

Mob Lynching - Jharkhand's Tabrez Ansari

What is the issue?

The death of a 24-year-old man in Jharkhand by mob lynching calls for an understanding on vigilantism and lynching culture in India.

What happened?

- The 24-year-old Tabrez Ansari was brutally beaten by a mob in Jharkhand for alleged theft, eventually leading to his death.
- He was seen in an alleged video to be forced to chant "Jai Shri Ram" and "Jai Hanuman".
- Eleven people were arrested recently in connection with Ansari's death.

How did the police handle the case?

- Ansari was tied to a tree and beaten for hours before police came to his aid.
- The police took him into custody based on a complaint of theft.
- They 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.
- Following a public outcry, some of the villagers allegedly involved were arrested on suspicion of murder.
- However, the conduct of the police indicates an official apathy and tacit acceptance of mob justice as a way of life.

What are the larger worrying trends?

- **Vigilantism** - The incident has again brought to light the disturbing phenomenon of lynching and vigilantism in India.
- [Vigilantes are those who organize themselves into an unofficial group and take up law enforcement into their hands.]
- **Communalism** - Organised vigilantism by cow protection groups was initially behind a wave of lynchings.
- Rumour-mongering through social media platforms came next as the cause.
- Now, the Ansari incident shows that the problem has moved into a form of enforcing the chanting of Hindu slogans by citizens professing other religions.

- The communal angle was on display, with the crowd forcing Ansari, a Muslim, to shout 'Jai Sri Ram' and 'Jai Hanuman'.
- It reflects an instance of mob mentality combining with a communal motive.
- **Lynching** - Lynching has acquired the status of a predominant social trend.
- It is taking place as a consequence of vigilantism, communal bigotry and dissemination of hate messages and rumours on social media.
- Rising intolerance and growing polarisation expressed through mob violence is becoming a normal way of life or the normal state of law and order.
- The Supreme Court too noted this and condemned it in a judgment last year.

What does this call for?

- As directed by the Supreme Court earlier, the State should 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 be punished.
- Beyond these, the larger issue of organized vigilantism on communal motives has to be addressed by the political leadership.

Source: The Hindu