

Kerala: Mob beats tribal man to death, CM says civilised society can't tolerate such acts

Police said Madhu, the tribal, was apprehended by a mob which accused him of theft from nearby shops and beat him up after tying him to a post. A special investigative team has been constituted to investigate the matter.

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The 27-year-old tribal man was beaten to death by a mob which accused him of theft in Kerala's Palakkad district.(ANI Photo)

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A 27-year-old tribal man was beaten to death by 15 locals over allegation of theft in Kadukumanna village in Attappady, near Palakkad on Thursday night.

Chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan condemned the killing saying a civilised society can't tolerate such heinous acts. Police have detained eight, though only two arrests have been made.

The killing caused an outrage as the video of the attack went viral. One of the pictures posted in social media also shows a man holding a stick questioning the tribal, while in another; a man is seen taking a selfie with the injured victim.

State police chief Loknath Behera said a Special Investigation Team has been constituted under Thrissur range IG MR Ajith Kumar and action will be taken against erring police officers. Police said the deceased, Madhu, was apprehended by a mob over allegation of theft and severely beaten up.

Later he was handed over to the police. On way to the police station he reportedly collapsed and died. The police have arrested two persons in connection with the case.

“It is heinous crime. A civilised society can’t tolerate such act. The government will take strict action against the guilty,” CM Vijayan said in a Facebook post. Meanwhile, BJP has called for a shutdown in Mannarakkad to protest the killing. Congress has also decried it saying it was a cold-blooded murder. “It is a shame on literate Kerala. Like honour killings in north India such brutal acts are raising their ugly heads here,” said writer and activist Joy Mathew.

Tribal activist Dhanya Raman said Madhu was suffering from mental ailment and he used to roam around the area for more than a year. However, Agali police said Madhu was involved in three cases of theft and he was caught-red handed while stealing from a shop.

The state government has announced a magisterial inquiry into the incident. State culture and SC/ST minister A K Balan will visit the area on Saturday. “The government will not spare the guilty. We have already asked the police to charge all accused under murder charges,” Balan said adding the incident has brought shame to the state.

The National SC/ST Commission has also sought a report from the district collector and police superintendent. The commission said in New Delhi that it will send a fact-finding team to Palakkad on Monday.

Malliamma, the victim’s mother, said her son led a nomadic life and used to stay in caves. But she denied allegation that he used to steal food from shops and houses. “Even if he had stolen food when he was hungry he should not have been killed like this,” she said.

Meanwhile, an aide of Mannarkkad MLA N Shamsuddin (Muslim League), M Ubaid, was reportedly present at the scene when the crowd attacked the tribal. However, the legislator said though he was present he only took a selfie and did not beat him.

“He is only a party worker not my staff member. When I made inquiries, local people told me though Ubaid was present he did not beat him but he took a couple of selfies. He should have saved him rather than clicking selfie,” the MLA said while condemning the incident.

Two similar incidents were reported from the state in last one month. In Pallippuram (Thiruvananthapuram) a mentally-deranged woman was beaten up by three women in front of a crowd last month. Later police arrested all three when the video of the attack gone viral. A transgender was stripped and attacked by a crowd in Valiyathura on the outskirts of the state capital a couple of weeks back alleging he was a child-lifter.

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