



Towards a culture of moral responsibility

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Mob action is the most violent expression of fears about the safety of our children; it shows a lack of trust in the state

Highlights

- Twenty people have been killed by raging mobs, on the suspicion of being child-lifters, across the country in the last few weeks. The trigger for the fears in these violent incidents was undoubtedly WhatsApp rumours that were unfounded.
- Eight children go missing every hour in India to remain untraced and four are sexually abused. Aren't these figures enough to cause fear among the masses?
- The violence apart, there are also many people who suspect that their children could be abducted for prostitution, organ trade, forced beggary or any other form of slavery.

Fear being the cause

- Can we say with confidence that our children are safe in homes, schools, neighbourhoods, workplaces, shelter homes, or even inside the places of worship and faith institutions?
- Can we guarantee that our children will not be abused by a family member or friend?
- Can we totally trust our state institutions to bring the perpetrators to justice?
- Fears triggered by such insecurities quickly take the form of collective frustration. Mob action, condemnable no doubt, is the most violent expression of such frustration.

Way Forward

- Moral responsibility is an individual decision and moral accountability is a culture. Ex: Mahatma Gandhi called off the Non-Cooperation Movement against the British because some of his supporters turned violent in Chauri Chaura. Martin Luther King Jr. repeatedly called for compassion and hope despite facing vicious racist insults. More recently, Nelson Mandela adopted the approach of reconciliation to bring about justice, despite being a brutalised victim of apartheid.
- A culture of accountability can be created if the society and the state are guided by a moral compass.

Source: [The Hindu](#)