

Medieval torture for sisters accused of theft

Kolkata - Two sisters were hanged from a tree and beaten up mercilessly in a West Bengal village after a kangaroo court found them guilty of stealing.

Mantu Santra and Baisakhi Santra, both in their teens and residents of Hijli village in West Midnapore district, were branded thieves and meted out the punishment on Friday by villagers, news reports here said. A crowd of around 500 people had gathered to witness the incident.

The sisters, accused of stealing jewellery and cash from the house of a school teacher, were tied to the branch of a tree for six hours and caned, slapped and clubbed because they refused to 'confess'. They were employed as domestic help in the teacher's house.

The girls bled profusely and fell unconscious. The assaulters later dumped the girls in a field in a semi-naked condition. A villager took them home and brought a quack for treatment.

When their condition deteriorated further, the sisters were shifted to a sub-divisional hospital at Ghatal.

Asit Samanta, officer-in-charge of Chandrakona police station, said though no police complaint had been lodged, they were investigating the matter and would soon make arrests.

According to police, most of the people involved in the incident had fled the village.

However, village head Jiten Santra seemed unrepentant.

'In the case of petty crimes in the village we sit on judgement like this traditionally. The punishment this time was a little harsh perhaps,' he said.

A few senior villagers said the punishment was in keeping with the methods used by the police on criminals. They said the cost of treatment of the girls would be borne by the village.

The village is about 180 km from Kolkata.

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