

Govt-Appointed Panel Says Payal Tadvi Was Ragged, But No Evidence of Caste Discrimination

Her family had said that the doctors targeting Tadvi made comments like “these caste people don’t know anything” and that “she got admission through caste quota”.

CASTE

HEALTH

RIGHTS

11/JUN/2019

New Delhi: The Maharashtra government-appointed panel to look into the suicide of Dr Payal Tadvi has said in its report that while the doctor was ragged by three seniors, no conclusive evidence was found of caste-based harassment.

The government’s report comes despite the fact that internal investigation at the TN Topiwala National Medical College in Mumbai, where Tadvi worked, **found that** she had been a victim of “extreme harassment”, including casteist remarks. Her family had said that the doctors targeting Tadvi, who was from the Adivasi community, made comments like “these caste people don’t know anything” and that “she got admission through caste quota”.

The government committee’s report also gave importance to the work stress and pressure Tadvi faced, the *Indian Express* reported. As *The Wire* has reported before, the lawyer for the three accused doctors had

also questioned Tadvī's "capacity" to deal with academic pressure. In cases like this, shifting the burden to the deceased is often the norm.

The four-member committee submitted its report to the medical education department, *Indian Express* reported, which will forward it to Maharashtra medical education minister Girish Mahajan. The panel spoke to 32 people including Tadvī's family, the parents of the three accused doctors and other doctors and hostellers.

While the report has found fault with the head of the gynaecology and obstetrics department – who had received complaints about the harassment Tadvī was facing but had not taken any action – it has not recommended punishment for the head or for the three accused doctors. Instead, it includes recommendations on what colleges can do to prevent ragging and increase counselling services.

Tadvī killed herself in her hostel room on May 22. The same morning, she was admonished by the accused senior colleagues in the presence of other staff and patients. The second-year PG student was seen crying as she left.

Her husband had filed a complaint on her behalf with the head of the gynaecology and obstetrics department nine days before that. The three accused doctors had reportedly found out about the complaint and amped up their harassment of Tadvī, raising questions on the college's handling of the case.