



The Role of Law Enforcement Against Illegal Logging in the Framework of Special Offences: A Case Study in Indonesia

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Abstract

Illegal logging is a complex and destructive environmental crime with multidimensional impacts on Indonesia's ecosystems, society and economy. Although the government has established regulations such as Law No. 41/1999 and Law No. 18/2013, this practice is still rampant. This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of law enforcement against illegal logging practices within the framework of special offences and identify various structural, juridical and technical obstacles faced by law enforcement officials. Using a qualitative method and a juridical-sociological approach, data was collected through literature study, legal document analysis, and the author's critical reflection on the empirical conditions of law enforcement in the field. The results show that law implementation often only targets field actors and has not been able to reach the intellectual actors behind organised crime networks. Weak inter-agency coordination, lack of technology utilisation, limited resources, and the involvement of unscrupulous officials are the main inhibiting factors. On the other hand, economic pressure and the lack of access to legal resources in the community also encourage their involvement in illegal logging practices. Therefore, the effectiveness of law enforcement needs to be complemented by socio-cultural approaches and community empowerment, as well as the integration of local and religious values in policy strategies. This research includes

strengthening institutional capacity, legal transparency and active community involvement in forest monitoring to promote a fair and sustainable legal system.

Keywords

Delict, Law, Illegal, Logging, Role.

Introduction

Indonesia is known as one of the countries with extraordinary natural wealth, especially in terms of biodiversity. This diversity is reflected in various types of plants, animals, and ecosystems that are widely spread from Sabang to Merauke. One of the tangible manifestations of this wealth is Indonesia's diverse forests, such as tropical rainforests, mangrove forests, and mountain forests. These forests not only have high ecological value, but also play an important role as a support for economic and social life, especially for people living in inland areas and around forest areas. In addition to being a source of livelihood for local communities, Indonesia's forests also play a strategic role in maintaining global climate balance. Their ability to absorb large amounts of carbon emissions makes Indonesian forests one of the main contributors to climate change mitigation efforts at the world level (Setiawan & Lufina, 2024).

However, in recent decades, the sustainability of Indonesia's forests has faced serious challenges due to increasing exploitation pressure. One of the main threats is the practice of illegal logging. Illegal logging is the activity of cutting down trees without a valid permit or, even if licensed, the implementation is not in accordance with applicable legal procedures. This destructive practice is often carried out massively and involves many parties, causing significant environmental and social impacts (Pradnya Satyalalita & Zulfiani, 2024).

The impacts of illegal logging are diverse, ranging from loss of forest cover, increased risk of ecological disasters such as floods and landslides, disruption of water systems, to economic losses to the state due to reduced revenue from the forestry sector that should be managed legally and sustainably. In addition, forest destruction due to illegal logging also directly affects the lives of indigenous and local communities who depend on the forest for their livelihoods (Boediningsih & Tandiono, 2022).

Forest destruction is a crucial issue that continues to haunt Indonesia, one of the countries with the third largest tropical forest area in the world. One of the main causes of this damage is the practice of illegal logging, which not only destroys the environment, but also threatens the sustainability of ecosystems, disrupts the lives of indigenous peoples, and causes economic losses to the state. Although the government has enacted various policies and regulations to tackle this practice, the reality is that illegal logging still continues. This shows that the crime is not just an ordinary violation, but an organised crime that involves many parties, ranging from local communities, businessmen, to law enforcement officials (Aprianto & Kamarubayana, 2023).

On the other hand, forests in Indonesia not only have ecological functions, but are also an economic and social resource for millions of people. However, their management still faces

serious structural and systemic challenges. The rampant practice of illegal logging is an indicator that existing regulations have not been effective in creating a deterrent effect for perpetrators. Factors such as weak law enforcement, the pressure of the economic crisis, obstacles in the process of proof in court, as well as the limitations of the criminal law approach used, have exacerbated the situation (Amir et al., 2022)

In an effort to overcome increasingly complex environmental crimes, the criminal law approach through special offences is increasingly relevant to be applied. This approach provides a stronger legal basis, both in terms of normative and substantive, in dealing with crimes such as illegal logging that involve many parties and are organised. Special offences, which are outside the general provisions of the Criminal Code, usually contain more specific norms, more severe sanctions, and expand the scope of legal subjects who can be held criminally responsible. With these characteristics, special offences are considered capable of answering various legal challenges, such as difficulties in proof, disclosure of the perpetrator network, and the creation of a more significant deterrent effect.

However, the problem of illegal logging does not only stem from the weak legal system, but is also closely related to the socio-economic conditions of communities around the forest. High economic pressure and limited access to natural resources encourage some communities to engage in illegal logging as an alternative income (Supardi et al., 2021). The lack of community involvement in forest management also strengthens dependence on this illegal activity, even though it ultimately damages the environment and threatens the sustainability of the community itself. Therefore, tackling illegal logging needs to consider the social dimension by encouraging community participation as part of the solution.

In this context, law enforcement has a central role in preserving natural resources and creating an equitable forest management system. One concrete example of law enforcement can be seen in a case that occurred in March 2024, when the Ministry of Environment and Forestry managed to secure 55 containers of illegal processed timber totalling 767 m³ at Teluk Lamong Port, Surabaya. The timber was found to have originated from East Kalimantan and was transported using forged documents in the form of Forest Product Certificate. In this case, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry applied a strict legal approach through multiple crimes, including the application of Money Laundering Crimes, as an effort to dismantle organised crime networks and support the achievement of the Forest and Other Land Uses Net Sink 2030 target (Mutikania, 2024). This case shows that strong and strategic law enforcement is essential, not only to stop environmental crime, but also to create sustainable systemic change.

In this context, the law does not only function as a coercive tool, but also as a guiding principle that plays a role in creating order and maintaining environmental balance. Therefore, law enforcement against illegal logging practices must be directed not only to punish, but also to dismantle the criminal networks involved, restore damage to forest ecosystems, and create a real deterrent effect for the perpetrators. The effectiveness of law enforcement is largely determined by the consistency and integrity of law enforcement officials, which is still a major challenge in

various regions.

Various academic studies have tried to illustrate the complexity of law enforcement against illegal logging in Indonesia. One of them is a study conducted by Josia Situmorang and T. Riza Zarzani on "Legal Aspects of the Accountability of Illegal Logging Offenders". This article discusses the complexity of law enforcement against illegal logging in Indonesia, which is categorised as an organised crime. This research uses a normative juridical approach by examining applicable laws and regulations, particularly Law No. 41/1999 on Forestry and the Criminal Code. This article emphasises the importance of the criminal justice system in tackling illegal logging and reveals the weakness of law enforcement in the field due to the lack of repressive measures against intellectual actors. On the other hand, it also highlights the importance of preventive measures and community empowerment as strategic steps, and proposes the active role of the community and synchronisation between law enforcement agencies. The strength of this research is the completeness of regulatory studies and community involvement efforts, but the weakness lies in the lack of empirical analysis and has not comprehensively touched on aspects of Islamic law or local values (Situmorang & Zarzani, 2023).

Meanwhile, as in previous research conducted by Nasir Wirawan Sinaga and Sodikin on "Criminal Law Enforcement against Illegal Logging: A Study in the Perspective of Positive Law and Islamic Law". This article presents a different approach by combining the perspectives of positive law and Islamic law. The main focus of this research is on Law Number 18 Year 2013 as well as sharia values such as *maslahah* and *hifz al-bi'ah* which emphasise the importance of environmental sustainability. This research uses qualitative methods with normative and comparative approaches. This article makes a new contribution by placing illegal logging as a *jarimah* that falls under the *ta'zir* category, where the form of sanction is left to the discretion of the ruler. It also emphasises the importance of integrating religious values in the national legal system. The strengths of this article are the holistic and normative comparative approach to values, but the weaknesses lie in the limited empirical data and the lack of discussion of the implementation of positive law in the field in a technical and comprehensive manner (Wirawan sinaga & Sodikin, 2025).

Overall, these two studies have their own strengths and limitations. Josia Situmorang and T. Riza Zarzani's research is stronger in formal legal studies and the criminal justice system, while Nasir Wirawan Sinaga and Sodikin's research expands the dimensions of the discussion through the integration of Islamic legal values. This research is an important basis for the author to improve the study of illegal logging crimes by combining normative, implementative, and religious and social value approaches as a more comprehensive and sustainable eradication strategy.

This research plays an important role in examining the dynamics of law enforcement against environmental crimes, especially illegal logging practices in Indonesia. The phenomenon of illegal logging is not only related to legal and environmental aspects, but also reflects social inequality and structural problems that have broad impacts across sectors and generations.

Therefore, tackling this crime demands a comprehensive and robust legal approach, as a strategic step to create justice while maintaining environmental sustainability. Within this framework, this study explores the extent to which existing legal mechanisms are effective, the role of law enforcers involved, and the obstacles faced in tackling illegal logging activities. The main objective of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of law enforcement in curbing illegal logging in Indonesia, as well as to identify the structural, juridical and technical obstacles. Through comprehensive analysis, this research is expected to provide strategic recommendations to strengthen the law enforcement system, improve inter agency coordination, and encourage community participation in preserving forests as part of sustainable environmental protection efforts.

Methods

The research method used in this paper is a qualitative method with a juridical-sociological approach, which aims to analyse the role of law enforcement against illegal logging in the framework of special offences in Indonesia. This approach is used to understand the application of legal norms in a social context as well as the effectiveness of law enforcement against organised forestry crimes.

Data Sources

Data were collected through desk study and legal document analysis, which included laws, implementing regulations, official reports from relevant ministries or agencies, as well as relevant scientific publications and media sources. These sources were selected based on their relevance and credibility in supporting the analysis of law enforcement practices on illegal logging.

Analysis Technique

In addition to the analysis of legal documents and literature, the reflection method was also used, which is an analysis based on the author's knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of law enforcement in Indonesia. This reflection serves as an interpretative instrument that links the theoretical framework with the empirical reality in the field, and provides evaluative space for legal policies and strategies that have been implemented.

Methodological Justification

The juridical-sociological approach was chosen because it provides room for legal analysis not only in the normative framework, but also in the social context and practice in the field. By combining literature study, legal document analysis and critical reflection, this research is expected to provide a more comprehensive and incisive picture of the challenges and opportunities in law enforcement on forestry crimes. This approach also allows for more contextualised and applicable recommendations in the context of legal system reform that is more responsive to environmental protection.

Results and Discussions

In the midst of Indonesia's biological wealth, forests not only act as the lungs of the world, but also become the main support for ecological balance, a source of economic livelihood for the community, and the foundation for socio-cultural sustainability as a place of livelihood for various indigenous and local communities (Farina et al., 2024). However, forests that play a crucial role in maintaining the balance of this ecosystem, in fact, continue to face serious threats, one of which is the increasingly widespread practice of illegal logging. This activity not only damages the structure of the ecosystem and reduces biodiversity, but also has a broad impact on climate change, land conflicts, and state losses due to the loss of potential revenue from the legal forestry sector (Kossay et al., 2024).

Illegal logging is not only limited to the activity of illegally cutting down trees, but also includes all activities that violate the law in the utilisation of forest products. However, in general, illegal logging refers to all activities or activities related to management that are not in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, including unauthorised logging (Mudrikah & Cahyana, 2025), where individuals or groups deliberately cut down trees in forest areas without obtaining permission or approval from the Government or authorised institutions, and other activities such as illegal timber processing, which also includes illegal logging products, such as cutting, processing and assembling wood without a valid permit (Rahman, 2024). In addition to these two activities, in fact there are still various other forms of illegal logging which in fact have a negative impact on the community, government, and institutions that should have clearer authority over the forest area (Moningka et al., 2024).

Despite various legal measures implemented to prevent and reduce illegal logging activities, the practice of illegal logging still occurs on a large scale, and even tends to increase in some areas. This raises fundamental questions about the extent to which law enforcement mechanisms are able to function optimally in dealing with the systematic and complex crime of illegal logging.

Effectiveness of Law Enforcement in reducing Illegal Logging Practices in Indonesia

The effectiveness of law enforcement in the context of illegal logging in Indonesia can not only be seen from the number of cases successfully prosecuted or perpetrators convicted, but also from the ability of the law to create a deterrent effect, dismantle the criminal networks involved, and prevent repetition of similar criminal acts. Law enforcement in practice is often faced with serious obstacles, including weaknesses in the substance of the law, limitations of law enforcement officers, and the social and economic conditions of communities living around forest areas (Yuniar et al., 2024).

One indicator that reflects the weak effectiveness of law enforcement in the forestry sector in Indonesia can be seen from the suboptimal implementation of existing regulations that have been passed, such as Law No. 41/1999 on Forestry and Law No. 18/2013 on Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction. Although both laws have contained quite strict provisions in

regulating forest utilisation, as well as providing sanctions for perpetrators of forest destruction, in practice implementation in the field is often constrained by various factors, ranging from weak coordination between law enforcement agencies, lack of human resources and budget, to the existence of legal loopholes that are exploited by illegal logging perpetrators. This shows that the existence of strong regulations does not necessarily guarantee the success of law enforcement if it is not accompanied by an effective and consistent implementation mechanism. Many of these regulations are still normative and have not been able to reach the complexity of environmental crimes that are cross-regional and involve various actors, including entrepreneurs, local communities, and even unscrupulous officials. The low completion rate of cases until conviction in court also indicates obstacles in the evidentiary process, weak coordination between law enforcement institutions, and less than optimal use of technology in detecting and tracing the distribution or trade routes of illegal timber.

On the other hand, although the criminal law approach has been used as the main instrument in efforts to eradicate illegal logging, the effectiveness of its application is still unable to touch the root of the problem in a comprehensive and sustainable manner. The special offences approach in criminal law does provide a legal basis to impose stricter sanctions and reach various forms of offences, both by individuals and corporations. However, without synergy with social approaches and community empowerment strategies, law enforcement tends to be repressive and only targets surface symptoms. In this context, communities living around forest areas, which should be part of the solution to environmental conservation, often fall into illegal logging practices due to economic pressures, limited livelihood options, and lack of legal access to forest resource utilisation. As a result, they are often the main target of law enforcement, while the big actors behind the practice of forest destruction often escape the law. This condition reflects a long-standing structural inequality and injustice, where communities have to bear a disproportionate legal burden, while the root causes of poverty, inequality of access, and weak governance of natural resources have not been fully addressed.

Major enforcement cases such as the seizure of 55 containers of illegal timber in Surabaya by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry do show progressive steps in law enforcement. The multi-layered criminal approach, including the application of Money Laundering Crime (TPPU), is an important breakthrough in dismantling the organised crime network (Mutikania, 2024). However, such cases are still incidental and do not reflect a system that runs consistently and integrated. Many illegal logging cases never reach the courts or stop at the field perpetrators, while the intellectual or main actors behind the crimes often escape or go scot-free.

The effectiveness of the law in dealing with illegal logging cases also depends not only on the regulatory framework available, but is also strongly influenced by the integrity and capacity of law enforcement officials themselves (Kossay et al., 2024). Officials who have a weak commitment to eradicating environmental crimes, or who are actually involved in corrupt practices, will significantly weaken law enforcement efforts. In various studies, including research conducted by Josia Situmorang and T. Riza Zarzani, it is explained that the lack of repressive

actions against intellectual actors behind organised networks is a major obstacle in effectively breaking the chain of this crime (Wirawan Sinaga & Sodikin, 2025). Law enforcement that only focuses on formal aspects, such as the arrest of field perpetrators without touching the masterminds behind it, and is not accompanied by a systemic and strategic approach, actually strengthens the public perception that the law runs artificially and does not favour ecological and social justice. As a result, communities directly affected by environmental damage feel neglected, while the main perpetrators remain free and operational. This creates distrust of legal institutions and increases the gap between environmental protection efforts and the reality on the ground.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of law enforcement should not only be seen from a legal or formal perspective, but also from the ability of the law to direct changes in community behaviour. The law should function not only as a coercive tool, but also as a normative guideline that internalises the values of environmental conservation (Yudinata et al., 2024). Research by Nasir Wirawan Sinaga and Sodikin, for example, shows that integration between positive law and Islamic legal values can be a relevant alternative approach, especially in societies with strong religious roots. By considering these various aspects, it becomes clear that the effectiveness of law enforcement against illegal logging practices in Indonesia still faces many obstacles, both structural, juridical, and social (Junaedi et al., 2025). Therefore, a comprehensive strengthening effort is needed, starting from regulatory reform, increasing the capacity of law enforcers, to actively involving the community in monitoring and managing forests (Rijal et al., 2024). The synergy between repressive and preventive approaches, as well as the integration of local and religious values in the national legal system, are important keys in realising law enforcement that is not only technically effective, but also fair and sustainable.

Obstacles Faced by Law Enforcement Officials in Tackling Illegal Logging in Indonesia

In understanding the root causes of illegal logging in Indonesia, it is important to trace the main causes that encourage the practice to continue and become a tradition despite the implementation of various regulations. The phenomenon of illegal logging does not emerge in a vacuum, but is a response to the needs and structural pressures that develop in the context of national and global economic development and growth. The two main factors that have consistently been the biggest contributors to the practice of illegal logging are the high industrial demand for forest products and also the conversion of forest areas into other forms of land use.

The high industrial demand for wood-based products in a modern, fast-paced and consumptive world has made wood the main raw material in various sectors such as the energy industry, the paper and tissue industry and the basic packaging material for various commercial products. As a result of this high demand, which does not exceed the legal production capacity that can be supplied by the official forestry sector, a black market has emerged that systematically absorbs timber from illegal logging that is cheaper and faster to obtain. In many cases, industry players prefer the illegal route because the costs incurred are much lower than following legal procedures that are considered long and strict. On the other hand, the conversion of forest areas

into residential or industrial areas is also a major trigger of land deforestation. In practice, logging is often carried out under the pretext of land clearing when in fact it is intended to open new economic access quickly without regard to the legality of the permit or long-term ecological impacts (Faradiba, 2022).

Law enforcement against illegal logging in Indonesia faces a number of complex obstacles, including structural, cultural and technical factors. Although regulations governing the protection of forests and the environment are already available in various forms of legislation, the reality in the field often does not work well and optimally. Law enforcement officials, such as the police, prosecutors, and forestry officers, are often hampered by unfavourable objective conditions in the field.

One of the main obstacles is the limited human resources and supporting facilities in forest areas. Indonesia's vast territory, with forest areas scattered in remote and inaccessible areas, makes it difficult to monitor thoroughly. The number of personnel assigned to guard forest areas is very limited and often disproportionate to the scope of the work area that must be monitored. The lack of facilities and infrastructure means that many forestry officers are not equipped with patrol vehicles, satellite-based monitoring technology, or integrated geospatial data systems. This has a direct impact on the difficulty of tracking and proving illegal logging practices, especially if the perpetrators use fake documents or operate at night and in bad weather (Ansar et al., 2024).

Another important obstacle is the low awareness of forest conservation among the community. In some areas, communities tend to ignore the long-term impacts of forest destruction because they prioritise their daily economic needs. When illegal logging has become a tradition and routine of a community group and may even be passed down from generation to generation, illegal logging, which is considered an extraordinary crime, is no longer considered a violation of the law but rather the community views this as an ordinary act and as a way to survive (Dekiawati, 2022).

This apathy is also exacerbated by the historical experience of the community, which has led to a sense of disappointment with government policies in the forestry sector. The centralised policies of the past, where forest products were taken by the state without making a real contribution to development in the region, have created a deep sense of distrust so that people are now indifferent to forest conservation. In these conditions, law enforcement officers not only face illegal logging perpetrators as individuals, but also face the collective attitude of a society that is permissive and even passive towards the practice. Without collective awareness of the importance of protecting forests as an ecological heritage and long-term source of life, law enforcement efforts will only be patchy and difficult to achieve sustainable results (Dekiawati, 2022).

However, obstacles that arise can also come from law enforcement officials themselves, such as corruption. Corruption is one of the most serious obstacles in law enforcement against illegal logging practices in Indonesia. There are many cases that show the involvement of law enforcement officers, local officials and military personnel in supporting or facilitating illegal

logging activities. The involvement of unscrupulous law enforcement officers not only damages the credibility or name of the institution but indirectly it also shows that the existing political design of the law has not been able to answer the real challenges in the field. The lack of transparency in the law enforcement process and the weak internal monitoring system exacerbate the situation, creating a wide space for the practice of irregularities. In this context, corruption and abuse of authority in forest management and supervision will have a direct impact on environmental damage and failure to effectively implement forestry policies, thus threatening the long-term sustainability of forest resources (Ansar et al., 2024; Junaedi et al., 2025).

In research conducted by Rinanda Aderiswanto in the Riau region, the main obstacle faced by law enforcement officials in the Riau region in tackling illegal logging is the increasingly organised practice of illegal logging which is no longer on a local scale but has involved national to international networks in the illegal timber trade chain and illegal logging in the area certainly does not stand alone but there is interference from individuals by running a neat and systematic pattern of cooperation so that the practice of illegal logging is difficult to track and eradicate. Factors such as the lack of implementation of regulations, lenient sentences, and weak coordination between law enforcement agencies also make the perpetrators more courageous to carry out their crimes and sometimes ignore the actions that have been taken. Moreover, economic factors that greatly affect the community because they still depend on illegal forest products make this condition difficult to handle. All of this shows that illegal logging is not only a matter of illegal logging but also includes complex structural problems in the law enforcement system in Indonesia (Aderiswanto, 2024).

With the many obstacles or barriers faced by law enforcement officials, the eradication of illegal logging such as illegal logging, black market distribution, transporting and trading illicit timber, deforestation and others that violate the provisions in Law Number 41 of 1999 and Law Number 18 of 2013 is increasingly difficult to carry out, especially when there are irresponsible elements. These activities damage forest sustainability, threaten biodiversity, and disrupt the livelihoods of local communities. Although the government has taken steps to eradicate illegal logging such as illegal logging through the implementation of the Timber Verification System (SVLK/TLAS) and the FLEGT scheme, consistent and firm law enforcement remains a major factor in overcoming this problem. In the context of criminal law, illegal logging can be categorised as a crime that harms the country's economy and is an extra ordinary crime so that community participation is needed in efforts to prevent and combat illegal logging by increasing vigilance and reporting illegal activities (Setiawan & Lufina, 2024; Wirawan sinaga & Sodikin, 2025).

In this case, local governments also take part or play an active role in restoring forest areas that have experienced deforestation and degradation due to illegal logging by implementing various approaches such as monitoring, which is carried out by law enforcement officers such as forest police. The Forestry Police has a strategic role in maintaining forest sustainability through four main approaches, namely preemptive, preventive, repressive, and participatory. In the

preemptive approach, forest rangers provide counselling and guidance to the community to make them more aware of the importance of protecting the forest. In the preventive approach, they carry out routine patrols and surveillance to prevent violations of the law in forest areas. Then in the repressive approach, the forest apparatus takes legal action against illegal logging perpetrators, such as arresting suspects and confiscating evidence. While the participatory approach is carried out by involving the community in forest conservation and monitoring activities (Gaol & Hariyanto, 2023; Sukir, 2021).

Apart from monitoring, local governments are also obliged to prioritise preventive and repressive measures as part of a comprehensive strategy. Preventive efforts taken by local governments are also somewhat similar to those taken by forest rangers, namely through direct approaches to communities, especially those living around conservation areas, by providing education on the importance of forest conservation and running reforestation programmes to repair damaged land. On the other hand, repressive efforts are crucial in ensuring fair and effective law enforcement, which is done through cooperation between investigators, prosecutors and judges. All of these steps become an integrated series to stop the forestry crime chain and maintain the sustainability of forest ecosystems in the future (Gaol & Hariyanto, 2023)

Eradicating corrupt practices involving certain individuals in illegal logging cases must also be a serious concern, considering that their involvement often becomes an obstacle in law enforcement in the forestry sector. The handling of corrupt individuals must be carried out in a firm and sustainable manner, accompanied by strengthening regulations that provide heavier legal sanctions to create a deterrent effect, but this also applies to perpetrators of illegal logging crimes, not just those who participate. In addition, synergy and coordination between law enforcement agencies, government agencies, and the active participation of the community are needed to create a more transparent, effective and equitable monitoring and law enforcement system in an effort to tackle illegal logging as a whole.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of law enforcement against illegal logging in Indonesia still faces serious challenges, both in terms of regulation and implementation in the field. Despite the availability of a number of legal instruments such as Law No. 41/1999 and Law No. 18/2013, their implementation is still not optimal. Law enforcement tends to be normative and has not been able to keep up with the complexity of crimes that are cross-regional and involve large actors, such as corporations and unscrupulous officials. Weaknesses in evidence, lack of technology utilisation in tracking, and lack of coordination between law enforcement agencies have also worsened the situation. The special offence approach does provide an opportunity for firmer and more comprehensive sanctions, but without the support of a strong system and the integrity of the apparatus, law enforcement often stops at field actors only, while intellectual actors escape the law.

On the other hand, social and economic factors in forest communities are major contributors to the rise of illegal logging. Unequal access to resources, economic pressures, and the lack of empowerment programmes make people tend to engage in illegal activities as a form of survival. This condition shows that repressive law enforcement alone is not enough to address the problem as a whole. Therefore, a holistic approach is needed that includes community economic empowerment, legal counselling, and active involvement of local communities in forest management. With a synergy between juridical, social and cultural approaches, efforts to tackle illegal logging can be directed in a more just, humane and sustainable manner.

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