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Dalit teacher kills self after insult by colleague

Anand Bodh, TNN, May 22, 2010, 03.05am IST

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CHANDIGARH: At a time when caste-based census is still being debated, a 50-year-old dalit school teacher ended his life after being allegedly humiliated by an upper caste employee of a school in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh. His body was recovered on Thursday.

Chandan Lal of Rinj village was posted as a physical education teacher at a government school and was deputed for census survey. On May 13, Lal along with Kesaru Ram, a lab attendant in the school, had gone for the census survey. Ram belongs to an upper caste community.

According to the police, Kesaru Ram, unaware that Chandan Lal belonged to the scheduled caste, had asked him to spend a night at his house. When he came to know about it, Ram allegedly insulted Chandan Lal for not revealing his caste.

DSP (headquarter), Mandi, Narinder Kumar said according to Chandan Lal's suicide note addressed to a tehsildar, he was not able to bear the humiliation and committed suicide by allegedly consuming some poisonous substance.

"The police will be directed to register a case under the Prevention of Atrocities Act if it is confirmed that there is a caste bias in the case," said Himachal Pradesh secretary for social justice Prem Kumar. "We'll verify the allegations and will take stern action," said Himachal Pradesh minister for social justice and empowerment Sarveen Chaudhary.

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