

Autopsy: TN man suffered 13 injuries in cops' custody

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Recently, the CCTV footage of the April 18 night had also come to light where police could be seen chasing Vignesh. (Representational image)

Published on May 06, 2022 12:29 AM IST

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Weeks after a 25-year-old man, V Vignesh, died in police custody in Chennai, the autopsy report of the deceased confirmed that he had suffered thirteen injuries, including several contusions and a fracture in his right leg, an official privy to the matter said on Thursday.

Vignesh was arrested on charges of carrying ganja and attempting to attack the police on April 18.

The cause of death has not been ascertained as a few more reports are pending. However, on April 19, after the news of Vignesh's death came to the fore, the Chennai police had claimed at that time that he had died due to a seizure. Following criticism of the handling of the case, the state deputy general of police (DGP) had transferred the case to the CB-CID on April 22.

On Thursday, Chennai police commissioner Shankar Jwal and additional commissioner N Kannan appeared before Arun Halder, vice-chairman of the National Commission of Scheduled Castes in Chennai to record their statements.

Speaking to reporters, Halder accused the policemen of brutality. "...And they killed him," he said.

"At first, the police wanted to suppress that he belongs to a Scheduled Caste family," Halder said. He has sought a probe in the case by a DGP-rank police officer.

After the post-mortem report began circulating on social media, several activists called for the arrest of the policemen involved. As per the post mortem conducted by the Government Kilpauk Medical College, the deceased sustained 13 injuries, including contusions on the mid-parietal region of the head and above the left eyebrow, swelling with contusion on the left cheek and on "dissection thick blood oozed out". A similar diffuse contusion was found on his right hand, forearm and right lower limb up to the ankle and from the left shoulder to left hand to the thigh region and on the sole of the left foot.

Human rights activist Henri Tiphange said that a murder case has to be filed against the police officers responsible (who are suspended), the station house officer and those were on night rounds.

"Witnesses and victims need protection and assurance from the Tamil Nadu government," Tiphange said.

Another activist G Sugumaran tweeted: "since the post mortem reveals 13 injuries, chief minister M K Stalin should alter the case to 302 IPC and "arrest the guilty police personnel immediately."

On the night of April 18, when police were on a routine vehicle check in Chennai's Kellys area, they stopped an auto rickshaw in which Vignesh and his friend G Suresh (28) were travelling.

As per police, Vignesh was found in possession of ganja (a banned tobacco product) and liquor. Police had earlier told HT that they had tried to escape from the spot and had also attempted to attack a cop brandishing a knife, so they were taken into custody. On April 19, around 8.30 in the morning, after they were given breakfast, Vignesh started vomiting and had seizures, police had said. He was rushed to a nearby private hospital, from where he was referred to Kilpauk Medical College and Hospital, where he was declared as brought dead, police said.

Following this, the family had alleged police brutality. Recently, the CCTV footage of the April 18 night had also come to light where police could be seen chasing Vignesh.

On April 26, the Opposition AIADMK had also raised the issue in the assembly session and chief minister M K Stalin had responded with the police version of the events. Three cops from Secretariat Colony police station connected to the incident were suspended on the same day the case was transferred to the CB-CID.

Seeking justice for Vignesh, his older brother V Vinod (30) said, "The policemen should be punished. This should not happen to anyone else."

Vinod who had raised the deceased and five other siblings said that the post mortem has confirmed what they have been saying from the beginning.

Vinod said he had seen several injuries on his brother's body when he was called to identify the latter at the magistrate's court. "I had seen injuries on his eyebrow, mouth, hands and his foot," Vinod said. "But, we were terrified of asking anything. There were 50-60 policemen, senior policemen and one of them had already threatened my younger brother Veera," he alleged.

Accusing the police of bribing the family to stay quiet, Vinod said on the day of Vignesh's death, he and two other siblings were brought to the police station and then to a nearby mansion.

"One of the policemen handed over ₹50,000 to Veera and threatened him to remain quiet. Later, they gave us ₹50,000 more. Three policemen remained with us till the last rites were over. They didn't let us speak to even one another, let alone allow us to speak to someone outside," he said.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/autopsy-tn-man-suffered-13-injuries-in-cops-custody-101651777146592.html>