

## **Critical Analysis of the Regulation of Extrajudicial Killings in India**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In India, extrajudicial executions are a serious threat to democratic governance, human rights, and the rule of law. The continuation of such executions raises concerns about the effectiveness of current regulatory procedures and the accountability of state actors engaged, even in the face of constitutional protections and legal provisions. The phenomenon of extrajudicial killings in India requires a critical analysis, and there is a need to investigate ways to improve legislative frameworks in order to stop and deal with these heinous human rights breaches. This research paper thus explores the several ways that extrajudicial executions affect natural justice principles and the legal framework that surrounds them. It looks at how society accepts extrajudicial executions, how difficult it is to maintain accountability, and how strict regulations are needed to safeguard the rule of law and preserve human rights. This paper seeks to advance the conversation on extrajudicial killings in India by analyzing case studies in-depth and providing a legal analysis while also advocating for reforms to stop such deaths in the future.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Police in India and anywhere else have a wide variety of powers which are used to fulfil their main role in the society – to maintain law and order. The police force is a crucial functionary in the justice system of India, as they aim to prevent the occurrence of crimes and also take appropriate action to bring offenders into the eyes of the law. The concept of justice however has to be understood properly by this wing though, as their powers are also susceptible to be abused. Very often there are reports or news of ‘encounter killings’ carried out by the police against accused offenders before these accused are brought before the justice system. These are instances where the police take justice into their own hands, without allowing the accused to be protected by the procedural safeguards, hence denying through justice. A recent such incidence took place in Andhra Pradesh where policemen shot down the accused perpetrators

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in a rape case. These police were however glorified by the people and in the eyes of the media for apparently 'bringing about justice' to the victim and her family. This is however a gross abuse of power and disrespect to the law. The accused persons had the right to be brought before a court and be put through trial to determine whether they really were guilty or not, and the action of the policemen denied them this right. This is the concept of extra judicial killings where the police force tries to bring justice outside the judicial process. Such actions have wide implications on human rights, and basic rights of accused persons and also the various laws of natural justice. This article thus focuses on bringing into light certain instances of extrajudicial killings in India, in order to help understand what is wrong with our criminal justice system in India. It dives into various legal frameworks already in place that may be used in regulating such killings and also analyses the lacunae in our laws that has to be addressed by our government authorities and lawmakers.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This paper employs a purely doctrinal approach, focusing on the review and analysis of existing legal literature related to Extrajudicial or 'encounter' killings. The study is made by examining legal principles and doctrines as articulated in legal texts, cases, and scholarly articles. Relevant legal literature and landmark cases have been included by comprehensive searches of academic databases, online repositories and legal research platforms.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

**“Extra Judicial Killings, an Overview” by Divi bhargavi** – gives different laws under the Indian criminal justice system and constitutional provisions surrounding the concept of extra judicial killings. It gives various reasons for occurrence of such killings in India. It also gives a few case studies of such situations in India. The author also writes that harsh steps should be taken but not proper guidelines or recommendation. It does not however deal with the implications on the factors of natural justice such as the rule of law.

**“Extra-Judicial Killings: A Threat to Democracy” by Aman Kumar Sinha, Kumar Adarsh , Vedang Upadhyay** – deals with how such killings are a violation of the principles of rule of law. The article discusses more thoroughly about custodial violence, even though it is a slightly different concept, which forms only a part of extrajudicial killings not the whole

of it. Also according to the paper, the number of police officers in India does not reach the bar set by UN for 1 lakh citizens. Although the essay goes into great detail about the issue, it does not go into great detail about possible fixes or steps to stop extrajudicial deaths and custodial violence

**“Analysis of the factors causing encounter killings with special reference to India” by Vandini Sharma , Manika Kamthan-** The author analyses the factors causing encounter killings with special reference to India. The paper identifies several factors that encourage encounter killings, such as social good, immediate impact on gang activities, overburdened criminal justice system, personal glory, rewards etc. The author suggests that a separate and independent agency must be created where the secondary victims can go for their protection and seek justice. However no proper recommendation as to how such an agency would function has been given.

**“Extrajudicial Executions: The Supreme Court has failed the citizen on encounter killings”**– this article discusses the societal acceptance of encounter killings. It emphasizes on the Supreme court’s failure to give a final decision or set down proper guidelines regarding encounter killings. By delaying the APCLC appeal indefinitely, the Supreme Court has, by default, sanctioned the so-called "encounter specialists" is evidence of the societal ongoing, extralegal practice of encounter killings.

**Impunity, Fake Encounters And Human Rights In Manipur by OINAM JITENDRA SINGH** – this paper focuses on the violation of human rights specifically in Manipur through frequent fake encounter killings over the years. It gives a detailed meaning of the term ‘extrajudicial killings’ and further assesses the situation in Manipur by using statistics and also explaining provisions of law that are being violated because of these killings.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

1. Whether there is a legal and institutional framework in India regulate and address issues related to extrajudicial killings?
2. Whether extra-judicial killings have legal ramifications on human rights, rule of law, and democratic governance in India?

## CONCEPT OF EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS

Extra judicial killings are those that take place outside the purview of the court and laws that are fixed in place, and it is carried out by the police. Governmental authorities cause the death of individuals without them undergoing any form of "judicial proceeding" or receiving due "legal process"<sup>3</sup>. The police generally carry out these killings in supposed 'encounters' with the persons, stating that they were escaping or to protect themselves or that it was in exercise of the right of private defence<sup>4</sup>. But whatever the reason, these encounters are rightly termed as extra-judicial killings as it is done unlawfully by a branch of the executive. If the police carry out executions of criminals, what makes them different from the criminals themselves? It can even be questioned whether the police have support from the government in carrying out such operations due to the response to such occurrences. Instead of being horrified at the gross miscarriage of justice, the general public tend to glorify the acts of the police, wrongly mistaking such deaths to be an embodiment of justice. True justice could only be brought about if the fundamental procedures established are first fulfilled.

What makes encounter killings unlawful is that the majority of such encounters could be 'fake', that is, staged. Various reasons given by the government officials responsible for these encounters is that the accused was fleeing custody, or that he was acting dangerously with arms or otherwise. But the crux of the issue of extra judicial killings comes to this, that more often than not, these are stories cooked up by the officers to escape liability and for their acts to be considered justified in the eyes of law. The police often go to great lengths to cover up such situations, from planting weapons to cremating the victim's body before conducting autopsies. These false narratives often result in the police officers being rewarded as well, which is a sad reality of the Indian society.<sup>5</sup> In Manipur especially, during the recent times of strife as well as earlier, there have been numerous cases reported of fake encounters, whether the citizens are stripped of their basic human right that are firmly guaranteed under the Constitution as well as various international instruments to which India is a party, such as the UDHR, ICCPR etc.<sup>6</sup>

Extrajudicial killings have a wide ambit, wherein it includes fake encounter killings, custodial deaths and any other form of executions by governmental authorities without the force of law.

<sup>3</sup> Oinam Jitendra Singh, *Impunity, Fake Encounters And Human Rights In Manipur*, VOL 18 World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues, 140, 143 (2014)

<sup>4</sup> [2022-8-05.pdf \(nhrc.nic.in\) \(last visited Mar. 27, 2024, 9:30p.\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> *Extrajudicial Executions: The Supreme Court has failed the citizen on encounter killings*, 50, Economic and Political Weekly, 7. (2015)

<sup>6</sup> *Supra* 1

Custodial deaths too, in India take place on a large scale in India. According to a NHRC report, there were 164 custodial deaths in 2023 alone<sup>7</sup>. Such deaths are also a gross violation of different human rights of the victim as well as certain rights that protects prisoners. The arrested persons who are required to be produced before a court within 24 hours, instead of being put through due process, are instead faced with torture even to the point of death. As per the information provided by the Union Home Ministry in Parliament in 2022, there were 655 fatalities resulting from encounters, between January 2017 and January 2022. Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest number of encounter-related deaths, with other states such as Assam, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Maharashtra also reporting significant figures.<sup>8</sup> These figures merely indicate that the police in India who are expected to protect lives are taking them away without the authority of law in the name of justice. With the population in our country, it may seem like a minute issue, when other crimes such as murder and rape are ever so prevalent in shocking numbers. However, the problem with extrajudicial killings arises with the reaction and response of the public to such actions. It has been seen over and over again in various such cases that the citizens have accepted the conduct of the police officers in encounters and praised them for it. These is quite dangerous as the people are left with the impression that those who may have committed crimes do not deserve the rights that others do.

### **NEED FOR REGULATION**

Extra judicial killings have posed and continue to pose a significant threat to the democratic stability of the country<sup>9</sup>. The very Preamble of the Indian Constitution inter alia guarantees justice and equality. These two concepts form the crux of the Constitution itself. When the branch of the government responsible for ensuring that the law is kept, carry out executions outside the judicial process, the very foundation of the Constitution is shaken. Justice in its whole is denied, both to the family of the victim in the case and the victim of this kind of unlawful killing, when the police take such misguided actions. It can never be known whether

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<sup>7</sup> GOVERNMENT OF INDIA MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS. (n.d.). Available at: <https://sansad.in/getFile/loksabhaquestions/annex/1712/AU2055.pdf?source=pqals> [Accessed 8 Apr. 2024].

<sup>8</sup> Sarda, K. *Police encounters: No separate laws, but SC and NHRC have laid down strict guidelines*, India Today, <https://www.indiatoday.in/law/story/police-encounters-no-separate-laws-but-sc-and-nhrc-have-laid-down-strict-guidelines-2359654-2023-04-13> (2023)

<sup>9</sup> Kumar Sinha, A., Adarsh, K., Upadhayay, V. *Extra-Judicial Killings: A Threat to Democracy*, 9, International Journal of Science and Research, pg 21,(2011).

the accused was indeed guilty or innocent, and thus true justice cannot ever be served in this manner, irrespective of whatever the society may think. This thus brings down the democratic ideals of the nations, where all men are supposedly equal. If the Constitution were genuinely kept by those working for its enforcement, then it would be assured that the accused person is innocent until proven guilty. It therefore poses a problem not only towards the society but also to the legitimacy of the judicial system. It also breeds a mistrust in the government, amongst the people who will stop turning to the police for assistance, lose faith in the legal system which will eventually lead to a rise in crimes.<sup>10</sup> This makes regulation of such acts necessary.

The act of execution without the sanction of the law is a barbaric act. It is no different from murders or other crimes under the IPC. It is barbaric because it is something that was done in the earliest of times. In those times, the kinds of legislations and rights that we recognize now did not exist, and it was acceptable to punish those who were thought to be guilty in all kinds of ways. But the world, the society and laws have evolved tremendously now into a modern system, where even accused and arrested persons are guaranteed rights. These rights are grossly violated by the officers conducting extrajudicial killings, giving rise to the need for regulating such conduct. Various rights of the victims are found under the Constitution and procedural laws, and also international instruments that India has ratified. These include right to life, right to a fair trial, right to be treated with dignity etc. Procedural laws such as the Criminal Procedural Code (CrPC) assures these rights to arrested persons, whatever the degree of crime they commit, to protect the basic human rights of these people. However, when government officers do not even give the accused the chance to be put through a fair trial and be heard, it not only strips them of these rights but also violates the principles of natural justice. An effective regulatory system is hence necessary to ensure that the executive acts within its power and that the judicial system is not losing its functionality.

Regulation of extra judicial killings is also of utmost importance because of the blatant abuse of power by the police. The police are entrusted with the peace and security in the society and to protect the lives of the citizens and for this they are bestowed with an array of powers, enshrined primarily in the CrPC. However, it should really be questioned whether the people are in safe hands, when one witnesses fake encounter killings, orchestrated by the police. Why is it that the use of excessive force by policemen still remains unquestioned and unaccounted for? The abuse of power by police officials has to be given due and grave consideration by the

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<sup>10</sup> Id. at 22

higher authorities and effective regulation is necessary to curb such practices and remind the policemen of their duty in and to the society. Considering that India possesses a resilient democracy, along with an independent press and a legal system that prioritizes accountability, it's puzzling to comprehend why the police seem to resort to lethal force without consequences, seemingly endorsed both politically and by the public<sup>11</sup>. There has to be made consequences for these actions, no matter how the public may react to it, because it is nothing but abuse of power, where the police take it upon themselves to serve 'justice'. It is important to make such officials accountable in the eyes of the law.

These above factors clearly lay out a need for stringent regulation to control and curb the occurrence of killings that take place without permission and without judicial scrutiny. It is a crime that has to be brought under the law. The legal framework governing extrajudicial killings will be discussed in detail in this paper, where the author will examine whether there exists any regulation presently and also what law the judiciary has laid down in the past years. The need for regulation is undisputable. This is also because apart from the above aspects of such killings, there is also the fact that the crucial principles of natural justice are undermined by extrajudicial killings.

### **CASE STUDIES AND ANALYSIS OF INVESTIGATIONS**

Analyzing case studies provides a comprehensive way to comprehend the dynamics pertaining to extrajudicial executions in India. These true stories offer a complex depiction of the situations, incentives, and fallout from violent crimes of this kind. By analyzing two individual cases, the author hopes to provide insight on the institutional and societal reactions to these incidents as well as the complex web of circumstances that contribute to the occurrence and persistence of extrajudicial murders.

- i) A famous instance of a 'fake encounter' killing is that of Thangyam Manorama Devi in Manipur in 2004. A squad of the 17th Assam Rifles (AR) detained Thangjam Manorama Devi on July 10–11, 2004, on the grounds that she belonged to a prohibited organisation. The arrest took place at her home, under the jurisdiction of the Ililbung police station in the Imphal East District of Manipur. The next day, Manorama Devi's dead body with numerous bullet wounds, was discovered on a roadside close to Yaiphorok. Manorama Devi was shot dead, according to the AR,

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<sup>11</sup> Belur, J, *Why Do The Police Use Deadly Force: Explaining Police Encounters in Mumbai*, 50(2), British Journal of Criminology, pp.320–341., pg 322 (2009).

when she tried to flee their custody. The woman was taken from her home in the dead of night by thirteen armed members of the security forces, was beaten, tortured and raped and left to die out in the open, all based merely on a suspicion. She was not given a chance to explain her side, not investigated, not allowed to bring evidence, not properly put through any of the procedural safeguards, but was killed. It was claimed by the officers that the victim was apparently leading them erroneously to different locations knowingly, and at one point had asked to relieve herself, for which the soldiers gave her space. However, it was claimed that she attempted to run away from custody then due to which she was shot and killed. It was noted by Justice D Biswas of the Guwahati High Court in the case of Col. Jagmohan Singh and others Vs The State of Manipur & Others<sup>12</sup>, that there were many procedural irregularities and that the actions were in violation of procedural law in force in India, such as the need for a female constable at time of arrest, no filing of FIR etc. There exist also other factual irregularities that causes one to have suspicions regarding the genuineness of the supposed encounter. Manorama's brother reported her body to the Iribung police station on July 12, 2004, when it was discovered, and an FIR was registered. The Manipur government swiftly appointed an Inquiry Commission amid protests, with the mandate to look into the circumstances surrounding Manorama's murder and suggest measures. But the Assam Rifles, who were involved in the incident, consistently impeded the investigation by denying summonses and claiming security concerns. The Assam Rifles filed the abovementioned case with the Gauhati High Court contesting the legitimacy of the inquiry under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, despite forensic evidence pointing to rape.<sup>13</sup> However, the report, which made it clear that the encounter was “fake” and that there was evidence of sexual assault, was submitted by the Judicial Inquiry Commission to the Supreme Court in 2014 as part of the EEVFAM case<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> AIR 2006 GAUHATI 33

<sup>13</sup> *‘These Fellows Must Be Eliminated’: Relentless Violence and Impunity in Manipur: III. The Killing of Thangjam Manorama Devi*, [https://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/india0908/3.htm#\\_ftnref71](https://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/india0908/3.htm#_ftnref71) [Accessed 11 Mar. 2024].

<sup>14</sup> *The State of Encounter Killings in India*, ACHR, (2018)



- ii) One of the most recent cases of an encounter killings was that which occurred in 2019 in Hyderabad. This is also one of the major factors behind the conduct of this research as apart from the actions by the police themselves, what is more concerning is the reaction by the public. The facts briefly of the incident are that four men raped and burnt a 26-year-old veterinary physician in Hyderabad. The state government had to bear the brunt of the public's extreme feelings about rape and issues pertaining to women's protection. State and federal police forces were criticised by the general public in addition to opposition political figures. The four defendants were all executed by the police on December 6, 2019 in an encounter. The police claim that the encounter occurred when the accused were brought to the scene of the crime in order to rebuild it and gain a better knowledge of the case, where the accused attempted to harm police officers in order to escape their custody. The accused was shot by the police, resulting in their death, while they were gaining possession of him. It was not only the public that applauded the police officers' actions, but celebrities and politicians also commended the killings. It is almost understandable as they were the accused in a brutal and horrific rape and murder case. However, it can never be truly known whether they truly were the perpetrators after all. There were many conspiracy theories that started piling up after the incident, where it was revealed that the victims of this 'encounter killing' may not have been the actual criminals. The truth can now never be found out because of the actions of the policemen, that resulted in a gross violation of the rule of law, principles of natural justice and various procedural laws to be followed by authorities. Soon after the incident, human rights advocates strongly objected and filed Public interest litigations as well seeking for an independent judicial inquiry to be made, and the Supreme Court thereafter appointed the Justice VS Sirpurkar Commission to look into the four men's deaths. The extensive report of the Commission spanning 387 pages that was released in 2021 state that the incident was staged, the accused were killed, and that the police officers implicated must face criminal charges. Numerous issues have been brought forth by the panel, including the non-existence of any eyewitness apart from the police themselves, the non-adherence by the police to enforcement protocols and whether they were cautioned by senior officers. On the recommendation of the commission, the

Supreme court asked the Telangana High Court to consider the case after reviewing all of the evidence and hearing all the parties in question<sup>15</sup>.

What is more concerning in this case is the reaction of the society to this gross violation of law, where these policemen themselves acted the way criminals do. Instead of criticizing the supposed encounter and calling for action and inquiry against these officers, they were commended, even by the media for the 'justice' brought about by them. This incident truly highlights the need to bring into light the illegality of extrajudicial killings so as to educate the public, whose support acts as one of the primary reasons that such killings continue and increase on such a large scale.

### **IMPLICATIONS ON NATURAL JUSTICE**

One of the far-reaching and most heartbreaking consequences of encounter killings is the blatant impacts on the principles of natural justice. Even though these ideas are not codified anywhere exactly, India has since independence practiced them. The three principles of natural justice are rule of law, audi alteram partem and the rule against bias. Of these, extrajudicial killings have a direct impact on the former two which is further analysed in detail below.

#### **1) Rule of law**

The concept of rule of law, in layman terms, is that law is supreme, and above all else and that no one is above the law. Every person, whether a commoner or the President of the country is subject to the law and cannot go over it to do any action. Extrajudicial executions threaten the legitimacy of legal authorities and the rule of law. In a democratic society that keeps the rule of law, every individual and every entity is bound by the same laws and protections. However, when state actors or law enforcement agencies conduct extrajudicial executions without facing any repercussions, it undermines democratic rule and fosters a culture of lawlessness by sending the message that some individuals or groups are beyond

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<sup>15</sup> Kumar, S, *Cops have right to be heard: HC on encounter*, The Times of India, 28 Dec 2023, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/telangana-hc-upholds-rights-of-police-officers-in-encounter-case/articleshow/106334878.cms>

the law and need not be held accountable. The procedural laws of the country clearly lay out how the arrest and conviction of an accused person must be carried out. The FIR must be registered, due and proper investigation must be done, the arrested person must be brought before a court of law and finally he must be given a chance to be heard. The policemen responsible for encounter killings overlook the supremacy of these laws and also the laws that give basic human rights to people when they take matters into their own hands. The lack of impunity in Indian society also makes one wonder whether the rule of law is just an ideal situation and not a principle that must be paid heed to.

## 2) Audi Alteram Partem

Audi alteram partem, which translates to "hear both sides," is the fundamental tenet of the accused's defence during the legal process. If the accused is denied the right to represent themselves in court, the possibility that they are innocent of the offense for which they are being tried cannot be proved. In that case, they stand to lose due to the wrongdoing of others. The principle of audi alteram partem gives that everyone will be entitled to a hearing, and all accused parties will appear before the court for a fair trial. However, killing a defendant before a fair trial would mean violating the accused's fundamental rights guaranteed by the Indian Constitution and making a mockery of the legal system's due process<sup>16</sup>. Extrajudicial killings thus subvert the concept that everyone deserves a fair trial, no matter how atrocious the crime. The police officers have no jurisdiction to take justice into their own hands. The principles of equitable treatment for all citizens are compromised when offenders are granted a fair trial. When the public accepts extrajudicial killings and provides authorities with more possibilities to carry out such atrocities, the cornerstones of justice in a society are undermined.

## CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS

India ratified a written constitution on January 26, 1950, with a preamble that guarantees everyone's right to privacy, liberty, and dignity as well as freedom of speech and religion. It also guarantees equality of opportunity in employment.

The Constitution of India under article 22 guarantees certain special fundamental rights to prisoners and accused persons, wherein an arrested person must be brought before a magistrate

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<sup>16</sup> Harsh Nayak, *Extra-Judicial Killing : Injustice done in the Name of Instant Justice*, SCC Online (2021)

within 24 hours of his/her arrest<sup>17</sup>. Apart from this, they also have the right to be represented by an advocate of their choice. Nowhere in the constitution are there special safeguards for special categories of people, except for in these provisions where prisoners and those accused of crimes are given special protection. This could be because of how the society perceives such people. The author is convinced that such safeguards were kept in place to protect the accused from unlawful reactions from the public or even authorities and any arbitrary actions against him. Even in the Constitutional Assembly debates, it was stated by the Drafting Committee Chairman that the proposed Draft Article 22 transformed the existing legal protections for inmates into fundamental rights, shielding individual freedom from unjust measures. This provision was brought about because the protection against arbitrary arrest was removed from article 21 which originally provided for the same.

Police officers are in direct violation of these fundamental rights of arrested persons by going outside the procedure established by law. Another fundamental constitutional provision that is of the utmost importance in India is Article 21, which gives the right to life and personal liberty. The right to life as propounded by various judicial decisions is inclusive of several other basic rights inherent to every human such as the right to health, right to privacy, right to live with dignity etc. This right to life and personal liberty is assured to all persons, there has been no differentiation made between normal citizens and arrest/accused persons. When the authorities who carry out fake encounter killings do such acts, they are arbitrarily depriving these persons of their personal liberty recognized in the Constitution.

### **JUDICIAL DECISIONS**

NHRC v. State of Gujarat<sup>18</sup>: Extrajudicial executions, the main incident in this case, took place against the backdrop of the 2002 Gujarati riots. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) was required by the Supreme Court to conduct a comprehensive investigation and to propose appropriate sanctions.

Extra Judicial Execution Victim Families Association (EEVFAM) v. Union of India<sup>19</sup>: This case centred on the situation in Manipur as there was a high number of extrajudicial killings and

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<sup>17</sup> The Constitution of India, 1950

<sup>18</sup> National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) v. State of Gujarat, (2009) 6 SCC 767

<sup>19</sup> Extra Judicial Execution Victim Families Association (EEVFAM) v. Union of India, (2016) 3 SCC 616

fake encounters that took place here. By directing an unbiased investigation into every case, the Supreme Court has emphasized the necessity for to make accountable those responsible for alleged extrajudicial murders and award appropriate punishments for their acts.

The court concluded in the *E. P. Royappa vs State of Tamil Nadu*<sup>20</sup> case that the Indian Constitution's Article 14 is violated by the state's arbitrary actions. The right to legal protection is violated when authorities conduct an encounter without a valid reason. Various media reports claim that these interactions are not directed against dangerous offenders but rather violate the right of the weaker and less fortunate members of society to live their lives freely. According to reports, since May 2017, encounters have taken place in Uttar Pradesh, impacting Muslims who are a minority and other underprivileged regions of the nation.

## **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

The study on extrajudicial executions in India offers a thorough examination of a gravely alarming problem that jeopardizes human rights, democratic governance, and the rule of law.

**Violation of Fundamental Rights:** Extrajudicial executions are against the Indian Constitution's guarantees of fundamental rights, including the right to life and personal liberty found in Article 21. Law enforcement organizations violate natural justice principles and deprive accused individuals their access to a fair trial by circumventing established legal procedures.

**Danger to the Rule of Law:** By encouraging a culture of lawlessness and signalling impunity for state actors, the frequency of extrajudicial executions threatens the rule of law.

**The society's view and approval:** Extrajudicial killings continue because of public acceptability and even glorification, even in spite of constitutional protections against them. The public's support for such measures, motivated by ideas of quick justice, is a reflection of a lack of knowledge of the fundamentals of the rule of law and natural justice.

**Need for Regulatory control and impunity:** To stop extrajudicial executions and preserve the rule of law, strict regulation and accountability procedures are desperately needed. Law enforcement organizations must be held responsible for their acts via independent investigations and judicial scrutiny, and current legislative frameworks must be reinforced.

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<sup>20</sup> *E. P. Royappa vs State Of Tamil Nadu & Anr*, [1974] AIR 555

To sum up, the extrajudicial murders problem in India poses a serious threat to the values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. A multifaceted strategy, including judicial scrutiny, public awareness initiatives, and legal amendments, is needed to address this issue. India may go closer to upholding its constitutional commitment to justice, equality, and human dignity by realizing the seriousness of the issue and implementing effective solutions.