



Demolition Gone Wrong

Raj Kamal is appointed as the Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) at a village in Etawah (Uttar Pradesh). A family in the village has been found to be living in a hut on encroached land which was supposed to be used for some developmental project.

The authorities arrived without any prior notice to vacate their house. The SDM ordered their house to be set on fire believing they would be compelled to vacate it. However, oblivious to the fire, the family was asleep, and it was too late before they could make it in time. Out of the five family members, two died in the fire and the remaining three suffered from third degree burns.

The police, on the basis of the complaint filed by the survivors, registered a case against more than 12 people including SDM, Station Officer, and Lekhpal. The SDM and Lekhpal were suspended by the district administration.

Do you think the approach followed by the SDM was justified anyhow? If not, then what other action could have been taken against the family to provide a better solution to this problem?

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