age of 21 to 30 and 31 to 40 responded No. people will be having less interference in the modes of offline.**(Graph-1)** The public opinion on the graph shows whether it is illegal to hunt wildlife without a permit in India and many of the respondents who are living in relationships and unmarried said Yes and many married responded No. people will be having less interference in the modes of Offline**. (Graph-2)**

The public opinion shows that whether Indian laws protect endangered species from poaching ,many of the respondents strongly disagreed and next to that many have strongly agreed and some have selected the option neutral. **(Graph-3)**

The public opinion shows that whether Indian laws protect endangered species from poaching, many of the respondents strongly disagreed and next to that many have strongly agreed and some have selected the neutral option and only very few selected the option. **(Graph-4)**

The public opinion shows Indian laws on protecting endangered species from poaching. Many of the respondents working from the private sector strongly disagreed and many of the

respondents working as self-employed strongly agreed to the question.**(Graph-5)**

The public opinion shows awareness of penalties for killing wildlife. Many of the respondents who were highly educated selected the option that they strongly agree with and very few selected the option neutral. **(Graph-6)**

The public opinion on the respondents of age between 21-30 responded to moderately aware the age between 31-40 responded slightly aware the age between 41-50 also responded to slightly aware about the penalties.**(Graph-7)**

The public opinion on the majority of respondents of marital status of unmarried responded to slightly aware the married respondents responded to moderately aware that they are aware about penalties and harming of wildlife.**(Graph-8)**

The public opinion on the majority of respondents of gender male responded to slightly aware the female responded to slightly aware that they are aware about penalties and harming of wildlife.**(Graph-9)**

The public opinion on the majority of respondents of marital status unmarried responded to slightly aware the Married responded to slightly aware that they are aware about penalties and harming of wildlife.**(Graph-10)**

## LIMITATION:

The Major limitation of the study is the sample frame. The sample frame Collected through offline platforms like sending mail, sending links via WhatsApp is the limitation of the study, the real field experience is missed out due to corona pandemic. The restrictive area of sample size is 201 yet another drawback of the research.Collection of data via offline platform is limiting the researcher to collect data from the field.Since the data is collected on offline platform wherein the respondent is not known, the original opinion of the respondent it is not found, The researcher could only come to a approximate conclusion of what the respondent is feeling to convey.

## CONCLUSION

Wildlife offences in India are serious violations that are governed by the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. These offences include poaching, illegal trade, wildlife trafficking, habitat destruction, unauthorised possession or transportation, use of prohibited methods, and hunting in protected areas. The penalties for such offences can be severe, including imprisonment, fines, or both. It is important to abide by the laws and regulations in place to protect India's rich biodiversity and contribute to the conservation and preservation of its wildlife.

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