

Dalit Also Claims Gang Assaulted & Killed Her Husband

Hemali Chhapia TNN

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Mumbai: In a rerun of the Khairlanji massacre, in which four members of a Dalit family were lynched in Bhandara district, a 34-year-old farm labourer from Yavatmal has alleged that she was raped by a group of men while their wives goaded them on. She claimed the men also assaulted and killed her husband Dharamsingh Khachakad. Police cremated the body the same day they found it after dubbing it a suicide.

The Khachakad couple was hired by a farmer in Bhigwan, 105 km from Pune, to harvest his sugarcane crop. The 6-month assignment started in September, while the crime took place end-December, the wife alleged in a complaint to the Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission. She claimed that Sadu Jadhav, a farmhand, came up to her husband and alleged he was having an affair with her and the two men got into a fight.

Early next morning, when Khachakad went to the farm, she saw a mob of people encircle him and beat him with sugarcanes. They tied him down on the ground and started beating him. "I ran to his rescue, but the three women among them attacked me. Then each of the six men, one after another, raped me," she alleged. As soon as the couple gained consciousness, they left the farm, went to the police station to register a complaint, but the police did not accept it. "We decided return home and then file a complaint in our village. But the people we wanted to register the complaint against followed us and when my husband boarded the bus at Latur, I suspect they kidnapped him because they got scared."

Two days later, one of the men who assaulted Dharamsingh travelled to Yavatmal and informed the Khachakads that the cops in Latur had found a man's body and his clothes matched those of Dharamsingh's. "We rushed to the Chakur police station. But the police handed us his clothes and his photograph and told us he was found hanging on a mango tree and he had committed suicide. The police had performed his last rites," she claimed.

According to the report by Latur SP Stalin Babu, Dharamsingh's body was found on January 3. The post-mortem was conducted in the afternoon and by evening, on the same day, the police performed his last rites. But a senior doctor with a post-mortem centre in Mumbai said rules did not allow police to perform the last rites immediately.