



Mob lynching in India: What's app as social media to 'anti' social media

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Abstract

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. Incidents of lynching can be linked to technology. Cell phones are used to spread rumours 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. There is silence too from the courts. Law has taken a backseat. The present paper deals with the role of what's app forwarded messages as a technological tool for spreading fake news and cause mob lynching in the country.

Keywords: lynching, mob, what's app, violence, fake news

Introduction

The origin of the word 'lynch' is said to have originated during the American Revolution phrased as 'Lynch Law' 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. During 1782, Charles Lynch had wrote that the 'Loyalist' or 'Tories' who were supporters of British side were provided Lynch Laws to deal with the 'Negroes'. It has recently led to series of protests and demonstrations (including the "Not in My Name" campaign) in many parts of the country. A spate of mob lynching were linked to messages that circulated on WhatsApp groups. The violence has been blamed on rumours of child kidnappings, spread over WhatsApp, which have led people to attack strangers. 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.

According to 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. Rise of mob lynching in 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. It has been analysed that the lynching or public disorder spiked up from 5% to over 20%. The anguish against this recent mob violence has been palpable among a large section of the citizenry. The increase of Lynching in India shows a strange barbarous behaviour of Human during the 20th century. Lynching involved 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 consuming. Mostly the victims of Lynch in India are minorities of that particular area such as Dalit's and Muslims.

Role of Social Media

With more than 200 million users, India is WhatsApp biggest market. Its users forward more messages, photo 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 which 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 rumours. In some cases, fake videos showing children being abducted from 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, organise and mobilise 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.

Cases related to Mob Lynching in India

Kherlanji Massacre 2006: On 29th September 2006, the first case reported in India relating to lynching. It occurred at Bhandara district in the state of Maharashtra. The lynching was due to a land dispute where a mob of at least 50 villagers barged into the house of the victim beating four members of the family and parading naked the wife and their daughter before they murdered them.

Jharkhand Lynching 2017 On 18th May 2017, in the districts of Jharkhand we had observe seven men being accused of

Child lifting and was lynched by the people. The violence occurred due to circulation of warning messages in WhatsApp regarding child lifters around the district. Four of the accused were Muslims while the other three were Hindus.

Thoubal, Manipur Lynching 2017 on 29th June 2017, Md Rakib Ali (19years) Md. Anish (20years) by an angry mob in Thoubal district, Manipur. The very next day a video clip was posted on Facebook by the Chief Minister Nongthombam Biren Singh on his page.

The most recent lynching in India happened at the north-eastern state of Tripura, where three people were killed in violence fuelled by the death of an 11-year-old boy on June 26. Rumours on WhatsApp that he had been a victim of organ harvesters.

Indian Law Dealing Mob Lynching

With the rising trend of lynching in India there is no objection in bringing in a law relating to lynching. The law creators should not stand indolent and place ignorance towards the matter of lynching. Lynching is a serious crime it can lead to death or injury of a person, if it leads to death of a person it will be an act of murder. Under the Indian Penal Code we have various subjects of offences spread through the list of acts by a person such as offences against abetment, offences against murder, offences relating to religion and so on, we should also include offences against lynching as it very well qualifies to be included in the Indian Penal Code along with the other offences. A criminal should be punished but the practise of mob lynching is not the way to punish a criminal. Lynching is a serious crime as it deals with a murder of a person by a group of angry mob without any legal authority. Any person acting against the legal authority is an illegal act and can be punishable by the court. The Indian Legal system has no definition and punishment regarding lynching. There is a need for a law based on lynching as it also falls under a crime committed to a person against the governments wish.

Review of Literature

Arnold (2017), the paper discuss the cases of mob lynching in India, from the first case of lynching observed in the Kherlanji to June 2017 where observed 5 cases of lynching where it proves that there is a public disorder in the society today. It imposes several questions about the current scenario of mob lynching in India and people have to be made aware and educated that lynching is a serious crime. Halai (2017) discuss the causes of mob frenzy, incidents of violence and the need for stringent laws that could bring the situation under control. Mob violence cannot be justified at all. Media continues to have debates on the issue. Loquacious leaders blame the media for being selectively outrageous.

Objectives

- To know whether or not mob lynching is what’s app forwarded message problem.
- To know at what extent what’s app users find forwarded messages credible.

Methodology

Descriptive Research Design is used for this study. The sampling technique used for the feedback study was Purposive

Sampling under Non-Probability Sampling Technique. The respondent chosen were according to the purpose of the study. This technique was used to get the right data from the interested audience and reduce the causality from respondents’ side. The planned sample framework was 90 but the researchers got 73 accurate questionnaires. The sample frame was designed keeping in mind this condition. The tool for collecting the data for the study was survey using questionnaire. The area of research was Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. The questionnaire has 11 questions where 10 questions were closed-ended and 1 question was open ended. Including the demographic questions, there were 15 questions in total.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The Data gathered for this study is organized, coded and analysed using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) where Frequency and Percentage were used to present the result of the study.

Table 1

SN		Category (s)			
1	Age (in years)	18-21	22-25	26-29	30-33
		37%	42.5%	8.2%	12.3%
2	Gender	Male		Female	
		54.8%		45.2%	
3	Occupation	Student	Employed	Self-Employed	
		67.1%	24.7%	8.2%	
4	Education	Under-Graduate	Graduate	Post-Graduate	
		32.9%	42.5%	24.7%	

Out of all, maximum number of participants i.e. 42.5% belonged to the age group of 22-25 years, followed by 37% respondent are from the age group of 18-21. 12.3% are from 30-33 years of age group. 8.2% participants are from the 26-29 age group. Male respondents were more 54.8% as compared to female respondents 45.2%. According to data analysis, 67.1% respondent are student whereas 24.7% respondent are employed followed by 8.2% respondents self-employed. 42.5% respondent are graduate followed by 32.9% respondents are under-graduate. 24.2% respondent are post-graduate.

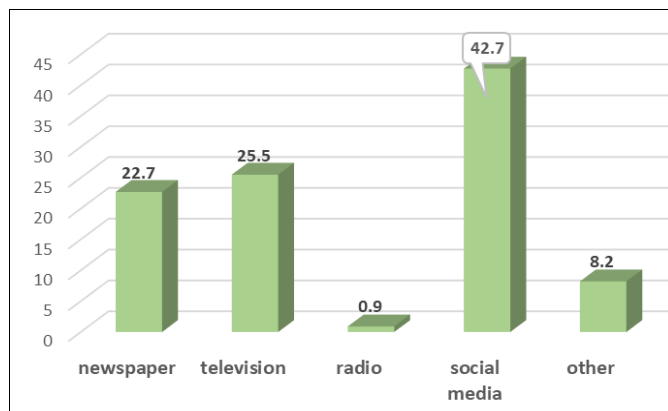


Fig 1: Source of Information about mob lynching

On the subject of source of information about mob lynching social media plays an important role for the disseminating of

information which indicates that social media is becoming major platform for communication so the involvement of fake

news risk is high because there is no restriction or regulation on the information provided by such platform.

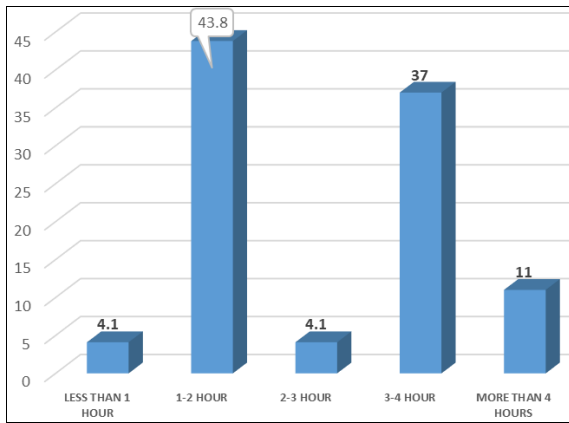


Fig 2: Time spend on what's App

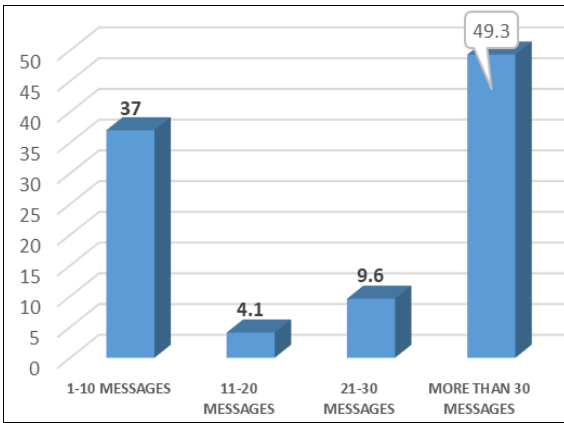


Fig 3: Forwarded message received in one day

Maximum(43.8%) respondent spend 1-2 hour on what's app whereas 37% respondent spends 3-4 hours on what's app followed by 11% respondent spends more than 4 hours using what's app and 4.1% respondent spends 2-3 hours and less than 1 hour on what's app respectively. 49.3% respondent says that they receive more than 30 messages per day this

indicates there is large circle of forwarded messages among what's app users, whereas 37% respondent receives 1-10 forwarded messages per day. 9.6% respondent receive 21-30 messages per day and 4.1% respondent receive 11-20 messages per day.

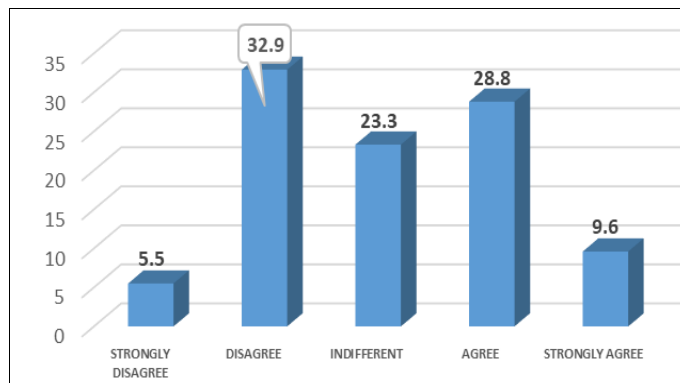


Fig 4: Reliability of What'sApp forwarded messages

This data revealed that forward message are not found reliable among respondents. According to data obtain, 32.9% respondent disagree with the statement that what's app

forwarded messages are reliable whereas 28.8% respondent feels that forwarded messages are reliable.

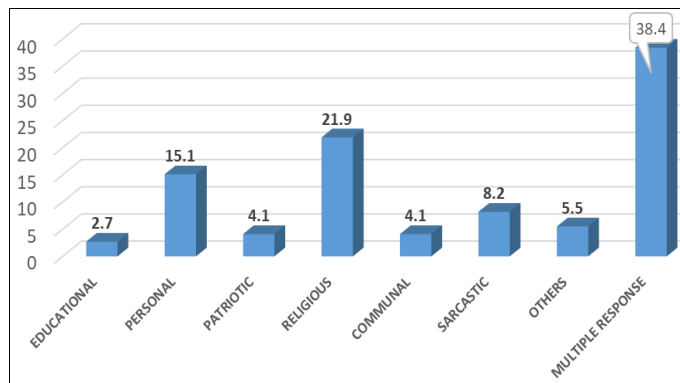


Fig 5: Type of forwarded messages you get

38.4% respondent says that they get different type of forwarded messages like religious, communal, patriotic, educational, and sarcastic. Apart from multiple responses most of the respondent (21.9%) respondent says that they get forwarded messages based on religion followed by 15.1% respondent receive personal forwarded message. Whereas 8.2% respondent receives sarcastic forwarded messages. 5.5% respondent receives other type of forwarded messages. 4.1% respondent receives communal and patriotic messages respectively and 2.7% respondent receives educational messages.

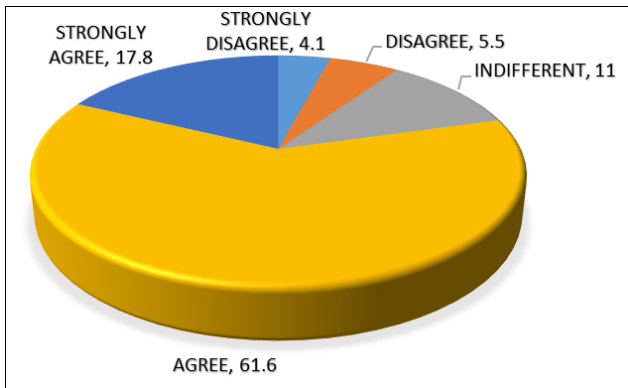


Fig 6: What's App is the major cause for Lynching

Many cases of mob lynching contain the element of fake news spread on social media especially what's app, while asking respondent about the what's app as a major cause of mob lynching, 61.6% respondent agree with the statement that what's app is the major cause of mob lynching whereas 17.8% are strongly agree with the statement. This clearly indicates that what's app plays a major role in Mob lynching through fake news.

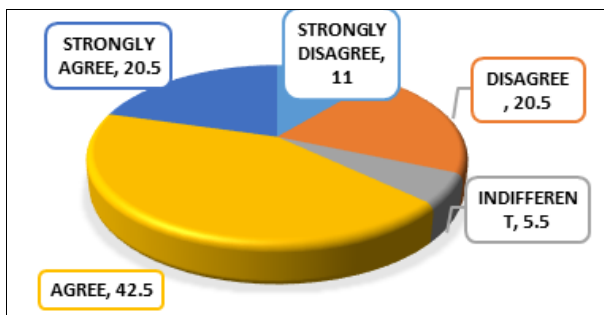


Fig 8: What's App should be regulated

The result shows that 42.5% respondent Agree and 20.5% respondent are strongly agree with the statement that what's app should be regulated with certain guidelines about using it and imposing strict laws against who misuse the what's App for unethical purpose. By regulating what's app the issue of fake news will get control. On the subject of restriction on forwarded messages can control the mob lynching, most of the respondent (54.8%) agree with the statement that restricting what's app message can limit mob lynching followed by 12.3% respondent are strongly agree with the statement. Although the government has imposed the restriction of forwarded messages in temporary basis still there is a need for permanent guidelines about using the what's app and forward message.

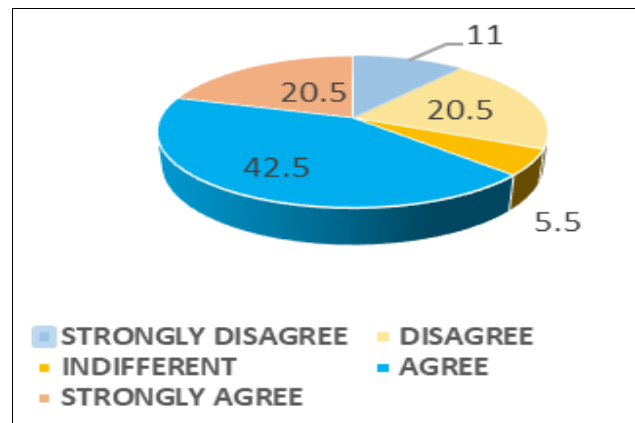


Fig 7

The result shows that 42.5% respondent Agree with the statement that what's app should be regulated with certain guidelines about using it and imposing strict laws against who misuse the Application for unethical purpose, whereas 20.5% respondent are strongly agree with the statement and same percent of respondent are disagree with the statement. 11% respondent are strongly disagree about regulation of what's app and 5.5% respondent have no opinion about the statement.

Table 2

	Cattle Slaughter	Child Kidnapping	Love-jihad	Rape
Very Less	7.3	8.2	3.6	9.1
Less	14.5	17.3	10.9	10.9
Can't Say	13.6	9.1	15.5	16.4
Much	33.6	38.2	35.5	24.5
Very Much	30.9	27.3	34.5	39.1

There are different reasons that are causing mob lynching in the country some of them are mentioned in the above table out of which the major cause of mob lynching is rape about 39% respondent says that rape is the major causes than any other reason after that most of the respondent (38.2%) thinks that child kidnapping is the major cause, lynching in Jharkhand and Tripura in the year 2018 was the evidence of this statement, moving forward after child kidnapping love jihad comes out to be the reason of mob-lynching of people. 35.5%

respondent says that love jihad cause mob lynching after that 33.6% respondent says that cow slaughter becomes the reason for mob lynching. In Dadri's Bishara village on September 28, a 50-yearold Mohammad Akhlaq was lynched and his son Danish (22) was brutally beaten up as punishment for allegedly eating beef on Eid and 'storing it' for later consumption. It is worth to mention that the major reason behind mob lynching is religious factor in India while there is no fear among the persons who spread the rumour on what's app because till now there is no such establish way to identify the accused.

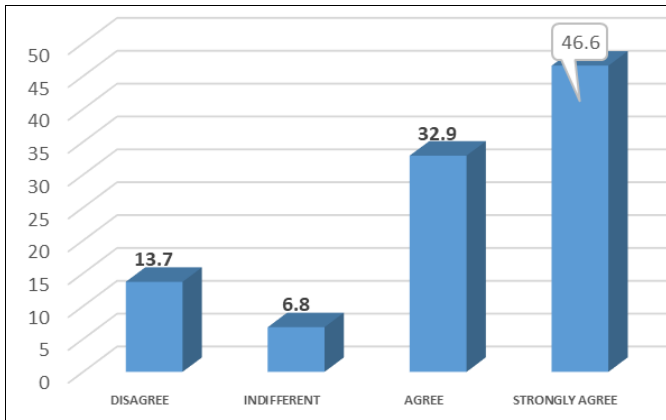


Fig 8: Identified and traceable id for what's app user

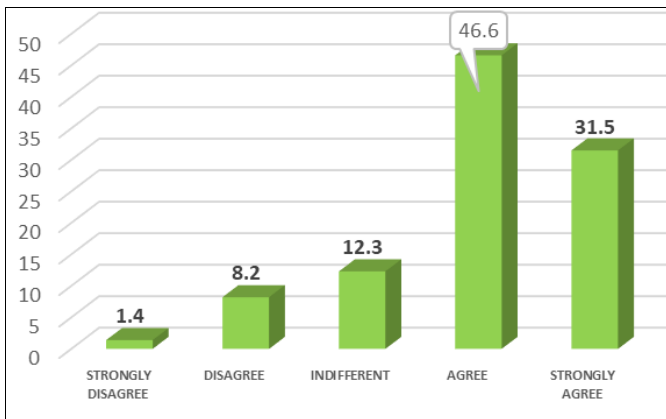


Fig 9: Change in policy about forwarding message

46.6% respondent are strongly agree with the statement that there should be Identified and traceable id for what's app user whereas 32.9% respondent are agree with the statement followed by 6.8% respondent have no opinion about this statement and 13.7% respondent are disagree with the statement that there should be Identified and traceable id for what's app user. 46.6% respondent agree with the statement that what's app need to change the policy about forwarding messages and not for temporary basis whereas 31.5% respondent are strongly agree with the statement. 12.3% respondent have no opinion. 8.2% respondent disagree with the statement and 1.4% respondent totally disagree with the statement that what's app need to change the policy about forwarding messages.

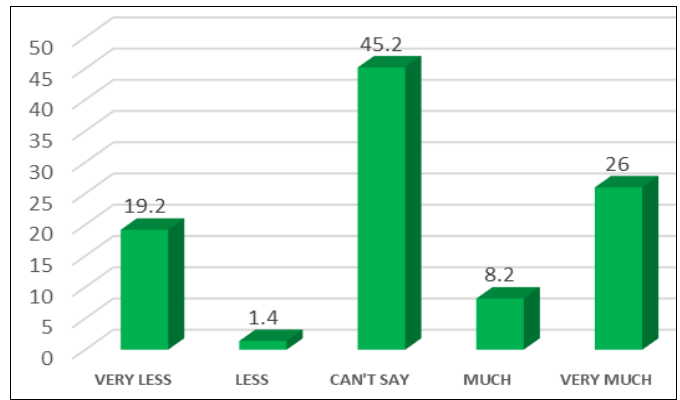


Fig 10: How much forwarded message affects you

45.2% respondent have no opinion whereas 26% respondent are very much affected by forwarded messages and 19.2% respondent says that forwarded messages affects them very less. 8.2% respondent are much affected by forwarded messages and 1.4% respondent are less affected by the forwarded messages.

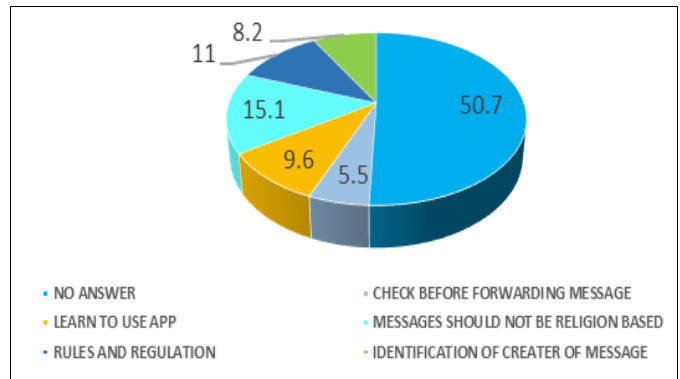


Fig 11: Suggestion to regulate misleading information in what's app

The open ended question asked about the suggestion to regulate misleading information on what's app, 50.7% respondent didn't answer the question whereas 15.1% respondent says that messages should not be religious or communal based followed by 11% respondent says that there must be rules and regulation for controlling misleading information. 9.6% respondent said that people should learn to use the app. 8.2% respondent says that creator of the message should be identified whereas 5.5% respondent says that checking the messages before forwarding messages can regulate the misleading information.

Findings and Conclusion

Within certain period of time India has come across various incidents related to Mob lynching and its one of the major cause 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 want strict rules and regulation regarding forwarded message. Fake News is also a major problem in today's Social Networking Society as many cases of mob lynching contain

the element of fake news spread on social media especially what's app. The study suggest to impose strict rules and regulation against the serious problem of mob lynching rising within India. It is worth to note that the incidents of mob lynching are not happening in Urban and Elite class group, the rural and labour class of our society contain this problem, so it is suggest that these class of society should indulge in technology learning and how they can safety use it.

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