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## POLITICS OF MOB –LYNCHING IN INDIA

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There has been a spurt increase in incidence of Mob lynching as indicated by Media reports. As highlighted in number of studies there has been remarkable increment in such incidents after 2014 with emergence of right wing government. Dimension of love-jihad, and Ghar vaapsi has too been highlighted by Charu Gupta in Mujeeb-ur –Rehman edited (2018), ‘Rise of Saffron power’. ‘Love jihad’ was alleged to be a movement to forcefully convert vulnerable Hindu women to Islam through trickery and marriage. Ghar wapsi signalled a synchronised vocabulary of anti-conversion by the BJP and of reconversion by the VHP and Dharm Jagran Samiti, an affiliate of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (henceforth RSS).(Mujeeb –Ur-Rehman, 2018).Gupta argues, ‘love jihad’ and ghar wapsi signal the interlocking of the social and the religious with the political, they also reflect deep-seated anxieties of Hindutva politics regarding female free will, subversive potential of love, pliable and ambiguous religious identities, and syncretic socio-religious practices, which continue to exist in different forms.. In actual practice, ‘love jihad’ was an emotive mythical campaign, a ‘delicious’ political fantasy, a lethal mobilization strategy, and a vicious crusade – a jihad against love – for political gains in elections. (Mujeeb –Ur-Rehman, 2018).

However lynching and political speeches has too been the mobilization strategy of right wing forces and too has played a determining role in strengthening communal narrative, thereby strengthening Hindutva forces. This article highlights cases and incidents of Mob lynching as reported by various media houses. It too analyzes how mob lynching and political speeches based on element of hatred strengthen ‘Hindutva Discourse’ thereby sustaining right wing dominance despite wide cultural diversity in India and is tactically employed to marginalize caste discourse.

“A recent [report](#) by *IndiaSpend*, basing itself on the content analysis of news reports, concludes that “In the first six months of 2017, 20 cow-terror attacks were reported—more than 75 per cent of the 2016 figure, which was the worst year for such violence since 2010. The attacks include mob lynching, attacks by vigilantes, murder and attempt to murder, harassment, assault and gang-rape. In two attacks, the victims/survivors were chained, stripped and beaten, while in two



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others, the victims were hanged. Another [analysis](#) of mob violence and public disorder between January 2011 and June 2017 on Observer Research Analysis, shows that cow-related violence has spiked up dramatically from five per cent of the total incidents (of Lynching or Public Disorder) to over 20 per cent by the end of June 2017”.([newslaundry.com](#))

In 2018 [livemint.com](#) highlighted, “Over the last year, there have been a number of deaths fuelled by rumours which spread like lightning via WhatsApp, the messaging platform owned by Facebook Inc. Horrific incidents have been reported from the states of Assam, Tripura, Karnataka, Jharkhand among others. A common rumour—that gangs of children-lifters are out to pick up children—have triggered almost all of these incidents of mob frenzy. Those being targeted include migrants, mentally challenged people, nomadic and denotified tribes and other vulnerable sections of society”.([livemint.com](#))

“Social media kills. It kills not only time but also men, women and even transgenders. More than 20 crore Indians use WhatsApp and a larger number have their accounts on Facebook. But the same social media may turn anti-social at the hands of rumour mongers leading to lynching. At least 16 cases of lynching have been reported from Tripura to Maharashtra since May 10, the latest being the lynching of five men in Dhule district. These incidents caused deaths of 22 people including a transgender”.([indiatoday.in](#))

**“Ayub Khan Lynching Case (June 23, 2017, J&K):** Police officer Mohammed Ayub Pandith was lynched by an angry mob after he allegedly opened fire at a group of people who caught him clicking pictures near the mosque”.([dnaindia.com](#))**“West Bengal Lynching Case (June 26, 2017, Durgapur):** On Saturday, barely two days before Eid, three Muslim youth were lynched in Durgapur village, West Bengal, by a mob of cow vigilantes over suspicion of cow theft”. ([dnaindia.com](#)).**“Guwahati Lynching Case:** A mob allegedly lynched two men in Nagaon district of Assam, after they were suspected to be cattle thieves. This was the first case of gau rakshaks going to such extremes in the state”. ([dnaindia.com](#)).**“Harpur Lynching Case:** Qasim (45) and Shamiuddin (65) were thrashed by a mob on rumours of their involvement into cow slaughter. The incident hogged headlines when a video showing both lying in a pool of blood and men from the mob shouting at them for facing the punishment for attempting cow slaughter”. ([dnaindia.com](#)).**“Junaid Lynching Case:** Naresh Rakh, the accused arrested for the murder of 16-year old Junaid Khan, told the police in his statement that he



attacked Junaid and others with a knife after they had hit him with a belt and he had started bleeding. He further said that he had thrown the murder weapon into a pond in his village at Jataula, Haryana. Rakh works as a guard at the National Museum”.(dnaindia.com). **“Alwar Lynching Case:** Man lynched to death on suspicion of being cow smuggler. In a shocking incident, another lynching has been reported from Ramgarh in Alwar district of Rajasthan. The lynching was done on suspicion of cow smuggling and comes a year after Pehlu Khan was lynched by gau rakshaks in the district. Pehlu Khan died later and the incident caused massive stir nationwide”.(dnaindia.com). **“Akhlq Lynching Case:** The accused in Mohammed Akhlq's murder case, who was dragged and killed by a mob on suspicion of eating beef In Dadri's Bishada village, may soon secure a job. Mohammad Akhlq was dragged out of his home and stoned to death on a village street after a public announcement from the local temple that the family had slaughtered a calf and eaten its meat, on September 29, 2015”. (dnaindia.com).

While political speeches of fundamental forces both among Hindus and Muslims and projection of ‘Linguistic’ war in public sphere accrues advantage to them as Caste is master signifier of Indian society and politics and exists across both among Hindus and Muslims. Studies of **Masood Falahi, Khalid Anees Ansari** too projects existence of caste in Islam. While only difference that exists between two religions is to be seen that in Hinduism caste is sanctified by religion, where as in Islam it is not sanctified by religion but in practice it too operates among Muslim community. Caste, therefore in India as argued by Sahni (2007) is “inextricably linked with communalism”. Therefore politics of lynching and hate-speeches as a tactics results in marginalization of ‘caste-narrative’,

**Hansen (1999)** argues, Hindu nationalism has emerged and taken shape neither in the political system as such nor in the religious field, but in the broader realm of what we may call public culture—the public space in which a society and its constituent individuals and communities imagine, represent, and recognize themselves through political discourse, commercial and cultural expressions, and representations of state and civic organizations. **(Hansen, 1999:4)**. It was the desire for recognition within an increasingly global horizon, and the simultaneous anxieties of being encroached upon by the Muslims, the plebeians, and the poor that over the last decade have prompted millions of Hindus to respond to the call for Hindutva at the polls and in the streets, and to embrace Hindu nationalist promises of order, discipline, and collective strength. **(Hansen, 1999:4)**.



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Mob-lynching through which fear and hatred is constructed among communities, constructing minorities and in particularly targeting Muslim community renders benefit to right wing Hindu forces. This deepens and strengthens the Hindutva discourse in public –sphere, however it simultaneously too strengthens Muslim fundamental discourse as well. Here it is pertinent to mention that ‘Fundamentalism’ as a category cannot be seen in separation but they share common characteristic. In context of India as discussed earlier, ‘Caste is the master signifier’ as entire processes of social stratification in India are controlled by Discourse of Caste. Caste in India leads to the splintering of Hindus as well as Muslims. It is on account of such position; it directly challenges dominant caste position among both Hindus and Muslims. Among Hindus, dominant castes are Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Baniyas, while among Muslims dominant castes are Syed, Pathans and Mughals. In order to eliminate Caste discourse, dominant castes to sustain their hegemony percolates communalism in public sphere and this displays through politics of Mob lynching to counter process of splintering of individual across lines of caste. Another major feature that requires understanding why dominant Media houses are involved in sustaining process of mob-lynching and spreading hatred? This is further to be seen in Caste ownership of Media houses. As majority of dominant media houses in India are controlled by two dominant castes i.e. Brahmins and Baniyas. Simultaneously right wing Hindu organizations are too being largely controlled by dominant castes. This further explains why Media houses work in alignment with right wing forces as both are striving for same object of sustaining hegemony in public sphere. And to achieve the same both resort to politics of Cultural Propaganda. Hence consistent increase in case of mob-lynching is to be seen in marginalizing other discourses based on caste etc. and to strengthify ‘Hindutva discourse’.



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