

Help's death: Police catch agency owner, ST panel seeks report

Ambika Pandit & Abhay | TNN

New Delhi: Almost two weeks after a 15-year-old tribal girl died by suicide at her employer's house in Rajouri Garden, police arrested one man on Tuesday. The accused was identified as Satish Kumar, one of the owners of the placement agency through which the minor girl was placed at the house.

The victim, Priti Kujur, went missing from her village in Jharkhand's Simdega district four months ago. She was found dead at her employer's house on May 31.

The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes on Tuesday issued a notice to Delhi Police commissioner and Jharkhand's director general of police seeking within three days an action report on the case of alleged death by suicide of the tribal girl in the national capital.

Citing the **TOI** news report titled "Help's death highlights job agency-employer link" that was published on June 8, the NCST in its notice states that it has taken suo motu cognisance of the case and has decided to investigate the matter.

"You are requested to submit the facts and information on the action taken on the allegations within 3 days of receipt of this notice," the NCST states in the notice. "The report should also contain action taken against the arrest of the accused, filing chargesheet under provisions of Indian Penal Code and the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, monetary relief and rehabilitation package to the victim family as per the Atrocity Amended Rules, 2016," it is further stated.

The NCST has made it clear

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that if the commission does not receive a reply within the stipulated timeframe, the commission may exercise the power of the civil court conferred upon it and issue summons for personal appearance of both officials before the commission.

Days after the death of the girl, police registered an FIR where apart from abetment to suicide, section 370 (buying or disposing of any person as a slave) of the IPC was also added. Police are probing the human trafficking angle in the case as well.

An officer said the investigation revealed that the girl wanted to go to her native place in Simdega but was not allowed to go, allegedly by the placement agency. "She was in distress, due to which she died by suicide at her employer's house in Rajouri Garden," an officer said. Police have also questioned her employer, and he claimed that the placement agency didn't provide them with her address.

According to the deceased girl's father Rajesh Kujur, who works as a daily wager in the village, it was only a day after his daughter died that a neighbour came forward to tell him that her own daughter and Priti had left with a man in February who worked as an agent.