

## **Hate Crime Victimisation: A study about the impromptu incitement of violent hatred crimes in India**

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**ABSTRACT:** Hate crimes are also known as bias - motivated crimes which drive the perpetrator to attack a victim with regard to their association with certain race, community, gender, religion, descent, sexuality, etc. The rate of these crimes has tremendously increased in the recent years, especially in India. This paper has a pessimistic approach to understand the magnitude of effect caused by these cruel acts and subsequently causing personal and societal dysfunction. In spite of the potential barriers which are being a hindrance in determining and analysing the root cause of hate crimes, there are various surveys and studies which have identified the patterns and the frequency of crimes of this kind. Both clinical and empirical studies in recent years show that the victims are more prone to depression, violence, social deterioration and suicidal attempts. It is often failed to consider as a crime against the society on the whole but only presumed to be a crime against a specific person. Such heinous acts of hatred raise questions about the extent of its effect over the secure upbringing of our children in the future. This paper starts by citing historical happenings about the past account of such acts, enumerates the possible effects of hate crimes that vandalises the social equilibrium and also attempts to draw about a rational solution to it.

**KEY WORDS:** Victim, hate crime, hatred, legislations, law, research, surveys, studies, violence, society, cruel, inhumane.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The word “Crime” was originated from Latin term “Crimen” which means “to take charge.” Defining what is crime has never been easy nor it has been accurate. Crime is a wide concept which covers a huge range of human traits and behaviours. Sir William Blackstone, a notable English jurist, well known for his writing called “the Commentaries on the Laws of England” defined crime in 1968 as “an act committed or omitted in violation of a public law either forbidding or commanding it”. Another eminent jurist Stephen defined crime as “an act forbidden by law which is at the same time revolting to moral sentiments of the society.” According to his definition of Crime, anything in contravention to moral trajectory of people in a society involved in a crime can be deemed to be a Crime. The nature of Hate Crimes can be very well associated to this definition. Since crime is a public wrong i.e. a harm done against the society, any type of ill act against a specific person or a group of people with regard to their association with specific caste, creed, religion, colour, descent, etc. is also a crime.<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International India’s interactive website “Halt the Hate” has found that the record of hate crimes have witnessed growing rise in numbers since 2016. Taking into consideration only the first six months of 2019 alone, a number of 180 incidents of alleged hate crimes have been recorded by the website which is nearly double than the previous three years’ counts.<sup>2</sup> One of the main fundamental rights provided under Part III of the Constitution of India promises prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, descent or place of birth.<sup>3</sup> However this hate crimes defeat the very purpose of the promised fundamental right.

However it is very unfortunate to exactly obtain the actual extent of hate crimes happenings in India because the criminal justice system or administration in India does not recognise hate crime as a separate offence. Consequently, there comes a need for a regulatory authority

specially to govern, punish and regulate the alarming rise in hate crimes. In the absence of any special provisions prohibiting acts of hatred, these acts are being considered under various legal provisions such as ‘rioting’, ‘unlawful assembly’, ‘murder’, ‘criminal intimidation’, etc. which adulterate the magnitude of the offences which subsequently leads to misleading data of hate crimes. India being demographically diverse, the level of hate crimes can bring about a major impact over the political and economic stability of the country. A total of 721 hate crimes has been documented between the years 2015 and 2019.<sup>4</sup> This rate of hate crimes has shown to be steadily rising over the past year. There is also a fear of disrupting their social equilibrium and resulting in societal dysfunction. However in July 2018, the Supreme Court of India laid down certain guidelines in mob violence and lynching cases in response to public interest litigations that had previously questioned the adequate handling of cases of this kind.

- The Concept of Crime, <https://www.abysinialaw.com/about-us/item/427-the-concept-of-crime>
- Hate Crime Reports On An Alarming Rise – Reveals Amnesty International India’s ‘Halt The Hate’, <https://amnesty.org.in/news-update/hate-crime-reports-on-an-alarming-rise-reveals-amnesty-international-indias-halt-the-hate/>
- Article 15, the Constitution of India.
- Amnesty International India
- The Case For Collecting Hate Crimes Data In India, [http://www.jgls.edu.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/9th\\_issue\\_law\\_and\\_policy\\_brief\\_sep\\_2018.pdf](http://www.jgls.edu.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/9th_issue_law_and_policy_brief_sep_2018.pdf)

### **INSTIGATION OF HATE CRIMES:**

Hate crimes can be induced due to various societal or historical reasons against a particular group or a person. Sometimes crimes of atrocities can also be an ultimate consequence of the social ambience. These crimes are most likely to take place when a particular class or group of people in a society have an upper hand over the other classes or groups of people in that particular society. However, some of the crimes of these kind can be done as a defence against an apprehended or presumed threat from another class of people. Sometimes it is committed with the desire to protect one’s own territory. But majority of these crimes are done to retaliate as an act of revenge.<sup>6</sup> Recently, to Muslim men were beaten up by mobs in Jharkhand in Mumbai, demanding they shout ‘Jai Shree Ram’ where one of them died due to internal bleeding.<sup>7</sup> On June 22, 2017, Junaid Khan, a 16-year-old boy from Delhi was stabbed to death by a mob of people due to the altercation of seats while he was travelling in train. The mob was heard saying “Tum mulle ho, kattulle ho. Gai ka gosh khate ho” which means “You are Muslims, circumcised. You eat cow meat.” However it is sad to state that Junaid hasn’t been the only victim of mob violence in India. Junaid’s killers were driven by prejudice and hostility towards their religious identity.

In another incident, a mob entered into a Muslim family’s house, attacked its members and resulted in brutal death one of the family members because it was said to the mob that they were having cow meat at home.<sup>8</sup> This is a very evident example of the magnitude of hate crimes in India. It reflects the very nature of the crime which is precisely the identity of the victim. According to Indiaspend.in’s Hate Crime Watch , 62% of the victims of religiously

motivated hate crimes who are reported to English news media were Muslims, 13% were Christians, 10% were Hindus and the rest of the percentage were unknown. As per the media report age, bias, prejudice, hostility towards religion or the identity of the victims plays as the most crucial aspect in this hate driven crimes. It is important to understand that crimes of this nature have a great impact over the criminal justice or administration system of India. There is a political and social urgency to put an end to these crimes. The NCRB,<sup>9</sup> which collects official crimes data in India, reportedly has decided to collect data on “mob lynching”. But the data that could be possibly collected by the bureau will not give an exact number or extent of mob violence or lynching in India. On the account of the absence of data, it has become necessary to rely on other sources such as media which brings the happenings of these crimes to the light.

- What is hate crime? Discuss the various reasons causing hate crimes – <https://blog.forumias.com/public/page/answered-what-is-hate-crime-discuss-various-causes-and-measures-to-stop-hate-crimes-in-india>
- Insights mindmaps: “Hate Crimes In India” – <https://www.insightsonindia.com/2019/07/13/insights-mindmaps-hate-crimes-in-india/>
- “Why India Man Was Lynched over Beef Rumours,” BBC News, October 1, 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india34409354>
- National Crimes Record Bureau

It must be admitted that hate crimes are not new in India and they are obviously not limited to religious-based hate crimes. They are indeed caste-based hate crimes and gender-based hate crimes which had been prevailing in India for a long time. But one key difference between caste-based hate crimes, gender-based hate crimes and religion-based hate crimes is that the crime data for the former is being maintained by the NCRB. There is a separate field where crimes against scheduled caste and tribe atrocities has been recorded. However, the NCRB has not been able to keep up the data of religion driven hate crimes in India.<sup>10</sup>

### **COURT DIRECTIVES:**

It was in the case of Tehseen Poonawalla v. Union of India<sup>11</sup>, the Honourable Supreme Court of India stepped up to frame a judgement including wide variety of terms such as mob violence, lynching, vigilantism, target specific crime, etc. The judgement made it necessary for the government to obtain the specific data and the commencing points of violence of this kind. The petitioner being a social activist, directed the respondent – the state to take necessary actions in order to put an end to violence against cows and also further directed to take down the violent content from social media which are being uploaded by the perpetrators themselves. Headed by the Chief Justice Dipak Misra, the three-judge bench of the Supreme Court of India held that cow vigilantism and acts of lynching are severely condemned and also stated that:

“That there cannot be a right higher than the right to live with dignity and further to be treated with humanness that the law provides. What the law provides may be taken away by lawful means; that is the fundamental concept of law. No one is entitled to shake the said foundation. No citizen can assault the human dignity of another, for such an action would comatose the

majesty of law. In a civilized society, it is the fear of law that prevents crimes. Commencing from the legal space of democratic Athens till the legal system of modern societies today, the law makers try to prevent crimes and make the people aware of the same but some persons who develop masterly skill to transgress the law jostle in the streets that eventually leads to an atmosphere which witnesses bloodshed and tears. When the preventive measures face failure, the crime takes place and then there have to be remedial and punitive measures. Steps to be taken at every stage for implementation of law are extremely important.”<sup>12</sup>

*The court also observed that what started as a individually targeted attack has now become a widespread threat to the entire society. It recognised the need for requirements of adequate laws and policies to prevent the occurrence on various levels. Mob violence is not entirely spontaneous. Some may be discussed and organised on different scales and on different levels. Rather than the mode of violence, it is the motivating factor that draws the Indian criminal justice system’s special attention to crimes of this nature.*<sup>13</sup>

- (2018) 9 SCC 501
- Lynching And Mob Violence: Supreme Court Issues Guidelines, <https://www.vakilno1.com/legal-news/lynching-and-mob-violence-supreme-court-issues-guidelines.html>
- The Case For Collecting Hate Crimes Data In India, [http://www.jgls.edu.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/9th\\_issue\\_law\\_and\\_policy\\_brief\\_sep\\_2018.pdf](http://www.jgls.edu.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/9th_issue_law_and_policy_brief_sep_2018.pdf)
- The Case For Collecting Hate Crimes Data In India, [http://www.jgls.edu.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/9th\\_issue\\_law\\_and\\_policy\\_brief\\_sep\\_2018.pdf](http://www.jgls.edu.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/9th_issue_law_and_policy_brief_sep_2018.pdf)

#### **PREPOSITIONS OF THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA:**

In the light of the recent cases where people are being targeted, tortured, beaten or the worst case scenario, are being killed, the Supreme Court of India laid down specific recommendations to the government of India to create a special legislation against lynching. The court passed an order on 30.07.2018 where it stated that “*in the civilised society, it is the fear of law that prevents crime.*” The following are the guidelines issued by the Supreme Court of India in the passed order:

- The State Government appoint officers in each district and to be designated them as a special task force in order to prevent mob lynching, to provide intelligence reports about the people who are most likely to commit the offence and to prevent spreading of fake news which would subsequently lead to the inducement of hate crime.
- .The state government to maintain the reports and information about mob violence cases that happened in the past so that they can be extra cautious and to appoint extra officers in such places.
- To spread awareness to the people about the serious legal consequences that might be attracted if indulge in an hate crime.
- To curtail and have control over the spread of fake news which might incite the very crime that the law is trying to prevent.
- The Police to file the FIR<sup>14</sup> against the persons who give out fake news and also to conduct proper investigation.

- The state government to plan and prepare a victim compensation scheme within one month from the date of this order.
- On the account of failure to comply with the said guidelines by a police officer or any officer working in the administrative system, it would be considered as an act of deliberate negligence and misconduct for which appropriate action could be taken.

It was also further recommended to the Parliament of India to make lynching as a separate offence and also to provide an appropriate punishment for the same. With regard to the same, the Ministry of home affairs had a detailed discussion with various stakeholders and agreed that the Ministry of Law will get to decide whether it is necessary to create new law or to amend the existing Indian penal code 1860.<sup>15</sup> It is the duty of the law of the land to ensure an orderly society and that every citizen of the country must get to enjoy his rights<sup>16</sup> and interests vested upon him by the Constitution of India, 1950. Adopting a law specially designed for crimes of this nature will empower the government to keep track and to have control over the frequency of occurrences. It also prevents the perpetrator or the victim to take matters into their own hands. It enables the respective authority to find the guilty mind after a fair trial.<sup>17</sup>

- First Information Report
- Recommendations Of The Supreme Court Of India On Criminalizing Mob Lynching- <http://www.theindianlawyer.in/blog/2018/08/04/recommendations-supreme-court-india-criminalizing-mob-lynching/>
  - Part III of the Constitution of India
  - Designating appropriate law would enable the government to have clarity over the matter and enforce the rule against bias by hearing both sides.

According to Section 46 of the Criminal Procedure Code<sup>18</sup> in Germany, the sentencing in violent crime must be based on the motives in the aims of the offenders where there is a deviation from human morals and human dignity. In spite of there being provisions in the Indian penal code where it punishes prevents hate crimes, not many police officers or administrative officers for that matter, are aware of it. On May 2019, the human rights watch report pointed out that only some states comply with the guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court of India. Even the police officers who did comply, they did so partially. Even though there are existing provisions, it does not seem to lower the rate of hate crimes. The media is also publishing inaccurate and sometimes false data which stirs great amount of confusion among the general public.<sup>19</sup>

### **CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES:**

The concerned about the growing rate of hate crimes in India is increasing both domestically and internationally. On a global perspective, India is being considered as a country with a increasing rate of hate crimes including hate speech in electoral campaign. Even now, most of the perpetrators are being released on bail or some of them are not being investigated properly. The actual extent of hate crimes in India is not unknown to the law with some exceptions because crimes of atrocities are not being considered as a separate and distinct

offences. A Muslim migrant worker was bludgeoned to death where his dead body set ablaze and the perpetrator blamed him for “love jihad”. All of this was caught on camera. “Love jihad” is an extremist phrase that call out Muslim men forcibly or fraudulently converting Hindu women in the name of marriage.<sup>20</sup> a mob of boys forcibly entered and house of a Muslim family late in the night where the couple was killed and woman and a minor girls were raped. Before killing them they exclaimed that they had eaten cow meat.<sup>21</sup> All these are just some examples of hatred crimes. Sadly, India with a huge population and with being a developing nation, it cannot wait longer. The executor of the country must act swiftly according to the guidelines of Supreme Court. But unfortunately a few days after the verdict of the *Tehseen Poonawalla v. Union of India*, another man Rabhkar Khan was lynched to death. Now the requirement is not just limited to find the perpetrators but also to ensure that the police involved in this specific case has acted in accordance to the guidelines of the Supreme Court.<sup>22</sup>

- Section 46- The decision on the application shall be taken by the court which would have been competent to decide on the facts of the case if the act concerned had been completed on time.
- Rising incidents of hate crimes point to the growing power-  
<https://iasexamportal.com/editorial-gist/10-07-2019-rising-incidents-of-hate-crimes-point-to-the-growing-power-of-the-lumpen-the-hindu>
- “Shambhu Lal Regar Gave Afrajuls Murder A Love Jihad Angle To Hide His Affair, States Police Chargesheet,” January 15, 2018, <https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/shambhu-lal-regargave-afrajuls-murder-a-love-jihad-angle-to-hide-his-affair-sta/306866>
- Anand Kochukudy, “Inside Mewat, Where Biryani Raids, Gangrapes and Murder Scarred Eid,” September 16, 2016, <https://www.dailyo.in/politics/biryani-policing-mewat-gangrapesharyana-gau-rakshak-khattar/story/1/12958.html>
- Checking the new abnormal – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/checking-the-new-abnormal/article24595595.ece>

It has become necessary to put an end to these crimes because it is profoundly alters the social and the cultural fabric of the nation. It imbibes deep-rooted hate among the young generations of India.

#### **THE WAY FORWARD:**

Most of the victims of hate crime are reluctant to come forward of their victimisation for many reasons. On an average, since most of the victims are from marginalised communities, they hesitate to narrate the story to the authorities because of the fear of getting judged and of being accused of lying. The EU Victims Derivative<sup>23</sup> states the special needs of a victim of hate crime. A similar set of provision must be adopted in India in order to deal with the wellness of the victims. Another important aspect to be considered is the gender of the victim. While prosecuting the case, it is necessary for the prosecutors to consider both the aspects of the case. Some of the victims might even go to the extent of feeling that they might be mistreated by the authorities and hence they might refine from revealing the truth. Being the important part of the case, the victim must be reassured that they deserve justice. The cultural differences, trustworthiness, protection, security concerns, cooperation, etc. must kept in mind while dealing with the victim.<sup>24</sup>

It is important to not consider the matter of hate crimes in relation to terrorism. The Parliament of India can adopt an omnibus act with special regard to offences of hate crimes. The rules and guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court of India must be strictly followed by the states of the country. The State Government must act swiftly by making it imperative to all the police officers and offices in administrative services to adhere by the guidelines. Harsh and severe punishments must be mandated by the respective State Governments by setting benchmarks for policeman and administrators to deal with crimes of atrocity. The Cyber laws of the country must be tightened so that fake or false information, news, threats will not affect the societal equilibrium. Children must be taught about the promised fundamental rights and fundamental duties with regard to the directive principles of state policy. Their awareness about the growing rate of hate crimes in India might potentially bring an end to the current situation. It must be made mandatory for all the children to be educated about the cries of hatred. Already the Rajasthan administration has introduced a bill which prohibits cow vigilantism but however it is the only hate crime that it restricts. But first of all, the drafting of necessary legal provision must be made as the top priority. Priests can reach the value of tolerance and respect that are common to all religions. This will help spread awareness among the uneducated class of people in India.

- European Commission
- Prosecuting Hate Crimes-

<http://www.mitramiss.gob.es/oberaxe/ficheros/documentos/ProsecutingHateCrimes.pdf>

- Insights mindmaps: “Hate Crimes In India” –

<https://www.insightsonindia.com/2019/07/13/insights-mindmaps-hate-crimes-in-india/>

### CONCLUSION:

Hate crimes of the criminal acts that are committed on the basis of bias, prejudice and hostility towards a specific class of people. The rate of hate crimes is growing at an alarming pace in India. There are evidences where Hindu Muslim violence in colonial and postcolonial India has taken place in the form of riots. Considering from an economic perspective, prosperity and well-being of the minor communities in India can also be considered as one of the driving factors. The role of social media plays a very crucial role in adjudicating hate crimes. It at times facilitates such violence. After a comparative analysis, it has become evident that India falls behind Syria when it comes to the number of hate crimes that take place annually. While the Constitution of India promises a secular country to all its citizens, these crimes defeat the entire purpose of the basic features of the Constitution. With various domestic organisations and international human rights organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch report, the rise in the average death every year by communal violence is easy to identify. In 2018 the report, the United Nations Human Rights Office has expressed its concerns over attacking minorities and Dalits in India.<sup>26</sup> the central government has delegated the power to the state government to legislation which criminalises hate crimes. Meanwhile, these hate crimes are being booked under various other offences engulfed in the Indian Penal Code 1860.<sup>27</sup> Having around 600 million people under the age of 25 in India, they are more exposed to technology and education than before. However apart of that population is what threatens the social stability of the country.<sup>28</sup> It is high time to

deviate the young minds of the country away from social ill wills such as lynching, mob violence, religion-based crimes, gender-based crimes, caste-based crimes, et cetera<sup>29</sup>. The young people must harbour the current scenario of the minority groups in India and to strive together to make the country a better place.<sup>30</sup>

- Dominance Of Majoritarian Politics And Hate Crimes Against Religious Minorities In India, 2009 To 2018-  
[https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1274&context=econ\\_workingpaper](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1274&context=econ_workingpaper)
- Hate crimes are soaring in India and oppressed castes are the prime targets – <https://peoplesdispatch.org/2019/10/13/hate-crimes-are-soaring-in-india-and-oppressed-castes-are-the-prime-targets/>
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- ‘We don’t have any fear’: India’s angry young men and its lynch mob crisis-[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/we-dont-have-any-fear-indias-angry-young-men-and-its-lynch-mob-crisis/2018/08/26/9a0a247a-a0aa-11e8-a3dd-2a1991f075d5\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/we-dont-have-any-fear-indias-angry-young-men-and-its-lynch-mob-crisis/2018/08/26/9a0a247a-a0aa-11e8-a3dd-2a1991f075d5_story.html)
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