

## Tamil Nadu: Handcuffing of teenage sexual assault victim sparks outrage; right groups demand action

**T S Venkatesan Nov 26, 2023, 04:30 pm IST in Tamil Nadu..**

In a disturbing incident in Uthagamandalam, commonly known as Ooty, Tamil Nadu, a 15-year-old sexual assault victim was allegedly handcuffed by police while deposing before a court, leading to widespread condemnation and calls for action



The incident of the sexual assault victim being handcuffed came to light when All Women Police Inspector Saraswathi filed a case on November 2, following a complaint that a youth had married a teenage girl against her will. After an inquiry, the inspector lodged the girl in a government-run home. Subsequently, in connection with the case, the girl was taken to a court in Nilgiris to record her statement before a magistrate. It is alleged that Woman Police Jamuna handcuffed the girl like a serial offender.

The controversy escalated with public outrage, prompting Nilgiris SP Sundara Vadivel to Investigate the matter. On November 22, Vadivel stated that the victim's mother personally accused the Kothagiri-based woman police of handcuffing her daughter during transit to court. Following this, Coty Town DSP Yasodha was directed to investigate the charges. After speaking to the victim, Yasodha reported that the victim denied being handcuffed. The SP, after examining CCTV footage, confirmed that the girl was not handcuffed during the incident.

Meanwhile, former government advocate Malini demanded departmental action against those responsible for the alleged handcuffing. Notices were issued to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, Coimbatore Range IG, and Nilgiris District Magistrate and SP In this regard.

The Tamil Nadu BJP State Vice President Naryanan Tirupathi condemned the police action, calling it unacceptable and a serious crime. Tirupathi criticized the delay in arresting the accused and accused the DMK government and its police force of allowing the offender to escape. He urged a thorough investigation and stern action against those involved, emphasizing the serious violation of POCSO guidelines.

Simultaneously, the Human Rights Monitoring Network People's Watch' from Madurai appealed to the Chief Justice of the Madras High Court to take suo moto action in the case. The NGO's letter highlighted another incident on November 7th, where a 15-year-old POCSO victim was allegedly handcuffed by a woman constable from the bus stand to the court in Ooty. Henri Tiphagne, the Honorary Executive Director of the

NGO, urged the Chief Justice to make this case an educational example to discourage such practices.

In the letter, Tiphagne detailed the alleged mistreatment of the victim, emphasising that it contradicted the POCSO Act guidelines. The victim's mother had previously complained to the Ooty SP on November 15th, claiming that a higher police official visited the victim at Annal Sathya Home and obtained her signature on a paper without allowing her to read it.

The NGO, in a release, described the police action as a violation of rights and called for an independent inquiry into the inhumane treatment. They raised concerns about the alleged Intimidation and coercion of the victim during the complaint investigation.

As the incidents continue to spark public outcry and calls for accountability, the focus shifts to how authorities will address these serious allegations of mishandling a vulnerable victim in violation of established guidelines. The demand for a comprehensive investigation and disciplinary action against those responsible remains a pressing concern for human rights advocates and the public alike.

<https://organiser.org/2023/11/26/207997/bharat/tamil-nadu/tamil-nadu-handcuffing-of-teenage-sexual-assault-victim-sparks-outrage-rights-groups-demand-action/>