

## Vijith

The WSG found out about Vijith through newspaper reports in 2000 that sensationally reported his story:

*In January 2000, a 17-year-old girl, Vini, was admitted to a rural state hospital by her family, after an attempt at ending her life. She died that same night. The inquest revealed the reason behind her suicide as a lovers' tiff.*

*Vijith, her 26-year-old fiancé, giving evidence, revealed that he was a female before he underwent a sex change nine years ago. Vini had been a long-term friend of Vijith before they started off on their romance. They both worked at a garment factory, and had been engaged to be married with the approval of their families.*

*On the fateful day, Vijith and Vini had had a quarrel over an incident involving Vini and a young man, and Vini had committed suicide in distress. While the inquest was going on, a police officer became suspicious regarding Vijith's identity, and a consequent medical examination confirmed Vijith to be a woman. Vijith was arrested and charged with misleading the public. It is interesting that Vijith defended his male guise as a means of avoiding harassment from men in Sri Lankan society. He was asked by the court to produce a medical report to confirm his sex change.*

*Following the first court hearing, a gang of men circled Vijith's sister's house, where he had been sheltering, and his brother-in-law had to ask for protection from his male friends. Vijith had to also deal with anger from Vini's family over her suicide. At the second hearing, Vijith pleaded guilty and a medical report was produced to the effect that he had assumed a male guise due to unsound mind. He was advised to seek psychiatric treatment so that he could be cured of his illusion of being male.*

The WSG made several interventions in the case, including visits to court hearings, posting bail, visiting Vijith in jail and consulting his sister on how the WSG could assist them. On his release he did not want any contact with the WSG and told us that he was planning to leave the country.

A year later (2001), the WSG read in the newspaper once more that Vijith had been apprehended by the police for impersonation and forging documents after marrying a woman from another village. He refused our intervention and there has been no news of him since.