

Role of Social Media in Mob Lynching Cases in India

Kuldeep Singh

Research Scholar

Meerut College, Meerut

Email: singhkuldeepsing395@gmail.com

Dr. Dwarika Prasad

Associate Professor

Meerut College, Meerut

Abstract

India is observing a high rise in cases relating to mob lynching when the people take law into their own hands it can be dangerous for the victim who is in threat of their lives. Incidents of lynching can be linked to technology. Cell phones are used to spread rumors about cow slaughter. A new form of primitive propaganda is manufactured to forge a collective majoritarian identity. Religiously charged mobs have become active in dispensing vigilante justice. They are running amok throughout the country. Lynching has been a frequent occurrence. The present paper deals with the role of social media and forwarded messages as a technological tool for spreading fake news and cause mob lynching in the country.

Keywords: *cow slaughter, mob, lynching, fake news, what's an app, Facebook,*

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

**Kuldeep Singh
Dr. Dwarika Prasad**

*Role of Social Media in
Mob Lynching Cases in
India*

Journal Global Values,
Vol. XI, No.II
Article No.30,
pp. 258-264

[https://anubooks.com/
jgv-vol-xi-no-2-july-dec-
2020/](https://anubooks.com/jgv-vol-xi-no-2-july-dec-2020/)

[https://doi.org/10.31995/
jgv.2020.v11i02.030](https://doi.org/10.31995/jgv.2020.v11i02.030)

Introduction

Lynching has been a new trend in India. We have been observing a number of cases regarding lynching in India. Some of the reasons are fair yet some are valueless. Many innocent have been brutally tortured and some even lost their lives. The increase of lynchings in India shows a strange barbarous behavior of humans during the 20th century. Lynching involved the injury or murder of a person who is a criminal or accused of a crime against the community. One of the strangest reasons for lynching today is cow slaughter, cattle smuggling, or beef consumption. Whoever has brought in such ideology that India belongs to Hindus as Hindus are the majority in India and cow is our holy animal and any kind of ill-treatment towards cow is a crime against Hindus, they should be considered as anti-nationals as they are ones spreading hate speech against another caste or community. India is a diverse nation which is true that Hindu is the majority taking India as a whole, but we should also remember that all states joined together forms India and not all states are Hindu majority. Forcing the ideology of Hindutva all over the states of India can bring in a Civil War.

In the last year, 28 people across nine Indian states have been lynched in separate incidents, which have been triggered by rumors spread on social media. Of these more than 20 people were victims of mob lynching in the last two months alone. The latest such incident occurred on 15 July 2018 in Karnataka when a software engineer was beaten to death on the suspicion of being a kidnapper. The earlier incidents have occurred in different parts of the country, from Assam in the northeast to Maharashtra in western India. The common thread in these gruesome incidents has been child lifting rumors circulated on social media.

Rumors are an age-old phenomenon and have played their part in momentous events. The role of rumors in the 'Great Panic', leading to the French Revolution and the seizing of Bastille on 14 July 1789, is well-documented. So too is the role of rumors in the uprising of 1857 in British India. In the 18th and 19th centuries, rumors were largely spread by word of mouth. However, now modern technology is aiding the spread of rumors, leading to unexpected and often brutal outcomes. In nearly all the incidents of mob lynching and mob violence, the rumors were circulated by WhatsApp, a free messaging application owned by Facebook. It is not a coincidence that India is WhatsApp's biggest market worldwide, with more than 200 million users.

Definition of Mob Lynching

The origin of the word 'lynch' is said to have originated during the American Revolution phrased as 'Lynch Law' or which is a punishment without trial. The

word 'lynch' or 'lynch law' has been derived from two Americans known as Charles Lynch and William Lynch who were from Virginia. In 1782, Charles Lynch had written that the 'Loyalist' or 'Tories' two were supporters of the British side were provided lynch Laws to deal with the 'Negroes'

According to the English dictionary, lynch means to put to death, especially by hanging, by mob action, and without legal authority. In other words, lynching is an unlawful murder by an angry mob of people.

Mob lynching in India

India is observing a high rise in cases relating to lynching. When the people take law into their own hands it can be dangerous for the victim who is in threat of their lives. We cannot particularly state the reason for a mob lynching, but we do know that the victim has committed a certain crime towards that community hurting their sentiments where there may be a lack of legal action taken by the government leading the people to take law into their own hands. Mostly the victims of Lynch in India are minorities of that particular area such as Dalits and Muslims. There are many cases where we observe a Muslim being lynched in India. Some of the uprising reasons for mob lynching are the simplest reasons which could have been solved in a manner without violence.

The Role of Social Media

In today's world, everyone is part of an audience, and most audiences are endlessly primed to become the mob. Our sense of individual selves with separate identities and moralities is being constantly eroded by an ever-present TV and social media. The idea of being part of a greater, aggrieved identity that is in eternal conflict with other similar identities is continuously driven into everyone's minds through TV news, WhatsApp forwards Facebook posts and Twitter. The loudest and angriest among us are the stars, the preferred voices to which people turn for news and guidance on what to think and how to feel. The study shows that three types of the crowd are involved in mob violence incidents. The first type of mob violence is created by the cow vigilantes. Second, by the angry villagers, and Third by the so-called anti-mob lynching protesters. In the first case, an element of communal hatred is prominent. The second type of incidents is occurring due to growing insecurity among villagers, and in the third, anti-social and communal elements of the minority community are involved. In all these incidents innocent civilians are being killed. Public property is being destroyed and most importantly lack of trust is constantly growing between the two communities. Social media is a very effective tool in such mobilizations. Every newspaper and TV channel has set its target audience. They

are focused on only that category of news that keeps their audience connected to them.

With more than 200 million users, India is WhatsApp's biggest market. Its users forward more messages, photos, and videos than any other country in the world. Groups on WhatsApp can have a maximum of 256 people. Many of the messages that are believed to have triggered violence were forwarded to multiple groups that had more than 100 members each. But the service is also providing an unfiltered platform for fake news and religious hatred. The other factor that has fuelled violence against strangers across the country is social media. More than a dozen people have been killed across India since May in violence fuelled primarily by fake social media messages. Mob attacks and vigilantism are on the rise in India, with social media playing a role in spreading malicious rumors. In some cases, fake videos showing children being abducted from the streets have gone viral, instigating locals to target any stranger or someone who cannot speak their language. The advent of social media networks in modern nation-states has led to what some call "radically networked societies" (societies that communicate, organize and mobilize much faster than traditional hierarchical states can respond). India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology called on WhatsApp to take "immediate action to end this menace," saying the company can't evade "accountability and responsibility" when its users spread false information.

Many cases of mob lynching contain the element of fake news spread on social media especially WhatsApp as a while asking respondents about WhatsApp as a major cause of mob lynching. Clearly indicates that WhatsApp plays a major role in mob lynching through fake news

Some Relating Cases of Mob Lynching in India

Jharkhand mob lynching case 2017

On 18th may 2017 in Jharkhand we had to observe seven men being accused of child lifting and was lynched by the people. The violence occurred due to the circulation of warning messages in what's app regarding child-lifters around the district. Four of the accused were Muslim while the other three were Hindus

Kherlanji Massacre case 2006

On 29th Sept. 2006, the first case was reported in India relating to mob lynching. It occurred at Bhandara in the state of Maharashtra.

Dadri UP mob lynching case 2015

On 28th Sept. 2015, an incident of mob lynching occurred at Bisara village in G.B. Nagar district in Uttar Pradesh. A group of Hindu mob had lynched Moh.

Akhlaq and his son Danish accusing them of stealing and slaughtering a cow-calf and storing the meat for consumption this was the first case of a Hindu mob lynching a Muslim in the name of cow or beef

Thoubal, district in Manipur mob lynching case 2017

On 29th June 2017 Mohammad Rakib Ali and Mohammad Anish by an angry mob in the Thoubal District Manipur. The very next day a video clip was posted on Facebook by the Chief Minister Nongthombam Biren Singh on his page

Bulandshar U.P. mob lynching case 2018

On 3ed December 2018 A police inspector, who had probed the Akhlaq lynching case initially, and a youth Sumit died of gunshot injuries 3 Dec. 2018 as a rampaging mob protesting alleged illegal cow slaughter torched a police post here and clashed with corps, the inspector was investigating officer in the Akhlaq lynching case of Dadri between Sept.28, 2015, to November 9, 2015

Fake News and Mob-Lynching

In the name of home coming, love jihad, cow protection, and self-defense. Comps, the longstanding issues of communalism against the community are being expressed now as violence,

The crowd is making a target of people such as. Junaid, Parveen khan, Munna Ansari and Mohammad Akhlaq. President of sociology department of Jamia Milia Islamia University Prof. says that “there is an attempt to provoke communities suffering from such attacks, Reserves victimhood, which means violence doing persons, they call themselves victim

Effects of Mob Lynching in Our Societies

Mostly the innocent Person is becoming the victim of mob lynching. People break law and order, social harmony disturbs, and riot also emerges. The feeling of fear generates. Among people that obstruct the social developments and unity in the country.

Mob lynching is not an ordinary crime. Evidence collected by India spends suggests that since 2010, there have been 87 incidents of hate crimes in 289 victims of cow-related violence. Significantly, 98% of these incidents of lynching have occurred since May 2014

The Supreme Court used powerful language in calling on the union government to curb the lynching of the **mafia**. He has notified, “citizens cannot take the law into their hands and added that horrendous acts of a monocracy” cannot become the new norm.

Conclusion

Within a certain period of time, India has become has across various incidents relating to mob lynching and one of the major causes is What App forwarded message is. During this study researcher came across major findings such as forwarded message is not reliable communication among them and people went strict rules and regulation regarding the forwarded message. Fake news is also a major problem in today's Social Networking Society as many cases of mob lynching contain

Social media is a very effective tool in such mobilizations. Every newspaper and TV channel has set its target audience. They are focused on only that category of news that keeps their audience connected to them. The difference between news and views is over. We need to go beyond theoretical stands and rethink to handle the cases of mob lynching and mob violence with strategically empowered iron hands. The element of fake news spread on social media, especially WhatsApp. The Study Suggest imposing strict rules and regulation against the serious problem of mob lynching rising within India. It is worth noting that the incidents of mob lynching are not happening in the Urban and Elite class group, the rural and labor class of our society contain this problem. The people have to be made aware and educated that lynching is a serious crime.

The difference between news and views is over. W need to go beyond theoretical stands and rethink to handle the cases of mob lynching and mob violence with strategically empowered iron hands.

References

- ¹. On 20 July 2018, a Muslim man was killed in Rajasthan by vigilantes on the suspicion that he and a companion were smuggling cows. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that this incident and earlier ones involving cow vigilantes were caused by online rumors.
- ² Michael Quinion. "Lynch". World Wide Words, 2008
- ³ Waldred, Christopher. Lynching and Mob Violence. In Finkleman, Paul. Encyclopedia of African American History 1619-1895. New York City Oxford University Press, 2006, p.308
- ⁴ The Wire Staff. Two Arrests, Protests Follow After What's App Rumours Lead to Lynching of Seven in Jharkhand <http://thewire.in/138667/WhatsApp-message-turns-tribals-violent-leaves-seven-dead>
- ⁵ First Post Staffs. Khairlanji Massacr: On 10yr anniversary of the brutal attack on Dalits, Maratha agitation gains momentum. First Post 2016. <http://www.firstpost.com/>

politics/khairlanji-massacre-on-10-yr-anniversary-of-brutal-attack-on-dalits-maratha-agitation-gains-momentum-3023870.html

- 6 Internet Desk the Dadri lynching: How events unfolded. The Hindu,2015.<http://www.thehindu.com/specials/in-depth/the-dadri-lynching-how-events-unfolded/article>
- 7 Biren Singh N. Facebook page. WATCH>>Manipur Mob Violence-a clear failure of police on duty. The Northeast Today, 2017. <http://thenortheasttoday.com/watchmanipur-mob-violence-a-clear-failure-of-police-on-duty/>
- 8 www.dnaindia.com/india/report-bulandshahr-cop-who-probed-akhlaq-lynching-case-among-2-dead-in-violence-over-cow-slaughter-2692115 on dated 12/12/2020 time 02:12 pm
- 9 www.readingjunction.com/essay-mob-lynching on 12/12/2020 time 09:20 am
- 10 ibid