

1. **lynching** (noun) – an act of punishing/killing someone by hanging for claimed offence by the group of people without legal trail.
2. **redux** (adjective) – brought back; revived, restored.
3. **sordid** (adjective) – disreputable, dishonourable, shameful.
4. **phenomenon** (noun) – occurrence, event, happening.
5. **any time soon** (phrase) – in the near future.
6. **come under** (phrasal verb) – be subjected to.
7. **suspicion** (noun) – misgiving, doubt/qualm, scepticism.
8. **mete out** (phrasal verb) – dispense, give out, allot (justice/punishment).
9. **vigilante** (noun) – a member of the self-appointed group which unofficially punishing crimes.
10. **vigilantism** (noun) – unofficial way of punishing crime by a self-appointed group of people.
11. **slaughter** (noun) – the killing of animals for food.
12. **on display** (phrase) – (something kept) in a place that is able to be seen by many people.
13. **invariably** (adverb) – always, every time/each time; habitually/inevitably.
14. **accompany** (verb) – coincide with, coexist with, go with.
15. **sectarian** (adjective) – denoting a sect (a group of people); factional, partisan.
16. **outcry** (noun) – protest, objections, opposition.
17. **allegedly** (adverb) – supposedly, unprovenly, reportedly.
18. **typify** (verb) – epitomize, exemplify, represent/characterize.
19. **apathy** (noun) – disregard, lack of interest, unconcern.
20. **tacit** (adjective) – implicit, indirect, hinted.
21. **way of life** (phrase) – situation, position, lifestyle.
22. **come to one's aid/rescue** (phrase) – help, assist; to provide support/assistance.
23. **merely** (adverb) – only, simply, just.
24. **distressing** (adjective) – upsetting, worrying, affecting.
25. **bigotry** (noun) – discrimination, prejudice, sectarianism.
26. **dissemination** (noun) – spreading, circulation, distribution.
27. **preponderant** (adjective) – predominant, more powerful, superior.
28. **intolerance** (noun) – prejudice, bias, bigotry/partisanship.
29. **polarisation** (noun) – separation of two contrasting groups (based on different opinions/beliefs).
30. **spate** (noun) – series, flurry; a large number of something (taking place at the same period).
31. **punitive** (adjective) – disciplinary, corrective, retributive.
32. **remedial** (adjective) – restorative, reparative, corrective.
33. **moot** (verb) – propose, suggest, introduce.
34. **combat** (verb) – fight, oppose, resist.
35. **perpetrator** (noun) – a person who does immoral, harmful and illegal activities; criminal, culprit, evil-doer.
36. **bring to book** (phrase) – punish officially.
37. **squarely** (adverb) – precisely, exactly, directly.
38. **rumour-mongering** (noun) – an act of spreading rumour intentionally.
39. **transmogrify** (verb) – change, alter, modify.
40. **sinister** (adjective) – disturbing, menacing; corrupt, bad/criminal.
41. **profess** (verb) – claim, purport, allege.
42. **unseemly** (adjective) – improper, inappropriate, undignified.
43. **heckle** (verb) – disrupt, interrupt, taunt.
44. **the ranks** (noun) – the members of a large group.

Lynching redux: on Jharkhand mob lynching

In Jharkhand, another instance of mob mentality combining with a communal motive

The death of a 24-year-old man in Jharkhand days after he was brutally beaten by a mob is a sordid reminder that the disturbing phenomenon of lynching is not going away any time soon. The assault on Tabrez Ansari also followed a recognisable pattern. The victim was Muslim and came under the suspicion of a mob, which chose to mete out vigilante justice, and someone in the crowd recorded trophy footage. This one was not motivated by cow vigilantism or suspicion of transporting cattle for slaughter or possessing beef. Yet, the communal angle was on display, with the crowd forcing him to shout ‘Jai Sri Ram’ and ‘Jai Hanuman’, confirming that vigilante justice and mob lynch mentality are invariably accompanied by a sectarian motive in the present context. Following a public outcry, some of the villagers allegedly involved were arrested on suspicion of murder. However, the conduct of the police typifies the official apathy and tacit acceptance of mob justice as a way of life in some parts of the country. Ansari was tied to a tree and beaten for hours before they came to his aid. They merely took him into custody based on a complaint of theft, and neither recorded his injuries nor mentioned in the FIR that he was assaulted. It was only after his condition worsened in jail that he was taken to hospital, where he died.

It is distressing that lynching, as a consequence of vigilantism, communal bigotry and the dissemination of hate messages and rumours on social media, has acquired the status of a preponderant social trend. The Supreme Court noted this when it observed in a judgment last year that “rising intolerance and growing polarisation expressed through [a] spate of incidents of mob violence cannot be permitted to become the normal way of life or the normal state of law and order”. It directed States to take specific preventive, punitive and remedial measures. It mooted a special law to deal with lynching and the appointment of a nodal officer in each district to combat the threat. While these measures are not yet in place, the latest incident must be thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators brought to book. However, the larger issue has to be faced squarely by the political leadership. Organised vigilantism by cow protection groups was initially behind a wave of lynchings; rumour-mongering through social media platforms came next. The Ansari incident shows that the problem has transmogrified into a sinister form of enforcing the chanting of Hindu slogans by citizens professing other religions. It may well be that the unseemly political use of the religious chant of ‘Jai Shri Ram’ in **Parliament** by some ruling party members to heckle those in the Opposition ranks is finding its echo on the streets.