

## CHENNAI

# Barber in Chennai ends life, family says he was distressed over lockdown

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

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## The barber's family said he was very upset, as he was not able to make ends meet during the ongoing COVID-19 lockdown

S. Bharani, who ran a barbershop in Taramani, died by suicide on Wednesday, as he was not able to earn a living for his family during the COVID-19 lockdown.

“Mr. Bharani was 38-years old. He ended his life in his barbershop,” said Venkiru Pazhani, president, Mudithiruthum Azhagu Kalai Matturm Amaippusaara Thozhilalar Sangam, who came to Government Royapettah Hospital to receive the body.

“He was disturbed after the lockdown was announced. He could not pay the rent for his house and shop, and hoped that the restrictions would be eased after May 3. But the continuation of the lockdown dashed his hopes because he had to feed his wife, mother and two school-going children. His wife told us that he was lamenting about the future of the family the entire night on Tuesday,” Mr Pazhani explained.

On Wednesday, Mr. Bharani had told the family that he would come back after visiting the shop. But he did not return. “When his son went in search of him in the shop, he found that his father had ended his life,” Mr Pazhani said.

Though the members of the association planned a demonstration and refused to receive the body, they gave up their plan after officials promised to look into their demands.

“Hospital authorities told me that in the time of pandemic it was not safe to keep the body in the mortuary and officials themselves were working overtime combating the disease. They have asked us to give our demands in writing. We have demanded ₹10 lakh assistance and a government job for his wife,” Mr Pazhani said.

Meanwhile Taramani police said they are investigating. “We have asked the association to give their demands in writing to the Greater Chennai Corporation. They have to take a decision on opening

the shops,” said a police officer.

*Assistance for overcoming suicidal thoughts is available on the State’s health helpline 104 and Sneha’s suicide prevention helpline 044-24640050.*

## A letter from the Editor

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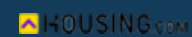
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