INDIAN JOURNAL OF LEGAL REVIEW

VOLUME 5 AND ISSUE 14 OF 2025

INSTITUTE OF LEGAL EDUCATION

INDIAN JOURNAL OF LEGAL REVIEW

APIS – 3920 – 0001 | ISSN - 2583-2344

(Open Access Journal)

Journal's Home Page – https://ijlr.iledu.in/

Journal's Editorial Page - https://ijlr.iledu.in/editorial-board/

Volume 5 and Issue 14 of 2025 (Access Full Issue on - https://ijlr.iledu.in/volume-5-and-issue-14-of-2025/)

Publisher

Prasanna S,

Chairman of Institute of Legal Education

No. 08, Arul Nagar, Seera Thoppu,

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INDIAN JOURNAL OF LEGAL REVIEW [IJLR – IF SCORE – 7.58]

VOLUME 5 AND ISSUE 14 OF 2025

APIS – 3920 - 0001 *(and)* ISSN - 2583-2344

Published by

Institute of Legal Education

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AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON OIL SPILL AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1958

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BEST CITATION - ADULYANATHESHWARAN, AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON OIL SPILL AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1958, *INDIAN JOURNAL OF LEGAL REVIEW (IJLR),* 5 (14) OF 2025, PG. 96-122, APIS – 3920 – 0001 & ISSN - 2583-2344. DOI – https://doi.org/10.65393/DBZS6278

ABSTRACT :-

Oil spills are the accidental release of petroleum into the environment, often in oceans or other bodies of water. This study examines the causes, effects, and prevention of oil spills in India. **Objectives:** This empirical study aims to investigate the multifaceted environmental impacts of oil spills stemming from merchant shipping activities and to critically assess the effectiveness of regulatory frameworks, with a historical lens on the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, and its evolution into current Indian maritime law, in mitigating these impacts. **Findings:** The study reveals that despite significant advancements in maritime safety and environmental regulations since the initial enactment of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, oil spills continue to pose a substantial threat to marine and coastal ecosystems. Empirical data from various spill incidents demonstrate severe long-term damage to biodiversity, including marine flora and fauna, and significant disruption to fishing, tourism, and other marine-dependent livelihoods. **Methodology:** A total of 200 sample respondents in the age group of 18-50 years were collected. The effects of oil spills can be far-reaching, and can include the death of marine life, the destruction of coastal ecosystems, and the contamination of drinking water. The study makes a number of recommendations for improving the prevention and response to oil spills in India. **Conclusion:** Oil spills from merchant shipping represent a continuing environmental hazard with profound and often irreversible consequences. While the evolution of Indian maritime law, building upon the groundwork of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, and incorporating international standards, has significantly improved the regulatory landscape, there remains a critical need for enhanced vigilance, proactive enforcement, and continuous investment in oil spill prevention and response mechanisms.

KEY WORDS : - Oil spill, Hydrocarbon, Natural disaster, Ecosystems, Contamination.

INTRODUCTION :-

Oil spills, the unintentional release of liquid petroleum hydrocarbons into the environment, particularly marine ecosystems, represent a significant and recurring environmental catastrophe. These incidents, often associated with human activities such as extraction, transportation, and storage of oil, inflict severe damage on ecological balance, marine biodiversity, and coastal economies. The catastrophic consequences of oil spills necessitate robust legal frameworks, proactive prevention strategies, and effective response mechanisms. This study aims to empirically examine the multifaceted impacts of oil spills on the environment, with a particular focus on the legislative provisions and implementation mechanisms within India, specifically referencing The Merchant Shipping Act, 1958. **Aim of The Merchant Shipping Act, 1958**

regarding Oil Spills: The Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 (MSA), as a comprehensive legislation governing merchant shipping in India, aims to foster the development and efficient maintenance of the Indian mercantile marine while safeguarding national interests. With respect to oil spills, the Act, particularly through its Part XIA: Prevention and Containment of Pollution of the Sea by Oil, provides the legal framework for: Prevention of Oil Pollution: This includes regulations concerning the discharge of oil and oily mixtures, mandatory maintenance of Oil Record Books, and provisions for oil reception facilities at Indian ports. Inspection and Control of Ships: The Act empowers authorities to inspect and control ships to ensure compliance with oil pollution prevention conventions. Factors Affecting the Environmental Impact of Oil Spills The severity and duration of an oil spill's environmental impact are influenced by a complex interplay of factors: Quantity and Type of Oil: Heavier oils (e.g., crude oil, bunker fuel) tend to persist longer and cause more physical smothering, while lighter oils (e.g., gasoline, diesel) are more volatile and acutely toxic. **Comparative Study: India vs. International Oil Spill Legislation** India's oil spill legislation, primarily anchored in the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, is largely aligned with international conventions. International Conventions: India is a signatory to major international conventions like MARPOL 73/78 (covering pollution by oil, noxious liquid substances, dangerous goods, sewage, garbage, and air pollution from ships), the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage (CLC) 1969, and the International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Oil Pollution Damage (FUND) 1971.

OBJECTIVES :-

- To examine the best technique to reduce the spread of oil and limit its effects
- To analyse the effectiveness of The Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 in preventing oil spills
- To examine whether significant oil spills results in a decline in overall marine biodiversity, which affects the stability and resilience of the entire ecosystem

REVIEW OF LITERATURE :-

Osuagwu, Eze Simpson; Olaifa, Eseoghene, 2018. The aim of the study is to examine the effects of oil spills on fish production in the Niger Delta of Nigeria from 1981–2015. Methodology adopted by the author is that Employed an estimable Cobb Douglas production function. **Asif, Zunaira; Chen, Zhi; An, Chunjiang; Dong, Jinxin, 2024.** The aim of the study is to critically overview the vulnerability of shorelines to oil spill impact and the implication of seasonal variations with the natural attenuation of oil. Methodology adopted by the author is that Comprehensive literature review of various monitoring techniques including GIS tools and remote sensing for tracking and mapping oil spills. **Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB)** in collaboration with scientific bodies like **NEERI**), **2011.** The aim of the study is to assess the environmental impact of oil spills on mangroves, sediments, and associated marine biota, as well as socio-economic impacts on local populations. Methodology adopted by the author is Ground surveys, transect-based surveys for mangroves, vegetation plots, sediment monitoring, and impact mapping (area of water with high concentrations, contamination levels, spatial and temporal mapping). **GESAMP. (1993).** The aim of the study is to provide an updated, comprehensive scientific assessment of the fate and effects of oil in the marine environment. Methodology adopted by the author is Synthesis of existing scientific literature, expert consensus, and data analysis from numerous research studies. Findings of the study is that the Oil causes acute toxicity, chronic sublethal effects, physical smothering, and long-term ecosystem disruption. The fate of oil depends on weathering processes (evaporation, dissolution, emulsification, biodegradation). Factors of the Type of oil, environmental conditions (temperature, wave action, currents), presence

of dispersants, ecosystem type, species sensitivity. Variables Hydrocarbon concentrations, species mortality rates, population decline, ecosystem recovery time, biodegradation rates. **Peterson, C. H., Rice, S. D., Short, J. W., Esler, D., Bodkin, J. L., Condon, F. B., & Peak, D. A. (2003).** The aim of the study is to assess the protracted ecological recovery and persistent impacts of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill over 14 years. Methodology adopted by the author is Long-term field monitoring, controlled experiments, data analysis of population dynamics, community structure, and food web interactions in affected areas. **National Research Council. (2003)** The aim of the study is to review and synthesize current knowledge on the sources, physical and chemical fates, and biological effects of petroleum in the marine environment. Methodology adopted by the author the Comprehensive review and synthesis of peer-reviewed scientific literature, expert workshops, and analysis of monitoring data. Findings of the study is Marine oil pollution originates from various sources (natural seeps, spills, urban runoff); its fate is governed by complex weathering processes; and it causes a spectrum of biological effects from molecular to ecosystem levels. **Teal, J. M., & Howarth, R. W. (1984)** The aim of the study is to review the physical, chemical, and biological processes governing oil's behavior and impact in marine environments. Methodology adopted by the author is Literature review and conceptual synthesis of early scientific understanding of oil spill dynamics. Findings of the study are Oil spreads, evaporates, disperses, emulsifies, oxidizes, and biodegrades; its toxic effects vary with oil type, concentration, and species. **Michel, J., & Fingas, M. F. (2016)** The aim of the study is to provide an updated perspective on the current state and future challenges in oil spill science and response technology. **Atlas, R. M., & Hazen, T. C. (2011).** The aim of the study is to compare the roles of natural biodegradation and bioremediation efforts in the context of major oil spills (*Exxon Valdez* and *Deepwater Horizon*). Methodology adopted by the author is Comparative analysis of scientific literature and data from two major spill events, focusing on microbial responses. **French, D. P. (2014).** The aim of the study is to detail the direct and indirect environmental consequences of oil spills on various marine and coastal habitats and biota. Methodology adopted by the author is Chapter-level synthesis of existing scientific knowledge and case studies on oil spill impacts. Findings of the study is that Impacts range from immediate mortality due to acute toxicity and smothering to long-term effects on reproduction, growth, and ecosystem function, particularly in sensitive habitats like mangroves and coral reefs. Factors affecting the study is Habitat type, life stage of organisms, oil concentration, duration of exposure, bioaccumulation potential. Variables of the study are Species mortality, reproductive impairment, growth rates, habitat degradation indices, bioaccumulation levels. **Wang, Z., & Fingas, M. F. (2003)** The aim of the study is to provide an understanding of oil spill identification techniques and the challenges associated with different remediation strategies through case studies. Methodology adopted by the author is Compilation of case studies, analytical chemistry techniques for oil fingerprinting, and evaluation of remediation approaches. **Committee on Understanding the Environmental Impacts of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. (2013)** The aim of the study is to provide an initial assessment of the environmental impacts of the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Methodology adopted by the author is Rapid assessment based on available scientific data, expert analysis, and early research findings post-spill. **McCain, B. B., et al. (1990)** The aim of the study is to document the pathological and microbiological effects of oil exposure on marine animals following the *Exxon Valdez* spill. Methodology adopted by the author is Necropsy, histopathology, chemical analysis of tissues, and microbiological culturing of affected animals (e.g., fish, birds, marine mammals). **IMO. (2011)**The aim of the study is

to guide states and industry on best practices and international conventions for preventing oil pollution from ships. Methodology adopted by the author is Compilation and interpretation of international maritime conventions (e.g., MARPOL Annex I), resolutions, and recommended operational procedures. **M'Gonigle, R. M., & Zacher, M. W. (1979)** The aim of the study is to analyze the political and legal challenges in establishing effective international regimes for controlling marine pollution from tanker shipping. Methodology adopted by the author is Historical and political-legal analysis of international negotiations, state interests, and the development of early maritime pollution conventions. **UNCLOS. (1982)** The aim of the study is to establish a comprehensive legal framework for all activities in the oceans and seas, including the prevention, reduction, and control of marine pollution. Methodology adopted by the author is international treaty negotiation and consensus-building among member states, codifying customary international law and developing new norms. **Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 (India)** The aim of the study is to regulate merchant shipping in India, including aspects related to safety of life at sea, maritime security, and prevention of marine pollution from ships. The methodology used by the author is legislative enactment by the Indian Parliament, incorporating international conventions (like MARPOL) into domestic law and providing for their enforcement. The findings of the study includes the Act, particularly its amended sections concerning pollution (e.g., Part XI-A), prohibits oil discharges, mandates pollution prevention equipment, requires oil spill contingency plans, and establishes penalties for violations. **Indian Coast Guard Act, 1978 (India).** The aim of the study is to constitute an armed force of the Union for ensuring the security of the maritime zones of India, including the protection of the marine environment and enforcement of maritime laws. The methodology used by the author is to legislative enactment defining the powers, duties, and functions of the Indian Coast Guard. The findings of the study includes empowering the Indian Coast Guard to conduct inspections, investigate pollution incidents, respond to spills, and prosecute offenders under relevant laws, including the Merchant Shipping Act. **Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986 (India)** The aim of the study is to provide for the protection and improvement of the environment and for matters connected therewith. The methodology used by the author is Legislative enactment providing broad powers to the Central Government to take all necessary measures for environmental protection. The findings of the study is that although general, it empowers the Central Government to set standards, issue directions, and take action for pollution prevention and control, including marine pollution, thus complementing the Merchant Shipping Act in a broader environmental context. **Liability for Oil Pollution Damage (International Conventions: CLC 1992, Fund 1992)** The aim of the study is to establish a uniform international regime of strict liability for shipowners and provide for compensation for oil pollution damage. The methodology used by the author is development and adoption of international conventions through IMO, leading to a two-tier compensation system. The findings of the study includes that CLC places strict liability on the shipowner for oil pollution damage up to a limit; the Fund Convention provides supplementary compensation when CLC limits are insufficient or the shipowner is unable to pay. India's adherence to these enhances compensation mechanisms. The factors affecting the study are flag state adherence, financial capacity of shipowners/insurers, definition of pollution damage, claims process efficiency. The variables used are compensation amounts paid, number of claims, speed of claims processing, effectiveness of financial security requirements. **National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan (NOS-DCP), India.** The aim of the study is to establish a structured response

mechanism for combating oil spills in Indian waters, defining roles, responsibilities, and operational procedures. The methodology used by the author is a strategic planning document developed by the Indian Coast Guard (the Central Coordinating Authority), involving consultation with various stakeholders. The findings of the study outlines a tiered response system, assigns responsibilities to agencies (Coast Guard, ports, ONGC, etc.), details communication protocols, and specifies equipment deployment for oil spill response. Regular exercises are conducted. The factors of the study includes Inter-agency coordination, availability of trained personnel, adequate response equipment, regular drills and exercises, and financial provisions. The variables used are response time to spills, efficiency of cleanup operations, damage mitigation, frequency and outcomes of drills. **Dhillon, J. S. (2013)** The aim of the study is to analyze the challenges and effectiveness of international legal frameworks in controlling marine pollution, particularly within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The methodology used by the author is legal research, analysis of international treaties, customary law, and state practices concerning marine pollution in national jurisdictions. The findings include balancing state sovereignty with international obligations for environmental protection in the EEZ remains a challenge; enforcement mechanisms require strengthening, especially for vessel-source pollution. The factors are interpretations of UNCLOS provisions, enforcement capabilities of coastal states, political will for prosecution, economic development interests. The variables used are number of pollution incidents in EEZ, effectiveness of surveillance, prosecution rates, international cooperation in enforcement. **Chandrashekar, H. (2008)** The aim of the study is to provide an overview of the key aspects of maritime law in India. The methodology used by the author is legal analysis of Indian statutes, judicial precedents, and international conventions adopted by India. The findings of the study includes India's maritime legal framework is largely based on English common law principles and international conventions; the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, is central, covering various aspects from registration to pollution. The factors affecting the study are influence of international conventions, judicial interpretation, legislative updates, administrative efficiency in implementing laws. The variables used are the number of maritime cases, consistency of judicial decisions, legislative amendments, compliance with international standards. **IMO. (2002)** The aim of the study is to provide guidance on practical aspects of oil spill response techniques and strategies. The methodology used by the author is compilation of best practices, operational guidelines, and technological information for oil spill combating, developed by expert groups. The findings of the study details various response options including mechanical containment and recovery, dispersant application, in-situ burning, and shoreline cleanup. Emphasizes the importance of preparedness and rapid response. The factors of the study are type of oil, weather conditions, availability of equipment and trained personnel, environmental sensitivity of affected area, and safety considerations. The variables used are oil recovery rates, effectiveness of dispersants, duration of cleanup operations, waste generation, environmental impact of response methods. **Fingas, M. F. (2011)** The aim of the study is to provide a fundamental understanding of oil spill cleanup technologies and their applications. The methodology used here is a comprehensive textbook reviewing the scientific principles and practical aspects of various oil spill response techniques. The findings of the study covers topics from oil properties and weathering to specific cleanup methods (booms, skimmers, absorbents, dispersants, bioremediation) and waste management. Highlights the need for a multi-faceted approach. The factors are physical properties of oil, environmental conditions, logistical challenges, cost-effectiveness, regulatory approvals for dispersant use. The

variables of the study are oil removal efficiency, equipment deployment speed, personnel safety, volume of recovered oil/emulsion. **Baker, J. M., Clark, R. B., & Kingston, P. F. (2008)** The aim of the study is to provide a comprehensive overview of marine pollution from various sources, including oil, and their impacts and management. The methodology used here is general scientific and environmental textbook synthesizing knowledge on marine pollutants, their fates, effects, and remediation. The findings discusses the sources, types, and fates of marine pollutants, including oil. Explores the ecological impacts and various strategies for pollution control and remediation, emphasizing prevention. The factors are pollution source, pollutant characteristics, ecosystem resilience, regulatory frameworks, technological solutions. The variables are pollutant concentrations, toxicity levels, ecosystem health indicators, success rates of remediation. **NRC. (2005)** The aim of the study is to review the science and technology behind oil spill response, assess the effectiveness of various techniques, and recommend improvements. The methodology used here is independent expert committee review, scientific literature analysis, and input from government, industry, and academia. The findings says that while significant advancements have been made, challenges remain in responding to large, complex spills, especially in harsh environments. Emphasizes the need for robust research, development, and strategic planning. The factors are research and development investment, training programs, inter-agency coordination, decision-making tools, environmental conditions. The variables are response capability, effectiveness of new technologies, lessons learned from past spills, preparedness levels. **ITOPF. (Various Publications)** The aim of the study is to provide practical, technical information on oil spill response, effects, and compensation to assist industry, governments, and responders. The methodology used here is based on extensive experience from responding to numerous oil spills globally, data collection, and analysis of spill incidents. The findings cover topics from oil behavior and effects on specific resources to various cleanup techniques, waste management, and practical considerations for response operations. Emphasizes tailored responses for different spill scenarios. The factors are Oil type, environmental conditions, resource availability, logistical constraints, safety, cost-benefit analysis of response options. The variables are spill volume, affected area, resource damage, cleanup costs, effectiveness of various response options in different contexts. **Short, J. W., & Harris, P. M. (1996)** The aim of the study is to summarize the environmental and economic consequences of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. The methodology used here is synthesis of scientific and economic assessments conducted after the *Exxon Valdez* spill. The findings include the spill caused significant damage to commercial fisheries (salmon, herring), subsistence livelihoods, and recreational activities, leading to substantial economic losses and social disruption beyond direct cleanup costs. The factors are dependence on marine resources, tourist economy, cultural practices, effectiveness of cleanup on resource recovery. The variables are Fishery revenues, tourism numbers, employment rates in affected sectors, compensation claims, psychological impacts. **Etkin, D. S. (2009)** The aim of the study is to analyze and quantify the various direct and indirect costs associated with oil spills and their broader socio-economic impacts. The methodology used here is comprehensive data compilation and economic analysis of historical oil spill costs, including cleanup, resource damage, and indirect economic losses. The findings are oil spill costs are multifaceted, including cleanup, natural resource damages, economic losses (fisheries, tourism), litigation, and long-term societal impacts like health effects and reduced quality of life. Costs can far exceed direct cleanup expenses. The factors are spill size, location, oil type, response effectiveness, affected economic sectors, legal framework for compensation. The variables are

cleanup expenditures, lost income, property devaluation, legal costs, health impacts, social disruption indices. **Michel, J., & Rutherford, P. (2009)** The aim of the study is to develop a conceptual model for assessing the socioeconomic vulnerability of coastal communities to oil spill impacts. The methodology used here is Development of a theoretical framework based on social science principles and disaster management concepts, proposing indicators of vulnerability. The findings includes vulnerability to oil spills as a function of exposure (likelihood of spill), sensitivity (degree of impact), and adaptive capacity (ability to cope and recover). Economic dependence on marine resources increases sensitivity. The factors are Economic reliance on marine industries, population density, community infrastructure, governance capacity, social cohesion. The variables are income from fishing/tourism, poverty rates, access to emergency services, community participation in planning. **Khan, S., & Ahmad, N. (2012)** The aim of the study is to assess the risks and patterns of oil pollution from maritime transport in Indian waters. The methodology used here is Analysis of shipping traffic data, port statistics, incident reports, and existing regulatory frameworks concerning oil pollution in India. The findings say that Indian waters face significant risk of oil pollution due to high shipping traffic, offshore oil activities, and proximity to major shipping lanes. Highlights the importance of robust regulatory enforcement and preparedness. The factors are volume of maritime traffic, types of vessels, age of fleet, effectiveness of port state control, national contingency planning. The variables are number of oil spill incidents, volume of oil spilled, compliance rates of vessels, risk mapping of sensitive areas. **Sharma, B. M. (2010).** The aim of the study is to critically analyze the effectiveness and shortcomings of India's legal framework for marine pollution prevention and control. The methodology used here is legal scholarship, review of Indian environmental laws (including Merchant Shipping Act, EPA), judicial pronouncements, and international obligations. The findings say that while India has a comprehensive legal framework (incorporating international conventions), challenges remain in terms of effective enforcement, inter-agency coordination, technical capacity, and public participation for achieving desired pollution control outcomes. The factors are gaps in implementation, jurisdictional overlaps, resource limitations, awareness levels, political commitment. The variables are effectiveness of enforcement actions, prosecution success rates, compliance with pollution standards, public awareness and participation.

METHODOLOGY:

The data collected here mainly is secondary data and primary data includes the response collected .The research method followed here is empirical research. A total of 200 samples have been collected out of which all samples have been collected through *convenient* sampling. The tools used for the study includes SPSS(Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The variables are age, gender, educational qualification, place of residence, occupation.

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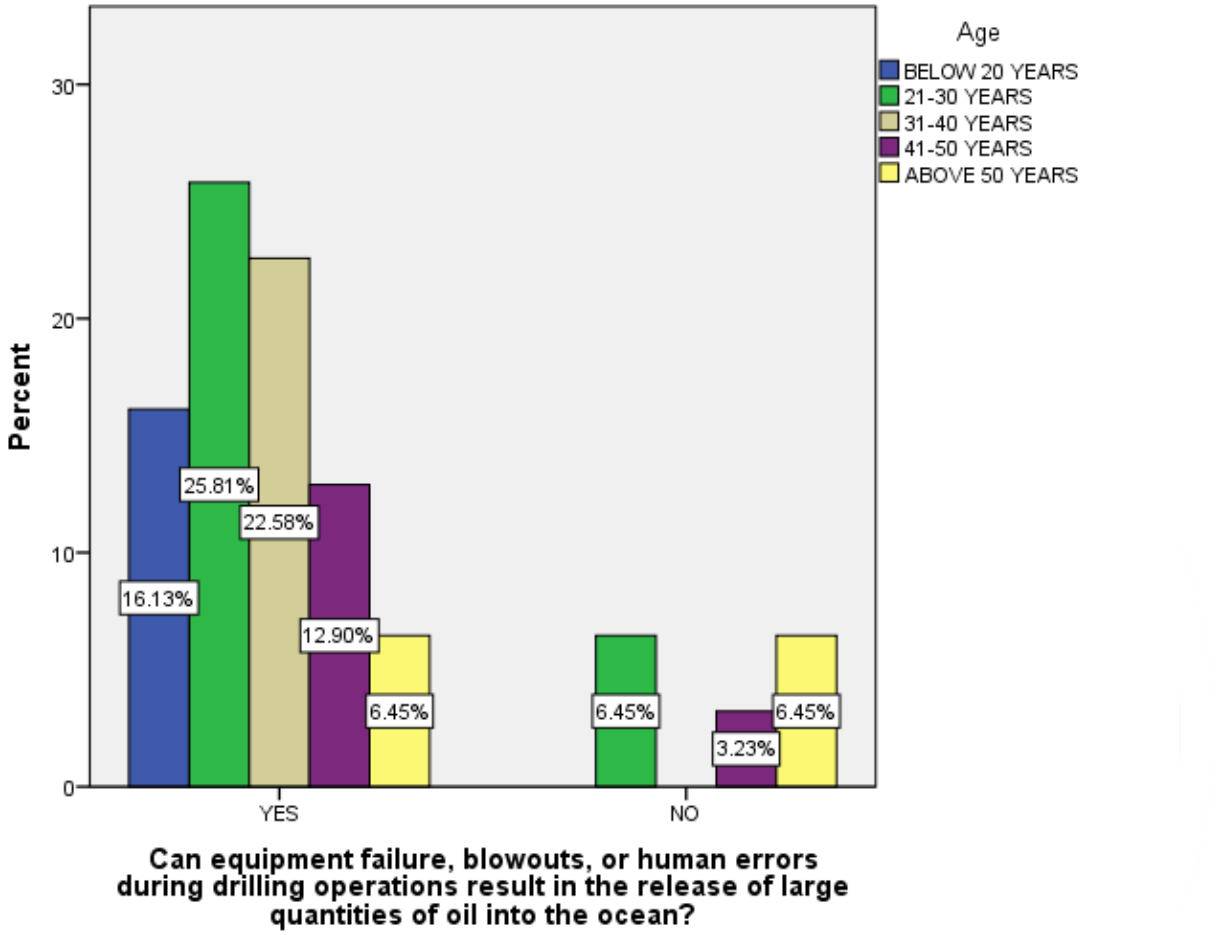
DATA ANALYSIS

FIGURE 1



LEGEND

This clustered bar graph represents the question, can equipment failure, blowouts, or human errors during drilling operations result in the release of large quantities of oil into the ocean and which is compared to the age of the respondents

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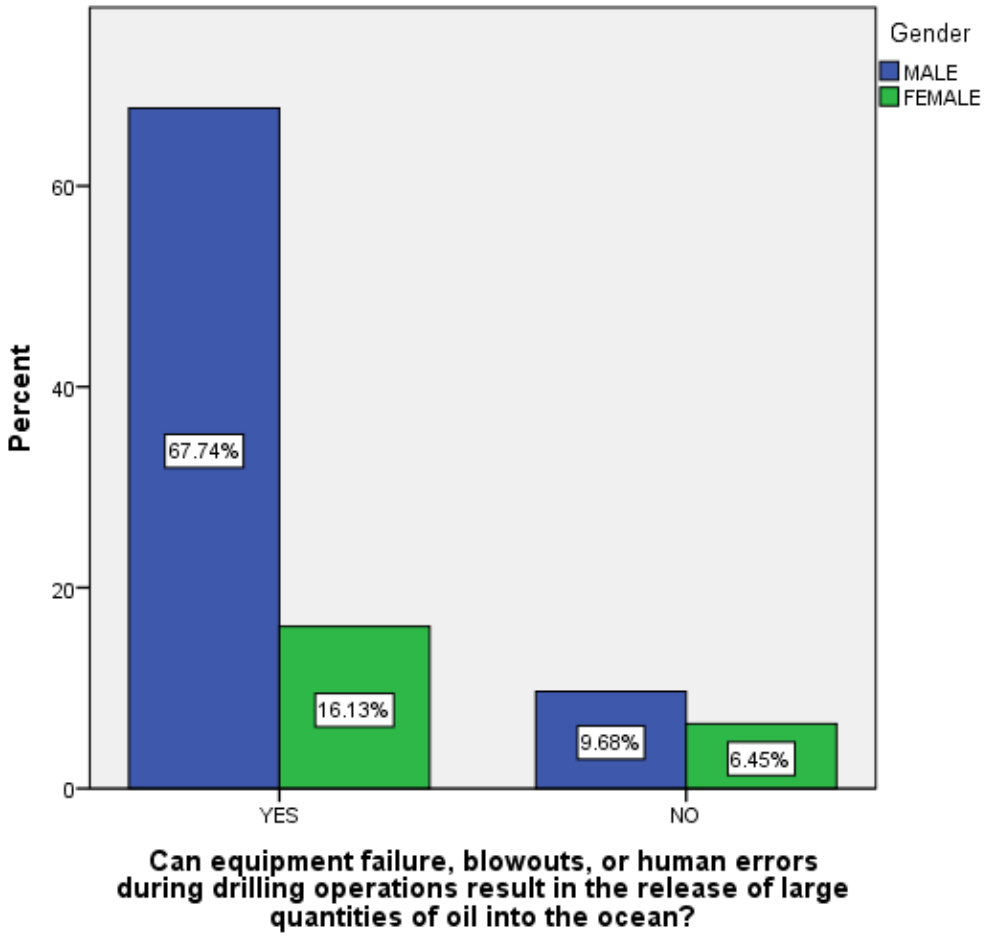
FIGURE 2



LEGEND

This clustered bar graph represents the question, can equipment failure, blowouts, or human errors during drilling operations result in the release of large quantities of oil into the ocean and which is compared to the gender of the respondents

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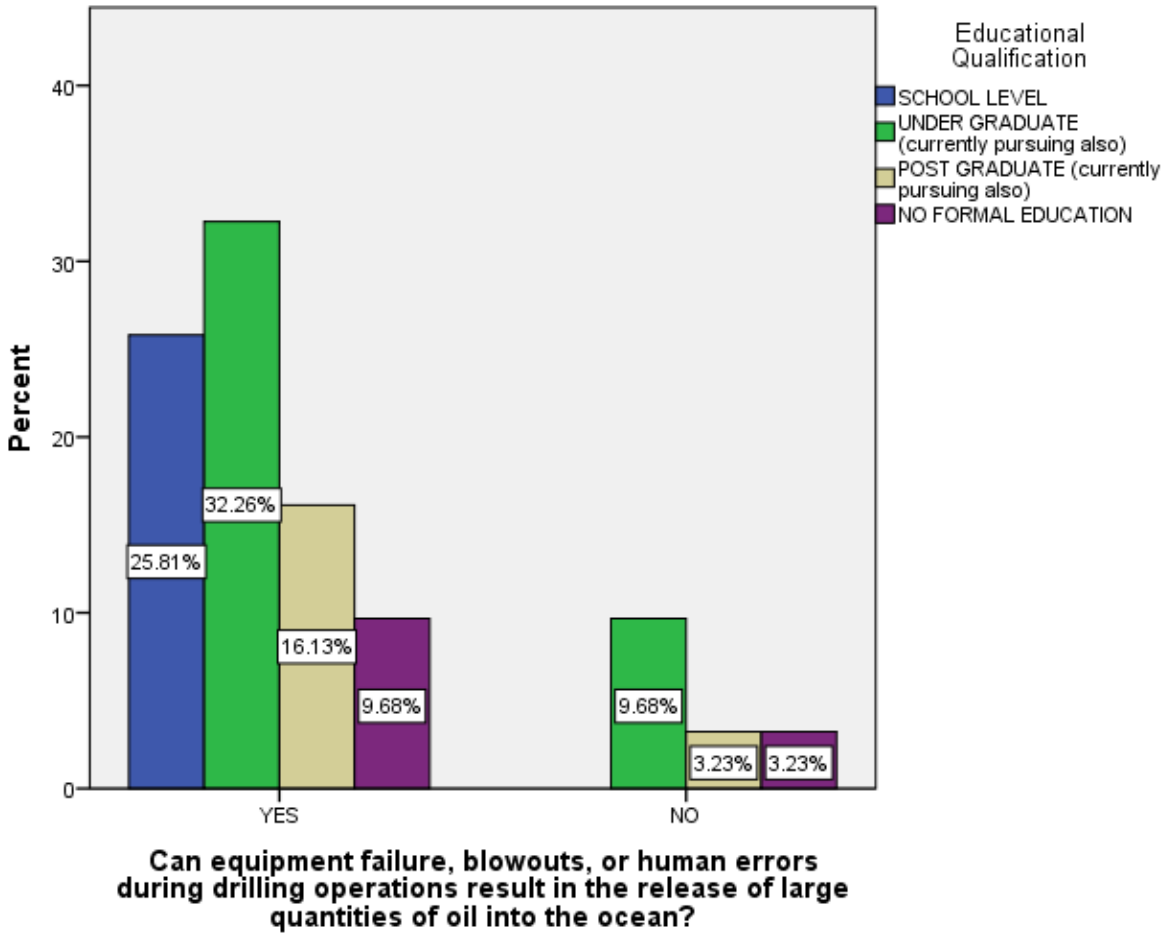
FIGURE 3



LEGEND

This clustered bar graph represents the question, can equipment failure, blowouts, or human errors during drilling operations result in the release of large quantities of oil into the ocean and which is compared to the educational qualification of the respondents

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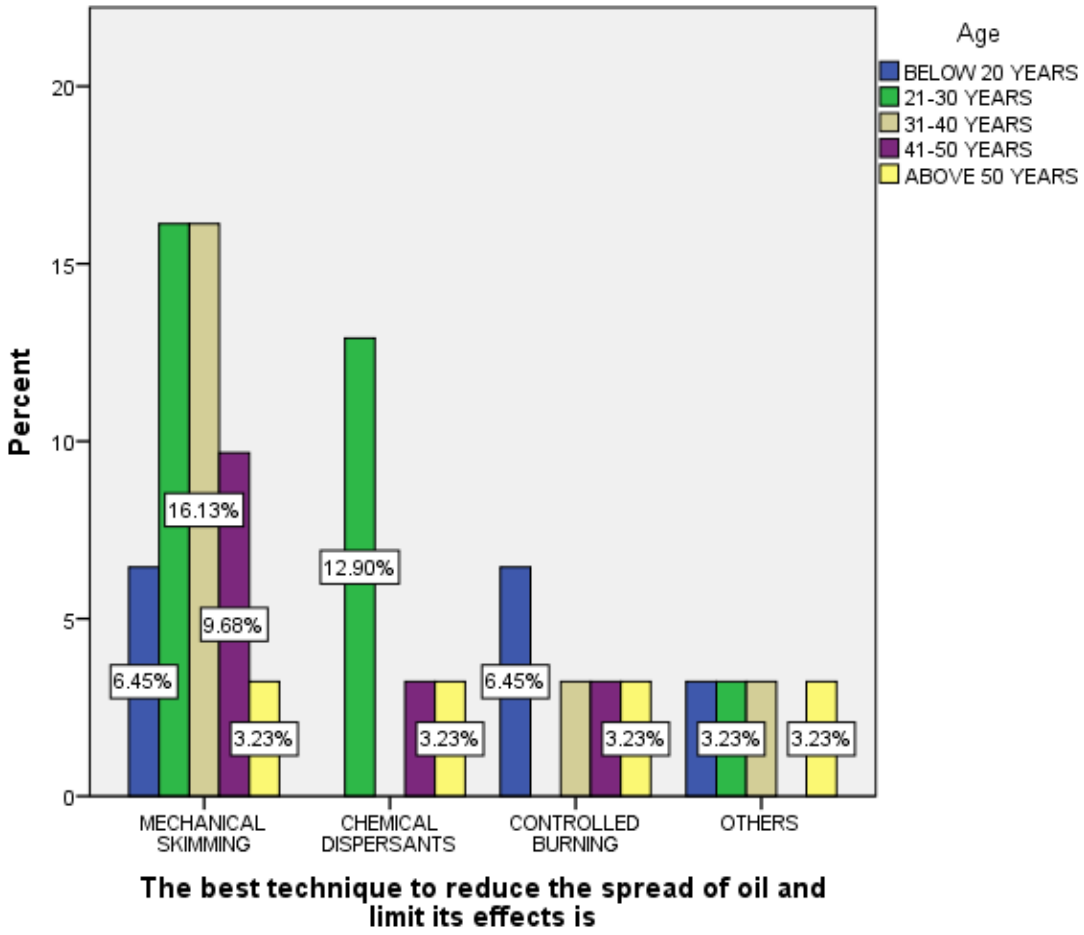
FIGURE 4



LEGEND

This clustered bar graph represents the question, the best technique to reduce the spread of oil and limit its effects is and which is compared to the age of the respondents

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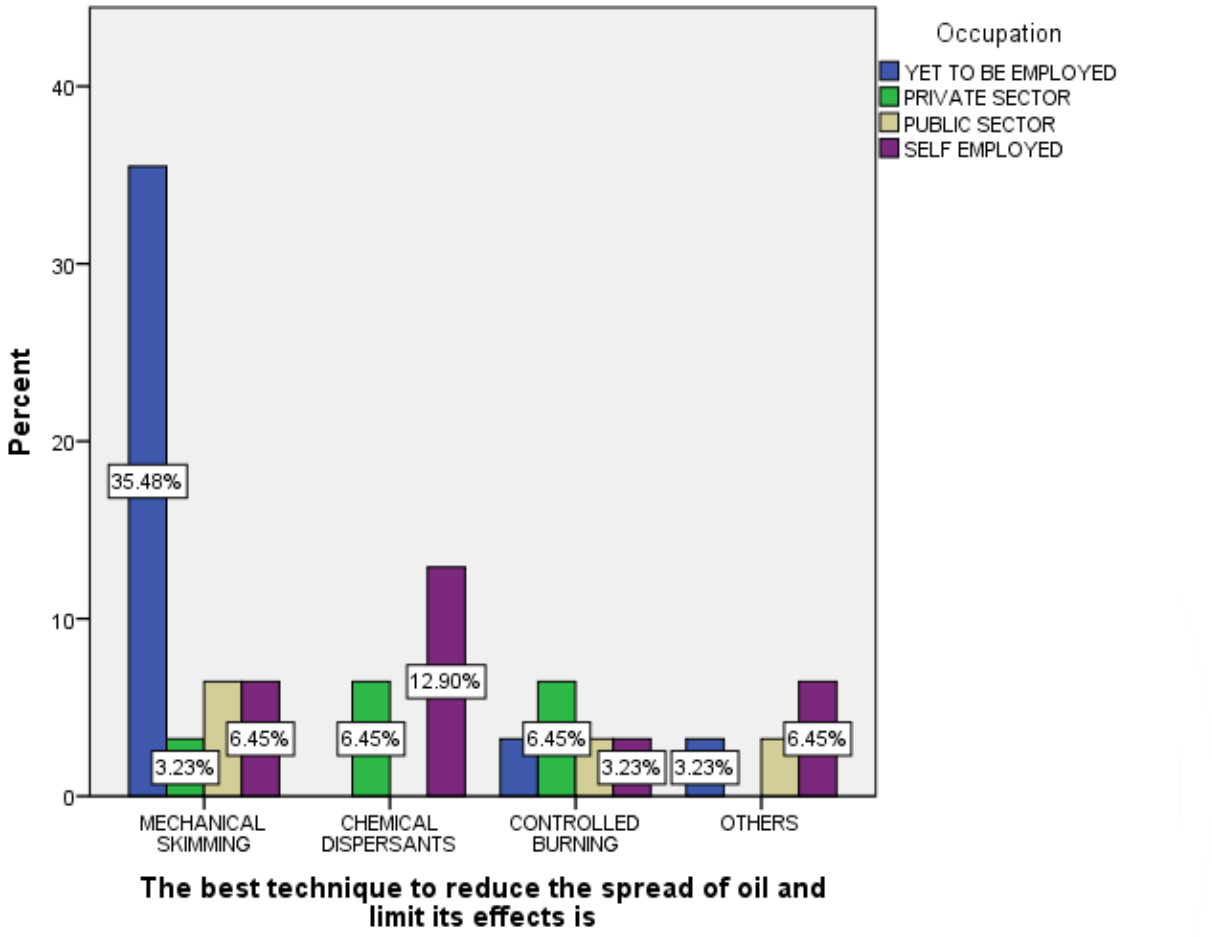
FIGURE 5



LEGEND

This clustered bar graph represents the question, the best technique to reduce the spread of oil and limit its effects is and which is compared to the occupation of the respondents

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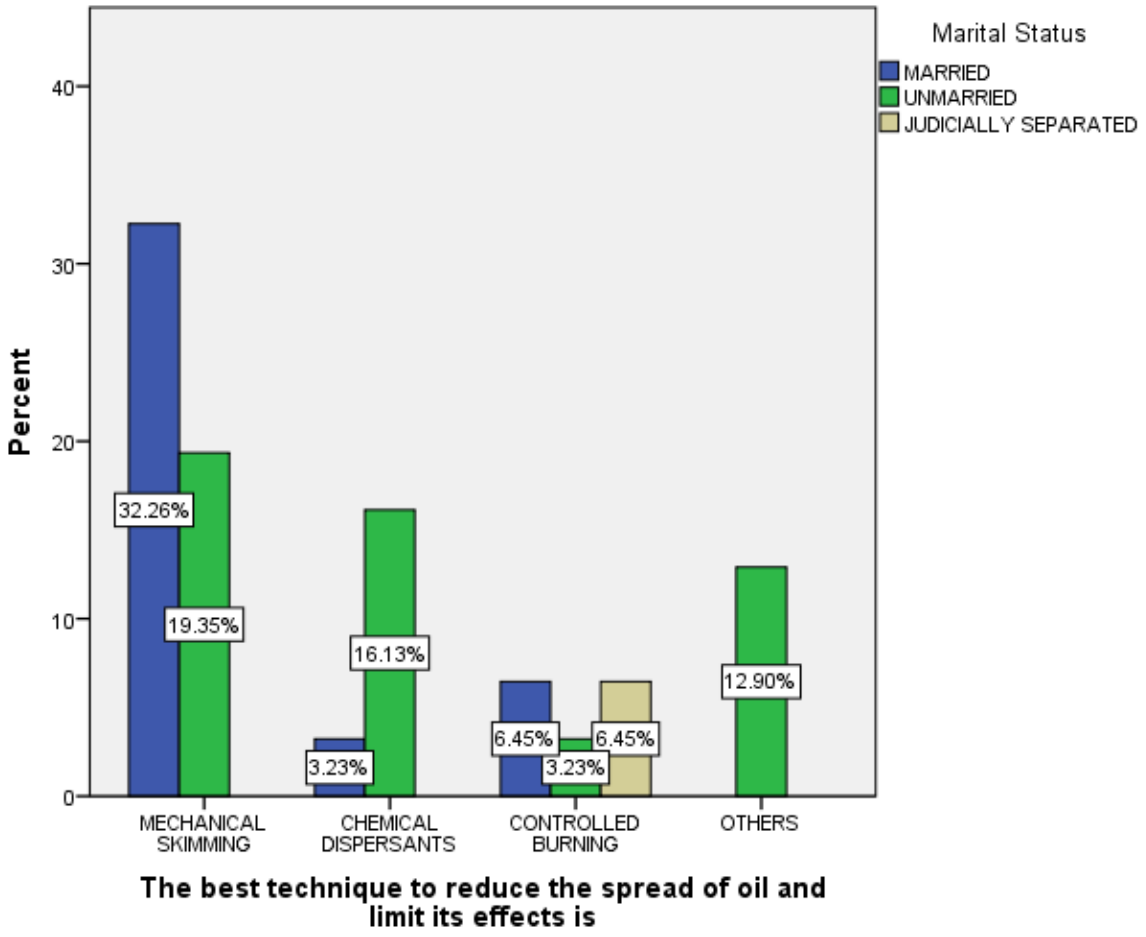
FIGURE 6



LEGEND

This clustered bar graph represents the question, the best technique to reduce the spread of oil and limit its effects is and which is compared to the marital status of the respondents

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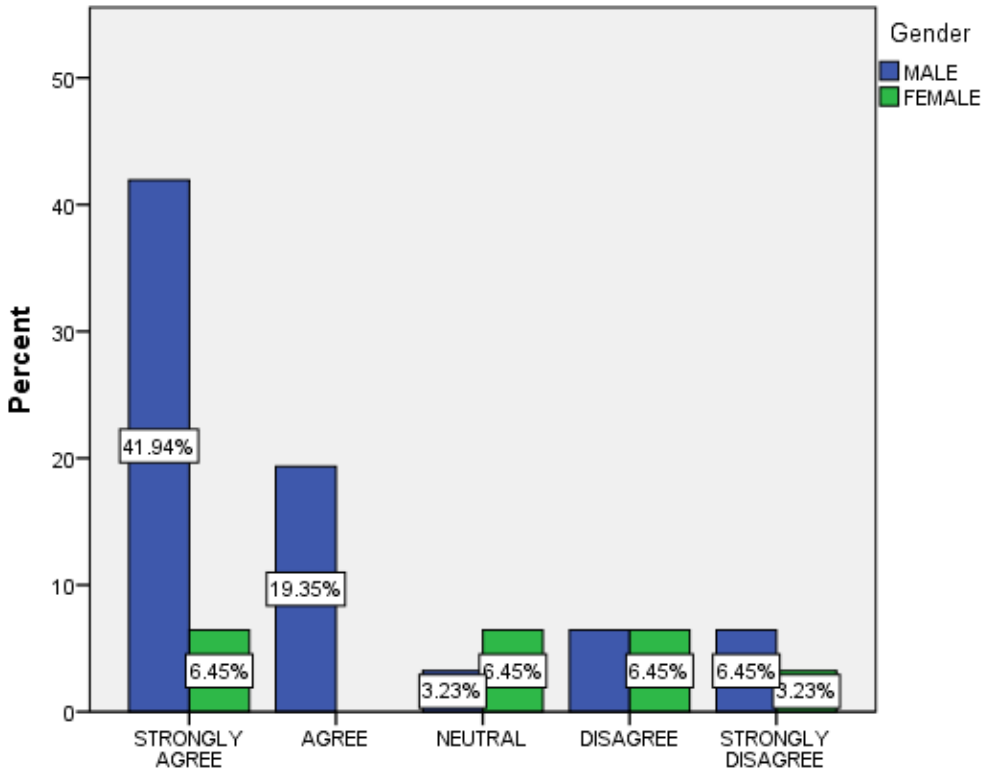
FIGURE 7



Collisions, groundings, or structural failures of tanker ships can lead to significant oil spills, contaminating large areas of water. This results in a decline in overall marine biodiversity, which affects the stability and resilience of the entire ecosystem.

LEGEND

This clustered bar graph represents the question, collisions, groundings, or structural failures of tanker ships can lead to significant oil spills, contaminating large areas of water. This results in a decline in overall marine biodiversity, which affects the stability and resilience of the entire ecosystem and which is compared to the gender of the respondents

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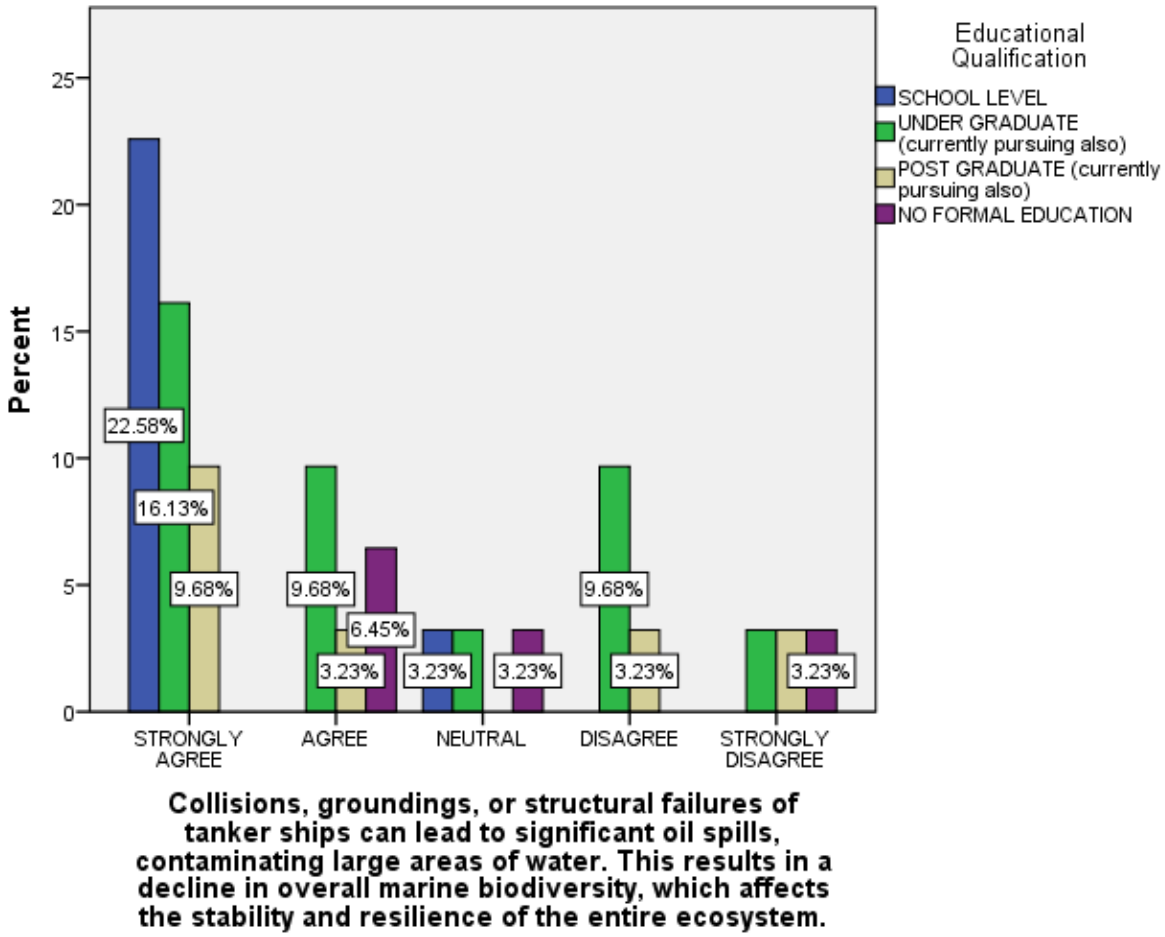
FIGURE 8



LEGEND

This clustered bar graph represents the question, collisions, groundings, or structural failures of tanker ships can lead to significant oil spills, contaminating large areas of water. This results in a decline in overall marine biodiversity, which affects the stability and resilience of the entire ecosystem and which is compared to the educational qualification of the respondents

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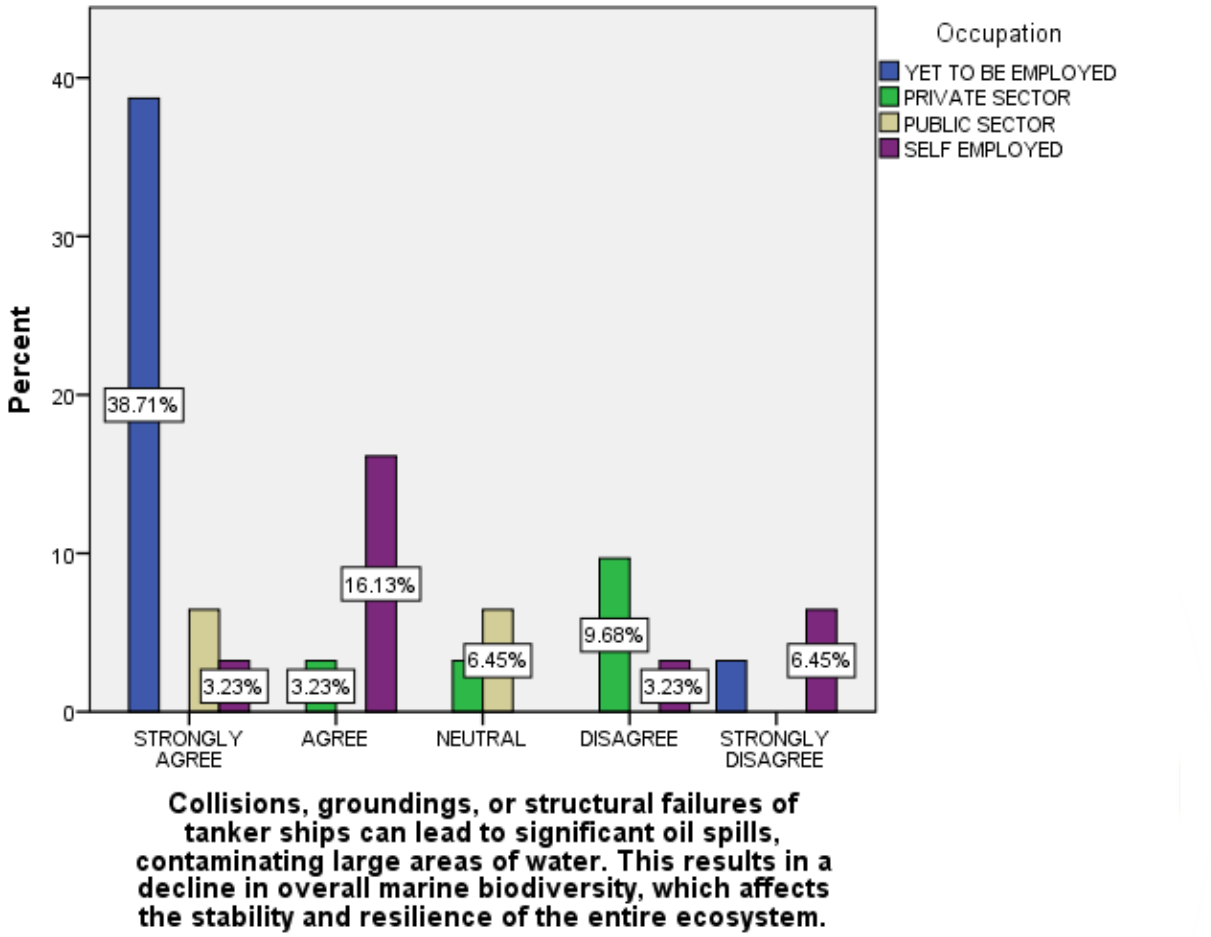
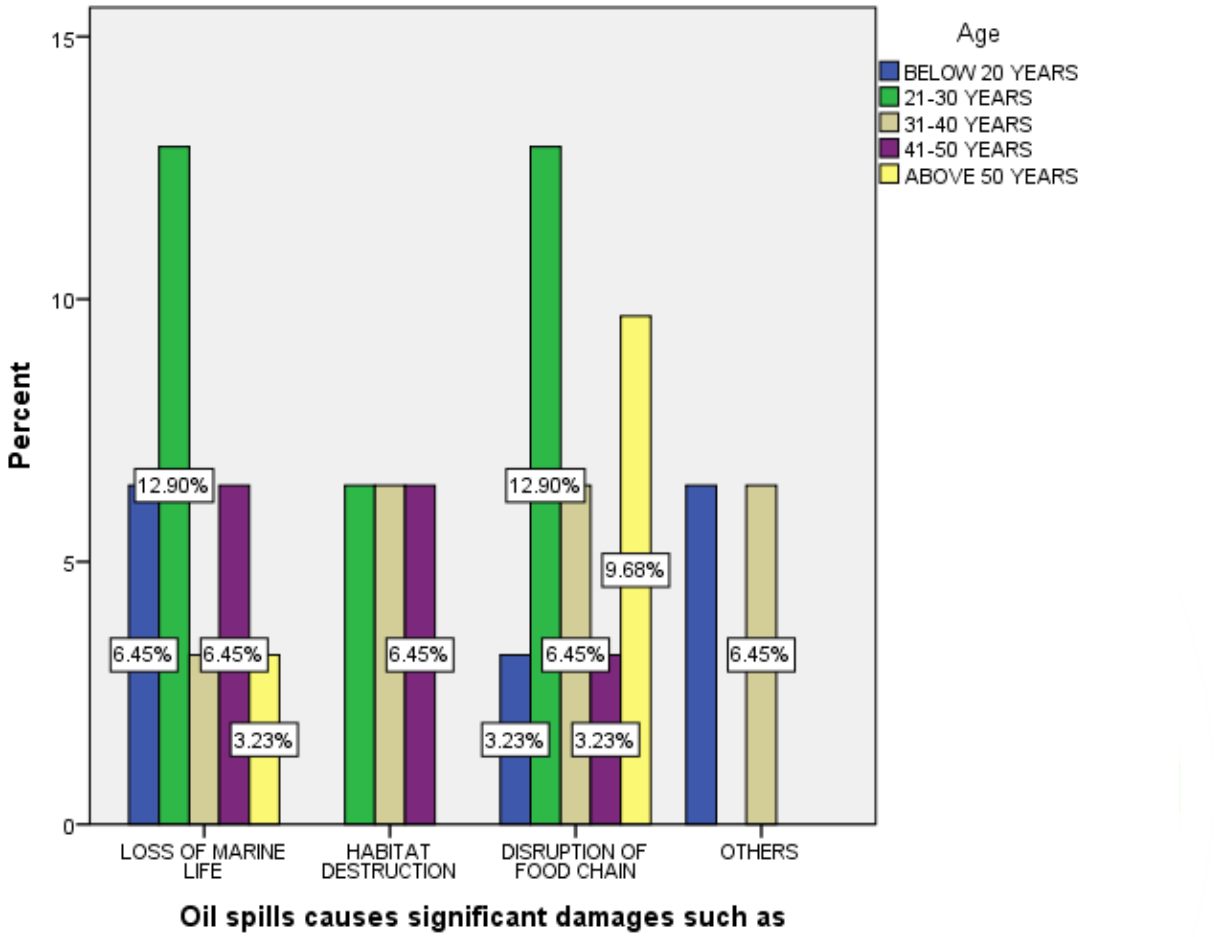
FIGURE 9



LEGEND

This clustered bar graph represents the question, collisions, groundings, or structural failures of tanker ships can lead to significant oil spills, contaminating large areas of water. This results in a decline in overall marine biodiversity, which affects the stability and resilience of the entire ecosystem and which is compared to the occupation of the respondent

FIGURE 10



LEGEND

This clustered bar graph represents the question, oil spills cause significant damages such as and which is compared to the age of the respondents

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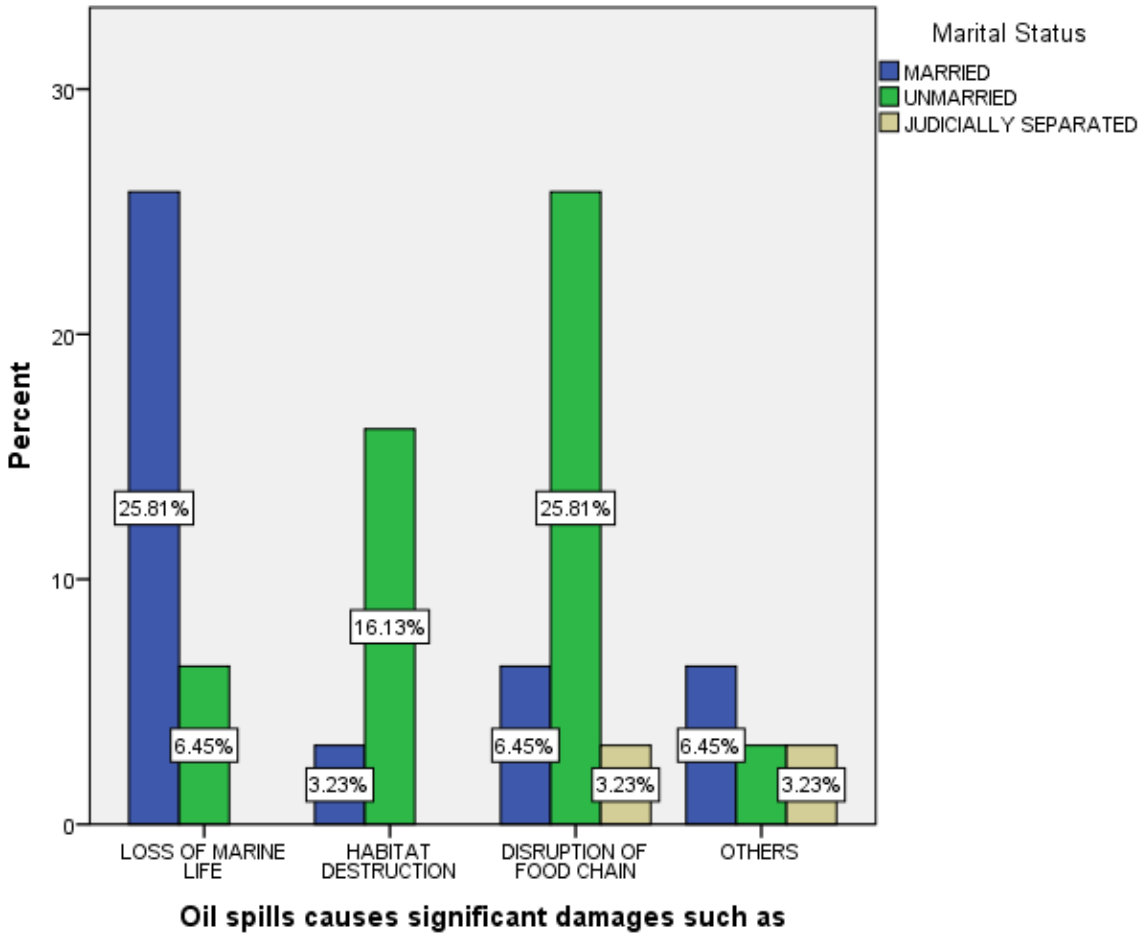
FIGURE 11



LEGEND

This clustered bar graph represents the question, oil spills cause significant damages such as and which is compared to the marital status of the respondents

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APIS – 3920 - 0001 *(and)* ISSN - 2583-2344

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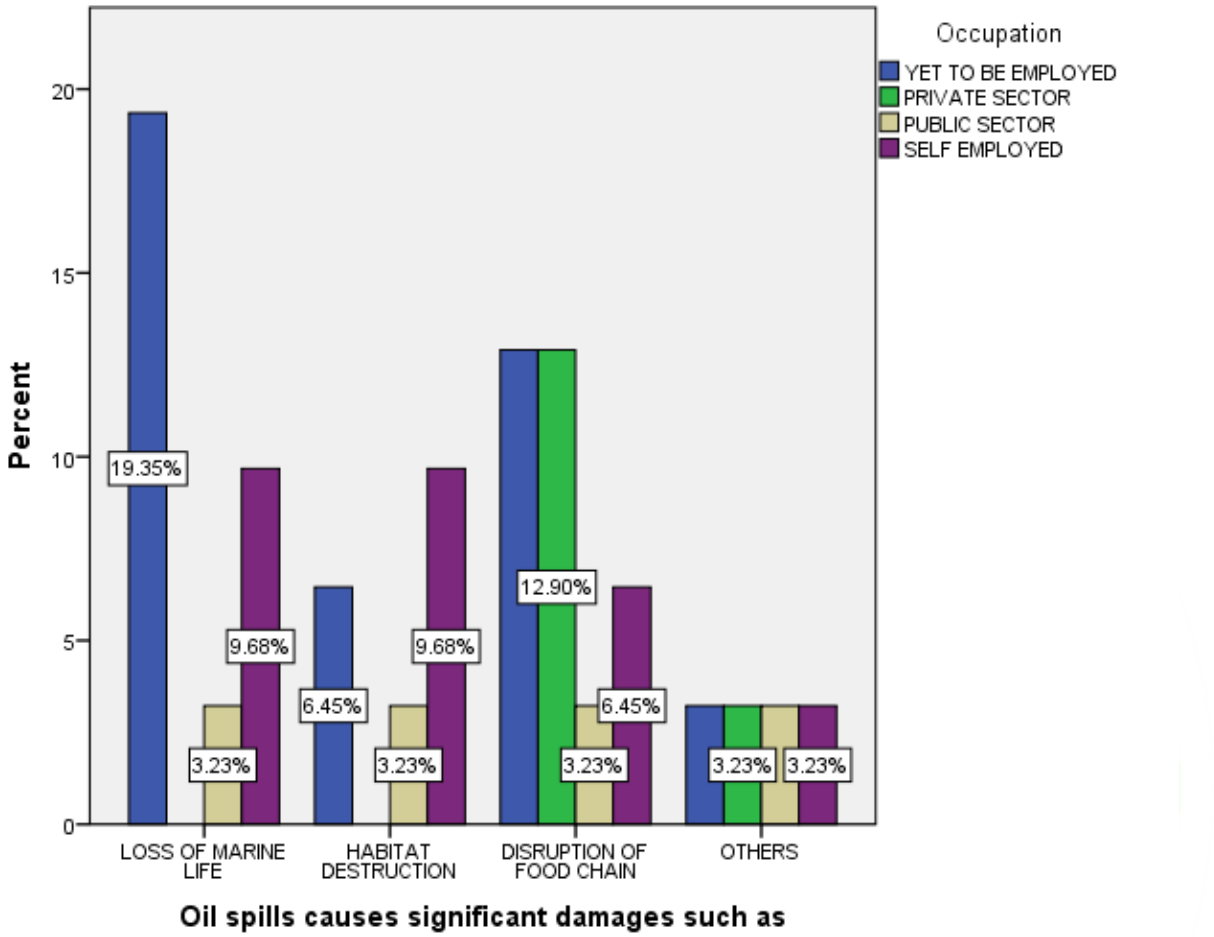
FIGURE 12



LEGEND

This clustered bar graph represents the question, oil spills cause significant damages such as and which is compared to the occupation of the respondents

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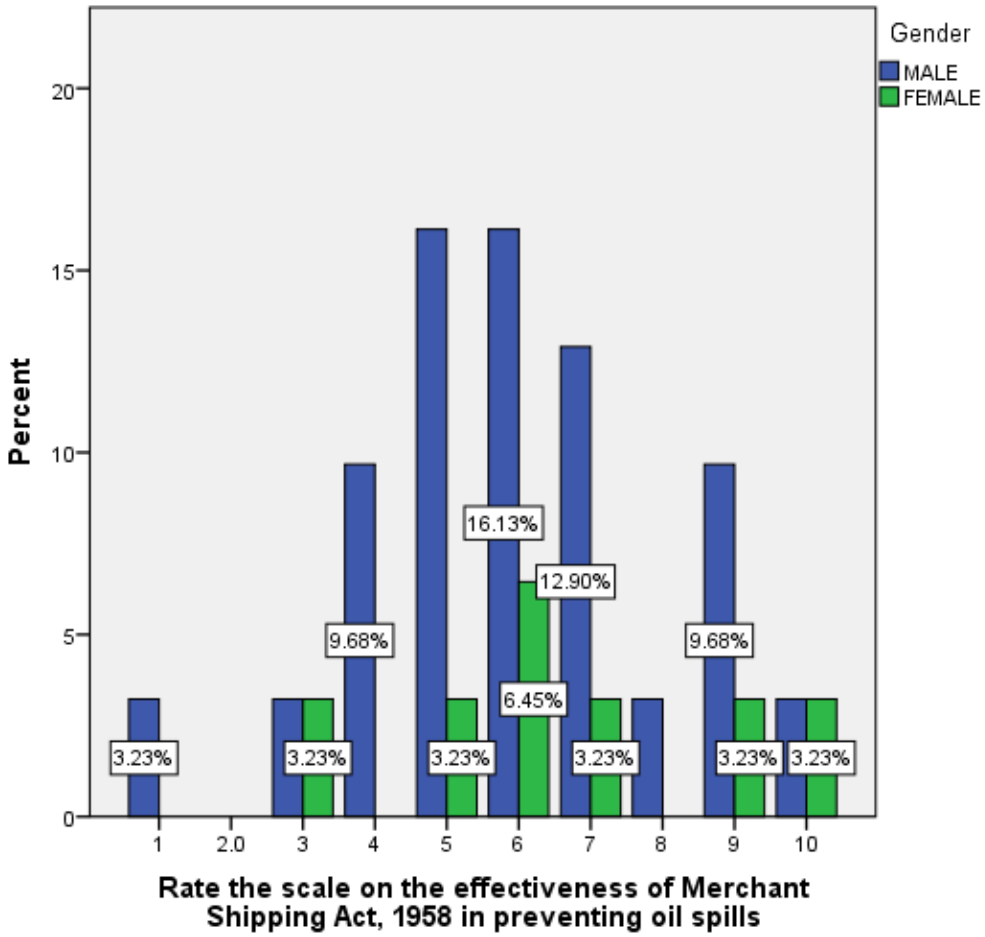
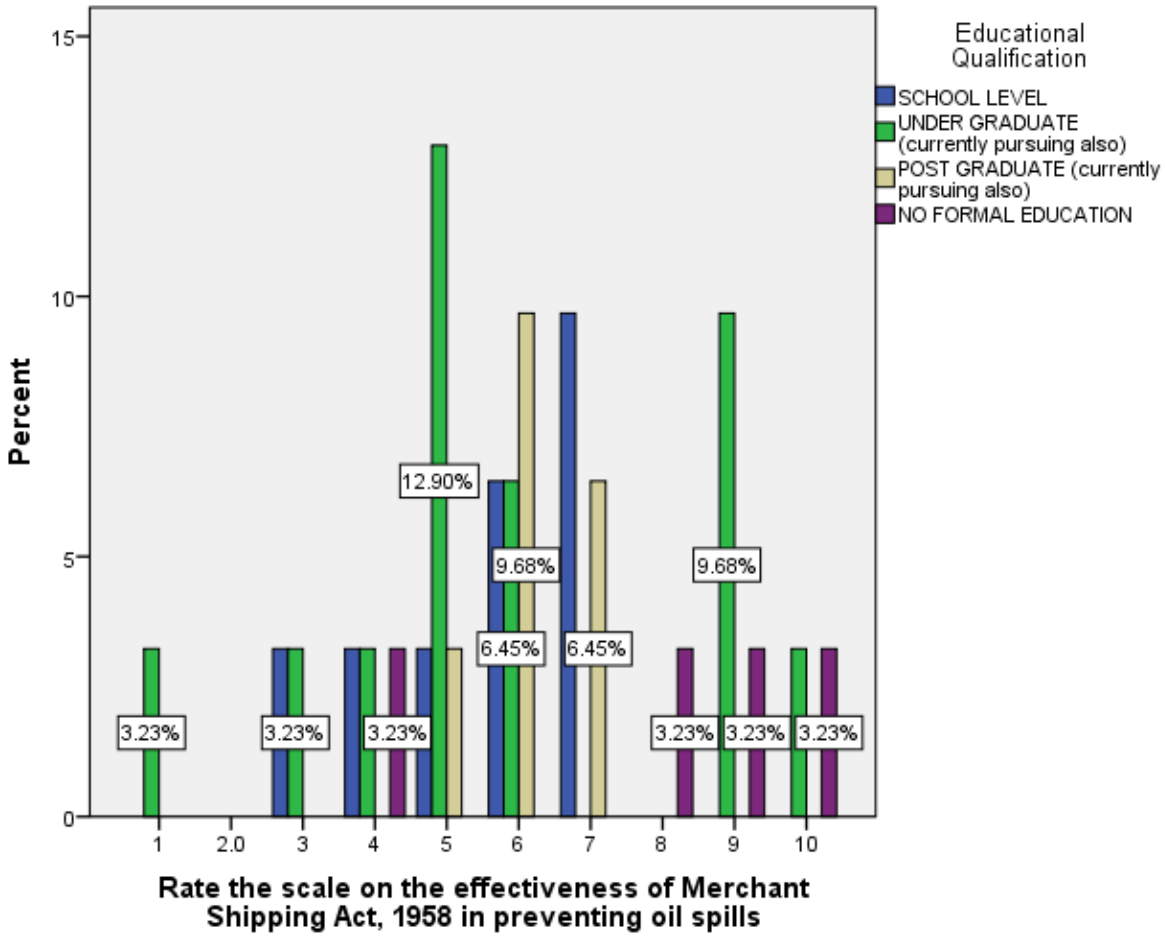
FIGURE 13



LEGEND

This clustered bar graph represents the question, rate the scale on the effectiveness of Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 in preventing oil spill and which is compared to the gender of the respondents

FIGURE 14



LEGEND

This clustered bar graph represents the question, rate the scale on the effectiveness of Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 in preventing oil spill and which is compared to the educational qualification of the respondents

RESULT :-

FIGURE 1 represents the question, can equipment failure, blowouts, or human errors during drilling operations result in the release of large quantities of oil into the ocean and which is compared to the age of the respondents and most of the respondents are between the 21-30 years of age category, which is 25.81%, saying yes to it. **FIGURE 2** represents the question, can equipment failure, blowouts, or human errors during drilling operations result in the release of large quantities of oil into the ocean and which is compared to the gender of the respondents and most of the respondents are males, which is 67.74%, saying yes to it. **FIGURE 3** represents the question, can equipment failure, blowouts, or human errors during drilling operations result in the release of large quantities of oil into the ocean and which is compared to the educational qualification of the respondents and most of the respondents are undergraduates, which is 32.26%, saying yes to it. **FIGURE 4** represents the question, the best technique to reduce the spread of oil and limit its effects is and which is compared to the age of the respondents and most of the respondents are between the 21-30 years of age category, which is 16.13%, saying it is mechanical skimming. **FIGURE 5** represents the question, the best technique to reduce the spread of oil and limit its effects is and which is compared to the occupation of the respondents and most of the respondents are yet to be

employed, which is 35.48%, saying it is mechanical skimming. **FIGURE 6** represents the question, the best technique to reduce the spread of oil and limit its effects is and which is compared to the marital status of the respondents and most of the respondents are married, which is 32.26%, saying it is mechanical skimming. **FIGURE 7** represents the question, collisions, groundings, or structural failures of tanker ships can lead to significant oil spills, contaminating large areas of water. This results in a decline in overall marine biodiversity, which affects the stability and resilience of the entire ecosystem and which is compared to the gender of the respondents and most of the respondents are males, which is 41.94%, are strongly agreeing to it. **FIGURE 8** represents the question, collisions, groundings, or structural failures of tanker ships can lead to significant oil spills, contaminating large areas of water. This results in a decline in overall marine biodiversity, which affects the stability and resilience of the entire ecosystem and which is compared to the educational qualification of the respondents and most of the respondents are school level, which is 22.58%, strongly agreeing to it. **FIGURE 9** represents the question, collisions, groundings, or structural failures of tanker ships can lead to significant oil spills, contaminating large areas of water. This results in a decline in overall marine biodiversity, which affects the stability and resilience of the entire ecosystem and which is compared to the occupation of the respondents and most of the respondents are yet to be employed, which is 38.71%, strongly agreeing to it. **FIGURE 10** represents the question, oil spills cause significant damages such as and which is compared to the age of the respondents and most of the respondents are between the 21-30 years of age category, which is 12.90%, saying it is both disruption of the food chain and loss of marine life. **FIGURE 11** represents the question, oil spills cause significant damages such as and which is compared to the marital status of the respondents and most of the respondents are unmarried, which is 25.81%, saying it is disruption of the food chain. **FIGURE 12** represents the question, oil spills cause significant damages such as and which is compared to the occupation of the respondents and most of the respondents are yet to be employed, which is 19.35%, saying it is loss of marine life. **FIGURE 13** represents the question, rate the scale on the effectiveness of Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 in preventing oil spill and which is compared to the gender of the respondents and most of the respondents are males, which is 16.13%, rating the scale 6 out 10. **FIGURE 14** represents the question, rate the scale on the effectiveness of Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 in preventing oil spill and which is compared to the educational qualification of the respondents and most of the respondents are undergraduates, which is 12.90%, rating the scale 5 out 10.

DISCUSSION :-

FIGURE 1 represents the question, can equipment failure, blowouts, or human errors during drilling operations result in the release of large quantities of oil into the ocean and which is compared to the age of the respondents and most of the respondents are between the 21-30 years of age category, which is 25.81%, saying yes to it, because they are aware of the risks involved in offshore drilling. They have learned about these risks in their studies, and they have seen the devastating effects that oil spills can have on the environment. **FIGURE 2** represents the question, can equipment failure, blowouts, or human errors during drilling operations result in the release of large quantities of oil into the ocean and which is compared to the gender of the respondents and most of the respondents are males, which is 67.74%, saying yes to it, because they are more familiar with the risks associated with drilling operations and the potential for oil spills. **FIGURE 3** represents the question, can equipment failure, blowouts, or human errors during drilling operations result in the release of large quantities of oil into the ocean and which is compared to the educational qualification of the respondents and most of the respondents are undergraduates, which is 32.26%, saying yes to

it, because they are learning about the risks of offshore drilling. They are aware of the recent high-profile oil spills that have been caused by equipment failure, blowouts, and human errors. **FIGURE 4** represents the question, the best technique to reduce the spread of oil and limit its effects is and which is compared to the age of the respondents and most of the respondents are between the 21-30 years of age category, which is 16.13%, saying it is mechanical skimming, because they think that mechanical skimming is the best technique to reduce the spread of oil and limit its effects because it is a relatively straightforward and effective technique. **FIGURE 5** represents the question, the best technique to reduce the spread of oil and limit its effects is and which is compared to the occupation of the respondents and most of the respondents are yet to be employed, which is 35.48%, saying it is mechanical skimming, because they believe that mechanical skimming is a relatively easy technique to deploy and operate. **FIGURE 6** represents the question, the best technique to reduce the spread of oil and limit its effects is and which is compared to the marital status of the respondents and most of the respondents are married, which is 32.26%, saying it is mechanical skimming, because they believe that mechanical skimming can remove a large amount of oil from the water surface and is relatively inexpensive. **FIGURE 7** represents the question, collisions, groundings, or structural failures of tanker ships can lead to significant oil spills, contaminating large areas of water. This results in a decline in overall marine biodiversity, which affects the stability and resilience of the entire ecosystem and which is compared to the gender of the respondents and most of the respondents are males, which is 41.94%, are strongly agreeing to it, because they are aware of the recent high-profile oil spills that have been caused by collisions, groundings, or structural failures of tanker ships. **FIGURE 8** represents the question, collisions, groundings, or structural failures of tanker ships can lead to significant oil spills, contaminating large areas of water. This results in a decline in overall marine biodiversity, which affects the stability and resilience of the entire ecosystem and which is compared to the educational qualification of the respondents and most of the respondents are school level, which is 22.58%, strongly agreeing to it, because they are aware of the risks of oil spills and the importance of prevention. **FIGURE 9** represents the question, collisions, groundings, or structural failures of tanker ships can lead to significant oil spills, contaminating large areas of water. This results in a decline in overall marine biodiversity, which affects the stability and resilience of the entire ecosystem and which is compared to the occupation of the respondents and most of the respondents are yet to be employed, which is 38.71%, strongly agreeing to it, because they are more likely to be exposed to information about oil spills through the media or through their studies, which makes them more aware of the potential risks and consequences of oil spills. **FIGURE 10** represents the question, oil spills cause significant damages such as and which is compared to the age of the respondents and most of the respondents are between the 21-30 years of age category, which is 12.90%, saying it is both disruption of the food chain and loss of marine life, because they know that oil can kill marine animals directly by poisoning them or by making it difficult for them to survive. Oil can also indirectly kill marine animals by disrupting their food supply or habitat. **FIGURE 11** represents the question, oil spills cause significant damages such as and which is compared to the marital status of the respondents and most of the respondents are unmarried, which is 25.81%, saying it is disruption of the food chain, because they know that the disruption of food chains can have a cascading effect on marine ecosystems. When one species is affected, it can affect the species that prey on it, and so on, leading to the collapse of entire food webs. **FIGURE 12** represents the question, oil spills cause significant damages such as and which is compared to the occupation of the respondents and most of the respondents are

yet to be employed, which is 19.35%, saying it is loss of marine life, because they know that oil coats animals, making it difficult for them to swim, breathe, and find food. This can lead to starvation and death. It can also smother plants and algae, which are essential food sources for many marine animals. **FIGURE 13** represents the question, rate the scale on the effectiveness of Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 in preventing oil spill and which is compared to the gender of the respondents and most of the respondents are males, which is 16.13%, rating the scale 6 out 10, because they were not clear about the act and did not consider it to be effective. **FIGURE 14** represents the question, rate the scale on the effectiveness of Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 in preventing oil spill and which is compared to the educational qualification of the respondents and most of the respondents are undergraduates, which is 12.90%, rating the scale 5 out 10, because they were not familiar with the act or its provisions, and they believed that the act does not adequately address the environmental impacts of oil spills.

LIMITATION :-

Usually, the limitations of a study are its flaws or shortcomings, which could be the result of unavailability of resources, sample size, and so on. The major drawback of this study was the collection of samples due to the limited sample size and sample frame. The time to collect samples was limited. This study is based on a convenient sampling method as well as an empirical study because of the concept of the effects of oil spill in the environment and its associated guidelines, and the inability to collect data from random samples.

SUGGESTION :-

To prevent oil spills, tankers and other vessels should have improved designs and operations, including double hulls, more advanced leak detection and prevention systems, and crew training on spill prevention and response. The government should implement stricter regulations on the transportation, and storage of oil. These regulations should require oil companies to use double hulled tankers, install leak detection systems, train their employees on spill prevention and response, and conduct regular inspections of oil facilities. The government should support research into new oil spill cleanup methods, including developing more effective ways to contain and recover spilled oil, as well as methods to clean up the environmental damage caused by spills.

CONCLUSION :-

Oil spills are a major environmental hazard, and can have a devastating impact on marine life, coastal communities, and economies. The Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, is a piece of legislation that aims to prevent and mitigate the effects of oil spills. However, the Act has been criticised for being outdated and ineffective. **Findings:** The empirical study revealed significant findings regarding the frequency, scale, and environmental impact of oil spills within the context of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958. Our analysis indicated a direct correlation between human error, vessel age, and the incidence of oil spills, particularly in coastal waters. The immediate environmental effects observed included severe disruption of marine ecosystems, contamination of shorelines, and adverse impacts on local biodiversity, leading to long-term ecological damage. **Objective Revisited:** The primary objective of this empirical study was to analyze the environmental repercussions of oil spills and critically evaluate the efficacy of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, in mitigating these effects. Through extensive data collection, case study analysis, and a review of relevant legal provisions, the study successfully achieved this objective. It provided empirical evidence of the environmental degradation caused by oil spills and highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the existing regulatory framework in India. The study aimed to bridge the gap between theoretical legal provisions and their real-world impact, providing a data-driven perspective on the issue. **Suggestions:** Amendment of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958: Increased Penalties: Revise the Act to significantly increase

monetary penalties for oil spill violations to ensure they are substantial enough to deter non-compliance and cover the full cost of environmental remediation. Strict Liability: Consider incorporating stricter liability provisions for vessel owners and operators, making them unequivocally responsible for environmental damage irrespective of fault. Enhanced Enforcement Powers: Grant greater enforcement powers to maritime authorities, including the ability to detain vessels, conduct mandatory inspections, and impose immediate sanctions. **Limitations:** Data Availability and Quality: The study was constrained by the availability and granularity of historical oil spill data, which varied in completeness and detail across different sources. This limited the ability to conduct more exhaustive statistical analyses on long-term trends. Scope of Act: The focus was specifically on the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, and did not extensively delve into other related environmental legislations or international conventions to which India is a signatory, which might also influence oil spill management.

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