



Committee Headed by Home Secretary Submitted Report on Lynching

A committee headed by Home Secretary recently submitted its report on enacting a law to curb lynching.

Background

Aftermath of Lynching incident in Alwar on July 20, the Central government formed a panel of Group of Ministers (GoM) under the chairmanship of Union Home Minister and Committee of Secretaries under Home Secretary, to submit a report on enacting a law to curb lynching.

The committee also deliberated upon the steps to curb fake news and misinformation and child pornography.

Recommendation

- The Committee has suggested tightening the existing law by inserting clauses in the Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure through parliamentary approval.
 - Lynching cases currently get covered under Section 302 (murder), 307 (attempt to murder), 323 (causing voluntary hurt) 147 (rioting), 148 (rioting armed with deadly weapons) and 149 (unlawful assembly) of the Indian Penal Code.
- The Committee has suggested that social media platforms — Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Twitter — will be made accountable for not blocking malicious posts/videos when brought to their notice. And social media platforms should act in a time-bound manner.
- The Committee has suggested that an FIR could be lodged against their country heads of social media platforms if they fail to comply with government orders and they will be prosecuted under the law.

Initiatives by Civil Society:

- Civil Society also made efforts to draft a bill against Mob lynching. National Campaign Against Mob Lynching has drafted a bill known as the Manav Suraksha Kanoon (MASUKA) against lynch mobs. It proposed to make lynching a non-bailable offense and the punishment for the ones convicted under it with life imprisonment.

Steps taken by the government to curb lynching

- After SC directives, the Centre has asked state governments and UT's to appoint an officer in each district at the level of Superintendent of Police, set up a special task force to gather intelligence, and closely monitor social media contents to prevent mob attacks on suspicion of being child-lifters or cattle smugglers.

Way forward

- Legal Experts are of opinion that existing laws are sufficient to tackle mob violence. Enacting a new law is unlikely to make much difference. Better enforcement of existing laws is more

important than new law.

- Committee's recommendation makes Social media solely responsible for lynchings and fake news. The real problem is not a messaging service, but how the people who use it. The same messaging service that was used to organize lynchings, was used to a completely different effect in Kerala where it helped save many lives.

[Read about SC Guidelines.](#)

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