

Kerala nun commits suicide

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**Sexually harassed by
Mother Superior,
alleges victim's father**

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THE FATHER of a nun who committed suicide at her convent in Kollam alleged on Tuesday that his daughter was mentally and physically tortured by her senior at the convent, who wanted sexual favours from her.

A 22-year-old nun Anupa Mary was found hanging from the fan in her bedroom of the St. Mary's Convent on Monday. In her suicide note she reportedly wrote that she was victimized by her Mother Superior in the convent.

Throwing more light on this her father Papachhan, who works at Kollam bishop house as a cook, alleged that his daughter was forced to do all domestic work and sexually harassed by Mother Superior Alberna. "Till midnight she was forced to do all work. During night the Mother Superior never allowed her to bolt

■ Anupa Mary left a suicide note saying she was forced to do all the domestic work and was sexually harassed by Mother Superior Alberna

■ In addition, Anupa's father has alleged that at night, the Mother Superior did not allow her to bolt her room from inside

■ Recently, the Women's Commission had asked the govt to prescribe minimum age for nuns but the issue had snowballed into a controversy

her room from inside," the inconsolable father said, adding that many people approached him to settle the case amicably.

A member of the Vimala Hridya Franciscan congregation Anupa had joined the new convent only two months back. She became a nun last year and was earlier serving at Patathanam convent in Kollam. "Though she told these bitter experiences to her mother and sister on several occasions I came know about this only after she committed suicide. Had I been known this I would have withdrawn her from the convent," the father said. None of the convent officials were available for comments.

Expressing shock over the death of young nun State Women's Commission chairperson Justice D. Sridevi

said the commission would closely monitor the police investigation. "I hope this incident would open many eyes. When we prescribed minimum age for nuns we were targeted by many," she said. Recently the Commission had asked the government to prescribe minimum age for nuns and prosecute parents who force their children to enroll the laity before attaining the minimum age. The issue had snowballed into a big controversy forcing the government to distance away from the women's panel observations.

Kollam's Superintendent of Police M.R. Ajith Kumar said all aspects would be examined during the investigation. "We are waiting for the autopsy report. We will record the statements of parents soon," he said.