
RESEARCH ARTICLE**Understanding the Social Acceptance of Mob Justice in Bangladesh Post-July 2024: An Empirical and Criminological Study****Almi Gazi***Department of Law and Justice, Jahangirnagar University, Dhaka, Bangladesh***Corresponding Author:** Almi Gazi, **E-mail:** almigazi3@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the rise and social normalization of mob justice in Bangladesh after the July 2024 revolution, with the purpose of explaining its causes, forms, and public acceptance through criminological and empirical analysis. In contemporary Bangladesh, particularly in the post-July 2024 period, this research categorizes mob justice into four overlapping types: peaceful justice demands, vandalism and mob violence, public beatings or lynchings, and organized attacks for personal or political gain. The study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys with 160 participants aged 15–40, and secondary sources such as academic studies and media reports. The findings show that political instability, weak legal institutions, declining trust in law enforcement, and social media misinformation have significantly increased mob actions and normalized them as a means of seeking justice. Criminological theories help explain how repeated exposure and low accountability make such behaviour socially acceptable. While peaceful protests remain widely supported, violent mob actions are often seen as a faster alternative to formal justice. The study concludes that mob justice comes from a lack of trust in institutions, as people often do not believe the legal system will give proper justice. This study shows a clear legal difference between peaceful protest and mob violence. Peaceful gathering and protest are allowed by the Constitution, but mob violence and mob justice are serious crimes in Bangladesh and violates human rights. The study suggests some solutions, such as legal reform, faster justice, public awareness, proper regulation of social media, and community-based conflict resolution.

KEYWORDS

Lynching, vandalism, social normalization, vigilantism., Public beating.

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1. Introduction**1.1 Background of the study**

Mob justice is enacted by community members who deliver immediate, often violent punishment, such as killing or severely beating individuals who have violated the law (Chulek, 2018). This practice is also known as vigilantism, which involves an organized effort by a group of ordinary citizens to enforce societal norms and maintain law and order within their communities, frequently through the use of violence (Abrahams, 2002). Mob justice is a community-driven response where people take action themselves, often using force or the threat of force. It happens when they believe someone has broken commonly accepted social rules, and they feel the formal justice system is slow or ineffective (Johnston, 1996). However, the term “mob justice” is actually contradictory, because when a group of people uses violence to punish someone on their own, it cannot be called real justice. True justice must follow law and proper process, so the word “justice” does not fit with the idea of a “mob.”

In Bangladesh, mob justice has increased since the political unrest of July 2024 and the fall of the government on August 5, 2024. Many people lost trust in government offices and in the legal system. Because of this, some people now use violence in the streets, such as beating, attacking, or damaging property, to punish others without waiting for the law. They believe this is faster than going to court. Social media like Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok has made the situation worse. Rumors spread very quickly online, such as claims of theft, child kidnapping, or insulting religion. These messages can create fear and anger, which leads large groups of people to gather and act violently (Ahmed, 2025).

Mob justice in Bangladesh today can be divided into four simple types, and sometimes these types can overlap. The first type is Peaceful Justice Demands, where people join peaceful protests or public gatherings to ask for justice or change. The second

type is Vandalism and Mob Violence, where large groups destroy property, burn things, or create chaos during unrest. The third type is Public Beating or Lynching, where crowds punish someone they believe is a criminal, without any legal trial. The fourth type is Instrumental Mob Attacks, where groups are organized on purpose to take political benefits, get personal revenge, or achieve other goals by using fear and force.

The rise of mob justice in Bangladesh creates serious problems for the rule of law and human rights. It ignores legal procedures, weakens the court system, and makes people believe that violence is an acceptable way to deal with crime. As a result, trust in government and justice institutions has decreased, and group violence has become more common. This study looks at the psychological, social, and political reasons behind this trend and explains why many communities now see mob violence as a normal response.

1.2 Research questions

What are the public perceptions and attitudes toward mob justice in Bangladesh following the July 2024 revolution?

How and why has mob justice become socially normalized despite its illegal and violent nature?

What are the differences among these four categories of mob justice : Peaceful Justice Demands, Vandalism and Mob Violence, Public Beating, and Instrumental Mob Attacks?

1.3 Research objectives

This research aims to examine the rising phenomenon of mob justice in Bangladesh following the July 2024 revolution and to analyze how it has become normalized despite its illegal and violent nature. It explores public perception and acceptance of mob justice, comparing its four categories: Peaceful Justice Demands, Vandalism and Mob Violence, Public Beating, and Instrumental Mob Attacks. Using criminological theories, the study seeks to understand the causes and processes behind its normalization and to propose practical reforms to restore trust in formal legal systems, prevent extrajudicial violence, and address the societal factors sustaining mob justice.

1.4 Literature review

Mob justice has become an increasingly visible and concerning issue in Bangladesh, particularly after the July revolution 2024. Research shows that such acts often occur because formal institutions are weak, legal processes are slow, and people have little trust in the police or courts (Rahman & Jahan, 2021). In Bangladesh, many people see the justice system as slow, unfair, and corrupt, so they sometimes take the law into their own hands. Other reasons include social and economic inequality, high youth unemployment, and lack of knowledge about legal rights among the public (Khan & Hossain, 2022). Ahmed highlights that false information shared on social media like Facebook and TikTok can quickly turn rumors into real mob violence.

Anisur Rahman found that many people turn to mob justice because courts are slow and corruption is common. About 70% said delays in the legal system push them to act, and 65% said corruption in the police or courts is a reason (Rahman, 2025). Majumder points out that, although the Constitution protects rights, these rules are not properly enforced. Weak legal protections in Articles 27, 31, and 35 make some people feel that taking the law into their own hands is necessary for justice (Majumder, 2025).

Cultural factors also play an important role. Shultana and Mahtab note that rural populations, in particular, often lack legal knowledge and see mob justice as a traditional method of maintaining order (Tanvir & Shultana, 2024). This suggests that mob justice is not only a reaction to perceived injustice but also a socially ingrained practice in some communities.

Overall, the literature shows that mob justice in Bangladesh results from institutional failures, political instability, misinformation, economic and social pressures, and cultural factors. However, there remains a significant gap in research on public perceptions and the social acceptance of mob justice, especially among youth. There is also limited study distinguishing the four types of mob justice such as peaceful justice demands, vandalism and mob violence, public beating, and instrumental mob attacks, which are becoming more common across the country. This research seeks to address these gaps by analyzing how these forms of mob justice have become normalized, exploring public attitudes, and examining why society allows such violence.

1.5 Research methodology

This study uses a mixed-methods approach to examine the rise and social normalization of mob justice in Bangladesh after the July 2024 revolution. Secondary data were collected from academic papers, news reports, and credible organizations for background. Primary data were gathered through surveys and semi-structured interviews with 160 randomly selected participants aged between 15 to 40 years old. Surveys included close-ended and open-ended questions, while interviews explored personal experiences. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and qualitative data were analyzed thematically.

Findings from both methods were combined to provide a complete understanding of the topic. Ethical considerations were ensured through informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation.

2. Current scenario of Mob Justice in Bangladesh (Post-July 2024)

Since July 2024, Bangladesh has seen a rapid and alarming rise in mob justice. The fall of the previous government, followed by political instability and weakened law enforcement, created a vacuum that allowed collective violence to spread across the country. Between August 2024 and July 2025, at least 637 people were killed in incidents of mob violence, including 41 police officers (News Desk, 2025a). This marks a sharp increase compared to 2023, when 51 deaths were reported from such violence. Mob actions in this period did not only involve physical punishment but also mass protests, vandalism, lynching, and targeted attacks, often shaped by politics, communal tensions, misinformation, and personal grievances. Surveys revealed that 71.5% of Bangladeshi youth now view mob violence as a “normal” part of public life, showing how deeply it has been normalized in society (News Desk, 2025b).

To systematically examine the alarming prevalence of mob justice, these incidents may be categorized into four principal forms: (1) Peaceful Justice Demands, (2) Vandalism and Mob Violence, (3) Public Beating or Lynching, and (4) Instrumental Mob Attacks.

2.1 Peaceful justice demands

Not all collective gatherings in Bangladesh during this period turned violent. In many cases, groups of students, citizens, and activists came together peacefully to demand accountability from institutions or leaders. For example, Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan and five other Supreme Court judges resigned following public pressure (Staff Correspondent, 2024). Students of ULAB, KUET, and Barisal University and others university peacefully demanded the resignation of their Vice-Chancellors. People injured during the July Uprising gathered at Shahbagh to ask for lifelong medical care, the implementation of the July Charter, the announcement of the July Declaration, and a permanent ban on the Awami League (DU Correspondent, 2025). BUET students also blocked Shahbagh with three specific demands without using violence (Star Online Report, 2025). These events show that not every public gathering after July 2024 turned violent. Many protests followed the constitutional right to lawful assembly. They expressed frustration but still relied on peaceful methods to put pressure on authorities.

2.2 Vandalism and mob violence

A second, more destructive form of mob justice involved destruction of property or infrastructure, looting, arson, and indiscriminate violence. These incidents often had political or communal motivations or Demand-Driven Violence.

Politically motivated violence rose sharply after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned on 5 August 2024. Mobs attacked and burned the homes and offices of Awami League leaders, including ministers, MPs, and former mayors (Rtv News, 2024). Party offices in Tejgaon, Dhanmondi, and many other districts were set on fire (TBS Report, 2024a). The Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhanmondi 32 was completely destroyed symbolizing the scale of anti-AL violence. Factories, such as the Gazi Tyres plant in Rupganj, were looted or disrupted during chaotic attacks (Star Digital Report, 2024a).

Communally motivated violence affected religious minorities across the country. Between 4 and 20 August 2024, more than 2,010 incidents were reported in 45 districts (TBS Report, 2024b). Hindu temples in Shariatpur, Narail, and Rajshahi were looted or desecrated, while Hindu homes in Khulna, Dinajpur, and Panchagarh were torched (Star Digital Report, 2024b).

A third form of vandalism was driven by public demands and grievances. Certain incidents were sparked by tragedies or events that affected large groups, leading to violent demonstrations. For example, on July 22, 2025, about 1,200 students protested against delays in HSC rescheduling. They marched to the Ministry of Education and the Secretariat, clashed with police, and damaged government property (TBS Report, 2024c). During protests over the Gaza massacre, mobs attacked stores selling Israeli products like Bata, KFC, and Pizza Hut, as well as local stores such as Coca-Cola and Seven Up (TBS Report, 2025).

After July 2024, vandalism and mob violence in Bangladesh happened due to political revenge, communal hatred, and frustration. These attacks caused fear among people and made mob justice seem normal. Many citizens began to believe that quick action outside the law was sometimes necessary to respond to problems, even if it involved violence or destroying property.

2.3 Public beating or lynching

The most brutal form of mob justice was seen in public beatings and lynchings of alleged offenders. These punishments happened outside formal legal processes, with mobs acting as judges and executioners.

Following the political upheaval of August 2024, Bangladesh witnessed a sharp rise in public beatings and lynchings, with mobs taking the law into their own hands based on rumors or suspicions. Human rights organizations have documented the scale of mob violence across the country. Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) reported that at least 111 people were killed in mob violence between January and August 2025. Notable incidents include the killing of mentally unstable Tofazzal Hossain at Dhaka University (Mizan & Rubel, 2024), the March 2025 lynching of Uber driver Riyadh over a false mugging allegation (Star Report, 2025), a man in Chattogram beaten to death after being wrongly accused of kidnapping a child (Staff Correspondent, 2025a). Around 69% of these cases involved alleged crime-driven retribution (Kibria, 2025), but most happened without any proof. These events show the dangers of false information, fear spreading among groups, and a weak legal system.

2.4 Instrumental mob attacks

Mobs were sometimes used deliberately as tools for personal or political gain rather than spontaneous anger. This means individuals or groups organized mobs to attack rivals, settle disputes, or gain control.

For example, in Old Dhaka (July 2025), scrap dealer Lal Chand “Sohag” was dragged, beaten, and stoned to death near Mitford Hospital (Staff Correspondent, 2025b). He was falsely branded as a thief, and this false claim was used by rivals to gather a mob and kill him.

On May 16, 2025, in Dhanmondi, members of the Birodhi Chhatra Andolan (BECHA) tried to lynch a publisher by calling him an Awami League collaborator. His only action was publishing books on the Liberation War, but BECHA leaders treated this as support for their rivals and used it as an excuse to attack him (News Desk, 2025).

In Gazipur (2025), farmer Md Mozammel (50) was falsely accused of stealing a household item. About 10–12 men, who already had personal disputes with him, dragged him away from his home, beat him with sticks, and left him so badly injured that he later died in the hospital (Our Correspondent, 2025). In another case in Jhikargacha, Jessore (August 2024), union leader Talimul Islam Khan was burned alive inside his home. The attackers tried to make it look like the people were angry and reacting naturally, but in reality, it was a planned killing (Star Digital Report, 2024c).

These examples show that mobs were often used as weapons to achieve private revenge or political goals. Instead of solving problems through law and justice, people spread lies, created fake anger, and used crowds to justify violence.

The post-July 2024 scenario in Bangladesh shows that mob justice has taken many shapes, from peaceful protests to brutal lynchings and deliberate organized attacks. While some groups exercised their right to lawful assembly in demanding reforms, many others crossed into destructive or violent behaviour. The normalization of mob actions, combined with weak law enforcement and political instability, turned these acts into a dangerous everyday feature of Bangladeshi life. Understanding these four categories is crucial for any attempt to reduce mob justice while respecting constitutional rights and maintaining public order.

3. Theoretical explanation of social normalisation of Mob Justice Post-July 2024

After July revolution 2024, Bangladesh experienced more collective actions, both violent and peaceful. Criminology theories such as Differential Association, Rational Choice, and Anomie etc. explain why these actions became normal.

3.1 Differential association theory

Differential Association Theory, developed by Edwin H. Sutherland, explains that people learn behaviour, values, and attitudes through interaction with others in their social environment (Sutherland et al., 1992).

It suggests that criminal or deviant behaviour is not inherited but learned from observing and communicating with others. People adopt norms and practices by watching how others behave and seeing which actions bring results or approval.

In Bangladesh, many people feel that the legal system is slow, unfair, or unable to deliver timely justice. After the political upheaval in July 2024, citizens increasingly took the law into their own hands. They tried to achieve justice or enforce demands through public protests, mob violence, or collective action. When one group acted, whether through peaceful assembly, vandalism, or public beatings, others observed and learned from these actions. They noticed that mob actions often produced immediate results, or at least drew strong public attention. Over time, these observations shaped the beliefs and behaviors of the wider community.

This learning process did not happen quickly. It developed gradually through repeated incidents in villages, towns, and cities. As more people participated or supported mob actions, the practice became more common and socially accepted. Communities began to treat public beating or mob violence as a normal way to respond to crime or disputes. Seeing repeated successes without serious consequences reinforced the idea that collective violence is an effective method.

3.2 Rational choice theory

Rational Choice Theory explains that people decide their actions by weighing the benefits and costs, choosing what gives the most advantage with the least risk (Cornish & Clarke, 1986).

After July revolution 2024 in Bangladesh, many people chose public protest, takes the law into their own hands because it offered clear advantages. The legal system is slow and often failed to give justice. Peaceful public demand allowed people to draw public attention and avoid strong punishment from the authorities. In public beating, findout the culprits is not easy. In mob violence they act in the name of justice and escape from punishments. Because of this, people saw mob justice as a smart and effective choice. They acted after thinking about what would work best with the least harm.

3.3 Anomie theory

Anomie theory, introduced by Emile Durkheim and later developed by Robert K. Merton, explains that when social norms are weak, unclear, or disrupted, individuals and groups feel disconnected from society and its rules. This creates a state of “normlessness” where people no longer trust the established order or formal mechanisms for justice (Johnston, 1996).

After July 2024 in Bangladesh, political unrest, sudden changes in government, and weak law enforcement created this situation. Many people started losing faith in institutions like the courts, police, and government leaders. Because of this,

people stopped trusting the law. When rules and justice systems seem weak, some people think taking the law into their own hands is okay. This made actions like mob violence seem normal and acceptable for dealing with disputes or punishing those they believe did wrong.

3.4 Strain theory

Strain theory, developed by Robert K. Merton, argues that when individuals or groups cannot achieve socially accepted goals through legitimate means, they experience frustration or strain. This pressure can motivate them to turn to deviant or unlawful behaviour to meet their needs or express grievances (Merton, 1968).

In Bangladesh, many people felt the justice system is too slow and unfair. Corruption and long delays in courts made them think they could not get justice properly. After the July revolution, political instability also reduced trust in the government to protect people's rights or punish criminals.

Because of this pressure, many people turned to group violence to get quick results. They believed that acting together could solve problems faster than waiting for the law. Over time, this made mob violence seem normal. People started thinking that taking the law into their own hands was the only way to get justice.

As more incidents happened without punishment, collective violence became part of how people responded to disputes or problems. Mob action slowly became accepted in society because people saw it as an effective way to demand justice when the official system seemed weak or slow.

3.5 Routine activity theory

Routine activity theory, developed by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson, argues that crime occurs when a motivated offender encounters a suitable target without capable guardianship (Cohen & Felson, 1979).

In Bangladesh now, political problems, weak police, and poor governance have made this more common. Many times, groups of people see someone they think has done wrong, but there is no protection from the law. Courts and police are slow or fail to act. Because there is no one to stop them, these groups feel they can take action themselves. They attack or punish the person without waiting for legal justice.

This shows that mob violence grows when law enforcement cannot protect people or enforce the rules. The lack of capable guardians makes it easier for violence to happen.

3.6 Broken windows theory

Broken windows theory, introduced by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, suggests that visible signs of disorder encourage more crime because they signal a lack of social control (Wilson & Kelling, 1982).

After July 2024 in Bangladesh, many cases of mob violence and damage in public places created a sense of disorder. When these actions happen and no one is punished, people start to think that using violence is normal and works. Slowly, society begins to accept group attacks as a common way to solve problems or express anger. When the law is weak and there is no clear action from police or authority, this violent behavior becomes more common and deeply rooted in everyday life.

3.7 Social learning theory

Social learning theory explains that people learn behaviour by watching and copying others (Bandura, 1977; Akers, 1998).

Social learning theory says people learn by watching others. When people see a mob beat someone and there is no punishment, they think the act is acceptable. They learn that violence gives quick results and makes others afraid. When those who take part in lynching walk free, it shows that society allows it. This makes more people want to do the same. At the same time, peaceful public demands continue in society to demand something or to protest anything. Day by day by seeing this people are choosing this way. Over time, more people start to believe that mob violence or go in the street to demand anything is a usual and accepted way to deal with disputes.

4. Empirical study on the social perception of Mob Justice in Bangladesh (Post-July 2024)

This chapter presents the findings of a mixed-method study conducted across Bangladesh to examine the social perception and normalisation of mob justice after July 2024. A total of 160 randomly selected people participated, ensuring diverse representation. Most respondents (94.4%) were aged between 21 to 27 years, with nearly equal gender distribution (51.2% female, 48.8% male). Most participants (86.9%) were university students, with smaller numbers of employed graduates, unemployed graduates, dropouts, and housewives. The study addresses 15 core research questions using survey data, close ended and open-ended responses to understand how educated youth perceive mob justice and the factors contributing to its normalisation.

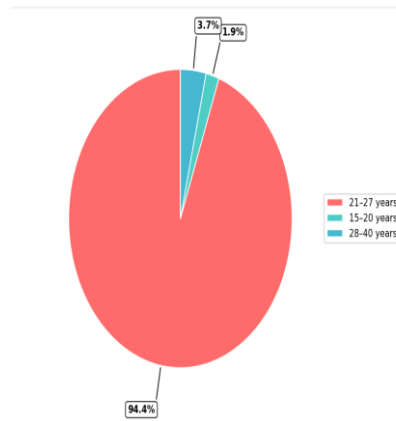


Figure 1: Age distribution of respondents

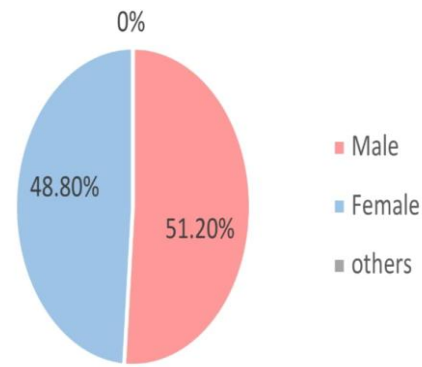


Figure 2: Gender distribution of respondents

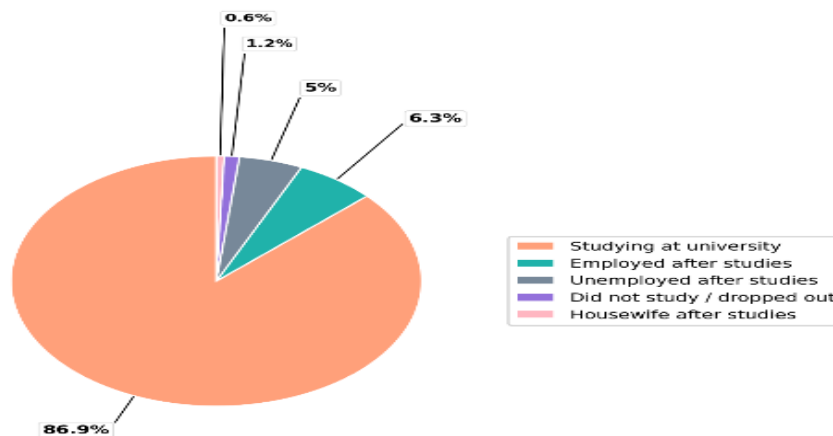


Figure 3: Educational and occupational status of respondents

4.1 Perceptions of Post-July 2024

As presented in Figure-4, the majority of respondents (79.2%) agreed that mob justice has increased in Bangladesh following July 2024. A smaller proportion (11.9%) believed it had risen to some extent, while 5% remained uncertain. Only 3.8% of participants stated that mob justice had not increased. These findings indicate a strong public perception that incidents of mob justice have increased in the post-July 2024 period, reflecting growing concern over the issue.

the rise of Mob Justice in Bangladesh

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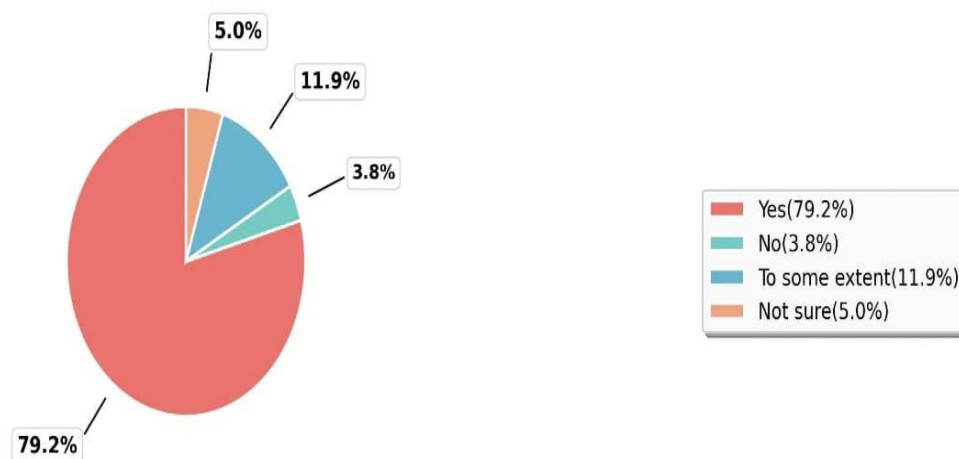


Figure-4: Public Perception of the Increase in Mob Justice in Bangladesh

4.2 Public perception of Mob Justice as a quicker alternative to legal penalties

As shown in Figure-5, more than half of the respondents (53.3%) believed that ordinary people view mob justice as a quicker and more effective form of punishment compared to legal penalties. Meanwhile, 23.3% disagreed, 17% felt it was true to

some extent, and 4.4% were not sure. This suggests that many people perceive mob justice as a faster response than the formal legal system.

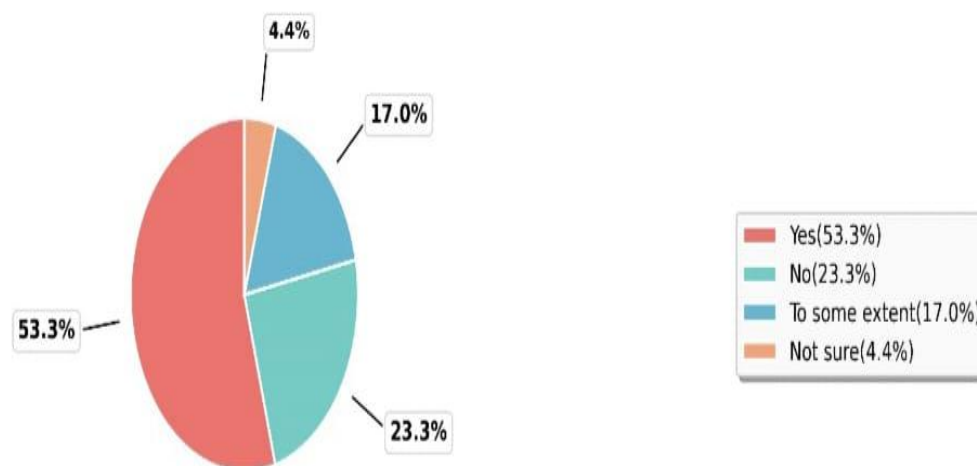


Figure-5: Public Perception of Mob Justice as a Quicker Alternative to Legal Penalties

4.3 Perceived acceptance of Mob Justice

As shown in Figure-6, 45% of respondents felt that mob justice is becoming more acceptable to ordinary people. Another 33.8% agreed to some extent, while 15% disagreed and 6.3% were not sure. This indicates that a significant portion of the population believes mob justice is gaining social acceptance.

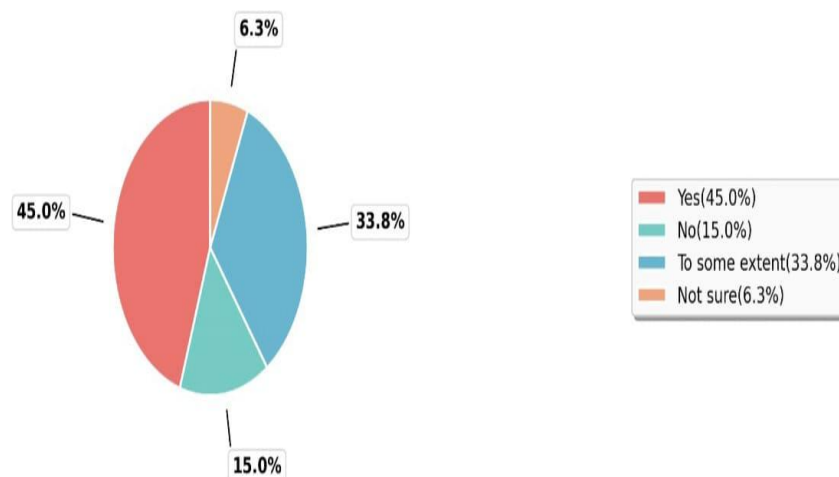


Figure-6: Growing Acceptance of Mob Justice Among Ordinary People

4.4 Impact of Mob Justice on morality and public trust in law

As shown in Figure-7, the majority of respondents (80%) believed that mob justice reduces people's sense of morality and respect for the law. Only 9.4% disagreed, 8.1% thought it was true to some extent, and 2.5% were not sure. This indicates that most people see mob justice as harmful to social and legal values. Figure-8 shows that 66.3% of respondents identified the decline of public trust in the law as the main reason behind the rise in mob justice incidents, while 26.9% believed it played a role to some extent, 5% disagreed, and 1.9% were not sure.

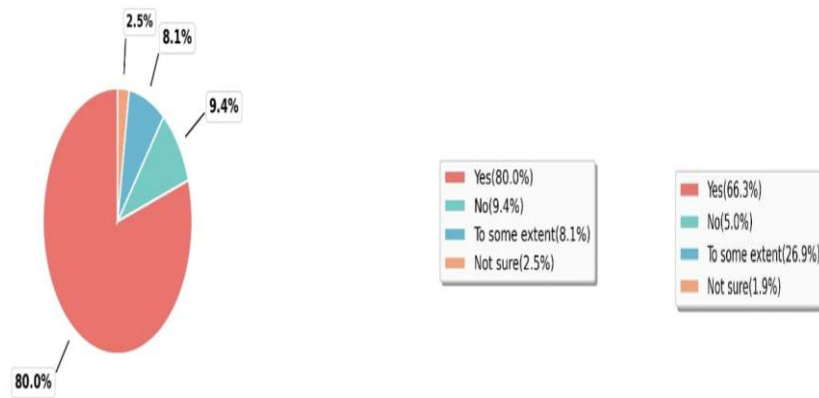


Figure-7: Perceived Impact of Mob Justice on Morality and Law

4.5 Role media in spread of Justice

Figure-8: Public Trust in Law as a Factor Behind Mob Justice

of social the Mob

As shown in Figure-9, most respondents (79.4%) believed that social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube play a major role in spreading mob justice. A smaller proportion (15%) agreed to some extent, while only 4.4% said no and 1.2% were not sure. This shows how much social media helps spread and encourage mob justice.

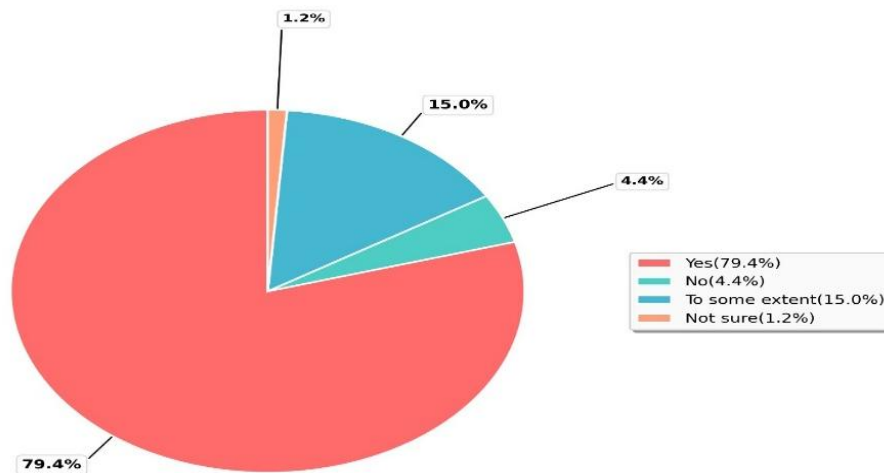


Figure-9: Perceived Role of Social Media in the Spread of Mob Justice

4.6 Public beating vs. Mob Justice: perceptions of similarity and difference

As shown in Figure-10, 35% of respondents considered "public beating" and "mob justice" to be the same, while 20.4% believed they are different. A larger portion (44.6%) viewed them as partially the same. The qualitative responses add depth to this distinction. Many participants explained that public beating is often a sudden, momentary reaction when someone is caught committing an offense, whereas mob justice tends to be more organized, purpose-driven, and pre-planned. Respondents highlighted that mob justice extends beyond physical assault, encompassing broader acts such as humiliation, punishment, and even digital trials. In contrast, public beating was seen as an immediate, emotional response, lacking deliberation. This indicates that while the two are related, mob justice is perceived as a broader and more systematic phenomenon compared to public beating.

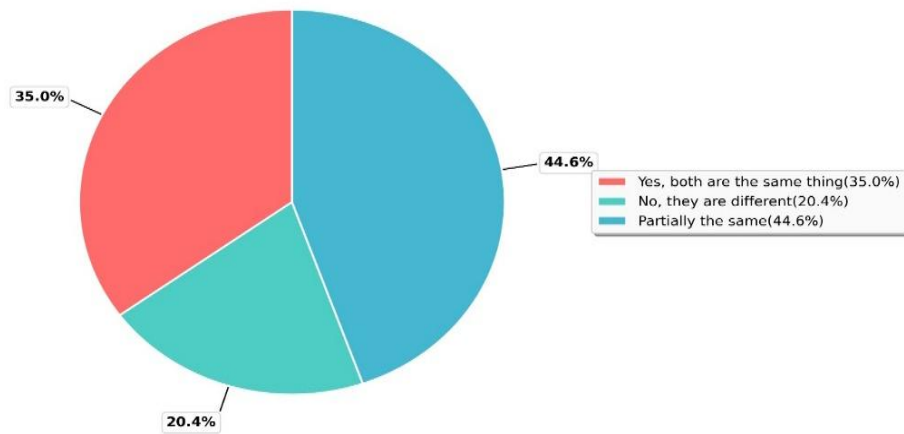


Figure-10: Perceptions of the Relationship Between Public Beating and Mob Justice

4.7 Acceptability of public violence in protests and demands

Figure-11 shows that 61.3% of respondents believed public violence is acceptable in certain situations when protesting government policies. Smaller portions saw it as fully acceptable (6.3%) or partially acceptable (5.6%), while 8.8% viewed it as

unacceptable and 16.2% as harmful. Only 1.9% were unsure. This shows that most people support public violence only in certain situations, not fully.

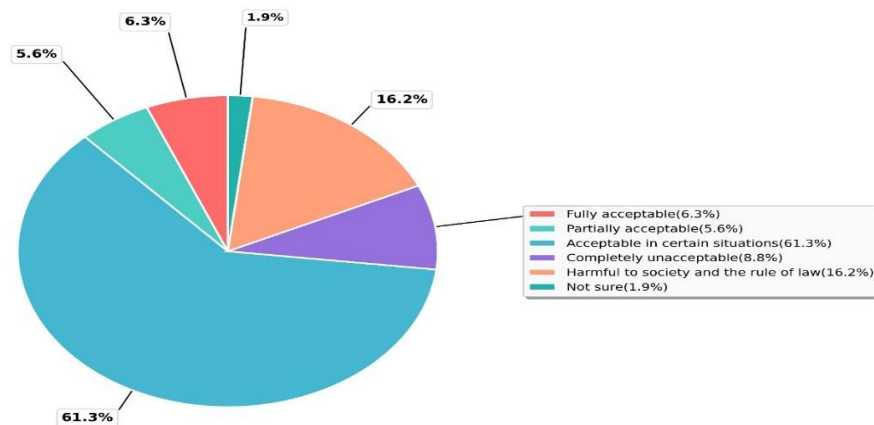


Figure-11: Perceptions of Acceptability of Public Violence in Protests

4.8 Preferred actions in protests against government decisions

Figure-12 shows that 76.1% of respondents preferred peaceful protests against government decisions. Many also supported legal actions (63.5%) and raising awareness through media (64.2%). Few chose mob violence (5%). Only 1.9% preferred other actions. Most people favored dialogue, negotiation, and peaceful ways to express opposition.

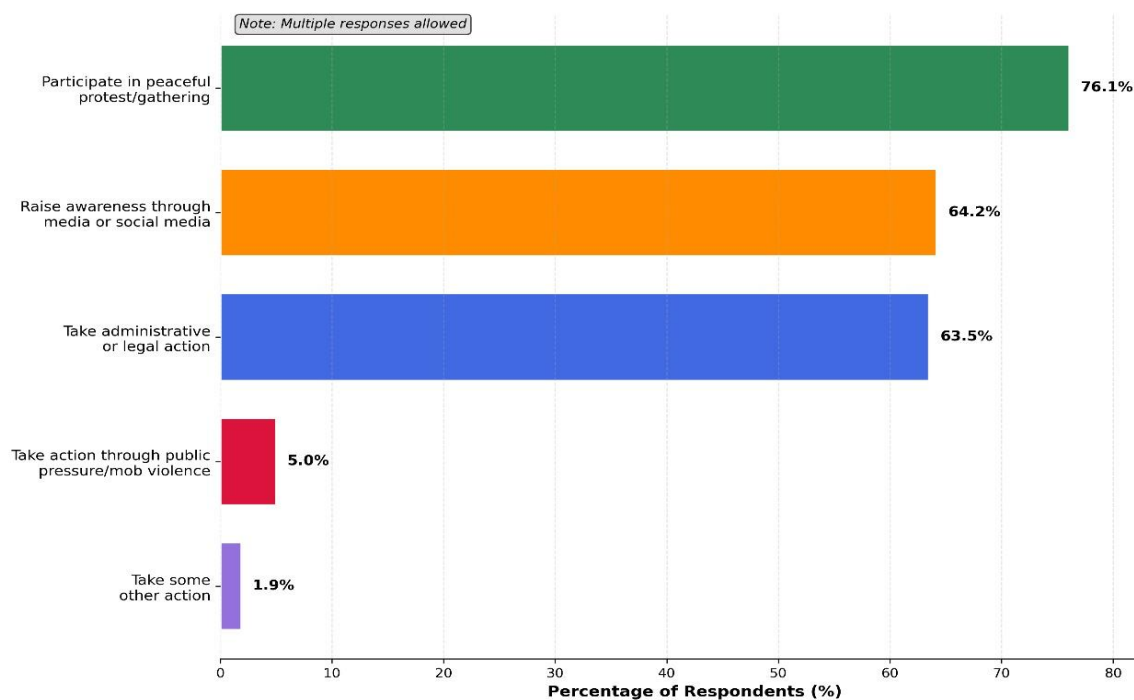


Figure-12: Preferred Actions in Protests Against Government Decisions

4.9 Public perception of demanding resignation without legal procedure

Figure-13 shows that most respondents supported public protest to demand resignations of officials accused of crimes. Specifically, 31.6% saw it as fully legitimate, 45.6% as acceptable in some cases, while 5.1% viewed it as illegal, 15.2% as harmful, and 2.5% were unsure.

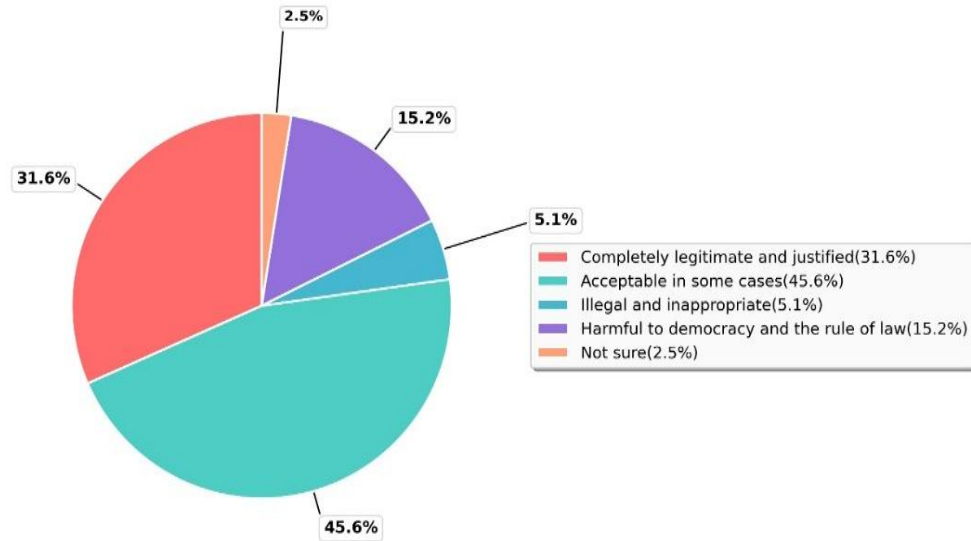


Figure-13: Public Views on Demanding Resignation Without Legal Procedures

4.10 Future perceptions of mob violence

Figure-14 shows that most respondents (59.7%) believe mob violence will increase in the future, 12.6% think it may rise to some extent. Only 7.5% felt it will not increase, and 20.1% were unsure. This indicates a widespread concern that mob violence is likely to continue growing in Bangladesh unless strong measures are taken.

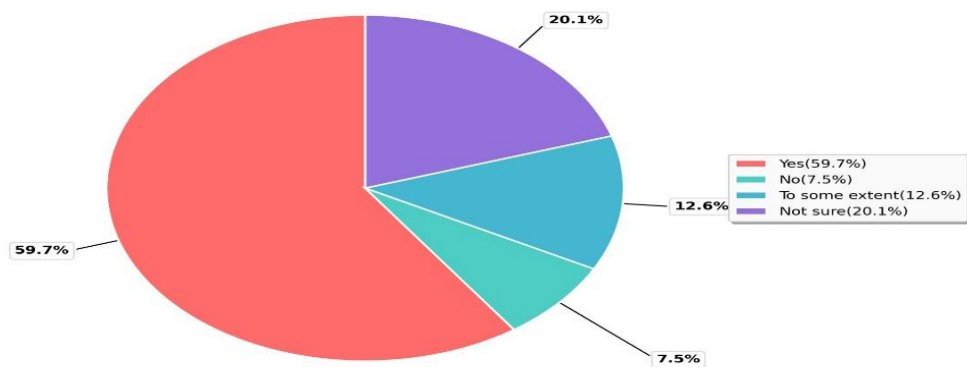


Figure-14: Public Perception on the Future of Mob Violence

4.11 Legal accountability for Mob Justice participants

Figure-15 shows that most respondents support legal action against mob justice. About 34.6% want the law always applied, 55.3% if violence occurs, and only a few opposed. Overall, people favor accountability, especially when mob justice causes violence.

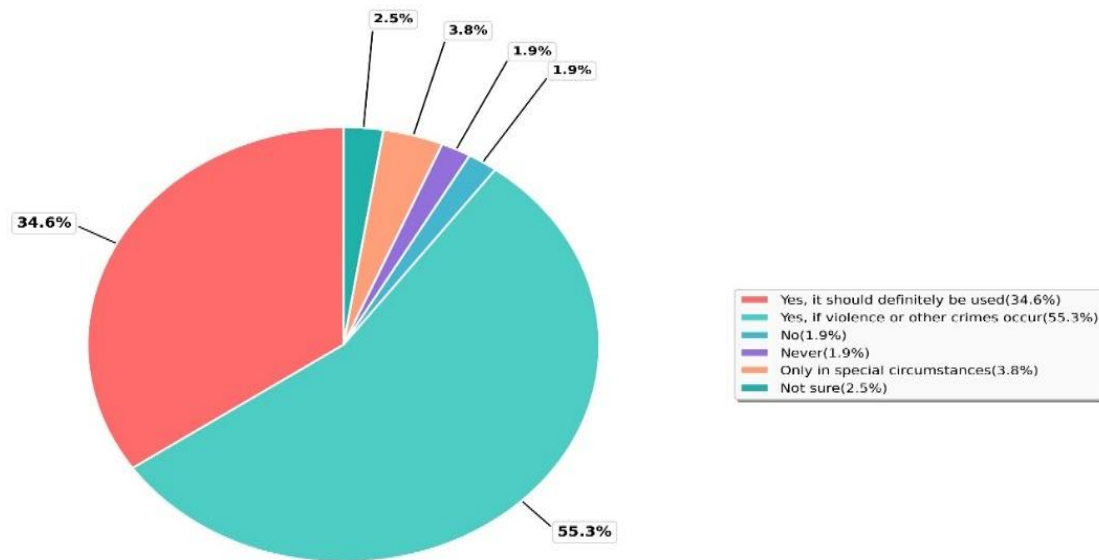


Figure-15: Public Opinion on Legal Punishment for Mob Justice Participants

4.12 Impacts of Mob Justice on society and personal life

As shown in question14, most respondents believe mob justice negatively affects society and personal life. They said it creates fear, insecurity, and reduces trust in the legal system. Innocent people often become victims, causing trauma. Respondents also noted it weakens the rule of law, encourages violence and moral decline, harms social peace, and violates human rights. Few saw it as necessary, but most stressed its harmful and destabilising effects.

4.13 Recommendations to prevent Mob Justice

Based on survey responses (Figure-16), several recommendations emerge to prevent mob justice in Bangladesh. The top suggestions are ensuring speedy trials (71.7%) and active monitoring by law enforcement (71.1%). Many respondents (65.4%) also stressed public awareness and educational campaigns. Other strategies include regulating social media (33.3%) and strengthening community-based peace systems (29.6%). Additional recommendations include building trust in the justice system, ensuring judicial independence, removing corruption, expanding court capacity, and prosecuting mob organizers. Preventing mob justice requires both institutional reform and civic education with stronger accountability.

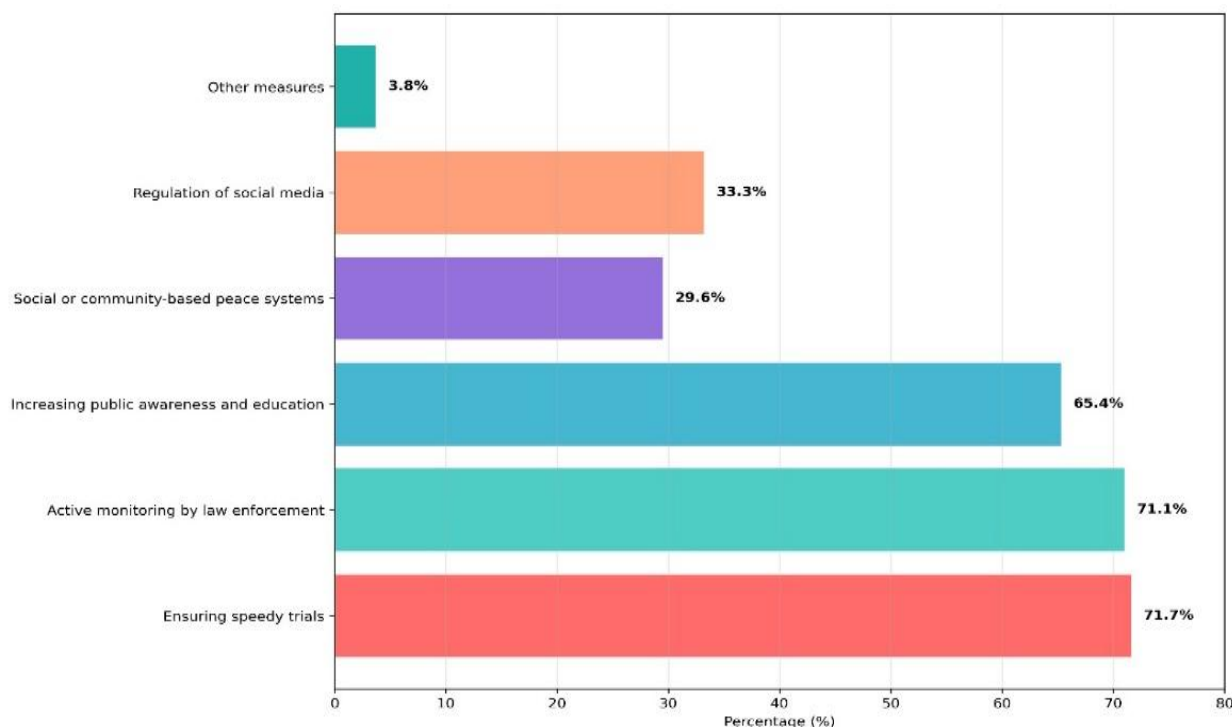


Figure-16: Recommendations to Prevent Mob Justice (multiple responses allowed open ended).

5. Findings and discussion

The research shows that most young people think mob justice has increased in Bangladesh since July 2024. Many believe it is a faster way to punish wrongdoers than the slow and corrupt justice system. More than half said mob justice is becoming socially accepted. Most also agreed it lowers morality and reduces respect for law. Social media like Facebook and TikTok helps spread rumours and videos that encourage mob actions.

5.1 Interpretation of the findings

The findings suggest that mob justice is seen as a substitute for formal justice because people have lost trust in courts and law enforcement. While some view mob actions as necessary in situations where the state fails, most respondents recognised it as harmful. The results also highlight that youth see mob justice not only as punishment but also as a reflection of wider frustration with governance and justice institutions.

5.2 Relation between mob justice and public beating

Respondents noted that public beating and mob justice are related but not exactly the same. Public beating is often emotional and spontaneous, while mob justice is more organised, planned, and includes broader forms of punishment such as humiliation or online shaming. This means mob justice is a wider phenomenon that includes but is not limited to public beatings.

5.3 Impacts on society and personal life

The majority of respondents agreed that mob justice has negative impacts on society and personal life. They said it creates fear, insecurity, and loss of trust in law. Many highlighted that innocent people often suffer, and such incidents damage social peace. Respondents also noted that mob justice encourages lawlessness, moral decline, and human rights violations. While a few thought mobs could be necessary where state institutions fail, most stressed that mob justice is harmful and destabilising.

5.4 Recommendations and reform needs

Respondents strongly recommended ensuring speedy trials and active law enforcement to prevent mob incidents. They also emphasised the need for public awareness campaigns, judicial independence, and anti-corruption reforms. Some called for better monitoring of social media and community-based peace mechanisms. Overall, the solution requires both legal reforms to rebuild trust in the justice system and civic education to discourage violence.

These insights highlight that mob justice cannot be addressed through law enforcement alone. Instead, it requires a dual strategy:

Institutional reform to restore faith in legal systems.

Civic education to reorient public values away from violence and towards rule of law.

6. Legal boundaries between peaceful assembly and Mob Justice in Bangladesh

After July 2024, Bangladesh has entered a period where mob justice is becoming more common. This rise in mob justice creates serious legal concerns because not all forms of mob activity are unlawful. Some forms of collective action are

legitimate under the law as an exercise of constitutional rights. The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees freedom of expression under Article 39 and freedom of assembly under Article 37 (Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1972 hereinafter referred as Constitution). These rights allow citizens to hold peaceful protests and public gatherings to share grievances, demand justice, or request reforms. When such gatherings are peaceful and do not involve violence, damage to property, or disruption of public order, they are protected under the Constitution and are not illegal.

However, when peaceful assembly turns violent, it goes beyond constitutional protection and becomes unlawful. Under Bangladesh law, violent acts in such situations often fall under the category of unlawful assembly, defined in section 141 of the Penal Code, 1860 (hereinafter referred as PC). An unlawful assembly occurs when a group of people comes together with the intention to commit an offence or cause terror. If these groups act violently, they may also commit affray under section 159 PC, which applies when violence disturbs public peace. If the group uses force or violence against persons or property, they may commit rioting under section 146 PC. When threats or force are used to demand property, money, or compliance, it becomes extortion under sections 384 to 389 PC. In such situations, all members of the mob can be held criminally responsible.

Specific acts of mob, such as public beating, are also serious crimes. Under the Penal Code, causing harm to another person is punishable under section 321 (hurt), while causing serious harm is punishable under section 325 (grievous hurt). If the beating results in death, offenders can be charged with murder under section 302 (murder) or culpable homicide not amounting to murder under section 304 of PC. Public beating can also involve wrongful restraint under Section 339 PC or wrongful confinement under section 340 PC, depending on the circumstances. These acts violate personal safety and the rule of law. They also breach human rights under international law, including the right to life and personal security under Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Instrumental mob attacks, which are organized acts of violence for a specific purpose, are even more serious crimes. These often involve criminal conspiracy under Section 120B PC and abetment of offences under Section 109 PC, in addition to rioting, hurt, or murder. Section 34 PC holds every member of such a group responsible for acts committed in furtherance of a common intention. Mob violence can also involve extortion under Sections 384 to 389 PC if threats or force are used to demand compliance or property. Such acts violate the right to personal safety and the right to be free from cruel or degrading treatment guaranteed by Article 5 of the UDHR and Article 7 of the ICCPR.

Mob justice also undermines other legal rights. For example, the right to life and personal liberty under Article 32 of the Constitution and the right to a fair trial under Article 35 are violated when people are punished without proper legal process. Mob justice also violates the principle of equality before the law under Article 27 of the Constitution and relevant human rights norms. Therefore, mob justice not only breaks specific provisions of the Penal Code but also undermines constitutional safeguards and human rights, which are essential for a democratic society that follows the rule of law.

Peaceful public assembly and protest are protected by the Constitution. However, mob violence and mob justice are serious criminal offences under Bangladesh law. To prevent mob justice, it is necessary to enforce existing laws strongly and to raise public awareness about the difference between lawful protest and unlawful violence.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Strengthen legal framework and enforcement

Mob justice has clearly become a growing concern in Bangladesh, and addressing it requires strict enforcement of the law. Authorities should apply existing provisions of the Penal Code more effectively, particularly regarding unlawful assembly (s 141), rioting (s 146), affray (s 159), hurt (ss 321, 325), culpable homicide (s 304), and murder (s 302). Swift and impartial legal action against perpetrators will deter future incidents and restore public confidence in the justice system.

7.2 Reform the judicial process to ensure speedy justice

A significant cause of mob justice is the perception of a slow and inefficient legal system. Judicial reforms should focus on reducing case backlogs, increasing the number of judges, and ensuring timely disposal of cases. Establishing fast-track courts for urgent cases could help restore faith in the legal process and reduce people's reliance on mob action.

7.3 Launch public awareness and education campaigns

since a large part of society sees Mob Justice as a quicker solution, public education is vital. awareness campaigns must highlight the risks of Mob Justice, explain the legal process, and promote peaceful means of conflict resolution. this should include incorporating civic and human rights education into school curricula and running mass media campaigns to strengthen respect for the rule of law.

7.4 Regulate and monitor social media

Social media plays a significant role in the spread and normalisation of mob justice. To prevent the misuse of online platforms, the government should implement regulations to curb misinformation, hate speech, and incitement to violence. At the same time, promoting fact-checking mechanisms and ethical reporting on social platforms will reduce the speed and scale of misinformation-driven mob incidents.

7.5 Facilitate peaceful protest and dialogue mechanisms

Peaceful protest is a constitutional right under Articles 37 and 39 of the Constitution of Bangladesh. Authorities should create more accessible platforms for citizens to express grievances without violence, such as community consultation forums, mediation cells, and grievance redress systems. This would reduce the perceived need for violent action while strengthening democratic participation.

7.6 Promote community-based conflict resolution

Local peace committees and community-based mediation systems should be strengthened to address disputes before they escalate into mob violence. These bodies should be trained, empowered, and connected to formal legal mechanisms to ensure disputes are resolved fairly and transparently.

7.7 Restore public trust in law enforcement and judiciary

The main cause of mob justice is loss of trust in the justice system. Transparency, accountability, and the elimination of corruption in law enforcement and the judiciary are crucial. Public trust can be rebuilt by ensuring that justice is delivered fairly, efficiently, and without political bias.

7.8 Strengthen human rights protections

The prevention of mob justice requires a strong human rights framework. The government, civil society, and educational institutions should work together to promote awareness of human rights, including the right to life, liberty, and fair trial (Articles 32 and 35 of the Constitution of Bangladesh, and relevant international treaties such as ICCPR). Respect for these rights will foster a culture where justice is pursued through lawful means rather than violent collective action.

8. Conclusion

This study has examined the rise, social acceptance, and implications of mob justice in Bangladesh in the aftermath of the July 2024 revolution, combining empirical evidence, criminological theory, and legal analysis. The research shows that mob justice in Bangladesh has grown significantly after the July 2024 revolution and has become increasingly accepted in society. Many young people see it as a faster way to punish wrongdoers compared to the slow and often corrupt formal justice system. While peaceful protests remain popular, violent forms of mob justice such as vandalism, public beatings, lynching, and organized attacks have become more common, partly fueled by political instability, weak law enforcement, and rumors spread on social media. The research also found that mob justice is often learned and copied from others, as people see it producing results without punishment. Many think that taking the law into their own hands is the easiest and quickest way to get justice. At the same time, the lack of trust in institutions, unclear rules, and visible disorder make society more tolerant of these violent acts. Over time, these behaviors have become normalized, especially among educated youth who participate in or observe them.

Despite some seeing mob justice as necessary when the formal system fails, most respondents recognized it as harmful. It creates fear, insecurity, and moral decline, and often punishes innocent people. It reduces respect for law, undermines human rights, and weakens social stability. Legally, peaceful protests are protected under the Constitution of Bangladesh, but when assemblies turn violent, they become criminal acts such as rioting, assault, or murder. Mob justice also violates fundamental rights like the right to life and a fair trial. To address this problem, the study recommends enforcing existing laws strictly, ensuring fast and fair trials, educating the public about legal rights, regulating social media to prevent misinformation, and promoting community-based conflict resolution. Rebuilding trust in law enforcement and the judiciary, along with civic education about human rights, is essential to reduce reliance on mob actions.

In conclusion, mob justice reflects a deep loss of trust in Bangladesh's legal system. While it may seem effective in the short term, it causes fear, harms innocent people, and destabilizes society. Long-term solutions require both strong institutions and public awareness. Only by combining strict law enforcement, speedy justice, and civic education can mob violence be reduced, and justice restored through lawful and peaceful means.

Statements and declarations

The author declares that no financial support or funding was received for this research and that there is no conflict of interest related to this study or its publication. The study was conducted in accordance with appropriate ethical principles for research involving human participants. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants after explaining the purpose of the study. The privacy and confidentiality of participants were maintained throughout the research, and no identifying personal information was disclosed. The data were collected by the author through a primary survey and supported by relevant secondary sources. Due to privacy and confidentiality considerations, the primary data are not publicly available but may be made available by the author upon reasonable request. As the sole author, the author was responsible for the conceptualization, literature review, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and preparation of the manuscript.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire:

1. Do you think mob justice has increased in Bangladesh after July 2024?
2. Do you think mob justice is seen by ordinary people as a faster and more effective form of punishment compared to legal penalties?
3. Do you think mob justice is becoming more acceptable to ordinary people?
4. Do you think mob justice reduces people's sense of morality or their feeling of law violation?
5. Do you think the main reason behind the rise in mob justice incidents is the declining public trust in the law?
6. Do you think social media (Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, etc.) plays a role in spreading mob justice?
7. Do you think "public beating" and "mob justice" are the same thing? If your answer is 'no,' how would you distinguish between 'public beating' and the contemporary use of 'mob justice,' and why do you think they are not the same?
8. To what extent do you consider achieving a demand or protesting against a government policy/decision through public violence acceptable?
9. What type of action would you take to achieve a demand or protest against a government decision?
10. After July 2024, how acceptable do you find peacefully pursuing demands (marches, human chains, holding placards)?
11. When a government official, other public officer, educational institution authority, political party, or senior judicial officer commits a crime or neglects duty, how do you view the public demanding their resignation through street protests instead of following legal procedures?
12. Do you think mob violence will increase in the future?
13. Should the law be used to punish those participating in mob justice?
14. What kind of impact do you think mob justice has on society and individual life?
15. In your opinion, what could be the most effective way to prevent mob justice?