

## GREEN CRIMINALOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES

*by*

Adv. Pooja R.Dubey

&

Adv. Priya G Singha

&

L.R.Tiwari

College of Law, Mumbai University

### ABSTRACT

Green criminology addresses the growing concern of environmental crimes that threaten ecosystems and public health. This research delves into the definition, scope, and significance of green criminology, emphasizing its role in studying both legal and illegal environmental harms. Environmental crimes, including illegal fishing, illegal logging, pollution, illegal mining, and hazardous waste dumping, have far-reaching consequences for biodiversity, climate change, and human well-being.

The study explores key factors contributing to environmental crimes, such as economic motives, weak law enforcement, corruption, lack of awareness, and increasing demand for natural resources. The legal framework governing environmental protection, particularly the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, and international efforts to combat environmental crimes, are examined in detail.

Through case studies like the destruction of mangroves in Mira Bhayander and the deforestation for metro projects, the research highlights real-life instances of environmental offenses and the challenges faced in ensuring environmental justice. The role of judicial interventions, such as landmark cases led by M.C. Mehta, is also discussed to demonstrate the legal battles fought for environmental protection in India.

The study concludes that addressing environmental crimes requires stronger enforcement of laws, corporate accountability, public awareness, and sustainable urban planning. Policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and civil society must collaborate to implement stricter regulations and promote environmental conservation to secure a sustainable future.

### **Introduction**

Green criminology is an evolving branch of criminology that studies crimes and harms against the environment from a criminological perspective. It examines both legal and illegal activities that contribute to environmental destruction and investigates the role of corporations, states, and individuals in environmental harm. The discipline emerged in the 1990s, with scholars like Michael J. Lynch introducing the term. Over the years, green criminology has gained significance due to the increasing threats posed by environmental crimes such as deforestation, illegal mining, pollution, and hazardous waste dumping.<sup>1</sup>

Environmental crimes not only damage natural ecosystems but also pose severe risks to human health, biodiversity, and global sustainability. The enforcement of environmental laws and the role of judicial interventions in addressing these crimes are critical areas of study within green criminology. In India, the legal framework, including the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, aims to curb such offenses. However, weak enforcement, corruption, and economic motives continue to drive environmental crimes.

This research explores the various types of environmental crimes, their causes, impacts, and legal consequences. Case studies, such as the Mira Bhayander mangrove destruction and the Metro Project deforestation controversy, highlight real-world challenges in environmental justice.

---

<sup>1</sup> Michael J Lynch, 'The Greening of Criminology: A Perspective for the 1990s' (1990) 2 The Critical Criminologist 11.

Furthermore, the contributions of pioneers like M.C. Mehta in advocating for environmental protection underscore the importance of legal activism in this domain.

### **Research Methodology**

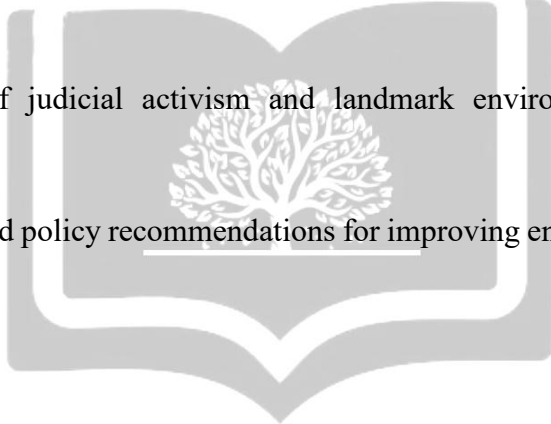
This research follows a qualitative approach, primarily relying on secondary data analysis. The study incorporates an extensive literature review, including books, journal articles, legal documents, and government reports related to green criminology and environmental crimes. This review helps establish a strong theoretical foundation and provides insights into existing research on environmental law enforcement and policy-making.

Additionally, a case study analysis method is employed to examine real-world instances of environmental crimes. Cases such as the Mira Bhayander mangrove destruction and deforestation for metro projects are analyzed to understand the challenges in environmental justice and law enforcement. This approach highlights the effectiveness of judicial interventions and the role of activists in advocating for environmental protection.

A comparative analysis of international and national environmental laws is also conducted to assess their effectiveness. The research reviews landmark judicial interventions, including cases led by environmental activist lawyers like M.C. Mehta, to evaluate how legal frameworks have evolved. This methodology provides a comprehensive understanding of the subject while emphasizing the need for stronger regulations and enforcement mechanisms.

### **Objectives of the Research**

1. To understand the concept and scope of green criminology in addressing environmental crimes.
2. To analyze the various forms of environmental crimes, their causes, and consequences.
3. To examine the existing legal frameworks and their effectiveness in combating environmental crimes.
4. To explore case studies highlighting real-world instances of environmental violations and legal interventions.
5. To assess the role of judicial activism and landmark environmental cases in shaping environmental policies.
6. To suggest strategies and policy recommendations for improving enforcement mechanisms and environmental protection.



Journal of Multi-Disciplinary  
Legal Research

### **Theoretical Foundations of Green Criminology**

Green criminology emerged as a response to the growing recognition that environmental harm is not only a scientific and economic issue but also a legal and criminological concern. Traditional criminology primarily focuses on direct, interpersonal crimes such as theft, assault, and homicide. However, environmental harm often results from corporate negligence, state policies, and systemic exploitation of natural resources, requiring a broader approach. Introduced by **Michael J. Lynch** **in 1990**,<sup>2</sup> green criminology challenges the boundaries of conventional crime studies by

---

<sup>2</sup> Lynch (n 1); Nigel South, 'A Green Field for Criminology? A Proposal for a Perspective' (1998) 2(2) Theoretical Criminology 211.

incorporating ecological damage as a form of social injustice. It critiques weak legal frameworks, inadequate enforcement, and the profit-driven motives of industries that contribute to pollution, deforestation, and biodiversity loss.

Green criminology also highlights the role of state and corporate entities in perpetuating environmental crimes. Governments, in the pursuit of economic growth, often approve large-scale infrastructure projects without fully considering their ecological consequences. Similarly, corporations prioritize profit over sustainability, leading to large-scale deforestation, hazardous waste disposal, and industrial pollution. In India, the Sterlite Copper Plant case (**Vedanta Limited v. State of Tamil Nadu, 2024**<sup>3</sup>) serves as a crucial example, where environmental violations led to severe health hazards and public protests, eventually resulting in the plant's closure. Such cases illustrate the intersection between legal oversight, environmental degradation, and public resistance, emphasizing the need for stringent environmental laws and corporate accountability.

Furthermore, green criminology extends beyond national boundaries, advocating for a global perspective on environmental justice. Issues such as climate change, illegal wildlife trade, and transboundary pollution demand international cooperation and policy coordination. In India, rapid urbanization and industrialization have intensified environmental concerns, necessitating stronger enforcement mechanisms and legal reforms. Landmark legal interventions, such as **M.C. Mehta v. Union of India (1987)**,<sup>4</sup> have played a pivotal role in shaping India's environmental laws, reinforcing the need for a criminological approach to ecological harm. By integrating environmental justice into legal and policy frameworks, green criminology not only addresses ecological crimes but also promotes sustainable development, ensuring that economic growth does not come at the cost of environmental destruction.

### **Key Issues in Green Criminology**

---

<sup>3</sup> 'Why the Vedanta-Sterlite Judgement Matters: An Annotated Deconstruction' (The Wire Science, 24 August 2020) <<https://science.thewire.in/law/vedanta-sterlite-thoothukudi-madras-high-court-judgment-environmental-jurisprudence/>> accessed 25 June 2026; 'SC Dismisses Vedanta's Review Petition to Reopen Copper Plant in Tamil Nadu' (Business Standard, 16 November 2024).

<sup>4</sup> Shyam Divan and Armin Rosencranz, *Environmental Law and Policy in India* (2nd edn, Oxford University Press 2001). The Oleum Gas Leak litigation, *M C Mehta v Union of India* (1987) 1 SCC 395, laid down the principle of absolute liability for enterprises engaged in hazardous or inherently dangerous activity.

### 1. Illegal Logging

Illegal logging is a significant environmental crime that leads to deforestation, habitat destruction, and loss of biodiversity. It is often driven by commercial demand for timber, weak law enforcement, and corruption within forestry management. In **G. Asokan v. District Collector (2008) 3 CTC 489**, the court addressed the issue of illegal logging and emphasized the role of local authorities in preventing unauthorized deforestation. Strengthening forest conservation laws, increasing surveillance, and enforcing penalties for illegal logging can help protect natural ecosystems.

### 2. Deforestation

Deforestation, whether legal or illegal, poses a severe threat to ecosystems and climate stability. Large-scale land clearing for urban expansion, agriculture, and infrastructure projects results in habitat loss, reduced carbon sequestration, and soil degradation. The Aarey Colony Metro Project controversy in Mumbai highlighted the ongoing conflict between development and environmental conservation. Sustainable land-use policies, reforestation initiatives, and stricter land-clearance regulations are essential to balance economic growth with ecological preservation.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. Industrial Pollution

Industrial pollution is a major contributor to environmental degradation, affecting air, water, and soil quality. Factories release toxic emissions, chemical waste, and hazardous byproducts, leading to severe public health crises. In **M.C. Mehta v. Union of India (1987) 1 SCC 395**<sup>6</sup>, the Supreme Court established corporate accountability for industrial pollution, reinforcing the need for stricter emission standards and environmental impact assessments (EIA). Regular pollution monitoring,

---

<sup>5</sup> Around 2,141 trees were felled at Aarey in early October 2019 before the Supreme Court ordered a status quo on 7 October 2019: 'Aarey Car Shed: SC Lets Mumbai Metro Cut 177 Trees but Fines It Rs 10 Lakh for Contempt of Court' (ThePrint, 17 April 2023) <<https://theprint.in/judiciary/aarey-car-shed-sc-lets-mumbai-metro-cut-177-trees-but-fines-it-rs-10-lakh-for-contempt-of-court/1524138/>> accessed 25 June 2026.

<sup>6</sup> Divan and Rosencranz (n 4).

stricter compliance mechanisms, and penalties for violations are necessary to mitigate industrial pollution's harmful effects.

#### 4. Hazardous Waste Dumping

The improper disposal of hazardous waste, including chemicals, plastics, and biomedical materials, severely impacts the environment and human health. Industries and hospitals often dump waste into rivers, landfills, or open spaces, contaminating water sources and soil. Despite the **Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016**, enforcement remains weak due to inadequate oversight and regulatory loopholes. Strengthening waste management policies, ensuring corporate responsibility for safe disposal, and promoting waste recycling initiatives can help curb this environmental crime.

#### 5. Biodiversity Loss

The destruction of natural habitats due to deforestation, pollution, and illegal wildlife trade leads to significant biodiversity loss. Ecosystems are disrupted when species lose their natural environments, affecting ecological balance and food chains. Conservation laws such as the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**, aim to protect endangered species, but enforcement challenges persist. Stronger wildlife conservation measures, habitat restoration programs, and stricter penalties for poaching and trafficking are necessary to preserve biodiversity.

By addressing these key environmental crimes through legal reforms, public awareness, and strict enforcement, green criminology can play a crucial role in protecting ecosystems and ensuring environmental justice.

### **Understanding Pollution Stigma**

Pollution stigma refers to the negative social, economic, and legal consequences experienced by communities affected by environmental pollution. Industrial pollution, hazardous waste dumping,

and unchecked urbanization often lead to severe health issues, reduced land value, and the marginalization of affected populations. This stigma disproportionately impacts low-income and marginalized communities, forcing them to bear the brunt of industrial negligence. The lack of effective legal mechanisms further exacerbates their vulnerability, making pollution not just an environmental issue but also a socio-economic concern.

### 1. Health and Social Consequences

Communities living near heavily polluted areas suffer from a range of health problems, including respiratory diseases, cancer, and waterborne illnesses. The Bhopal Gas Tragedy (1984) is a stark example of how pollution stigma manifests in public health crises. Even decades later, survivors of the disaster face health issues and economic hardships, highlighting the long-term impact of pollution. Socially, pollution stigma isolates affected communities, as people living in contaminated areas often struggle to find employment, education opportunities, and healthcare due to their location's environmental reputation.<sup>7</sup>

### 2. Legal and Corporate Accountability

The *M.C. Mehta v. Union of India* (1987) 1 SCC 395 case reinforced corporate accountability by ruling against industrial pollution, yet enforcement remains weak. Many industries continue harmful practices, exploiting legal loopholes and weak regulatory oversight. Environmental laws such as the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, exist, but without proper implementation, affected communities continue to suffer. Strengthening legal frameworks, imposing stricter penalties, and ensuring corporate responsibility through mandatory environmental compliance can help combat pollution stigma effectively.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Edward Broughton, 'The Bhopal Disaster and Its Aftermath: A Review' (2005) 4 Environmental Health 6. The officially recorded immediate death toll was about 3,800, with later estimates ranging from 15,000 to over 20,000.

<sup>8</sup> Divan and Rosencranz (n 4); the case cited is the *Oleum Gas Leak* decision, which established absolute liability rather than corporate accountability for routine industrial pollution.



### 3. Need for Public Awareness and Policy Reforms

Public awareness plays a crucial role in addressing pollution stigma. Advocacy efforts, social movements, and media coverage help highlight environmental injustices and pressure authorities to act. Legal reforms must include increased compensation for affected communities, stricter industrial regulations, and improved environmental monitoring. Sustainable industrial practices, pollution control technologies, and stringent enforcement mechanisms can prevent further environmental damage and reduce the long-term stigma associated with pollution-affected areas.

### **State and Corporate Environmental Crime**

Both state and corporate entities contribute significantly to environmental degradation through unchecked industrial expansion, deforestation, and exploitation of natural resources. Government-backed projects, such as the Metro Project deforestation in Aarey and Uttan, demonstrate the ongoing tension between economic growth and ecological preservation. Despite environmental laws like the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**, state policies often prioritize infrastructure over conservation, leading to habitat destruction and loss of biodiversity. Similarly, corporate environmental crimes, such as illegal mining in **Rajiv Narayan v. Union of India (2009) 9 SCC 219**<sup>9</sup>, showcase how industries exploit legal loopholes and weak enforcement mechanisms to maximize profits at the expense of sustainability. Large corporations, especially in sectors like real estate, mining, and manufacturing, frequently engage in deforestation, air and water pollution, and hazardous waste disposal, exacerbating climate change and ecological imbalance. Moreover, corruption and political interference further weaken environmental regulations, allowing businesses to evade penalties and continue harmful practices. To combat this, it is crucial to strengthen legal frameworks, enforce stricter penalties, and ensure greater corporate and governmental accountability. Judicial interventions, public awareness, and policy reforms must

---

<sup>9</sup> Divan and Rosencranz (n 4); the leading judicial responses to illegal mining include the Aravalli mining proceedings in *M C Mehta v Union of India* (2009) and the Bellary iron ore proceedings in *Samaj Parivartana Samudaya v State of Karnataka* (2013) 8 SCC 154.

work in tandem to create a balance between development and environmental sustainability, ensuring that economic progress does not come at the cost of ecological destruction.

### **Enforcement Challenges**

Enforcing environmental laws in India remains a significant challenge due to systemic corruption, inadequate resources, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and weak regulatory frameworks. While the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**, provides legal provisions to penalize offenders, enforcement agencies often lack the manpower, technology, and financial resources needed to monitor violations effectively. Corruption within regulatory bodies allows industries and real estate developers to bypass environmental regulations, leading to unchecked deforestation, illegal waste disposal, and industrial pollution. **The Mangrove Destruction in Mira Bhayander (2024)**<sup>10</sup> case exemplifies how government inaction and legal loopholes enable encroachments, even in ecologically sensitive areas. Despite clear environmental protection laws, delayed judicial proceedings and lax implementation often lead to prolonged destruction before any meaningful action is taken. Moreover, the involvement of influential corporations and political entities further weakens enforcement efforts, as economic and developmental priorities frequently override environmental concerns. Strengthening enforcement mechanisms requires an overhaul of existing policies, increased funding for regulatory bodies, stricter penalties for violators, and greater public accountability to ensure the protection of India's natural resources.

### **Social Activism Against Deforestation**

Public activism has emerged as a powerful force in the fight against deforestation, particularly in urban areas where rapid development threatens green spaces. One of the most notable examples is the **Aarey Colony Metro Project protest**,<sup>11</sup> where environmentalists, local communities, and

---

<sup>10</sup> Suresh Golani, 'Mira-Bhayandar: Environmentalists Condemn Delayed Action Against Illegal Mangrove Destruction Despite Court Orders' (The Free Press Journal, 21 April 2024) <<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/mira-bhayandar-environmentalists-condemn-delayed-action-against-illegal-mangrove-destruction-despite-court-orders>> accessed 25 June 2026.

<sup>11</sup> 'Case Comment on In Re Felling of Trees in Aarey Forest (Maharashtra)' (The Amikus Qriac, 13 July 2024) <<https://theamikusqriac.com/case-comment-on-in-re-felling-of-trees-in-aarey-forest-maharashtra/>> accessed 25 June 2026.

activists united to oppose the large-scale felling of trees for metro car shed construction. The movement, which gained national attention, emphasized the ecological importance of urban forests, particularly their role in reducing air pollution, maintaining biodiversity, and mitigating climate change effects. Legal petitions were filed to halt the tree cutting, and widespread protests led to a temporary stay on deforestation, showcasing the impact of sustained public pressure. Similar movements have emerged in Uttan, where local fishermen and residents have actively resisted deforestation linked to real estate development, arguing that it threatens both the environment and their livelihoods.

Beyond legal interventions, social activism against deforestation has expanded through digital campaigns, grassroots mobilization, and media coverage. Activists have increasingly used platforms like Twitter and Change.org to gather support, amplify concerns, and pressure authorities to adopt environmentally responsible policies. The Chipko Movement-inspired tree-hugging protests and street demonstrations have further strengthened civic engagement in environmental justice. However, activists often face significant challenges, including political pressure, legal hurdles, and threats from vested interests benefiting from deforestation. Despite these obstacles, environmental activism continues to be a critical force in shaping conservation policies, ensuring public participation in decision-making, and holding corporations and government agencies accountable for ecological destruction.<sup>12</sup>

Journal of Multi-Disciplinary  
Legal Research

### **Mira-Bhayander Deforestation Issues**

The **Mira-Bhayander mangrove destruction case (2024)** is a critical example of unchecked environmental degradation driven by illegal encroachments and weak enforcement mechanisms. Mangroves are legally protected under the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**, and the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2011, which prohibit their destruction due to their crucial role in preventing coastal erosion, acting as carbon sinks, and supporting biodiversity. Despite

---

<sup>12</sup> Ramachandra Guha, *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya* (Oxford University Press 1989).

these legal protections, real estate developers and industrial entities continue to encroach upon mangrove areas for construction and commercial projects. Investigations have revealed large-scale land reclamation activities, where vast stretches of mangroves have been cleared to pave the way for unauthorized developments. Local activists and environmental organizations have raised alarms, filing complaints with the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) and the National Green Tribunal (NGT), yet enforcement remains inadequate.

The inaction of government authorities and regulatory agencies has further exacerbated the situation. Despite multiple court directives, including **Bombay Environmental Action Group v. State of Maharashtra (2005)**<sup>13</sup>, which mandated the protection and restoration of mangroves, violations persist. Corruption, lack of accountability, and political interference have hindered effective action against offenders. The destruction of Mira-Bhayander's mangroves has led to increased flooding, loss of biodiversity, and deterioration of air quality in surrounding areas. Strengthening legal oversight, implementing real-time satellite monitoring, and imposing severe penalties on violators are essential steps to curb such environmental crimes. Additionally, empowering local communities to participate in environmental protection initiatives can enhance vigilance and ensure long-term sustainability.

### **Future Directions and Policy Recommendations**

To effectively combat environmental crimes, India must adopt stringent legal reforms, enhance enforcement mechanisms, and promote sustainable development. The following policy recommendations outline key areas for improvement:

#### **1. Strengthening Legal Frameworks –**

The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, should be amended to impose stricter penalties, including higher fines and longer imprisonment for offenders. Special environmental courts should

---

<sup>13</sup> The interim order imposing a total freeze on the destruction and cutting of mangroves across Maharashtra was passed on 6 October 2005: 'Bombay High Court Prohibits Destruction of Mangroves, Holds State Responsible for Its Protection and Preservation' (DNA India, 18 September 2018) <<https://www.dnaindia.com/mumbai/report-bombay-high-court-prohibits-destruction-of-mangroves-holds-state-responsible-for-its-protection-and-preservation-2664376>> accessed 25 June 2026.

be established for swift resolution of cases, reducing delays in justice. Additionally, legal provisions must be updated to address emerging environmental threats such as e-waste pollution and climate-related crimes.

This recommendation, however, must be read against the prevailing legislative trend, which has moved in the opposite direction. The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act 2023, which took effect in relation to the Environment (Protection) Act 1986 on 1 April 2024, removed the term of imprisonment of up to five years that section 15 had previously prescribed and replaced it with monetary penalties ranging from one lakh to fifteen lakh rupees, to be assessed by adjudicating officers rather than by criminal courts. Comparable changes were made to the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1981 and the Indian Forest Act 1927. Commentators have cautioned that substituting administrative penalties for the threat of imprisonment may weaken deterrence, particularly against well-resourced corporate offenders for whom a capped fine is merely a cost of doing business. A credible reform agenda, therefore, cannot simply call for stricter penalties in the abstract: it must engage with this decriminalisation and consider whether deterrence is better served by restoring custodial liability for the gravest violations, or by ensuring that monetary penalties are genuinely proportionate to the size of the enterprise and the magnitude of the harm caused.<sup>14</sup>

## 2. Corporate Accountability –

Implementing a strict liability framework will ensure that corporations are held accountable for ecological damage, even in the absence of direct negligence. Companies violating environmental laws should face heavy penalties, mandatory restoration costs, and public disclosure of violations. Strengthening the role of regulatory bodies like the National Green Tribunal (NGT) can help monitor and penalize corporate offenders more effectively.

---

<sup>14</sup> The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act 2023 came into force in respect of the Environment (Protection) Act 1986 on 1 April 2024: see 'The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2023' (PRS Legislative Research) <<https://prsindia.org/billtrack/the-jan-vishwas-amendment-of-provisions-bill-2023>> accessed 25 June 2026; Ashneet Hanspal, 'Changes to Environmental Laws under the Jan Vishwas Act 2023' (Ahlawat & Associates, 26 September 2023) <<https://www.ahlawatassociates.com/blog/facilitating-a-trust-based-business-environment-changes-to-environmental-laws-under-the-jan-vishwas-act-2023>> accessed 25 June 2026.

### 3. Community Engagement –

Encouraging public participation in environmental decision-making can enhance vigilance and prevent ecological destruction. Establishing citizen monitoring groups and public grievance mechanisms will enable affected communities to report violations in real time. Government-led awareness campaigns on ecological conservation and legal rights can empower citizens to take proactive steps in protecting their environment.

### 4. Stronger Enforcement Mechanisms –

Environmental agencies such as the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and state pollution boards must be provided with advanced technology, funding, and personnel to enhance monitoring and enforcement. Implementing real-time satellite surveillance and AI-driven data analysis can help detect illegal deforestation, mining, and pollution activities. Strengthening whistleblower protections will also encourage the reporting of environmental violations.

### 5. Sustainable Urban Planning –

Integrating ecological considerations into infrastructure projects will help minimize environmental damage while supporting economic growth. Policies should mandate Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) for all major projects, ensuring transparency in decision-making. Promoting green architecture, increasing urban green spaces, and prioritizing eco-friendly construction materials can further align urban expansion with sustainability goals.

## **Framework for Punishment under Green Criminology**

Environmental crimes in India are governed by various legal provisions under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Indian Penal Code (IPC). These laws provide punitive measures to curb

offenses against the environment and ensure accountability for ecological destruction. Some of the key legal sections applicable to green criminology are:

### 1. Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)

Section 279: Fouling the water of any public spring or reservoir so as to render it less fit for its ordinary use.<sup>15</sup>

Section 280: Voluntarily making the atmosphere noxious to the health of persons dwelling, carrying on business, or passing in the neighbourhood.

Section 286: Negligent conduct with respect to any poisonous substance, endangering human life or likely to cause hurt or injury.

### 2. Indian Penal Code (IPC)

Section 268: Public nuisance caused by pollution or environmental degradation.

Section 277: Contaminating water sources and harming aquatic life.

Section 278: Air pollution that endangers human health and environmental safety.

Section 425: Mischief resulting in environmental damage, such as deforestation or destruction of protected areas.

Section 431: Damage to public infrastructure leading to environmental hazards.

In addition to these penal provisions, special environmental laws like the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and the Forest Conservation Act, 1980**, provide specific guidelines for preventing and punishing environmental offenses. The role

---

<sup>15</sup> The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, Act 45 of 2023, ss 279, 280 and 286: see 'The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023' (PRS Legislative Research) <[https://prsindia.org/files/bills\\_acts/bills\\_parliament/2023/Bharatiya\\_Nyaya\\_Sanhita,\\_2023.pdf](https://prsindia.org/files/bills_acts/bills_parliament/2023/Bharatiya_Nyaya_Sanhita,_2023.pdf)> accessed 25 June 2026.

of judicial interventions and public interest litigations (PILs) further strengthens enforcement, with landmark cases shaping the legal landscape for green criminology in India.

### **Conclusion**

Green criminology provides a critical perspective on environmental harm, emphasizing the need to address ecological crimes that threaten ecosystems, wildlife, and human health. It highlights corporate and state responsibility in environmental destruction, exposing how weak policies and profit-driven actions contribute to pollution, deforestation, and climate change. By acknowledging the disproportionate impact of ecological harm on marginalized communities, it also promotes environmental justice and calls for stricter regulations and enforcement mechanisms.

As climate change and environmental degradation continue to escalate, green criminology remains essential in shaping laws, policies, and enforcement strategies to protect the planet. Strengthening legal frameworks, enhancing enforcement, and raising awareness are crucial steps in mitigating environmental damage. The field encourages a global perspective, urging cooperation between nations, organizations, and individuals to prevent and combat environmental crimes.

Ultimately, green criminology serves as a vital tool in promoting sustainable development and ensuring accountability for those who exploit natural resources irresponsibly. The fight against environmental crime is not just a legal necessity but a moral responsibility. By fostering collective action, we can safeguard our environment, uphold justice, and create a sustainable future for generations to come.