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Unable to Work, Bus Driver Dies by Suicide in Kerala

Santhosh's family members say he killed himself under mental stress due to the lockdown, which debilitated his financial situation.



A man stands as buses are seen parked at a depot during lockdown by the authorities to limit the spreading of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), in New Delhi, India March 23, 2020. REUTERS/Adnan Abidi



The Wire Staff



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New Delhi: A private bus driver died by suicide in Kerala, with the lockdown triggering a financial crisis due to the

lockdown, and private bus services not operating from this week.

A report in *Mathrubhumi* identified Santhosh, a resident of Choyi bazar in Kozhikode district, as having being found hanging on Sunday morning.

All his family members, colleagues and the bus owner stated that he killed himself as he was under mental stress due to the lockdown having debilitated his financial situation, the report said.

After the lockdown began, all private buses were parked and stopped services for around two-and-a-half months. After that, some services began with the proper social distancing protocols, following a hike in bus fare.

But, with the bus fare hike withdrawn, the owners decided to halt the services. Apparently, from Monday, private bus owners had decided not to operate any services.

Santhosh's family members, quoted by the report, said that he was hoping to get back to work from Monday and had told them that he would be unable to make ends meet if the situation didn't change.

According to media reports, Santhosh's bus owner said that he had tried to protect the jobs of his employees, who had been working for him for a long period of time. But, he pointed out that it was difficult to operate the buses with mounting losses.

Santhosh left home on Saturday evening, saying he had got a job as a lorry driver but did not return. He was finally found hanging on Sunday morning.

The harsh lockdown, implemented to contain the spread of the coronavirus, has proven to be difficult for many of the country's working class citizens. Researchers Thejesh G.N., Kanika Sharma and Aman, **have recorded** that since the lockdown was implemented, at least 740 people have died due to various reasons such as exhaustion, starvation, police brutality and lack of medical care. The data also shows that at least 126 people have died by suicide in this period.

If you know someone – friend or family member – at risk of suicide, please reach out to them. The Suicide Prevention India Foundation maintains a list of telephone numbers

(www.spif.in/seek-help/) they can call to speak in confidence.

You could also appear them to the nearest hospital.



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