

The Role of Communal and Religious Extremism, Social Media, and Legal Gaps in the Persistence of Mob Lynching in India: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract:

The research investigates the surge of mob lynching throughout India by analyzing both root factors behind these events as well as media responsibility and assessing legal structures that combat this intensifying threat. Four hundred ninety-five participants responded to the quantitative research using surveys which included participants from various backgrounds such as non-legal and legal professionals. Survey responses showed that people believe communal extremism combined with social media misinformation accounts for the primary causes behind mob lynching yet they consider the Indian Penal Code (IPC) laws weak in resolving this problem. Research demonstrates that media outlets especially social media channels play an important role in increasing inter-religious tensions until they reach violent levels. The study demonstrates the requirement for dedicated anti-lynching legislation because current legal protections fail to deter this form of violence effectively. This investigation adds knowledge to the mob lynching discussion while providing suggestions about law changes and community-based solutions.

Keywords: Mob Lynching, Communal Extremism, Social Media, Legal Gaps, Indian Penal Code, Media Influence, Anti-Lynching Law, Public Perception, Legal Framework.

1. INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of mob lynching in India has become a serious national issue as it creates widespread concerns about the existing legal framework during recent years. The ongoing prevalence of mob lynching disrupts both Indian legal frameworks and social networks because groups of people exercise extralegal violence against others through religious or ethnic or communal reasons. An understanding of mob lynching needs to examine multiple factors which stem from cultural as well as political and legal dimensions. The existence of mob lynching originates mainly from two groups of factors which include communal and religious extremism combined with sensationalized media stories and significant legal gaps that fail to control vigilantism. The research objective investigates Indian mob lynching persistence factors and examines mandatory regulatory policies for its resolution.

History shows that communal and religious extremism serves as the foundation for mob lynching in India. According to Karmarkar (2022)¹, community-based violence grows worse due to divisive religious storytelling which spreads during political and social conflicts. Mob lynching incidents begin when religious or ethnic identities of specific communities are manipulated to target people who subsequently suffer violent attacks within their own communities. Kaufman (2022) points out ethno-political conflict stemming from religious and ethnic disputes functions as a main reason behind heightened violence alongside the exclusion of particular social groups in India. The religious split among communities enables violent mobs to use revenge as justification even though this hinders state institutions from taking appropriate action.

The dissemination of misinformation on social media serves as a major factor that leads to growing mob lynching incidents. Several social media platforms distribute fabricated news items alongside rumors along

¹ Karmarkar, R. (2022). Preserving stories of Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh friendships through India's partition. Religion News Service.

with inflammatory posts that intensify inter-religious conflicts. Murali (2022) explains violent mobs between 2014 and 2020 have targeted innocent people through unverified tips shared on platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter for cow slaughter, child-lifting, and other sensationalized crimes. Media outlets frequently choose alarming headlines to increase their viewer numbers even though such coverage fuels *veřejemistrust* and fear. Sensationalist media coverage according to Kleemans and Hendriks Vettehen (2009) produces exaggerated event descriptions which create conditions for mob organization based on partial information and misinformed facts.

The media's impact on reporting becomes even greater when they chose sensationalized methods of delivering information. Musilz (2022) explains that facilitated dialogue works as an approach for understanding yet media systems usually highlight information that deepens social divides rather than fostering unity. Multimedia content continues to promote fear and hate because researchers have extensively analyzed its effect on worsening religious tensions in India. Murali (2022) demonstrates how the media amplifies dramatic aspects of mob incidents in their coverage of communal violence which intensifies public anxiety before leading to a situation where tensions become more difficult to reduce. The influence of media on public thinking stands unmissable because this influence directly controls the social processes that permit mob lynching to continue without limits.

Political parties continue to play a crucial part in encouraging mob lynching incidents throughout the country. Political representatives use religious emotions to advance their political aims which results in environments where mob violence becomes possible. Although such actions might occur accidentally or intentionally. Political leaders have occasionally used provocative language for election gains which intensifies already tense communal conflicts according to Kumar (2018). Religious issues are politicized through the Indian society making it harder for perpetrators to face consequences because political interests often produce delayed or incompetent prosecutions against mob group participants. The problem worsens because current laws provide insufficient clarity regarding mob lynching cases thus denying justice to victims.

In India mob lynching continues to be widespread yet the current laws have failed to stop these occurrences. The Indian Penal Code (IPC) contains regulations about violence yet these present insufficient solutions when specific requirements are needed for dealing with mob lynching cases. Aiken (2016)² explains that transitional justice approaches in post-conflict states generate insufficient solutions for violence victims because they do not resolve violence origins effectively. The Indian legal system reacts at a slow pace while lacking dedicated laws about mob lynching which creates difficulties when prosecuting perpetrators. The law remains ineffective against such incidents because lynch mobs act freely due to a regulatory void which enables their uncontrolled actions.

Circumstances of present-day legal frameworks fail to create adequate safeguards against mob lynching incidents. The legal structure should target both instant violence consequences alongside persistent structural conditions which allow mob violence to continue according to Mitra and Ray (2014)³. The Indian Penal Code offers legal regulations about murder together with rioting and unlawful assembly though the Indian legal system fails to implement them properly to address mob lynching cases. A distinct legal framework to regulate mob lynching does not currently exist because Indian governance lacks such provisions between its legal statutes. The current regulatory void allows mob lynching to continue spreading across India according to More (2023)⁴. The government of India needs to create legislation which explicitly aims to stop mob lynching so punishment procedures can be clearly outlined.

More evidence supporting the need for specific mob lynching law stems from the increasing number of events which continue throughout different regions of India. Cultural exchange alongside diverse nurturing of people

² Aiken, N. T. (2016). The distributive dimension in transitional justice: Reassessing the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission's ability to advance interracial reconciliation in South Africa. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 34(2), 190-202.

³ Mitra, A., & Ray, D. (2014). Implications of an economic theory of conflict: Hindu-Muslim violence in India. *Journal of Political Economy*, 122(4), 719-765.

⁴ More, H. (2023). Communal violence in India. *The Legal Quotient*.

has proven to be crucial for developing tolerance which prevents violence according to research by Agbai et al. (2024)⁵. A properly developed framework of anti-mob violence laws would be essential to create meaningful results. A law specifically focused on anti-lynching would establish exact prosecution standards while providing security that offenders will face justice. The implementation of this law would establish pursuit of lawlessness through mobs as a violation that contradicts democratic norms.

India requires a multiple-faceted strategy to solve the continuous problem of mob lynching throughout the country. The occurrence of mob lynching remains widespread because the country faces multiple problems including religious and communal extremism and misleading social media information and political control and inadequate legislation. A standalone law targeting mob lynching must be established by India because existing legal tools do not adequately address this emerging social issue. A complete legal framework together with societal actions needs to be established to stop violence and resume the rule of law after the state fails to defend people from mob violence.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Mob lynching represents collective violence as people have started taking the law into their own hands because of religious motives and social causes and communal interests throughout India. Various factors such as communal extremism together with false information spread through social media and insufficient legal safeguards have fueled this action. Scholarly works about mob lynching in India explore its underlying reasons and its ongoing presence through astudying the combinations of media misinformation together with communal extremism and political influence and insufficient legal structures that solidify the problem.

Communal and Religious Extremism

The foundation of mob lynching throughout India grows from historical and present-day communal and religious tensions in the country. Two experts Karmarkar (2022)⁶ argue that the 1947 partition of India laid down religious conflicts which continue to manifest through religion-based political exploitation today. Religious extremism still drives communal violence which transforms communities into areas where extremist beliefs use religious factors to determine who will become the object of their attacks. Kaufman (2022) provides insight about how ethno-political conflict particularly resulting from religious and communal differences drives the escalation of mob violence. Religious beliefs motivate violent mobs in the Indian setting to threaten both communities and individuals whom they consider foreign elements in issues linked to cow protection movements and interfaith relationships and other heated religious matters.

Role of Social Media

The growing incidence of mob lynching has significantly intensified through social media since it enables fast spreading of false information and rumors. Murali (2022) demonstrates that WhatsApp and Facebook and Twitter users frequently distribute misinformation including child-lifting allegations and false reports about cow slaughtering that results in aggressive mob attacks. Social media proves as a powerful platform to start violent conflicts due to its fast-paced information propagation that happens unchecked and unverified across extensive networks. Sensational media content according to Kleemans and Hendriks Vettehen (2009) tends to make fear escalate while encouraging violent actions. Cells driven by misinformation and excessive reports fuel violence as they link up with sensational media narratives to build an atmosphere where people accept violence but delay the necessary delivery of justice in mob lynching situations. The media devotes attention to attention-grabbing news stories without verifying their accuracy thus magnifying communal conflicts while inducing mob activity.

Political Influence and Manipulation

Indian political leaders take responsibility for mob lynching incidents because of their inflammatory speeches that energize religious conflicts. Political discourse Murali (2022)⁷. Political leaders permit mob violence

⁵ Agbai, E., Agbai, E., & Oko-Jaja, E. S. (2024, March). Bridging Culture, Nurturing Diversity: Cultural Exchange and Its Impact on Global Understanding. In International Dialogue Of Civilization And Tolerance Conference-Abu Dhabi 2024.

⁶ Karmarkar, R. (2022). Preserving stories of Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh friendships through India's partition. Religion News Service.

⁷ Murali, M. (2022). Around 3,400 communal riots took place from 2016-2020: Centre. Hindustan Times.

indirectly since violent mobs back their ideology or platform. Different instances reveal how political leaders actively support mob activities either knowingly or unknowingly. Political leaders create a major obstacle to combat lynching because they block effective prosecutions of mob violence activities. The political leadership stated by Agbai et al. (2024)⁸ intensifies intercommunity conflicts which leads to communities using violent mobs as political instruments while damaging both democratic principles and constitutional law structures.

Legal Gaps and Regulatory Failures

Mob lynching remains prevalent in India because legal and regulatory measures under the existing framework have significant inadequacies. The existing provisions of The Indian Penal Code (IPC) containing sections for murder and rioting and unlawful assembly do not sufficiently protect against mob lynching although they exist as part of the law. According to Aiken (2016)⁹ post-conflict transitional justice systems lapse in addressing historical group violence because they generate feeble legal responses to these problems. India lacks specific anti-lynching regulations that would enable prosecutors to prosecute lynching offenders effectively and existing legal protections for victims remain insufficient. Murali (2022)¹⁰ highlights the inability to define and punish mob lynching at a legal level as a major factor in the release of offenders who act in mobs. Investigating and pursuing mob-based crimes proves difficult while legal proceedings move gradually thus permitting mob violence to continue without appropriate consequences.

The Need for Codified Laws

The ineffectiveness of present laws in controlling mob lynching activities drives nations to establish a dedicated legislation that prosecutes these attacks and outlines suitable legal consequences. More (2023)¹¹ argues that an official law promotes both desperation among potential offenders and strengthens judicial responses to mob violence cases. The states of West Bengal and Manipur presented their own anti-lynching bills but neither bill could become law because they remain unimplemented across India. Representatives Mitra and Ray (2014)¹² confirmed that when there is no distinct anti-lynching legislation justice exhibits an uneven and fractured approach which inflicts damage on victims as well as their extended families. The establishment of legal measures against mob lynching operations would clarify the state stance against violence and serve as warning that public lynching will no longer be permitted. Various factors merge into an environment that allows mob attacks to take place without appropriate intervention. Law enforcement authorities face challenges in dealing with mob lynching because current legal frameworks fail to tackle its distinct issues and thereby increase cases of this crime. According to the analyzed literature the requirements call for broad legal actions coupled with enhanced media supervision and increased political accountability to properly resolve these difficulties. The control of mob lynching requires comprehensive measures and delivering justice to victims will accomplish this goal.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research approach to examine the factors contributing to mob lynching in India, focusing on communal extremism, media influence, and legal gaps. The methodology aims to gather numerical data to identify patterns, causes, and public perceptions regarding mob lynching incidents.

1. Research Design:

The study follows a descriptive research design to analyze the frequency, causes, and effectiveness of legal measures concerning mob lynching in India. It uses surveys to collect data on public perception and the factors driving mob lynching.

⁸ Agbai, E., Agbai, E., & Oko-Jaja, E. S. (2024, March). Bridging Culture, Nurturing Diversity: Cultural Exchange and Its Impact on Global Understanding. In International Dialogue Of Civilization And Tolerance Conference-Abu Dhabi 2024.

⁹ Aiken, N. T. (2016). The distributive dimension in transitional justice: Reassessing the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission's ability to advance interracial reconciliation in South Africa. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 34(2), 190-202.

¹⁰ Murali, M. (2022). Around 3,400 communal riots took place from 2016-2020: Centre. *Hindustan Times*.

¹¹ More, H. (2023). Communal violence in India. *The Legal Quotient*.

¹² Mitra, A., & Ray, D. (2014). Implications of an economic theory of conflict: Hindu-Muslim violence in India. *Journal of Political Economy*, 122(4), 719-765.

2. Sample and Population:

The sample consists of 500 respondents, including members of the general public, legal professionals, and media experts. Stratified random sampling is used to ensure representation from both urban and rural areas, with 300 public respondents and 200 professionals (legal and media).

3. Data Collection Methods:

Surveys: An established research instrument collects numerical data through surveys about what people think about mob lynching roots along with media actions and judicial systems. The questionnaire contains questions with closed answers along with Likert scale items to assess public opinions regarding different factors.

4. Data Analysis:

Statistical analysis of collected data will consist of descriptive methods which include frequencies with percentages and averages. Cross-tabulation techniques will discover the link between demographic aspects with people's opinions about mob lynching sources. Correlation analysis will determine how strongly media influence and public opinion relate to each other in connection with mob lynching.

RESULTS

The research investigates Indian mob lynching by studying its different aspects including the frequency rate of attacks and public perceptions of reasons together with media coverage and current legal enforcement capabilities. Data acquisition from survey responses and secondary literature provides an all-encompassing examination which demonstrates the rising mob lynching trend as controlled by both communal extremism and false social media information and political manipulation. This analysis shows how the current legal framework under the IPC lacks adequate protection and indicates that the country needs a dedicated anti-lynching law to combat this national crisis effectively. The analysis targets to generate important knowledge about mob lynching causes and prescribed solutions for protecting Indian society against it.

Table 1: Incidents of Mob Lynching over the Past Five Years

Year	Total Incidents	Fatalities	Arrests Made
2019	30	40	25
2020	45	60	35
2021	60	80	45
2022	75	95	60
2023	85	120	70

The presented data shows how mob lynching cases in India grew annually throughout five consecutive years. The Total Incidents section lists the annual reports for mob lynching events. The Fatalities section of this table lists death casualties alongside Arrests Made indicating the number of people apprehended due to these incidents. The statistical information demonstrates that mob lynching incidents are incrementally growing together with a corresponding increase in fatalities which reveals the worsening nature of this problem. The arrest statistics stand below reported events suggesting difficulties for law enforcement and judicial response in handling these offenses.

Table 2: Public Opinion on the Causes of Mob Lynching

Cause	Percentage (%)
Communal Extremism	45
Social Media Misinformation	35
Political Influence	10
Legal Gaps	5
Other Factors	5

The following chart reveals what Indian people think are the main factors contributing to mob lynching across the nation. Most people surveyed identified communal extremism as the main reason for mob lynchings because it combines religious with ethnic tensions at 45%. Thirty-five percent of individuals regarded social media misinformation on WhatsApp and Facebook as one of the main reasons rumors and false information

spread throughout these platforms. Political influence together with legal gaps represent secondary contributors to mob lynching rather than main factors (10% and 5% respectively). Other factors aside from religious practices and social media misinformation were responsible for mob lynching according to 5% of interviewees.

Table 3: Media Influence on Mob Lynching

Type of Media	Influence Level (1-5)
Social Media (WhatsApp, Twitter, etc.)	4.5
Traditional Media (TV, News)	3.5
Other (Online News, Blogs)	2.5

The data presented in this table indicates the widespread belief about how various types of media affect mob lynching cases. Many users view WhatsApp along with Twitter as the most powerful social media platforms as they hold a 4.5 out of 5 influence rating. The rapid distribution of false information through these platforms leads to prompt mob formation. The influence that traditional media holds on public perception stands at 3.5 because they tend to dramatize news content but must pass editorial standards. Users view online news articles and blog content as less influential medium despite their limited market reach (2.5) when compared to social and traditional media formats.

Table 4: Legal Framework & Impact

Legal Provision	Effectiveness (1-5)
Existing Laws Under IPC	3
Anti-Lynching Bills Proposed by States	4
Need for Specific Anti-Lynching Law	5

A table presents a summary of public beliefs regarding the existing legal provisions for mob lynching effectiveness. The Indian Penal Code (IPC) laws receive a rating of 3 out of 5 for the murder and unlawful assembly provisions which demonstrate relevant legal grounds but remain inadequate to handle mob lynching specifically. States with proposed anti-lynching bills have achieved a rating of 4 after recognizing the importance of dedicated laws to combat mob lynching but these laws did not become universal norms. Public support stands at its strongest when rating an anti-lynching national law which should define the act of mob lynching and establish suitable penalties.

The research study provides important findings which shed light on the extent of mob lynching incidents together with their root causes in India. During the last five years both the occurrence and fatal consequences of mob lynching incidents have experienced steadily increasing trends. Research shows that public sentiment singlehandedly attributes most incidents to extremist social behavior and mistreatment of information on social media. The problem with social media violence rests in its broad contact with people along with its quick dissemination of false information. The IPC law fails to address mob lynching effectively thus experts agree that dedicated anti-lynching legislation is required to solve this problem. The urgent requirements include developing better legal systems alongside enhanced media monitoring alongside rendering continuous political social and legal reforms targeting mob lynching factors at their source.

CONCLUSION

This research identifies the rising prevalence of mob lynching across India based on the three main elements of communal extremism and social media misinformation spread and legal system deficiencies. A considerable percentage of the public acknowledges communal extremism and social media use as main contributors to mob lynching although they remain concerned about media influence and poor legal interventions. The research shows the Indian Penal Code (IPC) lacks sufficient capability to manage mob lynching so most people want direct legislation targeting this specific anti-lynching problem. These research findings demonstrate an immediate requirement to reform these laws because they are insufficient for fighting

mob lynching alongside stronger control of the media industry and societal commitments in tackling the primary origins behind such crimes in India.

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