

## **Role and Relevance of Zoological Gardens in Contemporary Times: Case Study from Delhi and Imphal Zoo**

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**Abstract:** Zoological gardens have long been the rendezvous of people with wildlife in a safe and secure manner. The Vienna Zoo, part of the imperial summer residence of Schönbrunn, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was founded in 1752 and claims to be the world's oldest Zoo. Since then, nations around the world have created Zoological Gardens, mainly in urban areas, for their citizens to be thrilled by being able to view the wildlife. However of late, with greater awareness on animal rights and much emphasis on environmental ethics, the relevance and validity of zoos calls for greater academic enquiry. The emergence of satellite television, broadcasting wildlife related documentaries since the 1980s and Internet broadcasting of high definition wildlife videos since the 1990s further questions the educational value of zoological gardens in contemporary times. There is thus a need to analyse the benefits derived from the zoos in the present day in order to understand their relevance and requirement in the 21st century. This research contribution attempts to identify and evaluate the educational benefits of zoological gardens by carrying out detailed case studies of Delhi and Imphal Zoo. We show how while zoos are visited by large number of individuals, they serve a greater recreational purpose than educational thus calling for innovative interventions in their management.

**Keyword:** animal rights, environmental ethics, education, zoological gardens.