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CASE FILE
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# Hyderabad Family Challenges Newspaper Accounts of Father's Funeral

Original reporting by **Swati Goel Sharma**



5 Muslim men organise last rites of Hindu man shunned by neighbours

Died Of TB, But Locals Believed He Had Covid-19

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Hyderabad: Five Muslim friends carried out the last rites of an auto driver, a Hindu, who had died of tuberculosis but neighbours ostracised the family fearing it to be a Covid-19 death.

Venu Mudiraj, 50, from Khairatabad died at OGH on April 16 and trouble started after his family brought home the body the next day for his funeral. His two teenaged children and uncle G.Vinod faced the heat from [illegible] as

"He was suffering from tuberculosis and during the lockdown period his condition deteriorated. But after his death, there was absolutely no one to take care of the children as their mom had died a few years ago," said Mudiraj's brother Vinod who lives a few kilometres away in Ramnagar.

The children did not have money for the funeral and the neighbours kept away. Just when the crestfallen family was giving up hope, help came from an unexpected quarter.

"A friend who lives in the same locality reached out to us claiming that nobody was coming forward to make arrangements for the funeral due to Covid-19 fear. That's when I and my four friends decided to go there and help the family," said Sadeb [illegible]

▶Carried the bier: P3

The report published on the front page of The Times of India headlined '5 Muslim men organise last rites of Hindu man shunned by neighbours'.

## CASE SUMMARY

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| **Complaint filed** | The family submitted a written complaint at Punjagutta Police Station in Hyderabad on 21 April. |
| **Disputed headline** | On 20 April, The Times of India ran a front-page report saying five Muslim men organised the last rites after neighbours shunned the family. |
| **Family's account of the funeral** | The family says relatives and neighbours helped it perform the last rites on 17 April. |
| **Photograph allegation** | The complaint says the five men asked to carry the bier, took a photograph without the family's knowledge and left within five minutes. |

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Updated from an original written by Swati Goel Sharma in April 2020. Summary prepared by Rashtra Jyoti Staff. Facts refer to the original reporting date.