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## Dalit woman branded a witch, thrashed in Rajasthan

Updated on Sunday, August 29, 2010, 13:06

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Tonk: A Dalit woman was labelled a witch and beaten up badly in Rajasthan's Tonk district, police said on Sunday.

Kamla Bairwa of Jhalra village in Tonk district, over 100 km from Jaipur, stated in her First Information Report (FIR) filed with the police Saturday that some villagers tagged her as a witch, insulted her and then beat her up.

"The villagers, especially the women, call me a witch. They insult me, torture me and beat me up. They wanted me to leave the village," Kamla, a labourer, told a news agency.

She added: "A couple of days back they tied me around a tree and I was beaten badly. I am scared. How can I live in such a place where people are after my life."

A policeman of Uniara police station in Tonk district said: "Kamla Bairwa has filed an FIR against five people, including two women."

Police have started investigations.

"We will record the statements of both the parties. We may conduct a medical examination of the complainant and, if need be, arrest the culprits," the police official said.

Rajasthan is one of the states in the country where women, who exhibit abnormal behaviour, are often called witches and ill-treated by the society, causing them to commit suicide.

In a bid to curb this, the women's commission in Rajasthan has prepared a draft bill that has been sent to the state government.

According to the draft bill, called Rajasthan Prevention of Witch (Dain) Practices Bill, a crime would be considered to have been committed when any person or community intentionally or inadvertently abets, conspires, aids and instigates the identification of a woman as a witch, leading to her mental and physical torture and humiliation.

The bill advocates severe punishment for the guilty.

However, the draft bill sent to the state government over three years back, is still to see light of the day.

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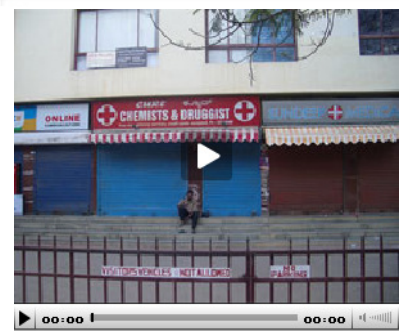
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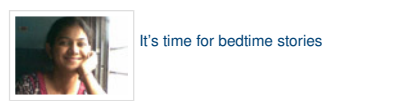
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