



Cow Vigilantism and Mob Lynching

For Prelims: States which have passed laws against mob lynching, Haryana mob lynching, Provisions available against mob lynching.

For Mains: Causes for Mob Lynching and measures taken to address it.

Why in News?

Recent incident of killing and burning of two men in Haryana on suspicion of illegal transportation, smuggling or slaughtering of cows by cow vigilantes **highlight the issue of Mob Lynching.**

What is Mob Lynching?

- **Mob lynching** refers to **targeted violence by a large group of people** which includes **offenses against the human body or property, whether public or private.**
- The mob believes they are punishing the victim for some perceived wrongdoing, even if it's not necessarily illegal and **take the law into their own hands disregarding legal rules and procedures.**

Cow Vigilantism: Cow vigilantism or lynching in the name of **Cow Protection** poses a serious threat to the **secular fabric of the nation.** Killing of people just on the suspicion of beef depicts the intolerance among the vigilantes.

What are the Causes of Mob Lynching?

- **Biases:**
 - Mob lynching is a hate crime that is rising due to the biases or prejudices among various castes, classes of people, and religions.
- **Rise of Cow Vigilante:**
 - In Hindu religion, cows are revered and worshipped. This sometimes leads to Cow vigilantism.
 - It is perpetrated by the majority towards the minority on the presumption that the minorities are in regular consumption of bovine meat.
- **Lack of Speedy Justice:**
 - Inefficient working of justice rendering authorities is the primary reason why people take law into their own hands and have no fear of the consequences.
- **The Inefficiency of Police Administration:**
 - Ineffective investigation and lack of trust in the legal process is one reason that promotes people to take matters in their own hands.

What are the Issues related to Mob Lynching?

- Mob lynching is a **violation of human dignity, Article 21 of the Constitution**, and a gross infringement of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**.
- Such incidents **violate the Right to Equality and Prohibition of discrimination**, which are enshrined in **Articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution of India**.
- However, it is **nowhere mentioned in the law of the land** and is hence simply put as murder since it has not been yet incorporated under the **Indian Penal Code**.

What are the Government Steps on the Issue?

- **Preventive Measures:**
 - In July 2017, the Supreme Court in the case of **Tahseen s. Poonawala v. UOI** had laid down several preventives, remedial and punitive measures to deal with lynching and mob violence.
 - The Supreme Court in this case aptly **referred to mob lynching as a 'horrendous act of mobocracy.'**
- **Designated Fast Track Courts:**
 - States were directed to set up **designated fast track courts in every district** to exclusively deal with cases involving mob lynchings.
- **Special Task Force:**
 - The court had also mooted the **setting up of a special task force** with the objective of **procuring intelligence reports about the people involved** in spreading hate speeches, provocative statements and fake news which could lead to mob lynchings.
- **Victim Compensation Schemes:**
 - Directions were also issued to set up **Victim compensation schemes** for relief and rehabilitation of victims.
 - A year later in **July 2019 the Supreme Court** issued notices to the Centre and several states asking them to submit the steps taken by them towards implementing the measures and file compliance reports.
 - As of now **only three states Manipur, West Bengal and Rajasthan have enacted laws against mob lynching**.
 - The **Jharkhand** Assembly has passed **Prevention of Mob Violence and Mob Lynching Bill, 2021** which has been returned by governor recently for reconsideration of a few provisions.

Way Forward

- Lynchings have no place in a democratic society like India. As a country that prides itself on being democratic, it is **crucial that mob violence is eradicated**.
- In a disturbing trend, **police inaction in cases of mob violence is often reciprocated by public sanction of extrajudicial punishments by the police**. Thus, it is important to gain public trust on legal proceedings.
- All the states and centre should look forward to bringing **comprehensive legislation** on the matter as brought by states like **Manipur, West Bengal and Rajasthan**.
- Measures need to be taken to curb the spread of fake news and hate speech.

Source: IE