

HC seeks report on exorcism at Sangam

Rajesh Kumar Pandey, TNN | Mar 28, 2015, 10.55AM IST

ALLAHABAD: The Allahabad High Court on Friday directed the Allahabad SSP to file reply in response to a PIL seeking probe into alleged beating of tribal women by self-styled 'ojhas' (sorcerers) at the Sangam in the name of exorcism.

Hearing a PIL filed by Deeksha Dwivedi and Charlie Prakash, law interns working with Human Rights Law Network, a division bench comprising Chief Justice Dr Dhananjaya Yeshwant Chandrachud and Justice Pradeep Kumar Singh Baghel directed to list this PIL on April 10 for next hearing.

Appearing on behalf of the petitioners, their counsels Mamta Singh assisted by Rakesh Singh pointed out to the court that tribal and poor women are often brought to Sangam area and thereafter victimized in the name of 'witch-hunting'. She contended that police remains a mute spectator to the entire social crime, which has been going on since long in the name of removing of evil spirits from the poor and illiterate women.

The petitioner mentioned an incident in the PIL which had taken place on March 18 in Sangam area, where some tribal women belonging to Madhya Pradesh and Budelkhand were pushed into running water, badly beaten by iron rods and chains and their hairs pulled mercilessly. She alleged all this was done in the name of removing evil spirit from them.

They further alleged that as usual, the police remained a silent spectator to the entire drama, which was done as part of the evil practice of superstition.

Counsel for the petitioner urged the court to direct the authorities concerned to take stringent action against the accused persons and security be also provided to women at Sangam area. In addition, she also requested the court to pay adequate compensation to the victims who were subjected to undignified assault.

The petitioner alleged that similar incidents had taken place earlier during the Kumbh period in January 2013.

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