

MOB LYNCHING IN INDIA: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES, AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Journals of Education & Social Sciences

Vol. 1: Issue 1

Page 49–59 © The Author(s) 2025

Received: 24 June 2025

Accepted: 20 July 2025

Published: 26 July 2025



Dr. Navin Kumar - Assistant Professor at Bharat College of Law

ABSTRACT

In India, the idea of mob lynching is not new; instances of it date back to the partition era, where hundreds of villages migrated from Pakistan and India, respectively, out of pure fear. This paper examines the phenomenon of mob lynching by assessing its historical development and core factors and societal effects throughout Indian society. Social media serves as a significant factor that leads to the increase of mob lynching because it provides an avenue for misinformation to spread quickly, which triggers violence and allows people to behave like vigilantes. A detailed evaluation explains the factors behind mob violence normalization in particular regions through political speeches, cultural elements, and religious or communal disagreements. The analysis demonstrates how legal problems combine with governmental ineffectiveness to prevent or respond to these criminal acts. This paper evaluates major lynching cases from 2015 to 2018, the Dadri mob killing and the Alwar mob violence, to establish how such acts result in societal breakdown and rights abuses. Additionally, the paper examines the present limitations of legal systems that address mob-lynching incidents before proposing specific solutions to combat this rising threat. The struggle against this severe issue requires enhanced legal systems, higher levels of political supervisory power, and community-focused education.

KEY WORDS

Mob Lynching, India, Communal Violence, Social Media, Legal Framework, Human Rights

1. Introduction

The Indian population has grown increasingly concerned about mob lynching, which involves groups of people assaulting and harming others without sufficient evidence in recent years. The practice of mob lynching emerged as a visible problem in the early 2000s because supporters acted based on false information and historical dislikes combined with unreasonable paternal instincts¹. The violence stems from rumors that circulate across social media platforms, particularly WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter because these platforms serve as leading platforms for misinformation dissemination². Through social media tools, false reports' wide distribution and growth create intensified community anger and fear, affecting numerous people

¹ Ward, M., *Walls and cows: Social media, vigilante vantage, and political discourse*, 6 *Social Media & Society* 2 (2020).

² Banaji, S. & Bhat, R., *WhatsApp vigilantes: An exploration of citizen reception and circulation of WhatsApp misinformation linked to mob violence in India*, 2 *LSE Media & Comms.* 1 (2020).

with misguiding information. Mob lynching in India mainly occurs in the context of religious conflicts and sectarian differences against vulnerable social groups, such as Muslims and Dalits, together with other marginalized communities³.

India has experienced communal and caste-based violent outbreaks, especially following major events, including the partitions of 1947 and the 2002 Gujarat riots in history. The intensity of lynching incidents and their revealed clarity have shown significant growth during the previous decade across the nation. The increased social tension has concentrated on protecting cows while fighting religious conversion and "love jihad," which forms the basis for violence against marginalized populations. The people who engage in mob justice use such actions to display or protect their community's cultural heritage and religious beliefs⁴. The unproductive efforts of law enforcement agencies to stop mob lynching events make the situation worse. The authorities like police departments always overlook these crimes or even participating actively in violent actions. Some leaders within the political sphere maintain indirect support for these crimes, while others face criticism for their ignorance approach to punishing the perpetrators⁵. Social and political backing of vigilantism, along with insufficient legal definitions, has led societies to accept mob violence as an approved justice system.

The analysis in this paper investigates the increasing prevalence of mob lynching in India through an assessment of its underlying reasons as well as its societal and political consequences and its detrimental effects on human rights. The paper evaluates current legal responses to this problem by analyzing case studies while recommending reforms for preventing additional violent incidents. The Indian population has grown increasingly concerned about mob lynching, which involves groups of people assaulting and harming others without sufficient evidence in recent years. The practice of mob lynching emerged as a visible problem in the early 2000s because supporters acted based on false information and historical dislikes combined with unreasonable paternal instincts⁶. The violence stems from rumors that circulate across social media platforms, particularly WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter because these platforms serve as leading platforms for misinformation dissemination. Through social media tools, false reports' wide distribution and growth create intensified community anger and fear, affecting numerous people with misguiding information. Mob lynching in India mainly occurs in the context of religious conflicts and sectarian differences against vulnerable social groups, such as Muslims and Dalits, together with other marginalized communities⁷. India has experienced communal and caste-based violent outbreaks, especially following major events, including the partitions of 1947 and the 2002 Gujarat riots in history. The intensity of lynching incidents and their revealed clarity have shown significant growth during the previous decade across the nation. The increased social tension has concentrated on protecting cows while fighting religious conversion and "love jihad," which forms the basis for violence against marginalized populations. The people who engage in mob justice use such actions to display or protect their community's cultural heritage and religious beliefs⁸.

The unproductive efforts of law enforcement agencies to stop mob lynching events make the situation worse. The authorities from local police departments have been charged with overlooking these crimes or even participating actively in violent actions. Some leaders within the political sphere maintain indirect support for these crimes, while others face criticism for their unactionable approach to punishing the perpetrators⁹. Social and political backing of vigilantism, along with insufficient legal definitions, has led societies to accept mob violence as an approved justice system.

The analysis in this paper investigates the increasing prevalence of mob lynching in India through an assessment of its underlying reasons as well as its societal and political consequences and its detrimental effects on human rights. The paper evaluates current legal responses to this problem by analyzing case studies while recommending reforms for preventing additional violent incidents.

³ Choudhary, P., Pandey, S., Tripathi, S. & Chaurasiya, S., *Fake news detection based on machine learning*, in Lecture Notes in Electrical Engineering 47, 47-56 (2021).

⁴ *Mob Lynching: A rising threat to our society*, 7 Strad Res. 11 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.37896/sr7.11/011>

⁵ Singh, U. K., *Law, state and right-wing extremism in India*, 14 J. Policing, Intel. & Counter Terrorism 3 (2019).

⁶ Sadev, S. P., *Mob lynchings: Vigilante violence and state obligation*, SSRN Electron. J. (2021).

⁷ Pandey, B., Kumar, G., Algavi, L. O., Kumar, M. & Sharma, V., *Exposure of fake news to the Indian social media users*, 28 RUDN J. Stud. Lit. & Journal. 2 (2023)

⁸ Gupta, I., *Mob violence and vigilantism in India*, 23 World Affairs: The J. Int. Issues 4 (2019).

⁹ Malik, S. A., *Minority rights protection in India: From Sachar Committee recommendations to mob lynching*, SSRN Electron. J. (2019).

2. Historical Context

India's historical development as a nation has been formed by religious and caste conflicts, which defined both the Indian national identity and the government's approach to violence. The partition of India in 1947 opened the beginning of continuous religious violence that triggered extensive riots and lethal clashes throughout the nation¹⁰. Post-independence India has faced constant religious tensions, which emerged when India and Pakistan split into separate countries during partition. The government has lived in terror of communal violence for multiple decades through attacks from destructive religious and ethnic hatred mob members targeting specific communities¹¹.

Extrajudicial violence through mob lynching has existed in India for many years. During periods of lawlessness, people became aggressive enough to take justice upon themselves because they lost faith in conventional legal procedures. From the 1990s onwards, mob violence expanded its intensity and became more noticeable during the post-liberalization period¹². When Indian economic reforms began in the early 1990s, they introduced major political and social system transformations throughout the nation. The new conditions enabled identity politics to grow because religious and cultural identity disputes became stronger. These emerging political issues progressively resulted in violent religious and cultural value-based conflicts between different Indian communities.

The demolition of the Babri Masjid mosque in 1992 rose as a major milestone during which communal violence started to escalate while mob justice expanded. Hindu activists destroyed the 16th-century mosque under the pretense that it stood on the site where Lord Ram was born, which triggered national riots throughout India¹³. Many hundreds of people lost their lives during this major rioting event, which became a foundation for political groups to exploit violence in the upcoming years. The Babri Masjid incident led to the expanding influence of Hindutva ideology, which portrayed the mosque destruction as righteous Hindu action. After this incident, religious violence became part of the social norm that motivated additional mob attacks against Muslim and other minority populations¹⁴.

Mob violence returned with gravity during the 2002 Gujarat riots that took place next in history. The violence that erupted across Gujarat following the Godhra train fire targeted mainly the Muslim population after a Hindu pilgrims' coach burned down. The riots claimed the lives of thousands of victims whose identity was primarily Muslim¹⁵. The Gujarat riots were an organized, violent movement, yet they fostered the use of mob lynching as a new means through which people exhibited both political and religious attitudes. The public sympathy for "mob justice" rose following riots as people used violent measures to seek claims of vindication. Future lynching incidents emerged because violent acts gained acceptance as protective measures for religious or social order, which deepened vigilantism in Indian society¹⁶.

The widespread use of social media during the past decades has intensified the distribution of aggressive religious and communal stories that generate hatred and fear among the population. Rumours that mainly address religious sensitivities now propagate rapidly among users of WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter platforms, resulting in violent community reactions. Modern technology has transformed how mobs move because false information triggers big crowds to perform unlawful executions without legal protection¹⁷. The convergence of identity politics with religious polarization, together with expanding social media influence, allows mob lynching activity to flourish in India. The Babri Masjid demolition¹⁸, together with the

¹⁰ Pandey, G., *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism, and the Body in the Indian Subcontinent*, 47 *Studies in History* 2 (2007).

¹¹ Kaur, R., *The Partition of India and Pakistan: The Impact on Women and the Violence of Partition*, 25 *South Asia Journal* 4 (2018).

¹² Prakash, B., *Mob lynching: A criminal injustice towards humanity?*, SSRN Electron. J. (2021).

¹³ Jaffrelot, C., *The Babri Masjid: A Case Study in the Politics of Communalism*, 17 *Modern Asian Studies* 4 (1983).

¹⁴ Sajjad, T., *The Demolition of Babri Masjid: A Reflection on Indian Secularism and Religious Nationalism*, 23 *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 2 (2000).

¹⁵ Kishwar, M., *The Gujarat Riots and the Hindu-Muslim Divide: A Critical Analysis*, 42 *Economic and Political Weekly* 7 (2002).

¹⁶ Samadhiya, P. & Mishra, M., *Mob lynching: A new form of collective violence*, 7 *Legal Res. Dev.* 4 (2023).

¹⁷ Chatterjee, S., Chaudhuri, R. & Vrontis, D., *Dark side of instant messaging: An empirical investigation from technology and society perspective*, 74 *Aslib J. Info. Mgmt.* 5 (2022).

¹⁸ Zinn, S. L., *The Gujarat Riots of 2002: A Case Study of Religious Nationalism and Its Impact on Indian Society*, 18 *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 1 (2003).

Gujarat riots from the past, continue generating ideological support for mob justice through community notions of protecting their religious identity and sense of self.

3. Causes Of Mob Lynching In India

The increase in mob lynching throughout India stems from multiple social, political, and cultural variables working together. The phenomenon maintains deep ties with the historical origins of India yet has strengthened in recent years through modern tools and political and social developments alongside existing social divisions¹⁹. This section examines four fundamental factors that drive the escalating rate of mob lynching across India, including the spread of false information and social media influence, as well as religious conflict weak police cooperation with politicians, and the social acceptance of vigilantism.

The fast growth of mob lynching events in India can be primarily attributed to social media platforms. The emergence of communication platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter enabled fast-scale information diffusion through easier and never-before-seen pathways for connection. Rapid misinformation spread through these platforms has become a direct factor that increases lynching. The fast spread of videos and information through social media networks led to widespread child kidnapper rumours that resulted in deadly violent actions²⁰. The Indian countryside witnessed multiple lynching in 2018 because numerous WhatsApp users received messages stating child abductors were active in the area. Community members initiated violence against innocent individuals by spreading baseless rumors about nonexistent child abductors and activists until people died in violent attacks. Some targets of this violent action proved connected to those who carried it out²¹.

The propagation of false information about cow killing and religious conversion pressure has served as a frequent tool for sparking anti-Muslim communal violence. The misinformation transmission becomes stronger because rural India lacks high internet connectivity and widespread literacy skills. People with limited literacy skills in specific regions explicitly trust social media for reliable information, thus permitting fake stories to infiltrate popular consciousness easily²². Uncontrolled rumors spread through the media have triggered tensions that have resulted in many innocent deaths. Social media technology can trigger unity among people yet simultaneously presents potential risks to manipulate or spurn violence through deceptive information sharing. Any effective solution to stop mob deaths requires an investigation of how WhatsApp and similar social media tools contribute to spreading these unverified rumours²³.

3.2 Religious And Communal Polarization

Despite uplifting national pride, the multitude of religious and cultural groups across India serves as a factor that drives social conflict, especially during recent decades. Political discourse, together with spiritual and caste-based identities, has enhanced the occurrence of violent mob actions²⁴. Modern religious tensions intensify between Hindus and Muslims because of growing right-wing ideology movements together with the rising power of the Hindutva movement. In India, the defence of cows represents the main reason behind mob lynching incidents. Hindus worship the cow as a sacred animal, and the killing of cows has scored violent confrontations between individuals. Many newly reported lynching cases stem from public allegations of cow killing that have led mobs to assault both Muslims and Dalits who are accused of such actions²⁵. Vigilantes usually present these attacks as defensive actions to protect Hinduism from what they view as threats. Certain segments of society have developed increasingly intolerant religious views, leading these instances to become ideological battles that political groups with self-claimed defender status of Hinduism routinely approve.

¹⁹ Nair, A., *Law, politics, and the social media narrative: Understanding the dynamics of mob lynching in India*, 7 J. Soc. Media & Politics 2 (2020).

²⁰ Sengupta, A., *The role of social media in inciting mob violence in India*, 16 J. Inf. Tech. & Politics 2 (2019).

²¹ Ganguly, S., *Cow vigilantism and mob lynching: A case study from Rajasthan*, 12 J. Soc. Justice & Law 3 (2019).

²² Ghosh, A., *Mob lynching, social media, and the rise of vigilantism in India*, 12 Int. J. Commun. 2304 (2018).

²³ Mukherjee, R., *Mobile witnessing on WhatsApp: Vigilante virality and the anatomy of mob lynching*, 18 South Asian Popul. Cult. 1 (2020).

²⁴ Broussard, A. S., *New perspectives on lynching, race riots, and mob violence*, 30 J. Am. Ethnic Hist. 3 (2011).

²⁵ Prasad, D. & Singh, K., *Lynching by mob in India: Why?*, 48 Review J. Philos. & Soc. Sci. 2 (2023).

Communal violence finds support through the "love jihad" belief system, which Muslims allegedly utilize through interfaith marriages to convert Hindu women into practitioners of their faith. Right-wing groups without evidence have adopted the idea as justification for launching assaults against Muslim men who enter interfaith relationships with Hindu women²⁶. People use lynching's as a way to protect Hindu honor at the expense of perpetuating communal hatred among groups while maintaining a general atmosphere of distrust and mistrust. The deepening social divisions create obstacles for harmonious community interactions, which generates additional fuel for mob violence incidents to occur. The backing of contentious political beliefs by state bodies has established a perilous atmosphere through which violence remains an acceptable reaction to identified dangers. Political leaders and party members who do not speak against mob violence, alongside their occasional diplomatic support for such events, reinforce public acceptance of violent tactics as methods to protect religious and cultural interests²⁷.

3.3 Weak Law Enforcement And Political Complicity

Law enforcement agencies fail to stop mob lynching incidents effectively in India because of their inability to prevent or effectively respond to such incidents. The enforcement of murder, assault, and hate speech laws in India remains weak, especially when implemented in rural districts²⁸. Many parts of the country face understaffed police departments that demonstrate poor capabilities for handling complex social situations such as mob violence without sufficient resources. The police arrive after the mob violence has ended in numerous cases because they do not come in time to stop the lynching. The presence of police personnel does not guarantee intervention during mob action when they witness it happening. Police have reportedly shown two forms of collusion with lynching: Some officers deliberately ignore the violence while others actively take part in it when circumstances become extreme. Police incompetence allows mobs to carry out their crimes with little fear of consequences since police officers frequently remain unaccountable²⁹.

The problem worsens because of political authorities who side with the mob attacks. Some local politicians have faced charges for two conflicting behaviors: they actively back mob violence, or they fail to stop perpetrators of lynching's. Political officials back mob injustice because they need support from specified castes and communal voters. When offenders go unpunished and are suspected of lynching, the lawlessness triggers new waves of self-instigated attempts at justice³⁰. India witnesses a continuous growth in mob lynching because the country's ineffective police services pair with political trends, which offer protection to these crimes without punishment. No meaningful intervention from state authorities and their legal institutions will probably lead to ongoing violent outbreaks.

3.4 Cultural Acceptance of Vigilantism

Heroic groups throughout some sections of India now practice vigilantism to solve supposed offenses, which subsequently makes violent group actions socially accepted. The wider population accepts vigilantism because they believe that official legal systems either fail to perform effectively or maintain unfair biases³¹. Residents pick extrajudicial means for justice when they observe the formal justice system operating slowly, with corruption, or from remote locations. Actions taken by vigilantism that align with popular or righteous causes, including protection of religion and national security or moral values, expand their social acceptance³². Society views killings during religious cow defence as religious acts rather than criminal acts of violence. Community-wide acceptance of mob justice actions has led to the justification of lynching despite deficient evidence or procedural standards.

Many people living in rural areas with traditional social structures that predominate emerging communities consider lynching to be a natural continuation of communal justice practices when members

²⁶ Shaikh, F., "Love Jihad" and the Politics of Religious Conversion in India, 47 Economic and Political Weekly 19 (2012).

²⁷ Sengar, M., *The Politics of "Love Jihad": Religious Nationalism and the Culture of Hate*, 29 South Asian Studies 3 (2014).

²⁸ Makovi, K., Hagen, R. & Bearman, P., *The course of law: State intervention in southern lynch mob violence 1882-1930*, 3 Sociol. Sci. 547 (2016).

²⁹ Bhat, M. M. A., Bajaj, V. & Kumar, S. A., *The crime vanishes: Mob lynching, hate crime, and police discretion in India*, 11 Jindal Global Law Rev. 1 (2020).

³⁰ Hagen, R., Makovi, K. & Bearman, P., *The influence of political dynamics on southern lynch mob formation and lethality*, 92 Soc. Forces 2 (2013).

³¹ Jain, A., *Analysis of mob lynching and religious rights in India*, 13 Towards Excellence 1 (2021).

³² Prakash, B., *Mob lynching: A criminal injustice towards humanity?*, SSRN Electron. J. (2021).

break accepted social standards³³. Under such circumstances, the community accepts or joins violent actions, extending the collective justice pattern through mob activity.

4. Case Studies Of Mob Lynching In India

Indian society has experienced severe nationalistic outrage as mob lynching incidents increased due to multiple prominent cases that reveal rising social-political tensions. Different factors including wrong information spread by the media join with religious prejudice and the inability of authorities to prevent mob violence leading to deadly outcomes in the case studies that portray mob terror's true nature³⁴. The following case studies of mob lynching incidents in India—Dadri (2015), Alwar (2018), and Jharkhand (2019)—demonstrate the varying dimensions of this phenomenon and the far-reaching impact on Indian society.

4.1 The 2015 Dadri Lynching

The town of Dadri in Uttar Pradesh witnessed the famous and notorious incident of mob murder in 2015. A Hindian mob killed 52-year-old Muslim Mohammad Akhlaq after he became the subject of accusations that he slaughtered a cow, which many people in the Hindu faith consider a sacrilegious action. The incident began after local Hindu residents started spreading false stories about Akhlaq possessing beef in his home refrigerator. A violent mob attacked Akhlaq outside his family home as they dragged him from his residence while using sticks and stones to beat him continuously³⁵. The gunmen injured Danish, who was 22 years old, together with his father during the assault. The absence of solid proof disproving cow slaughter failed to prevent the mob from exposing intense interreligious hostility throughout the area. The tragic incident ignited massive demonstrations across the nation that started a nationwide debate about intensifying religious extremism across the country. The combination of an unproven investigation and the growing right-wing ideology during that political period worsened the situation³⁶. The failure to hold anyone responsible for Akhlaq's murder served as a clear demonstration of how law enforcement systems are inadequately handling their duties, thus leaving the family without any sense of legal protection. This incident represented more than a single occurrence because it functioned as a manifestation of ongoing interreligious tensions affecting India essentially through religious identity disputes about beef.

The brutal killing in Dadri revealed how claims can provoke public anger, which becomes more severe when politicians exploit religious matters for their benefit. The situation exposed the ineffective response of authorities because they did not take prompt or decisive action to prevent this violence from happening repeatedly³⁷.

4.2 The 2018 Alwar Lynching

Right-wing groups continue to extend their influence in India through the brutal 2018 death of Rakbar Khan at Alwar in Rajasthan, which demonstrates rising trends of violent acts related to cow protection. A vicious mob attacked Rakbar Khan, who happened to be Muslim because he was carrying what they suspected to be stolen cows. The incident started on July 20, 2018, as Khan transported cows to slaughter them at a neighbouring village³⁸. Right-wing organization members stopped Khan while accusing him of performing illegal cow smuggling activities since this action remains highly controversial across Rajasthan and numerous Indian regions. Due to the excessive beating with sticks and stones, Khan remained without medical care until it became too late for treatment. Law enforcement officials showed a delayed reaction when they came to the area multiple hours after the assault incident occurred. Several attackers presented their act as a necessary

³³ Dubey, G. & Verma, A., *Mob lynching: Socio-legal morality*, 3 Legal Res. Dev. 3 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.53724/lrd/v3n3.02>

³⁴ Shahi, G. K. & Majchrzak, T. A., *An exploratory study and prevention measures of mob lynchings: A case study of India*, in Lecture Notes in Bus. Info. Process. 103-115 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-43590-4_7

³⁵ Ganguly, S., *The 2015 Dadri Lynching: A Case of Vigilantism and Religious Intolerance in India*, 51 Economic and Political Weekly 45 (2015).

³⁶ Sharma, P., *The Dadri Lynching and the Politics of Cow Vigilantism in India*, 58 Contemporary South Asia 4 (2016).

³⁷ Ghosh, A., *The Dadri Lynching and Its Aftermath: Religious Intolerance and the Politics of Cow Vigilantism*, 30 South Asian History and Culture 1 (2016).

³⁸ Singh, V., *The 2018 Alwar Lynching: A Case Study of Cow Vigilantism and Mob Justice in India*, 23 South Asian Studies 2 (2019).

defence of Hinduism while protecting cows because they saw themselves as protective "vigilantes" who defend Hindu religious values³⁹.

The Alwar lynching incident revealed the growing power of cow protection groups because they now disregard legal boundaries during their activities. Political figures support or demonstrate no opposition to such groups, which makes them feel free to perform violent acts without any fear of legal repercussions. Many perpetrators of religious-motivated mob violence operate with complete immunity because they claim to protect religious beliefs. Public condemnation and media coverage did not prevent the attackers from going without legal punishment for several months following the alleged attack⁴⁰. Public officials and political figures who endorse vigilante actions fuel dangerous scenarios, leading mobs to feel authorized to exercise unlawful law enforcement.

4.3 The 2019 Jharkhand Lynching

A devastating incident of mob lynching happened in Jharkhand in 2019 as misinformation circulated through social media platforms. Wrongful accusations about child abduction led a mob to strike two Muslim men, including Tabrez Ansari, along with his colleague. The lies about child trafficking that gained widespread popularity on WhatsApp showed the alleged men as members of a child abduction ring that operated in that area⁴¹. Several people yielded to baseless reports about the two men and thus captured them before tying them to a tree for malicious physical assault. The entire video recorded the incident and was distributed through social media, where the fake story gained more traction and fuelled public anger. The community faced repeated delays from their law enforcement when they tried to intervene against the heinous attackers of the violent incident. The police detained Tabrez Ansari but failed to give him proper medical assistance, resulting in his death while being detained in custody for several days⁴².

Social media served as the key factor in mutating rumours into violent behaviors during this instance. Modern digital platforms accelerate the distribution of information, which increases the deadly impact of inaccurate information multiplication at an alarming rate. The failure of law enforcement to investigate and prosecute the wrongdoers left affected communities feeling helpless, worse off, and more fearful of the Jharkhand mob violence⁴³. Video and internet dissemination of the incident intensified the impact of visual media, which steered public opinion and intensified expectations, forcing the authorities to take action. When the state agencies failed to respond appropriately to the crime, it proved the state's inability to handle the increasing wave of mob violence.

5. Legal And Policy Framework

India has a complex legal system designed to protect its citizens from various forms of violence. However, when it comes to tackling the specific issue of mob lynching, the existing legal and policy measures have proven inadequate in curbing the prevalence of this alarming phenomenon. Despite having laws in place to address general acts of violence, mob lynching remains a significant challenge due to a lack of specific legal provisions, inconsistent implementation of directives, and delays in passing new laws that could more effectively address this growing issue⁴⁴. This section examines the legal framework surrounding mob lynching, the gaps in the existing rules, and the steps taken by the Indian judiciary and legislature to tackle this grave issue.

³⁹ Chatterjee, S., *Cow Vigilantism and the Alwar Lynching: An Examination of Religious and Political Dynamics*, 45 Economic and Political Weekly 29 (2018)

⁴⁰ Jain, A., *The Alwar Lynching: Hindutva, Cow Protection, and the Rise of Mob Violence in India*, 31 Journal of South Asian Politics 3 (2019).

⁴¹ Kaur, J. & Singh, B., *Emergence, reasons and prevention of mob lynching of religious minorities in India*, 18 Manchester J. Transnat'l Isl. Law & Pract. 1 (2022).

⁴² Talukdar, H. & Dutta, A., *News narratives and news distortions: A case study of Dokmoka lynching in Assam*, 8 Soc. Sci. & Humanities Open 1 (2023).

⁴³ Shyam Sundar, S., Molina, M. D. & Cho, E., *Seeing is believing: Is video modality more powerful in spreading fake news via online messaging apps?*, 26 J. Comput. Mediated Commun. 6 (2021).

⁴⁴ Muralidhar, A., *Impunity, lynching, and the erosion of democracy in India*, 20 Indian J. Hum. Rights 2 (2018).

5.1 The Indian Penal Code (Ipc) And Existing Legal Provisions

India bases its criminal law framework on the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the main legal document. Section 302 of the IPC addresses murder, while Sections 321-324 cover assault crimes along with Sections 141 through 160 dealing with rioting incidents, thus relating to mob lynching. The legal framework fails to provide mobile-specific provisions even though such violence normally brings together numerous people with communal, religious, or political tendencies. Lynching lacks particular legal clauses; therefore, police agencies face challenges in responding adequately during time-sensitive situations⁴⁵. General criminal laws that apply for murder and assault prove inadequate in cases dealing with the organized plan and structured nature of most lynching events. The perpetrators of mob lynching cannot always be easily identified for prosecution because mob attacks involve multiple parties instead of individual actors, so it is challenging to establish who bears responsibility for the murder charges. The police frequently miss the chance to arrest perpetrators during several incidents of mob lynching, so victims must wait before receiving proper justice⁴⁶.

5.2 The Prevention Of Mob Lynching Bill (2019)

The Parliament initiated the Prevention of Mob Lynching Bill as a response to rising mob lynching occurrences in 2019. Through this bill, lawmakers expressively outlaw the act of lynching as distinctive violent behavior while establishing enhanced legal procedures to combat it. These penalties apply to all those who take part in lynching incidents because the bill establishes life sentence terms with heavy monetary fines⁴⁷. The bill requests the formation of swift adjudication systems along with provisions for compensation payments that benefit lynching victims or their surviving relatives. The bill promotes a designated "Lynching Victim Relief Fund" to provide victims and their relatives monetary aid. The move will assist in judicially pursuing offenders and supplying justice to injured parties through cases where law enforcement cannot achieve quick judicial outcomes⁴⁸. A legal requirement of the bill includes creating preventive functionalities that involve establishing awareness campaigns to teach people about the harmful effects of mob violence. Legislative delays have hindered the Progress of the Prevention of Mob Lynching Bill as it continues without certainty about becoming law. The bill has not granted the necessary legislative approval, which fosters delays in creating effective solutions to address this problem. Since the legal system lacks a dedicated law criminalizing mob lynching, perpetrators tend to avoid proper prosecution for their serious crimes, leading to multiple instances of defendants escaping imprisonment. Civil society groups, together with legal experts and human rights activists, express their rising discontent due to the insufficient action that prevents the ongoing acceptance of lynching in Indian society⁴⁹.

5.3 Supreme Court Ruling On Mob Lynching (2018)

In 2018, the Supreme Court of India took major steps to stop nationwide mob lynching eruptions, which were increasing at that moment. Through a landmark court decision, the Supreme body of India found mob casualties to break fundamental human rights while ordering the state to launch immediate response methods for preventing these violent events. The Court emphasized that vulnerable communities frequently face mob aggression, and lynching represents both a physical attack and a violation of the legal system. State governments received Supreme Court orders to create specific tribunals plus speed-up courts, which would facilitate fast and effective trials against people involved in lynching activities. The Court ordered police to immediately stop lynching and charged them with finding the culprits responsible for these crimes. The Supreme Court requested the government to organize public education campaigns about the legal repercussions of conducting violent mob actions along with the hazards they represent. The legal recognition of lynching as a significant issue was positive, but uneven enforcement of these rulings exists between

⁴⁵ **Shahi, G. K. & Majchrzak, T. A.,** *An Exploratory Study and Prevention Measures of Mob Lynchings: A Case Study of India*, in *Lecture Notes in Business Information Processing*, 2023.

⁴⁶ **Kaur, J. & Singh, B.,** *Emergence, Reasons and Prevention of Mob Lynching of Religious Minorities in India*, 18 *Manchester Journal of Transnational Islamic Law and Practice*, 1 (2022).

⁴⁷ **Khan, N.,** *The Prevention of Mob Lynching Bill (2019): A Legal Framework to Combat Vigilantism in India*, 62 *Journal of Indian Law and Society* 1 (2019).

⁴⁸ **Patel, R.,** *The Prevention of Mob Lynching Bill (2019): An Examination of Its Potential Impact on Society and Legal Systems in India*, 12 *South Asian Studies Review* 3 (2020).

⁴⁹ **Singh, V.,** *Prevention of Mob Lynching Bill (2019): A Critical Analysis of Its Implications on Law and Order in India*, 47 *Economic and Political Weekly* 38 (2019).

different states of the country. States nationwide have shown insufficient compliance toward Supreme Court guidelines, yet the establishment of special fast-track courts and tribunals remains incomplete across the country⁵⁰. The police force continues to hold up investigations while murderers who commit lynching cases face no consequences. The Supreme Court's orders face complications when states fail to follow the norms consistently, which confirms the difficulties of establishing legal measures for tackling mob violence.

5.4 Challenges And Gaps In The Legal Framework

The IPC and the Prevention of Mob Lynching Bill, together with Supreme Court intervention, do not solve all problems in effectively dealing with this issue. The main obstacle to swift law enforcement in dealing with mob lynching incidents stems from their unwillingness to act because of social or political factors in specific areas⁵¹. Local government authorities who abstain from action during mob incidents in rural regions further enable these acts, and the judicial system extends the matter slowly⁵². The present laws fail to tackle the fundamental factors responsible for mob violence, which include false information propagation together with religious hatred and division among communities. The slow legislative process and narrow focus of the Prevention of Mob Lynching Bill leave significant factors about mob lynching without proper legal consideration⁵³.

6. Consequences Of Mob Lynching

Various severe impacts of Indian mob lynching events affect victims and their families together with the entire social structure throughout the nation. The direct consequence of mob violence consists of taking innocent lives, but lynching produces additional far-reaching repercussions that spread through whole communities and institutions⁵⁴. This part highlights three significant results of mob lynching, which encompass fatality and psychological wounds as well as social split and damage to institutional authority.

6.1 Loss Of Life And Psychological Trauma

The tragic first effect of mob lynching takes the form of fatal injuries sustained by innocent victims. Unverified stories and misinformation drive many instances where people lose their lives after attacks by mobs that link to social or religious matters. Such violence directed by populace groups against individuals is excessively cruel because it includes public torment followed by burning the victim or even hanging their body⁵⁵. The survivors of mob lynching victims face an absolute tragedy in the aftermath of this violence. These families endure two severe tragedies because they lose a loved one and endure social ostracism and stigma. Those affected by violent deaths due to mob lynching suffer enduring emotional damage, which makes their communities experience a profound sense of grief and helplessness⁵⁶. The psychological damage from lynching lasted for years following the event, especially among members of the community who saw the violence or anyone touched by its presence. The trauma spreads outside victim families to permeate the community as a whole, where it generates widespread fear together with distrust between people. In these situations, people develop concerns about their security and the protection of their family members because assailant mobs can intervene even when no real evidence exists. Insecure feelings created by this situation result in lasting psychological damage, which impacts both specific people and community unity⁵⁷.

⁵⁰ Patel, A. B., *Is mob lynching a contemporary social problem in India?*, 9 Int. J. Crim. & Sociol. 309 (2020).

⁵¹ Leader, T., Mullen, B. & Abrams, D., *Without mercy: The immediate impact of group size on lynch mob atrocity*, 33 Pers. & Soc. Psychol. Bull. 10 (2007).

⁵² Pathak, M. K. & Rai, S., *Mob lynching: A new form of hate crime*, 20 Medico-Legal Update 3 (2020).

⁵³ Kathuria, S., Saha, R. & Bansal, H., *Innovate or execute: Spurring the discussion on a more controlled and regulatory framework in social media platforms*, 24 Paradigm 1 (2020).

⁵⁴ Baksi, S. & Nagarajan, A., *Mob lynchings in India: A look at data and the story behind the numbers*, Newslaundry (2020).

⁵⁵ Singh, V., *Mob lynching: An expression threatening the right to life*, SSRN Electron. J. (2020).

⁵⁶ Kumar, R., Tarai, S. & Singh, M., *Conceptualizing the issues related to the mob lynching of women in India: A qualitative and quantitative analysis of media corpus and discourse*, 39 Asian Women 1 (2023).

⁵⁷ Tyagi, B., Nigam, S. & Singh, R., *A review of deep learning techniques for crowd behavior analysis*, 29 Arch. Comput. Methods Eng. 7 (2022).

6.2 Communal And Social Fragmentation

The practice of mob lynching generates severe consequences for the social structure as well as communal relations between communities in the nation. The various religious, ethnic, and caste communities that makeup India becomes specific targets whenever mob violence occurs throughout the country⁵⁸. When religious groups, including Muslims and Dalits, become targets of lynching attacks, the incidents create more severe social divisions between religious communities and caste systems. Lynching's cause permanent loss of life while unintentionally worsening social relations because they cause communities to distrust and hate each other. Each lynching incident sets off violent retaliation that leads to additional public killing sprees. People who undergo violent treatment from one group after another frequently choose between using counter-violence or organizing social demonstrations to retaliate. The reactions that follow these incidents lead to greater separations between communities, which decrease their ability to function peacefully as one unit. Such violence enables political groups to use communal tensions between communities to gather support among their followers, which maintains a long-lasting cycle of violence after the initial event⁵⁹.

Social fragmentation from mob lynching becomes a persistent problem that affects future generations. Such violence creates enduring fear, together with mistrust followed by hatred, which produces long-lasting scars throughout successive generations of affected communities. The social environments created by mob lynching events imprint divisions upon young people who later maintain and reinforce dangerous social and religious stereotypes⁶⁰. The long-term impact of mob lynching deteriorates communal harmony to such an extent that peace-building and reconciliation efforts become much harder.

6.3 Erosion Of The Rule Of Law

The activity of mob lynching poses an immediate threat to the legal framework that exists in India. All individuals must be subject to the law, as justice needs to be delivered impartially according to the rule of law as a basic principle. The practice of mobs taking justice through violence damages state legal authority by eliminating official legal pathways. The growing incidents of mob violence mark that the state has lost its power to control public disorder⁶¹. Harboring perpetrators who commit lynch activities without fear of judicial penalties communicates to society a lack of judicial system capability to secure citizen rights. The declining confidence in law enforcement agencies and the legal system produces widespread insecurity, which teaches people they lack state protection. People in such circumstances tend to "use the law" on their own because they do not trust normal law enforcement processes, which creates a dangerous downward spiral of violence⁶². A deterioration of the rule of law diminishes democratic institutions throughout society. People who feel the legal system fails to handle their problems and protect them will lose faith in democratic core values. The public trust in protective institutions decreases when rights protection fails, leading to social breakdown⁶³. Political leaders who fail to condemn or even implicitly support lynching's at their discretion make the situation much worse. The absence of state action that protects its citizen's leads to an environment where premeditated violence becomes socially acceptable, thus exposing the government's failure to enforce laws. The breakdown of social relationships between state authorities and citizens develops into more societal fragmentation while strengthening national instability⁶⁴.

7. Conclusion

India faces a serious widespread problem of mob lynching, which exists because of history along with social elements pol, political dynamics, and cultural background. This phenomenon endangers innocent lives and the key structures supporting human rights besides the principle of law enforcement and national social connections. Such violence remains unaddressed because political leaders do not enforce existing laws

⁵⁸ Stevenson, S., *The psychodynamics of lynch mobs: Grouping, ganging or lynching*, 54 Group Anal. 3 (2021).

⁵⁹ Ali, K., *Social marginalisation and scapegoating: A study of mob lynching in Pakistan and India*, 4 Pakistan Social Sci. Rev. 2 (2020).

⁶⁰ Rane, S. S., Pawar, B. S., Baviskar, P. A., Pawar, G. P. & Tadvi, S. M., *Impact of mob lynching phenomenon on well-being*, 14 IRA-Int. J. Mgmt. & Soc. Sci. 2 (2019).

⁶¹ Patel, A. B., *Is mob lynching a contemporary social problem in India?*, 9 Int. J. Crim. & Sociol. 309 (2020).

⁶² Bhattacharyya, R., *The politics of lynching: Communalism, vigilantism, and the state in India*, 42 J. South Asian Stud. 2 (2019).

⁶³ Das, N., *The rise of mob lynching and the breakdown of legal norms in India*, 68 Law, Crime & Soc. Change 3 (2017).

⁶⁴ Handique, J., *Mob lynching due to mistaken identities*, 1 The J. Unique Laws & Students 3 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.59126/v1i13a9>

effectively, and police authorities show indifference to these cases, which fuels ongoing impunity. The situation worsens because these issues harm the justice system, generating fear and social fragmentation. The fight against mob lynching requires a strengthened legal structure that enforces unique laws against lynching repeatedly. Such violence needs active political opposition from leaders who will establish a judicial space where offenders face punishment to prevent future occurrences. The solution to base causes of mob violence, including misinformation together with religious intolerance, and social divisions, requires extensive public education alongside community-building programs. Protecting citizen rights and their safety becomes possible when society develops values centered on justice and unity alongside respect for human dignity. A combination of legal revisions together with social education and political determination remains the only path that can help India defeat its increasing problem of mob lynching and rebuild trust in government institutions.