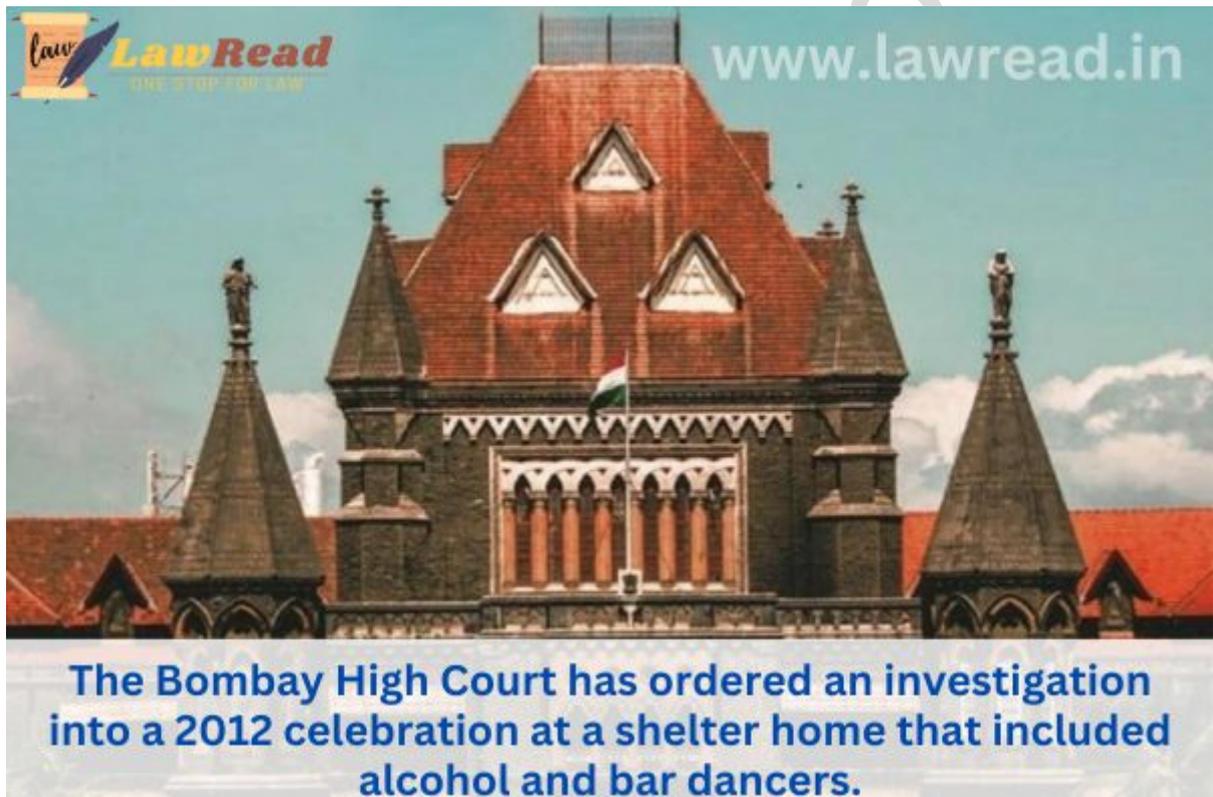


News

The Bombay High Court has ordered an investigation into a 2012 celebration at a shelter home that included alcohol and bar dancers.



A social worker claimed in a 2014 Public Interest Litigation that 26 girls with mental disabilities attended a party in a shelter home in 2012, when bar dancers performed and alcohol was given.

A formal investigation into a 2012 New Year's Eve party that allegedly featured alcohol service and bar dancers performing in front of 26 mentally challenged girls who were brought to the event without official permission has been ordered by the Bombay High Court, nearly 12 years after the incident was made public [**Sangeeta Sandeep Punekar v State of Maharashtra & Ors**].

On Monday, the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities was instructed by a Division

Bench consisting of **Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice Sandeep Marne** to investigate the event and provide a report to the Maharashtra government within six weeks.

The State has also been directed to provide a compliance report within three months and take appropriate action in light of the findings.

In 2014, social worker Sangeeta Sandeep Punekar filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL), which prompted the Court's order.

Punekar claimed in her appeal that on December 31, 2012, an unapproved New Year's entertainment event was hosted at Agrawal Hall, which is housed in the boys' portion of the Children Aid Society Shelter Home in Mankhurd.

It has been stated that booze was given, bar dancers were invited to perform, and the 26 girls with mental disabilities were forced to attend the party, only to return at approximately 3:15 am.

The petition claimed that the authorities had hidden the issue and that no authorization had been requested for the event. The petitioner claimed that the incident was never thoroughly investigated, despite the Trombay Police at the time giving the organizers a clean sheet.

The High Court called the claims "shocking" in its initial order dated August 6, 2014, and instructed the Crime Branch to look into them. Additionally, the Court mandated the creation of a group with representatives from the Child Welfare group and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Additional guidelines were released to safeguard whistleblowers, some of whom allegedly received threats from high-ranking officials.

The issue went unsolved for more than ten years in spite of these early directives. The Court voiced its strong disapproval of the delay in action on June 16, 2025.

"A petition cannot be left unanswered for eleven years in this manner. It is not within your power as state authorities to shield wrongdoers. Something must be done. Have you made any inquiries? What have you done? We tell you to do something. The Bench said, "We will [initiate] contempt in other ways."

The Court further criticized State officials by adding:

"You need to feel embarrassed by your police. You're brave enough to say, "We'll find out."

The Court ordered additional action after noting that the authorities had not shown that any action had been taken against those responsible for the occurrence.

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