

Review article

Illegal harvesting and trade of medicinal and aromatic plants: A criminal justice approach

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ABSTRACT

The illegal trade of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs) threatens biodiversity, local economy, and traditional knowledge systems worldwide. Many MAP species are threatened by unsustainable harvesting due to herbal remedy demand. This paper explores illegal MAPs collection and trade in Latin America, Africa, and South Asia, where MAP-rich ecosystems are depleting. Certain species' high market value, rural economic difficulties, and organised crime syndicates are key drivers. The environmental and social repercussions are severe, destroying biodiversity, ecosystems, and indigenous cultures. This paper examines CITES and CBD, revealing enforcement and intergovernmental collaboration shortcomings. Criminal networks use corrupt institutions and weak rules to evade law enforcement. Judicial examples show the necessity for tougher punishments and legal professional knowledge.

Keywords: Biodiversity loss, criminal networks, illegal trade, medicinal and aromatic plants