

RECAPITULATION AND CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

The research motif of this study began, and remains focused on, the question, *Why would Indian parents kill young people who have fallen in love and make a public showing so their community can see what they have done?* A parallel question followed: *With the adoption of a Western-style democratic constitution and a police force available, why does the murder of newly married couples still happen in the present era?* Added to these are the questions: *What is progress?* and, *What are the steps forward?* This study critically analyzes an extraordinary sequence of events that began in 1993 with global media reporting the illegal murder of young lovers in Northern India. It tells an ongoing saga involving local communities, the general public and the government.

PAPER 1

Entitled ‘Towards a Study of Potentially Tragic Romantic Events of *Romeo and Juliet* Style (happening in the World Today and Mythological)’, Paper 1 is an ‘a priori’ research protocol for the study. As stated in the paper’s introduction, I, the author, noted violent outcomes involving young couples. This led to a desire to study and attempt to understand the couples’ social situation. The intent was to make a contribution to global perceptions regarding social progress related to romance tragedy in various cultures, in this instance involving race, religion, and social status, primarily in India. In Nepal in 2001, I was able to meet Hindu people locally and socially through professional voluntary working commitments. Paper 1 indicates five research avenues to be followed in investigating romance tragedy involving young lovers: mythological

and legendary stories; in-depth interviews; community opinion; media reports; and theatre and the arts.

PAPER 2

Entitled ‘Present day romance tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* style: Focus on Northern India and Nepal in the time period 1993–2013,’ Paper 2 is the core paper of this thesis. The logic of the paper is presented under the following headings, which are briefly annotated.

A Period in Time

India adopted a democratic constitution in 1950, giving Indian citizens legal free choice of marriage partner. Telegraph reporter Uddalak Mukherjee, when writing about the killing of Gudiya and Mahesh Singh in 2007, confirmed that the illegal persecution of young lovers had only come to general public attention since 1993. The prime location where romance tragedies related to marriage still happen is in rural Northern India, especially in the state of Haryana.

Hindu Law

Khap authorities (village elders) have used local and regional religious leaders’ interpretation of traditional Hindu law, *The Dharmashastra*, to justify murder. The *Hindu Succession Act of 1956* was amended a second time in 2005 to allow daughters of the deceased equal rights with sons. Property possessed by a Hindu female is now legally her absolute property. She (theoretically) has full power to deal with it and dispose of it by will, as she likes.

Caste Endogamy and Village Exogamy

Caste endogamy and village exogamy are requirements of marriage in villages that do not recognize Indian constitutional law related to marriage partners. Where rules of

exogamy apply, young people growing up in the same village or closely-related villages in these parts of India are regarded as consanguineous (of the same *gotra*). They associate freely like brother and sister, visit each other's homes, and may attend the same school. Close association between the sexes may be permitted to a certain degree but marriage is forbidden and would bring shame to the family.

Role of the Khap Panchayat

Information sought from Dilawar Chetsingh (my bicultural adviser) explains that Khaps and their Panchayats have been the traditional authorities in these Haryana villages. The positive side of village communities being regarded as one brotherhood definitely helped in times of conflict from outside, however the authorities are also aware that social change is coming with extensive migration of the young from rural to urban areas. Concessions, especially for young women regarding dress and travel, have begun.

Khap Panchayat Edicts

Examples where the Khap Panchayat gives young married couples the option of divorce or death show that the latter eventuates. Expulsion from the village is another Khap ruling imposed on lovers and their families. Forced divorce and forced marriage have been imposed on transgressing families as a condition of remaining in the village. In some villages, there are new restrictive rules for young women such as the banning of mobile phones to reduce the possibility of easy contact between the sexes.

Capital Punishment Awarded and Commuted

Federal laws and government are under scrutiny. The High Court in India now recommends capital punishment for the 'rarest of rare' category of intolerable murder, which includes honour killings. Implementation of a capital punishment sentence for honour killing seems unlikely. While the first judgement of this kind happened in 2010, with more in 2011 and 2012, the 2010 capital punishment sentence for the murder of

Manoj and Babli has been commuted to life imprisonment. It is expected that other capital punishment sentences of this kind will be commuted as appeals are brought to court, with the likelihood that new judges will be more sympathetic to tradition. In response to court rulings, the Khap Panchayats have convened regional meetings where representatives discuss their strategy in the face of new criticism and court-imposed penalties against them. They have demanded that the government declare marriages within the same sub-caste or *gotra* illegal, and asked that the Hindu Marriage Law be amended to implement this recommendation. *We can't let our traditions get diluted. We have to uphold them*, said Bhola Ram Baniwal, President of the Jat Maha Sangh (the premier organization of Jats in India). No action has been taken on this appeal to date.

Political Complacency and Law Reform

There is relative silence from the major political parties in relation to the Manoj–Babli case, reflecting the importance parties attach to caste support and ‘*gotra* politics’. However, questions are being raised in Parliament as to whether a new law for perpetrators of honour killings is necessary or whether perpetrators can be charged under existing laws related to murder.

Local Police Protection

In spite of an increasing number of couples obtaining police protection, the protection itself is precarious. It may be impossible for the police to prevent kidnapping of, and violence toward, the eloping couple. Mumtaz Khan and Mohsin Khan, a runaway couple, petitioned the court for police protection. The court happening is interesting for its counseling component coupled with awarding protection by police. The court asked the father and daughter to talk it out in the judge’s chamber.

Local Police Inaction

In the case of Village Jondi, the police stood by silently during the public announcement

of penalties to the affected families. The police also stood by, unable to exert their authority whether they wished to or not, in the case of mob violence that led to the lynching of Ved Pal when he came looking for his bride.

Resolutions

Suicide of one or both partners is not an infrequent consequence when lovers are forbidden to marry. Murder happening in the frenzy of the moment is committed with any weapon available. Although led by senior family members, it is usual for sons in the family to do the killing. Expulsion from the village or voluntarily leaving home, thus permanently cutting social ties, are other eventualities. There are examples where survival after attempted murder has been followed by prosecution of family members and police protection awarded to the petitioner.

Social Dynamics

Responsibility for preserving community honour and opposing threats to the established way of life in terms of religious affiliation, land ownership, power and authority, and preserving the public image lies with the village elders. Severe penalties are imposed. Social backlash against happenings viewed as a threat to village honour may lead to an increase in restrictive punishments. Questions of social status are highly important for the family and the breaking of rules leads to public shame, with fear of social ostracism.

Social Progress

In the face of allowing a Hindu-Muslim marriage after ten years of trying to keep the lovers apart, Ashok, Ujjala's father, comments, *We don't want it, we won't attend the marriage, but we won't become violent*. I see this as heralding progression and tolerance within Ashok's community. This example of nonviolence was at the cost of the family's social estrangement from their relatives. The decision not to act violently represents the first positive end point in determining social progress, which is the aim of this study.

Film making plays a prime role in social progress and the Bollywood movie ‘Khap—A story of honour killing’ is one example.

Community Support

A 100-day candlelight vigil outside the prestigious St. Xavier’s College was held by family and friends of Rizwanur Rahman, whose partner’s family caused his death. The All India Democratic Women’s Association (AIDWA) is a leading human rights organization. Their president Jagmati Snagwan affirmed that Haryana women, with the help of AIDWA, have done the most to fight Khap Panchayats and honour crimes in Haryana.

Hindustani Legends

Reference is made to four popular romance tragedies in the Punjabi tradition of India and Pakistan. The legends have always been loved in Hindustani folklore and stage presentations, even by those who would not allow their family to act similarly.

Conclusions

Indian scholar Prem Chowdhry documented the status quo in 2007 with her treatise, *Contentious Marriages, Eloping Couples: Gender, Class and Patriarchy in Northern India*. Chowdhry poses the question, ‘What could make a difference to the existing state of affairs?’ and says:

Caste and its perpetuation through the observance of caste endogamy in marriage has not yet come under the scanner of public debate to be roundly condemned. The need is to understand the political economy of marriage overlaid by cultural and ideological norms, in order to counter it effectively.

In 2010, Chowdhry discusses honour in an article entitled *Redeeming ‘Honour’ Through Violence: Unravelling the Concept and its Application*, saying:

The regional and national dailies are currently full of reports of ‘honour

killings'. In fact, these crimes have emerged as a raging media news item and although problematic in its coverage, it has helped to draw attention to the shocking violation of constitutional and human rights.

In an interview with Sheela Reddy entitled 'Khaps have to Reform', Chowdhry points to the prime role of women in social change, affirming that, 'Whatever resistance there has been, it has been led by women. I think women's groups in the villages should be encouraged more.'

This study looks for a path of progress. In the time period since 1993, I have observed wider media attention leading to public protest, more and more reporting through the media and film making, the call for awarding capital punishment first realized in 2010 (but not yet carried out), and the provision of safe houses. Media reporting of horrific violence against inter-caste lovers in the years 2006–May 2013 gives hope that these incidents peaked in 2012 and will lessen in the future. Nonviolence is the first step in a path of progress that leads to reconciliation and acceptance.

PAPERS 3, 4, AND 5.

The *Romeo and Juliet* phenomenon is presented as a trilogy in three papers reflecting its universality in human culture throughout time, its pervasive expression in the arts, and its sociological aspects both locally and globally. The *Romeo and Juliet* phenomenon is basic to stories likened to *Romeo and Juliet*, and is referred to in this study as being of '*Romeo and Juliet* style.'

Paper 3

Entitled 'The *Romeo and Juliet* phenomenon 1: Before and after Shakespeare,' this paper looks first at Italian roots of the *Giulietta e Romeo* legend associated with

longstanding family vendettas of renaissance Italy in the 13th to 16th centuries and highlighted by the ‘Cruel Carnival of Udine’ in 1511. The paper then examines the emergence of the *Romeo and Juliet* theme that follows Shakespeare’s quintessential expression of it.

The circumstances of the ‘Cruel Carnival of Udine’ are told in the award winning book *Mad Blood Stirring: Vendetta in Renaissance Italy* by Edward Muir. Luigi da Porto’s novella *Guilietta e Romeo* is one of Shakespeare’s key sources. Da Porto experienced falling in love at the time of the carnival but could not act on it. He wrote his novella later in life after becoming aware of a legendary 13th century story *Guilietta e Romeo* involving lovers from families involved in a family vendetta.

After Shakespeare comes the famous story *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* by Gottfried Keller. *A Village Romeo and Juliet* is based on a real life story – the double suicide of two young lovers whose families had lived in enmity – which appeared in the *Zuricher Freitagzeitung* (Zurich Friday Newspaper) of 3 September 1847. The phenomenon continues to be a popular theme for writers and composers, as evidenced in *Westside Story*, a musical depicting gang warfare and romance tragedy in New York City.

Paper 4

Entitled ‘The *Romeo and Juliet* phenomenon 2: Expression in the Arts – A tribute to genius,’ Paper 4 presents critical analysis of selected legends portrayed by great writers and composers.

Hinemoa is an oral history Maori legend translated by Sir George Grey, Governor of New Zealand. It is the only *Romeo and Juliet*-like story with a happy ending chosen in this study. *Hinemoa* was the subject of New Zealand’s first feature film in 1914. The cantata *Hinemoa*, composed by Alfred Hill with libretto written by Arthur Adams, was

first performed in 1896. Hinemoa eloped at night, swimming to Mokoia Island to meet her lover Tutanekai in answer to the sound of a flute. The legend has a great moral in that Hinemoa's chieftain father, having forbidden her liaison with her lover Tutanekai, recants and peace ensues between the tribes.

Leyli and Majnun is presented with reference to two legendary Azerbaijani poets, Neẓāmi of Ganja (1141–1209) and Muhammed Fuzuli (1498–1556), and to composer Uzeyir Hajibeyov (1885–1948). Leyli and Quays fall in love too young. Described as 'the man who loved too much,' Quays, a poet without peer, becomes known as 'Majnun' (literarily 'madman') as he flees to the desert, living with animals. Their love persists but is never consummated. Hajibeyov, whose opera is likened to *Romeo and Juliet* of the East, has been compared with the giants of Soviet music, including composers such as Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Kachaturian, Kabelevski, and Jerinski. Inspiring work has been done by Yo Yo Ma (b 1955) and The Silk Road Ensemble in beginning the globalization of this important work.

A Village Romeo and Juliet, Gottfreid Keller's highly acclaimed text, inspired Frederick Delius (1862–1934) to compose his opera *A Village Romeo and Juliet* based on Keller's work. Delius, with his wife Jelka, wrote the English-language libretto. The orchestral *Walk to Paradise Garden*, which depicts Sali and Verena approaching the gypsy meeting place, is well-known to music lovers worldwide. Musicologist Arthur Hutchings (1906–1989) has written of the ending: 'The orchestra alone then concludes the work with a perfection unattainable by words; the music suggests the deep and enfolding waters.' Keller's intention is to portray the story to show how deeply rooted in human life are romantic plots such as *Romeo and Juliet*, and how they continue to emerge in new dress.

Tristan and Isolde is a story of truly epic proportions. We are indebted to Gottfried

von Strassburg (died c. 1210) for a definitive account. Richard Wagner (1813–1883) has given us a magnificent ‘musical drama,’ highlighting portions of the story and portraying all-consuming romantic love in music; love that Wagner claims never to have experienced in his own life. Gottfried von Strassburg says in his prologue to *Tristan*:¹

I have undertaken a labour to please the polite world and solace noble hearts...noble lovers who gave proof of perfect love:

... a man, a woman; a woman, a man:

Tristan, Isolde; Isolde, Tristan.

Heer Ranjha takes us to Hindustani romantic literature. In cosmopolitan Australia, it is possible to find people who have not heard of Shakespeare and *Romeo and Juliet*. If you ask an immigrant Indian taxi driver about *Heer Ranjha*, *Mirza Sahiba*, *Sassi Punnun*, or *Sohni Mahiwal*, their response is usually immediate with a smile coming to their face and they will ask you how you know about these Punjabi romance tragedies. In a world of arranged marriages, true love legends are a treasured part of the folklore. The legends portrayed in the arts continue to be played out in the theatre of real life. Artistic presentations of stories illustrating the *Romeo and Juliet* phenomenon, together with responsible reporting by the world media of real life stories, aid progress in moving towards a community consciousness within all societies that violence is inappropriate.

Paper 5

Entitled ‘The *Romeo and Juliet* phenomenon 3: Sociological aspects of romance tragedy – Local and Global,’ Paper 5 presents aspects of law, globalization, and emancipation

¹ Hatto, A 2004, *Tristan: Gottfried von Strassburg* (Transl entire for the first time; with the surviving fragments of the *Tristan* of Thomas), Penguin, London

relevant to the romance tragedy phenomenon, together with reference to marriage systems and the psychology of shame. Comparisons are made between local and national responses to violence, with emphasis on the concept of maximizing pacifism.

Marriage systems are discussed, acknowledging that taboos in relation to choice of marital partner are present in every culture, including those without written history. These religious or national laws control the options available to lovers, with social consequences if they are disobeyed.

Law continues to evolve and the Government of India, through their High Court, is taking steps to constrain illegal murder that was previously ignored. This has led to the awarding of capital punishment, even though it is unlikely to be implemented.

Globalization is a driving force as the young become aware of 'better' options. However, the advantages of international life may carry a loss of local privileges. Law, globalization, and emancipation comprise the subject matter of Boaventura de Sousa Santos's seminary thesis *Toward a New Legal Common Sense*. Arguing under the 'logic of the sociology of emergence,' Santos suggests that the 'paradigm of modernity,' whilst benefiting mankind in realizing the discoveries of modern science and incorporating relevant knowledge into the practice of law, has at this point of time outlived itself and is exhausted. Appropriate emancipation is the goal of evolving social change that is detailed in this paper.

CONCLUSION

The thesis has attempted to answer Shakespeare's challenge to work at social change to help young lovers. It is an ideology consistent with Boaventura de Sousa Santos's paradigmatic concept of 'prudent knowledge for a decent life.' The struggle is led by the young, some of whom become martyrs for the cause. Human rights are allowed or

disallowed by authorities at all levels of society, the most important level being the immediate family located in a specific community.

How do we view progress?

- *Every culture has wonderful legendary romantic stories.*
- *Every culture has its marital taboos.*
- *Romance is unconditional.*
- *Nonviolence is the first acceptable end point.*
- *Effective law and order is imperative.*
- *Family estrangement remains a legal option.*
- *Reconciliation is good and can happen at any time.*
- *Acceptance may involve surrendering previously held convictions.*
- *Welcome and celebration is ideal.*

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

Tell the stories and spread the word.

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APPENDIX A: Letter of appreciation

During the research period presentations of the project were given to various organizations the most recent in September 2013 given to the University of the Third Age (Flinders - Inc). This letter of appreciation was received.



UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE
Flinders - Inc

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27 September 2013

Dr. David Evans
3 Moorhouse Ave.
Myrtle Bank SA 5054

Dear David,

Your recent presentation of "Present Day Romance and Tragedy" on September 10, has been well received and thoroughly enjoyed by our members of Flinders U3A and it was a stimulating, thought-provoking and interesting session.

Our members were not only interested but quite impressed by the presentation of this subject and the research involved and it is people like you, who are committed and offer their knowledge to present such a totally different session like this, it showed a deep interest in the subject, which came through in the overall setup and presentation.

The University of The Third Age is, dedicated to providing members with the opportunity for continuous learning and our programmes throughout the year include talks on a wide variety of topics, by experts in the fields.

Thank you for sharing your interests and enthusiasm, as you have given us the opportunity to get acquainted with something quite different from the ones usually offered and thereby making a valuable contribution to our programme.

Yours sincerely,

Tony van Kalken

On behalf of the U3A Committee

OFFICE: Room 242 Information, Science and Technology Building...Open Mon-Wed 9:30 am -12:30 pm
Acknowledging the generous support of Flinders University

APPENDIX B: I am Juliet

I am Juliet

I am Juliet is an anonymous letter sent to the author following a presentation to a Seniors Education Association on 15th March 2007.

For many years in the 1920s my Capulet family of 3 and the Montague family of 6 were best friends despite distance. This happy state was disrupted when *The Depression* made railway fares too expensive and our little house could not accommodate nine of us when the Montagues visited us, but it resumed for one visit to them in 1939. Romeo, aged 13 ½, and I, Juliet aged 15 fell in love. We had enough sense to know that ridicule would kill romance so the only plan we made was to urge the two families to reinstate the annual holidays together. However, World War II broke out the next month.

It was 4 years before we met again by which time Romeo had joined the Air Force and Juliet was in the second year of Uni. In those 4 years, the families kept in touch by letter but Romeo and Juliet had made no plans and couldn't. Yet neither of us ever doubted that the other remained in love to the exclusion of all others. And so it proved. Our secret remained till I was 21, and we decided to post letters to our parents on the same day to say we were engaged. We married a year later and had a perfect marriage because we were so alike. This is where I should say, "We lived happily ever after" but..... At this point, I must digress.

My grandmother's first child was a cripple due to Gran falling when she was chased across a field when she was pregnant. The child died at the age of six, never having walked. My mother was the eldest of the brood that followed, but never had her babyhood day of receiving the limelight. Of necessity, she had to be capable and dominant. She was a country girl and fell in love with a city boy and they were complete opposites in every possible way – nice people though they both were. She would not heed her family's warnings. She had too much pride and was never wrong! Little differences became irritations (punctuality versus lateness etc). Mother sacrificed everything to further my education. She told all her friends it was so that I should not be trapped in a marriage and could take her away from my father, but I was only a child and she never told me.

On receipt of Romeo's engagement letter to the Mama Montague she wrote a delightful missive to me welcoming me into their family and she wrote an equally delighted one to my mother Capulet, her best friend. My mother replied! She was sure, Mama Montague had been in the secret and encouraged by us and had been disloyal to my mother's friendship. They never wrote to each other again and my mother never contacted me for the next 10 years.

I was used as writing a fortnightly letter home so continue to write to her and my father (separately). I knew she would therefore be able to answer any questions friends asked which would salve her pride. At the end of 10 years, I was pregnant with our first child, and thought it would be awful for a grandmother and grandchildren not to know each other so my husband and I travelled all the way to see her and just called on her taking her by surprise, appearing on her doorstep asking for a cup of tea. All was sweetness

and light; her pride prevented us ever commenting on the last lost years, and she invited us to come and stay for a week very soon. Eventually she came to live with us when my father died and she told everyone what a wonderful son-in-law she had. She never resumed the relationship of the Montague's and no side ever mention the rift. I did write regularly to the only surviving Montague, Romeo's sister. Truth to tell I never managed to love my mother any more despite all the sacrifices she had made for me in my youth.

Romeo died 34 years ago, aged 46. We had 26 wonderful years together. All those who lost their lives in the war didn't have 26 years of happy memories so I am a very blest Juliet.

Clarification

1/. When the families resumed visits in 1939 the children who had last seen each other 8 years before had very little remembrance of each other.

2/. When we fell in love in 1939 it was almost impossible to get together alone among nine people to make any plans.

3/. London and Midlands schools close when war break out, and the children became evacuees to safer parts of the country with many changes of venue; hence our inability to obtain each other's addresses without asking our parents which would have revealed our secret and brought ridicule and refusal.

In World War I my mother's sister and her cousin were nurses at Whipp's Cross Hospital in London, and both fell in love with diggers, whom they nursed. The cousins eloped. Mother's cousin reached Australia after the war, settled in Brighton, S.A., had no children but a happy marriage, and, during *The Depression*, sent (or paid for) a sheep (frozen carcass) to the family in U.K. for my grandfather to cut up each Christmas and distribute among family members. It is through this contact that I am here today. Mother's sister had a less happy result. Grandmother made my grandfather pursue and "rescue" my aunt, because her suitor was Catholic. One successful Juliet; one frustrated. As a result, my aunt developed an illness then called "St. Vitus Dance". She was the dearest of people and eventually recovered. I'm the only person who ever knew that her suitor, who happily married later, return once to see his Juliet who never married.

My favourite Romeo and Juliet were Jacob and Rachel; see Genesis chapter 29 - 31. It pleases me that Jacob outwitted Laban, his father-in-law, with his revengeful speckled sheep-breeding.

From the interest your lecture has aroused in me you can guess how we enjoyed your lecture though most of our members have age handicaps, which prevent them contacting you as I am doing. I was intrigued by your research into the other countries' legends and think you might like my input if you are lecturing to other countries and cultures. We are so sorry the technicalities prevented you from showing your slides despite Topsy's and your efforts and we commend your achievement in coping. What I mean is, "Please come again with the slides and you will find us full of contributions now that we know what to expect."

Wishing you both for success in your enterprise and thank you for setting our brains thinking, from,

Juliet

Letter dated 18th of March 2007.

APPENDIX C: Mamata and Prateek

Mamata and Prateek

The author and his wife Topsy Evans stayed at the home of Prateek (then co-editor of the Kathmandu Post) and his wife Mamata in Kathmandu. When discussing personal interests and the study of romance tragedy was mentioned, they said, *then you should interview us!* The Interview that took place at their home in Kathmandu in November 2005).

Mamata, I would love to hear your story, and how you met.

Mamata

Okay,

Actually we, when I was studying and at school, and he was in a College and our school and college was same, and he was senior than me, two years senior, and when I passed my 10 class, grade 10, then I saw him that time, right, then afterwards I joined same college there, and he proposed me.

Oh did he?

Ya.

First, he proposed me, I say no.

Then, after one year, again, we met in, like in computer classes. We used to take extra class outside, and same place, he also came there. So we were just talking and like, strolling around, and one day he proposed me again.

Then, I say yes. That's the way.

When he proposed to you the first time. How long had you known each other?

No, we were not so much close, we used to say just hi and hello, that's all.

How long ago was that?

Two years.

Before you married?

Four years.

Before you married?

It was four years. Then we like go for four years before we marry..

Now, your family background. Could you tell me how your parents reacted to your decision?

At first I didn't tell them, they didn't know anything about, about us, and they wonder what happened, as his parents ask him to marry, right if you have your girlfriend and want to marry her. They force him, he forced me to marry, right, and I was a little scared because I was Brahmin, and he was Newar, and we have two different castes right, so, I was scared to tell my parents. I knew that they would not allow me to marry. Because, before two years also, my sister married a Russian guy, yes my own sister, and they didn't allow her to marry, and they eloped, right.

After two years I did the same thing and I was little scared to ask, to ask my parents, so he forced me to say that to tell your parents, "Why don't you tell them", and I was scared. Then what I did, was, since my sister-in-law, my brother's wife, she was also there, so I tell her, she knew about all this, only my parents didn't know, my sister-in-law she knew it, right, and I asked her, "Why don't you ask them - tell my parents," I didn't tell my parents first - first my sister-in-law asked them, and they didn't answer anything.

They were so furious with me that they stopped talking with me. Then they didn't allow me to go out also. I was studying in the college. They just kept quiet, they just avoided. Then again he forced me, because his parents had already arranged everything here for his side, right?. I tell my sister-in-law about the date and everything and that I am going to marry, and all sort of things, but they didn't say anything. From that date, the date when I was supposed to marry, they were so strict they didn't allow me out and one person, my dad and sometimes mother would stay in my room and wouldn't allow me to phone or call, and that happened like that.

I'm still not clear when you married? Did you leave home to marry?

Yes.

You eloped?

Yes, I eloped.

So after that, after maybe 10 days, and they didn't allow me to go out, and they tried me to convince me. "Don't marry now," first complete your studies, he is not able to, because he hadn't completed his Master's at that time, study - Let him finish all the studies. And what happened, he asked for the guarantee that, "if I finish Master's will you marry nicely your daughter?"

They didn't give him guarantee, right? He wants a guarantee, "I finish my Master's, if you don't give then, what will happen?"

So one day, they allow me to go to college, right, and that day I didn't come home. I call him and he came and he picked me up, and he took me to his sister's place. So I didn't go back, so for a whole one year, they didn't allow me to go there, my house, my mother's place.

After you left home, how long after that, did you actually marry?

For 5 days. All the rituals was done here.

And you didn't go home to your parents again from another year?

One year, and I was pregnant after two months.

When I was in eight months pregnant, then I had some problem, like whooping cough, and they were a little scared that maybe something will happen to me, and he called my parents' house that I am not feeling well. So, then they asked us to come and visit them, and that day we went and afterwards we didn't went there. My first child was Caesarian baby, so because of the operation, he called them. They came there, and after he was born, then I went there, then it was regular.

Okay, so after you did go home you then started going regularly back home.

Because in our culture, like in our culture after a baby is born. We have to go to mother's place for one month. They believe that not here, but in mother's home only the woman will get proper care, not in the house, only in the maternal house. So I went there.

So after the time you went home regularly, and how there was the relationship?

It was cool now, they accepted him and also me, and the baby also, and till now it is okay.

Prateek

Our brother and sister-in-law met with me once and they wanted to wanted to talk me out of it and they wanted to get me to leave her as she was not good and she was crying all the time. She was like so - goofy. They told me - really I'm not kidding - she is useless.

I said, that doesn't matter to me at all, since I'm in love, I will marry with her. They said, why just now, if you waited two years you will be ready to support her, and I said, I am already capable of supporting her, because at that time I was doing a small business.

But I said OK, if you will give me a guarantee, I will wait to her but before, the first time, you cheated me when we were going to marry. We are going to marry so give me a date that her parents are saying that they are going to let her come out of the house and come to my place. I had even called Brahmins, everything was ready here in this house, and on that date, her parents didn't let her come out. I called them many times and they didn't matter out to Jean King, and once I was ready to manage my friends were here the priest was sent. My parents were ready, and she said no, I cannot come. I went with one of my friends to her house had some sort of exchange with her father. It is cheating, he should have told me beforehand that he would not let her marry me, but he still was like that. Then they would not let her call me and it went on like that.

In the meantime it was like courting days. She managed to meet me once, and I told that if she is ready to marry me, I will give you one month, because there is a tradition that on the second month after second one of the Nepali calendar, and we were to marry in

the first month of the Nepali calendar – mid-April. So I was not supposed to marry during church during the second month, or something like that. So this is the only month, we can marry, otherwise I will not do that. She was imprisoned in her house with 14 days but one fine day, they let her go because she started fasting. She was not eating anything at all. So her parents were so much surprised that they knew that if they let her go out of the house she will definitely come to me.. They had no choice, so they let her out. She was in college dress - in a traditional sari, nothing else, and she called me up. And that was that.

Moreover, her sister was in constant touch with her after that, after our marriage - only her parents were not talking to her and not inviting her to go there. She was all the way saying to the Attlee and most you have to go and talk my parents. You are junior to them. You have to say sorry to them – you fought with my father -

When she was having health problems. She was not allowed to take antibiotics. It was a worrying situation. Then I cook. Then I called her parents. Then I called her parents and said that she was sick, and she should come to their place. They didn't invite us, but they said yes OK.

APPENDIX D: ‘anti-caste’ documentation of cases of gross violence against marrying couples in time period 2006-2013

anti-caste

on caste, women’s oppression, communalism, and class struggle in South Asia from a Marxist perspective

inter-caste couples 

May 9, 2013

INTER-CASTE COUPLE–A BRAHMIN MAN AND A JAT WOMAN–SUFFER ATTEMPTED LYNCHING, CONTINUED THREATS FROM WOMAN’S FAMILY

Couple thrashed for marrying out of caste (*Hindustan Times*)

A couple who had married against the wishes of the girl’s parents were thrashed by the girl’s brother and an uncle on Wednesday, and **have been admitted to the local civil hospital**. Jasleen Kaur, a Jat and Pankaj Agnihotri, a Brahmin by caste, had been forced to marry in court in August 2012, **as the former’s parents did not approve of their relationship due to their different castes**. They said they had since been **running from one place to another as Jasleen’s maternal uncle had threatened to kill them**.

“On Facebook, he had posted messages threatening to kill my brother and also insulted my sister,” said Pankaj.

He claimed that they had returned to their native village Motian on May 6 as his father was ill. However, on May 8, his in-laws thrashed them up severely.

“A mob, **including my younger brother, uncle, grandmother, aunt and others** arrived at our doorstep. Without a word, my brother and uncle started beating me and my husband,” said Jasleen.

“They were **carrying baseball bats, rods and an iron chain**. They dragged us out and tore my husband’s clothes. **They threatened to drag him naked by tying him to their jeep**. However, the villagers intervened and they left the place,” alleged Jasleen, exhibiting the bruises on her body. She said **her uncle had threatened them to leave the village or face certain death**.

See all anti-caste posts on [inter-caste couples](#)

Posted at 09:47 PM in [caste](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

April 15, 2013

200 UNTOUCHABLE FAMILIES FLEE VILLAGE UNDER ASSAULT BY CASTE HINDUS OVER AN INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE

Dalit locality attacked, water supply cut after inter-caste marriage in Haryana (*Hindustan Times*)

Over 200 Dalits residing in Pabnawa village, around 25km from Kaithal, were lucky to have lost no lives to a violent mob of the dominant Ror community on Saturday night, but have been left without water supply since.

Agitated after the recent elopement and marriage of a Dalit man with a woman from the landowning Ror community of the same village, the 400-strong mob barged into the settlement, Ambedkar Nagar, on Saturday night, and **not only ransacked houses and shops but also damaged the locality's water tanks and six borewells**, besides injuring three persons. **Residents are now forced to procure drinking water from adjoining villages.**

As for the couple—Surya Kant (26) and Meena (21)—they have been in a protection home since their April 8 wedding, and the Kaithal police are guarding them on directions of the high court. After the attack, around 50 villagers including Surya Kant's relatives reportedly left the village for an undisclosed location. [...]

Rajiv, another Dalit resident, **insisted that the marriage had “indeed broken the *bhaichara* (brotherhood) of the village”**, but noted, **“The Rors now want to take revenge from the entire Dalit population and hatched a conspiracy to kill us.** They had been asking us to hand over Meena to them, even when she married as per her free will and is staying with her husband at a police protection home.”

Rors are a farming community who claim to be descendants of the Marathas who had fought the Second Battle of Panipat in the region and settled in pockets of Panipat, Karnal, Kurukshetra and Kaithal districts now. **Their dominance stems from their ownership of significant chunks of land, though they are not otherwise considered high in the caste hierarchy.**

See also on anti-caste: 268 UNTOUCHABLE HOUSEHOLDS LOOTED, SET ABLAZE BY CASTE-HINDU MOB OVER INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE (November 8, 2013)

Posted at 11:23 PM in [atrocities \(untouchable lynchings\)](#), [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [inter-caste couples](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

April 14, 2013

300 DEPENDENT UNTOUCHABLE FAMILIES BANNED FROM LABORING IN FIELDS OF CASTE-HINDU LANDOWNERS AS COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENT FOR INTER-CASTE RELATIONSHIP

A love affair is the reason for denial of work to Dalits (*The Hindu*)

Over 300 Dalit families of Deveerahalli Village, of Kudimenahalli Panchayat, in Krishnagiri district allege that **they are being denied work by intermediate castes of the village** and of six other nearby villages. **The reason behind this, they say, is that a Dalit youth in their area had fallen in love with a girl of an intermediate caste** from Sathinayakkanpatti under Damodarahalli Panchayat.

The girl is back with her parents after the youth's parents wanted her to go back, as **they feared the type of mob fury which was unleashed on three colonies in nearby Dharmapuri district over a similar issue in November last year.** But, the boycott of the Dalits of the Krishnagiri village continues although the affair had come to light in December and the girl had gone back to her home.

“Intermediate castes have banned Dalits from working on their agriculture fields, brick kilns and other income-earning activities since then. The decision to bar them from such forms of employment was allegedly taken by a ‘khap panchayat’ — a council of older persons who issue decrees to their community members on matters such as marriage — consisting of the leaders of seven villages, in and around Sathinayakkanpatti and Deevarahalli, on December 24 last year,” alleged A. Manikandan, district convener of Naam Tamizhar Katchi.

Many Dalits, who have also taken up the lands of intermediate caste on lease, for cultivation of crops, lost lakhs of rupees due to the economic boycott. They were not allowed to step into the farm lands.



See also anti-caste post on mob attack in Dharmapuri last November: **268 UNTOUCHABLE HOUSEHOLDS LOOTED, SET ABLAZE BY CASTE-HINDU MOB OVER INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE (November 8, 2012)**

Posted at 07:44 PM in [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [labor and caste](#), [social boycott](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

February 21, 2013

NEPAL: THERE ARE CASTE LINES AMONG UNTOUCHABLES, TOO, AND MARRIAGE ACROSS THEM CAN HAVE BITTER CONSEQUENCES

Dalit family ‘expelled’ from Baitadi village (*Kathmandu Post*)

A Dalit family from Rudreshwor in the district **has been expelled from the village after one of the male members married a woman from an ‘upper-caste’ Dalit family.**

Mandodari Damai and eight other family members fled to the district headquarters three weeks ago after they were **chased away by other Dalit villagers belonging to Wada and Pal castes.** The dispute erupted after Mandodari’s son Naresh married a woman of the Wada community more than two years ago.

The villagers had earlier driven away Naresh and his wife from the village and of late, they were persecuting the entire family members. Mandodari said people from Wada and Pal communities started mistreating and forced her family to leave the village immediately. [...]

Naresh’s wife Baragrathi said her relatives not only disowned her but also tried to attack her and husband’s family members because she married to a man from a ‘lower-caste family’.



Posted at 10:40 PM in [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [Nepal](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

December 19, 2012

THREE RECENT CASES OF CASTE-BASED HONOR KILLINGS

Chennai: Dalit youth missing since last week found dead in alleged honour killing

(IBNLive, December 19)

The body of a Dalit youth, reportedly in love with a Vanniyar girl and missing since last week, has been found in a village lake in Cuddalore District, the Madras High Court was informed on Wednesday.

Another Dalit lover gets murdered for 'family honour' in UP (Deccan Herald, December 17)

A Dalit youth was allegedly killed by the family members of his lover in Uttar Pradesh's Sultanpur district for the sake of 'family honour'.

On Saturday, one of the girl's family members, as per a planned conspiracy, told Rinku that they had agreed to their marriage and wanted to discuss it with him. He was asked to come to the house.

They caught hold of the youth when he visited them and killed him.

Suspected dishonour killing reported from Punjab (Zee News, December 8)

Police on Saturday said the suspected murder of a 25-year-old woman was a case of dishonour killing with her parents, fiercely opposed to her affair with a dalit boy, allegedly getting her eliminated.

"Manpreet's father Kapur Singh, mother Balwinder and two others – Satnam and Jaswinderpal – had been arrested and Rs 1.50 lakh, a sharp-edged weapon and a car used in the crime seized," he said.

"The girl's mobile phone and her burnt clothes were also seized from the arrested persons," Gill said.

Posted at 02:34 PM in [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

November 08, 2012

268 UNTOUCHABLE HOUSEHOLDS LOOTED, SET ABLAZE BY CASTE-HINDU MOB OVER INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE

3 Dalit colonies face mob fury in Dharmapuri (The Hindu)

As many as 268 dwellings—huts, tiled-roof and one- or two-room concrete houses—were torched by the mob **after a caste Hindu man, Nagarajan, committed suicide over his daughter marrying a Dalit boy** from one of the colonies. [...]

It is said that Ilavarasan and Divya got married in a temple a month ago. Fearing attack by caste Hindus, the couple approached the Deputy Inspector of General of Police, Salem Range, Sanjay

Kumar, only a week ago for protection. Though the police assured them safety, **a kangaroo court directed Ilavarasan's family to return the girl** on Wednesday. The girl refused to go with her father, who later hanged himself at his house in Sellankottai, just half a km from the Dalit colonies. And then, the mobs went on the rampage.

See also:

[Dalit houses, property systematically destroyed](#) (*The Hindu*, November 10, 2010)

An official estimate, though preliminary as claimed by Collector R. Lilly, has put the number of damaged households at 268. The three colonies in total have 500 houses, a strong concentration of Dalits in one single block in the district.

Almost all the able-bodied youth from these colonies are working in Bangalore as construction workers, godown boys and collectors of used paper market for recycling. Their hard-earned money serves as solid investments in their native village. Some have become landholders. They grow maize, turmeric and tapioca in rain-fed conditions.

"For the past one decade, I have been working in a godown in Bangalore where they pay me Rs. 200 a day. I leave my wife and children back at the village. Our small but **hard-earned savings of all these years have gone up in smoke in one single night of riot**," laments Muniappa of Anna Nagar.

Those who have suffered extensive damage claim that the mob, armed with deadly weapons and petrol bombs, **indulged in four-hour looting**. "We were chased out before they began their act. *Almirahs* were broken and valuables such as gold jewellery and cash stolen before the houses were either set on fire or damaged," said Rajalingam in Natham colony who runs a lucrative business in used paper market in Bangalore.

And see:

[A wedding and a funeral](#) (*The Hindu*, November 10, 2012)

In an India that is fractured along caste lines, a marriage is never the simple establishment of a relationship between two independent, adult individuals. Instead, it can involve not only the two families, but whole communities as well. **An inter-caste marriage without parental approval is, therefore, a potential trigger for violence** in rural India. The caste group that is relatively higher in the social hierarchy sees any such marriage as a social affront, especially if the other caste group is Dalit. Wednesday's attack on three Dalit colonies in Dharmapuri district of Tamil Nadu, which ended in the burning down of 268 houses, is another shocking instance of how social stigmas engendered by caste identities can provoke large-scale violence. The arson was the immediate fallout of the suicide of a caste Hindu man whose daughter had married a Dalit living in one of the colonies. Apparently unable to accept his daughter's decision to marry a Dalit, the man opted to end his life. **For a bride's family, especially if it is higher in the caste ladder, the socially-sanctioned stigma associated with an inter-caste marriage is greater.**

Women carry a far heavier responsibility of having to protect the “family honour”, which is a euphemism for the feudal notions of social status and acceptance held by the senior male members of the family. Indeed, the prevalence of such notions is an indicator of the secondary status accorded to women in these communities.

Worryingly, in rural Tamil Nadu where caste conflicts over marriages, religious rituals or access to public resources are common, the police were slow to sense the potential for trouble. A few days before the violence, the newly wedded couple had approached the police for protection fearing attacks by members of the bride’s community. Other than providing assurances and holding out promises, **the police seem to have taken no preventive steps**. A self-styled court in the village ordered the Dalit man to send his wife back to her parents, but the woman refused to leave her husband. This should have alerted the police to the possibility of trouble. Although the suicide, the immediate trigger for the attack, could not have been predicted or prevented, the police had adequate reason to apprehend the tensions and ample time to take precautionary steps. **The only reason that none in the Dalit colonies suffered any bodily harm is that all the residents had left their homes and taken shelter in another village.** Social stigmas and caste inequalities cannot be wiped out overnight, but surely the law enforcers can show greater anticipation and quicker reflexes in familiar situations that give rise to tensions between caste groups.



And see further:

[Attack on Dalits of Dharmapuri: A Fact-Finding Report](#) by Dr. Anand Teltumbde (for the fact-finding committee) (December 6, 2013)

Posted at 09:46 PM in [atrocities \(untouchable lynchings\)](#), [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [inter-caste couples](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

October 29, 2012

INTER-CASTE LOVE HAS DEADLY CONSEQUENCES: FOUR RECENT CASES

Honour killing in Haryana: Family kills married girl (*Haryana Tribune*, October 29)

It was an inter-caste marriage. The victim, Indu, had married her friend Ajay Rohil against her parents' wishes. Unhappy with the inter-caste marriage, girl's parents killed their daughter after 16 days of Indu's marriage. Indu was a student of engineering.

Indu's parents had convinced her in-laws to let her go home with them after the wedding. But they killed her and took the body to the cremation ground clandestinely and consigned it to flames so that the evidence can be destroyed.



Inter-caste love claims 3 lives (Express News Service, October 7):

A 50-year-old man, who was opposed to the love affair between a youth from a different caste and his relative, shot dead the youth's aunt and father at Avathi village in Mallandur police limits Chikmagalur district on Wednesday night. The man was also killed by the youth and his relatives on the spot.

Young couple found hanging from tree in UP (September 26)

A young couple was found hanging from a tree in Bhaluwani area of the district, police said on Tuesday.

[Police] said the couple belonged to different caste and police suspect they committed suicide after failing to get married.

A case of honour killing? (*The Hindu*, September 22)

The family members of 19-year-old Suma B., who witnessed the murder of her husband by an armed gang of four on September 6, are alleging that the murder is an honour killing. But, the police differ, saying it was the fallout of an eve-teasing row.

After a month of married happiness, Ms. Suma's dreams were shattered when her husband, Naveen Kumar (23) of Anekal, was hacked to death even as she watched helplessly.

Suma is yet to come out of the shock. She stopped going to college fearing for her life as she is the sole eye-witness to the murder.

Married on August 6 this year against her parents' wishes to Naveen, who is from a Dalit family, Ms. Suma now says her husband was killed at the behest of someone who was against their marriage as she is a 'caste' Hindu.

Posted at 02:01 PM in [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

September 18, 2012

INTER-CASTE LOVE HAS DEADLY CONSEQUENCES: FOUR RECENT CASES

Parents hack girl for loving boy from 'low' caste (TNN, September 19)

Parents of a Class X student dragged their girl out of her lover's house early on Monday morning and hacked her to death for continuing with the relationship they vehemently opposed. Neighbours rushed to rescue the girl but by the time she was freed from her parents, uncle and elder brother, it was too late. She died on the spot.

Father, uncle 'kill' 20-yr-old girl for honour, arrested (*The Indian Express*, September 14)

Upset over his 20-year-old daughter's affair with a boy of another caste, a retired army personnel allegedly killed her with the help of his elder brother by asphyxiating her with a pillow on the intervening night of September 11 and 12.

Inquiry Officer Harpal Singh said the deceased, a resident of Jandiala, was allegedly in a relationship with Sukhdev Singh (21), a resident of Jaanian village, for the past one year. Kaur belonged to Mazhabi Sikh community and her friend was from a Jat Sikh family.

Dalit youth burnt alive in Junagadh (TNN, September 14):

Tension mounted in Una town of Junagadh district on Thursday after a 27-year-old dalit youth was charred to death by a group of 12 people in Akolali, a village about 25 km from the coastal town.

The attackers suspected that the youth, Lalji Sarvaiya, had eloped with a girl from their community. The girl had been missing since two days. They came to Lalji's house at around 8am and started asking for his whereabouts. They also threatened his father Kala Sarvaiya to hand over his son or face dire consequences.

After heated arguments, some people barged into his house while others climbed onto the roof and started breaking it. "Seeing him sleeping, the attackers closed the main door of the house and those on the roof poured some inflammable liquid on him and set him ablaze. They also

tried to set the house on fire but escaped after the commotion,” Dipanker Trivedi, SP, Junagadh, said.

Couple threatened for marrying without parent’s wish (TNN, September 7)

A youth from Temni village near Gondia was allegedly threatened by the parents of the girl whom he married out of the caste.

Rajesh Dongre, who married Sarita Neware, was allegedly threatened by her parents and the village sarpanch that they would be killed if they settled in the same village.

Posted at 01:41 PM in [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

August 26, 2012

THREE RECENT CASES OF CASTE-BASED HONOR KILLINGS

Hung up on ‘honour’, father murders girl who eloped (*Deccan Herald*, August 10)

Eighteen-year old Reshma was **strangled by her father** Salim in Hapur district on Thursday after she refused to desert her lover and marry someone else as wished by the family. After killing his daughter, an unrepentant Salim went to the local police station and told everything to the cops.

According to reports, Reshma had an affair with Aqueel, who is already married and a father of four children. Reshma’s family did not approve of the relationship as Aqueel was not only married but also **belonged to a different caste**.

In the name of honour, Gokak couple butchered (*Deccan Chronicle*, August 15)

Lives of a young couple, **who married out of their caste and ‘economic status’**, were snuffed out by the girl’s family in a case of ‘honour killing’ in Gokak on Tuesday. The **girl’s family hacked the couple to death in broad daylight**, leaving the city in a shock. Twenty-year-old Nethra and 26-year-old Vittal Kuri married one-and-a-half-years ago, against the wishes of their parents and relatives. Nethra was from the rich family of Bagai brothers, while Vittal was from a poorer background. As they could not get their parents to agree to their relationship, they got married in a sub-registrar’s office and settled down at Loslur near Gokak, away from trouble. The couple, in the meanwhile, had a girl child, who is seven months old now.

Woman, 3-year-old daughter killed for ‘honour’ (*Times of India*, August 26)

A married woman Sanjana Raj (25) and her three-year-old daughter Gungun Kumari were murdered allegedly by her family members in Gulab Bagh locality under Barh police station in Patna district late on Friday night. [...]

Sanjana had married one Dilip Kumar, a resident of Gulab Bagh, in 2008. Dilip owns a tailoring shop. It was an **inter-caste marriage** and it seems that the girl’s family members were not happy with the marriage. He said about four days ago, Sanjana’s family members reached

Dilip's house, saying they were not opposed to the marriage and wanted to do her *vidai* (send-off) properly. Dilip allowed his wife and daughter to go with their family members.

On Friday night, Dilip made a call on Sanjana's cellphone and found it switched off. He said when Dilip reached his in-law's house, **the neighbours informed him that his wife and daughter had been murdered and their bodies had been thrown into river Ganga.**

Posted at 05:48 PM in [caste](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

July 28, 2012

VICTIM UNDER ARREST ON HIS HOSPITAL BED, ASSAILANTS GO FREE: UNTOUCHABLE MAN STABBED TWENTY TIMES BY IN-LAWS IN ATTEMPTED HONOR KILLING FACES CHARGE OF "ELOPEMENT"

Dalit stabbed; in detention for marrying upper-caste girl (rediff.com)

A Dalit youth, who had **married an upper-caste girl against the wishes of her family**, was stabbed, and his wife abducted by his in-laws in Motihari town in Bihar's east Champaran district nearly 10 days ago, is seeking justice from the hospital bed as he has been put under police detention.

"I was **put in police detention and handcuffed in the hospital where I am under treatment after being stabbed 20 times by my in-laws, who also abducted my wife**, in an old case filed by my father in law, which is baseless. It appears to me that police is more keen to torture me instead to recover my wife and arrest the named accused in my complaint," Krishna Prasad Ram, the 24-year-old victim said.

Ram told rediff.com over telephone from his hospital bed that the "**police is behaving as if he is the real criminal**, but the fact is that at the time of his court marriage a year ago, he and his wife Khushboo Singh were adults, and India's constitution allows an adult to marry or choose his life partner."

"Nine police personnel have been deputed for my security and surveillance round the clock, despite the fact that they handcuffed me during treatment at the Sadar Hospital," he said.

Ram was 23 and Khushboo was 21 when they got married. "Even if we were forced to elope after her family opposed, it was not a crime as both of us were adults and consenting adults," Ram said.

Posted at 05:32 PM in [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [state repression](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

July 15, 2012

CASTE-BASED HONOR KILLINGS IN DELHI AND TAMIL NADU

First they agreed, then killed him (*Hindustan Times*, July 15)

Two brothers' misplaced sense of honour drove them to **stab their sister's 'lower caste' husband to death** at a park in northwest Delhi on Thursday morning, police said. [...]

"At around 9:30 am on Thursday morning, Jyoti's brothers, Gaurav and Rahul, went to Ranvir's house and took him to the neighbourhood park on the pretext of talking to him. They then stabbed him to death," said a senior police officer. [...]

Ranvir and Jyoti, according to police, had got married on April 17 and, sensing a threat to their lives from their own family members, had approached a city court seeking security. After the court made both families resolve the matter, Jyoti's family had consented to get the couple remarried in accordance with necessary rituals.

"However, **persistent taunts from their neighbours drove Jyoti's brothers over the edge**," [...] said the officer.

Honour killings in Tamil Nadu (*The Asian Age*, July 15)

Elango was murdered by a gang of men who **opposed his falling in love with Selvalakshmi, 18, a dominant-caste girl** in Erode.

Selvalakshmi's brother Saravanan, who wanted to save the 'honour' of the family, arranged his friends to 'finish off' Elango, a dalit. His friends brought Elango to Muneerpallam secretly and killed him.

Now Saravanan's gang has been put behind bars. Selvalakshmi is depressed and sees no hope for her future. [...]

In another case in Ramanathapuram, a mother and grandmother of a bride were arrested for killing the girl who **got married to a lower caste man**.

Three days ago, a dominant caste parent was alleged to have kidnapped her grandchild as **the child was born to a dalit man**. There is a misconception that honour killing occurs only in villages.

In another incident, a caste Hindu girl of Chennai, Sadhura, **who married a dalit**, Daniel Selvakumar, working in a private bank, was poisoned by her family for 'spoiling' their family name.

Posted at 05:18 PM in [caste](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

July 14, 2012

DECLARED DEAD BY FAMILY FOR MARRYING OUT OF HIS CASTE

'Dead' man in India must prove he is alive (*Gulf News*)

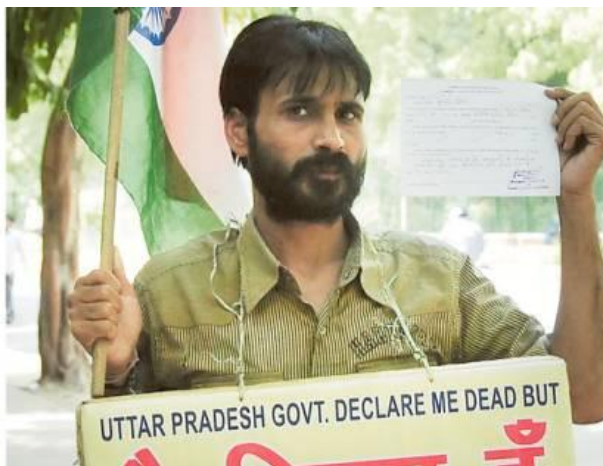
Singh's problems started when he fell in love and married a Maharashtrian girl from a dalit (lower caste) family.

"My parents had passed away and my sisters were by then married. When I went back to my village, I had to face angry relatives, who threatened to teach me a lesson for marrying a dalit girl. **They said I had brought shame upon the thakur (upper caste) family we belong to.**"

"The villagers declared me an outcast and my relatives reported me 'missing'. Soon after, **my cousins, who are politically well connected, prepared fake documents and declared me 'dead'.** They have since grabbed my land and property," Singh said.

Singh's battle in the court to get back his identity and land bore no result, as the date of hearing kept being postponed for many years. "I had no money left to pay the lawyer and he ditched me," he says dejectedly. [...]

Remonstrating just a couple of kilometres away from where the high-and-mighty political leaders reside, he laments, "Except assurances, I have received nothing. **Even the police sided with my cousins and beat me up mercilessly,** due to which my left ear drum is permanently damaged."



Posted at 05:53 PM in [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [inter-caste couples](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

July 1, 2012

THE PRICE OF LOVE ACROSS CASTE LINES: FOUR STORIES FROM THE PAST FOUR DAYS

Couple harassed for inter-caste marriage (*Times of India*, July 1)

According to the police, Suman Kumar, a resident of Banswara's Anjana village had married Happy Kalal **who comes from a different caste**.

"Suman Kumar says that he and his family members are being harassed since the marriage took place. He says that members of a caste council in their village **forced him to vacate the shop that he was running, rendering him completely jobless**," said a police officer.

"He added that his mother and brothers are being forced to stay separated from him and his wife."

"Whenever my wife heads out of home, she is subjected to mockery and humiliation," said Suman Kumar in his statement to the police.

Young woman strangled to death (*The Hindu*, June 29)

In a shocking case of 'honour killing' on the outskirts of the Capital, a young Municipal Corporation of Delhi school teacher was **strangled to death allegedly by her brother and mother** in Kanjhawala here **over her affair with a man belonging to a different caste**.

The accused, Birmati (50) and Mohit (22), stuffed the body of Deepti Chhikara (26) in an Alto car and dumped it in Uttarakhand helped by the victim's uncle Amit, the police said.

The sensational murder came to light more than a month after the incident, when **Deepti's paramour Lalit Vats, a diploma holder in computer science**, wrote an e-mail to the senior police officers saying that he suspected something wrong had happened to the woman. [...]

When subjected to sustained interrogation, Birmati and Mohit purportedly confessed to having strangled Deepti on April 19 night when they caught him talking to Lalit over the phone. The mother-son duo first beat her up and Mohit later strangled her to death. "**Birmati held Deepti by her legs, while Mohit strangled her**," the police said.

Dalit killed after 4 yrs of marriage to upper caste girl (*Times of India*, June 28)

A dalit youth, who had married an upper caste girl in the face of strong opposition from her family four years back, was killed in Sector 8 of Kurukshetra. [...]

Rohtas Kumar, a property dealer and resident of village Rojla (Karnal), had met Sonia first time when she was pursuing a post-graduate course in Kurukshetra University in 2008, said Kumar's family members.

"They got married in the same year after a love affair despite the fact that her parents opposed the wedding," said Kumar's brother, Vajir Singh in a police complaint.

“But, even after marriage, the couple faced lot of opposition from her family members who pressurized her to seek divorce from him. Finally, she gave in, agreed to divorce her husband and returned to her parent’s house,” he added.

Singh told the police that they could not track his brother for five months as his mobile phone remained switched off.

Finding that his house was locked for long, the house owner **requested the police to break the lock, to find the body of Kumar, which had been reduced to a skeleton.**

The Class Prejudice Still Plaguing a Culture (*Huffington Post* UK, June 28)

Parvati has been secretly dating the same man for over four years. **This independent and educated female was terrified of the consequences if her parents discovered that she was in a relationship with a low-caste Hindu**, because in Parvati’s high-caste Brahmin family it is forbidden for women to marry into lower caste families. Here Parvati lost my understanding. How could she allow what is essentially a form of racism concealed by religion to continue through her own choices?

I didn’t feel able to ask Parvati this question aloud, but I did ask why she didn’t just marry her partner. **“They might have him murdered”**, she whispered to me one evening over a bottle of wine, shaking and tearful. **“The extended family would laugh at us and disown us, and they’d never forgive me for dirtying their honour.** I don’t know what they might do in response to that.”

A rare anecdote, you might say; an unlikely story? But this is the story of [South] Asian women around the world. Whether they are living in India, Europe or the US, whether they are artists, lawyers or doctors, scratch the surface and the thick residue of an old inequality still remains. With their modern dresses these women wear a set of rusty, confining shackles.

Posted at 10:15 PM in [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

June 5, 2012

PUNISHED FOR CROSSING THE CASTE LINE: TWO RECENT CASES

Dalit youth allegedly ostracised over affair (*The Statesman* Calcutta)

A 27-year-old Dalit man in Haryana was allegedly humiliated and **sent into exile for 11 years over his love affair with a higher-caste girl.**

His face was painted black as he was thrown out by his village panchayat. The panchayat at Putthi Samain village near Narnaund police station of Hisar district also fined him Rs 21,000.

[...]

In his complaint, the man said he fell in love with the girl from the same village while they were studying at a coaching institution in Meham tehsil. He alleged that when the girl’s parents came

to know of the affair, they took the matter to the village panchayat. When he appeared before the panchayat on 31 May, its members reprimanded him, blackened his face and exiled him. **The girl's father also married her off on 2 June.**

Dalit's house set on fire for eloping with a Muslim girl (*Indian Express*, June 4, 2012)

Some unidentified assailants allegedly set the house of a Dalit man on fire for eloping with a Muslim girl in Kithora village in the district, police said today.

The Dalit man Prateek had eloped with the girl on May 24, they said, adding, **the girl was rescued and sent to Nari Niketan, while he was sent to jail for abducting her.** [...]

The Dalit family alleged that the accused have threatened them to leave the village or face the consequences, they said.

Posted at 02:08 PM in [atrocities \(untouchable lynchings\)](#), [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [inter-caste couples](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

May 10, 2012

WOMEN'S OPPRESSION IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CASTE SYSTEM: SOME RECENT ATROCITIES COMMITTED IN DEFENSE OF FAMILY HONOR

Mob lynches woman, man forced to attempt suicide (*The Hindu*, May 10, 2012)

Madhavan, a Dalit, has literally escaped the noose and is grateful that he is still alive.

On Tuesday morning, he was dangling from a sari, after he was forced to attempt suicide.

But, there was no such luck for Chitra, a 29-year old caste Hindu, who was lynched by a village mob for her alleged relationship with Madhavan.

The honour killing took place on Tuesday just after dawn in Vandal in Vedaranyam. Chitra and Madhavan were bullied and beaten up. **Their crime was that their 'relationship' was not only extra-marital, but also inter-caste.**

Minor Dalit girl sent out of village for inter-caste affair (*The Hindu*, May 3, 2012)

A minor Dalit girl from Bannirsarige in Chamarajanagar district of Karnataka was forced to leave the village by her family and local people **for falling in love with a boy from a different caste and, in their view, bringing 'ignominy' to the community.**

Suma (name changed), 17, and pregnant, was left to fend for herself after her father and other family members threatened to commit suicide if she did not leave the house.

Father kills daughter for family honour (*Deccan Chronicle*, May 2, 2012)

In a bid to save family honour, a man strangled his daughter at Gedellanka village of Mummidivaram mandal in East Godavari on Monday night **as she insisted on marrying her lover who belongs to another community.**

Dalit youth, victim of honour killing (*The Hindu*, May 1, 2012)

In yet another case of suspected honour killing, the Tirunelveli district police on Friday arrested four persons on charges of murdering **a Dalit youth who fell in love with a caste-Hindu girl.**

According to police sources, S. Elango (25) of Periyar Nagar in Erode was invited for a discussion by his girlfriend's maternal uncle and his former employer Saravanan. When he went to see him in a village near Munnirpallam on August 5, 2011, Saravanan and his associates took Elango to an isolated place and murdered him. The body was thrown into a pond.

Posted at 02:25 PM in [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

April 25, 2012

FOUR RECENT CASTE-BASED HONOR KILLINGS: CASTE AND WOMEN'S OPPRESSION REINFORCE EACH OTHER

Father bludgeons daughter to death for loving low-caste suitor (Bikya Masr)

The 19-year-old girl Tabassum Khatun had got involved with 21-year-old Imran Khan, who was living as a paying guest in the upper floor of their apartment and was romantically involved with Tabssum the past four months.

The two had even sought the permission of the deceased's parents to legalize their relationship in matrimony. However, **the parents would have none of it, as Khan was from a lower caste.** On Sunday, night the father Mohammad Kitabuddin Abdul Gafur Shah was awoken with a sudden sound and caught the two in the middle of a clandestine meeting, when in a fit of rage he killed his daughter.

See also three other cases of caste-related honuor killings in the Indian press this week:

Man kills wife belonging to backward class (Times of India, April 23, 2012)

In a shocking incident, a backward-class woman was murdered allegedly for hiding her caste and marrying an upper caste man in Chitrakoot district. The man and his father have been arrested.

The man confessed that he had killed his wife. He told the police that he was in love with his wife, who introduced herself as Puja Mishra when they first met. The two got married. **When he came to know that she belonged to a backward caste**, the man got furious and murdered Puja.

Girl's mother, grandmother arrested for honour killing in Ramanathapuram (The Hindu, April 22, 2012)

Irked over the girl eloping with a Dalit boy, Ilanjiam forced Thiruselvi to consume a pesticide. When the victim refused to do so, she forcibly poured the poison into her mouth. [...]

The issue had been brought to the notice of the State Director-General of Police. According to him, at least a dozen honour killings were reported across Tamil Nadu in the last three years.

"There is a caste angle in almost every case and a majority of victims were women. We have called for enactment of a special law to eradicate honour killings."

Dishonour killing: Father kills daughter in Indore (NDTV, April 29, 2012)

Shivnarayan Verma (45), a resident of Pardeshipura area, choked his daughter Jyoti late on Saturday night, police said today. Afterwards, he went to the police station and confessed.

“According to police, the girl was in relation with a boy who lived near her house and wanted to marry him. **But her father was against it as the boy was from another caste.**

The victim had decided to elope on Saturday night, but her father learnt about her plan and tried to stop her. She, however, refused to change her mind, which led to her murder, police said.

Posted at 12:52 PM in [caste](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

March 14, 2012

MURDERED BY HER BROTHER FOR MARRYING AN UNTOUCHABLE MAN

Honour killing of assistant professor? (*The Hindu*)

In what is being described as an ‘honour killing’, a married woman was strangled to death allegedly by her brother at her residence at Alanahalli Layout here early on Tuesday.



The victim, Smruthi (28), was an assistant professor in Kannada at the Government First Grade College at Kuderu in Chamarajanagar district.

The accused, Mahadeva, **had strongly opposed her marriage to Sudeep Kumar (28), a Dalit, who is an assistant director in the Physical Education Department in Tumkur University.**

Smruthi, a Lingayat, and Sudeep had a civil marriage last November after a seven-year courtship. They wanted to hold a wedding ceremony after getting the consent of their families.

Smruthi, a native of Periyapatna taluk, who lost her father a year ago, was staying with her grandmother Nanjamma and a friend Savita Hegde. She was pursuing doctoral studies, according to sources.

Posted at 01:43 PM in [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

December 1, 2011

BARRIERS TO CIVIL MARRIAGE IN INDIA TARGET INTER-CASTE AND INTER-RELIGIOUS COUPLES

Thwarting a union (*Communalism Combat*)

It is important to mention that any unmarried, sane, consenting adults (where the bridegroom is over 21 years of age and the bride is over 18 and who are unrelated within the degrees of prohibited relationship), irrespective of faith or caste, can get married under the Special Marriage Act. The couple from Rajasthan, who come from an inter-caste background, could have done so too. So why did they decide to have a religious marriage ceremony? **It was almost certainly because they wanted to make sure their parents did not receive any intimation about their marriage through the official notice – as would any couple who anticipated threats to their life and liberty.**[...]

Barring Delhi, all other states follow **the dangerous practice of sending a copy of the notice of intended marriage to the permanent addresses of the marrying couples [in non-religious ceremonies under the Special Marriages Act]**. Thanks to the initiatives of the Delhi government and a landmark judgement by Justice S. Ravindra Bhat of the Delhi high court in April 2009, the practice of sending notices to the homes of couples desirous of solemnising their marriage under the Special Marriage Act was curbed. However, it has not been completely discontinued, as the officials fear the wrath of the parents of marrying couples.

The administrations in Ghaziabad, Noida and Gurgaon in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana are not even willing to bear the expenses of dispatching notices and they insist that couples provide pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelopes beforehand. Couples also have to publish an advertisement of their proposed marriage in a leading newspaper and submit a copy of the published advertisement to the marriage officer's office. In Gurgaon, the concerned deputy commissioner's office has taken the pains to add a column for specifying the applicants' religion in the 'Intent to Marry' form and an additional point about the citizenship of the applicants in the declaration form. **I wonder why religion should be mentioned at all in the one legally recognised marriage procedure intended to be outside the realms of faith or caste.**

The Gurgaon office also requires that couples provide envelopes bearing the names and designations of the marriage officers in districts where the applicants permanently reside. I can only speculate on the amount of homework a couple has to do before they file their application. A marriage cannot be solemnised under the Special Marriage Act without receipt of a verification report from the concerned *tehsildar*; and the report will not, of course, be issued as a matter of routine. The couple has to take great pains to ensure that the report is in fact released by the *tehsildar*'s office.

Looking at just a few of the requirements essential for marriage under the Special Marriage Act, one can safely say that no couple would choose to go through the traumatic experience on its own. So **those couples who are still determined to get married under the Special Marriage Act are forced to engage an advocate and shell out a large sum of money for his/her fees.** Unfortunately, the majority of couples cannot afford the services of an advocate and thus, confronted by various hostile and complex sociopolitical pressures, they are forced to opt for a religious form of marriage.

Posted at 08:30 PM in [caste](#), [communalism](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [Muslims](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

October 24, 2011

HORRIFIC KILLING IN THE NAME OF CASTE PURITY AND PATRIARCHAL HONOR

Village watched as woman was set on fire by husband, in-laws (NDTV)

A married woman who tried to elope with her Dalit lover met a gruesome death when her husband and in-laws tried to hang her, then set her on fire in Madhya Pradesh.[...]

Guddi, who was married to Dhaniram, was trying to escape from their village with her lover. Her husband and his parents tried to hang her from a tree. When she survived, they allegedly beat her up, poured kerosene over her, and then tried to set her on fire. When that attempt to kill her also proved unsuccessful, they placed her on a wooden pyre and then lit a match.

She was finally killed near a temple while the whole village watched, police said.

See also:

Married woman killed for eloping with dalit (*Times of India*, October 25, 2011)

Guddi's younger sister Brijesh is married into the same family. She remained a mute spectator while Guddi was tortured to death. Police were surprised that Brijesh, an eyewitness to her elder sister's murder, refused to give a statement or talk about the incident. [...]

Guddi was married into the influential family of farmers more than a decade ago. She was about 15 years younger than her husband. She fell in love with a dalit youth Kamal Valmiki, who visited their village often. On October 2, Guddi eloped with Kamal to Delhi so that her husband and in-laws could not find her.

Posted at 11:43 AM in [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

January 25, 2011

CASTE-BASED HONOR KILLING IN TAMIL NADU

For marrying a Dalit, man slits daughter's throat in police station *(Times of India)*

Following a complaint by Joshua and Kalaivani that they feared for their lives as her family was against their marriage, Red Hills police inspector K Kumaran called Ezhumalai for talks. "Ezhumalai, a real estate businessman, came to the station dressed in a pair of trousers and shirt. As soon as he entered, he **walked towards Kalaivani, pulled out a knife from his pocket and slit her throat,**" Kumaran said.

Kalaivani, an undergraduate student, fled home on January 21 to get married to Joshua in a city church. She had met Joshua, an employee of a private firm in Ambattur, some 18 months ago through a common friend. Fearing opposition, she did not disclose her relationship to her family and registered her marriage at the sub-registrar's office in Egmore last week.

Posted at 01:52 PM in [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

July 9, 2010

NIRUPAMA PATHAK CASE PUTS SPOTLIGHT ON CASTE-BASED HONOR KILLINGS

In India, Castes, Honor and Killings Intertwine *(New York Times)*

New cases of killings or harassment appear in the Indian news media almost every week. Last month, the police arrested three men for the honor killings of a couple in New Delhi who had married outside their castes, as well as the murder of a woman who eloped with a man from another caste.

Two of the suspects are accused of murdering their sisters, and an uncle of the slain couple spoke of their murders as justifiable.

"What is wrong in it?" the uncle, Dharmaveer Nagar, told the Indian news media. **"Murder is wrong, but this is socially the best thing that has been done."**

Intercaste marriages are protected under Indian law, yet social attitudes remain largely resistant. In a 2006 survey cited in a United Nations report, 76 percent of respondents deemed the practice unacceptable. An overwhelming majority of Hindu couples continue to marry within their castes, and newspapers are filled with marital advertisements in which parents, seeking to arrange a marriage for a son or daughter, specify caste among lists of desired attributes like profession and educational achievement.



[candlelight vigil in memory of Nirupama Pathak]

Posted at 02:49 PM in [caste](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

July 7, 2010

CASTE-BASED HONOR KILLINGS OCCUR ALL ACROSS INDIA

Now, honour killing rocks TN: Father attacks daughter (*Times of India*)

The latest in a series of such attacks on women in the state, the Megala case dispels the popular notion that ‘honour killings’ are confined to Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh in the north; southern states such as Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh too witness similar incidents periodically. Many of them are sparked off when educated single women walk out of their homes and choose their own partners, sometimes from another community or caste. [...]

A study by the National Commission for Women (NCW), still underway, shows that of the 326 cases of conflict surveyed so far nationwide, **72% were because the couple crossed caste barriers and only 3% were because the couple were from the same gotra**. “Women are making their own choices and in a patriarchal set-up this causes problems,” says Ravi Kant, Supreme Court advocate and president of Shakti Vahini, the organisation that is conducting the study for NCW.

Activists in Tamil Nadu endorse this view. “Honour killings are not unheard of in Tamil Nadu. The basis is usually caste, more often than not a Dalit boy marrying an upper caste girl,” says U Vasuki, general secretary, All-India Democratic Women’s Association.

Posted at 03:53 AM in [caste](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [reports](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

June 22, 2010

**POLICE AND THE STATE ENFORCE CASTE LAW AGAINST YOUNG COUPLES:
FORCIBLY SEPARATING THEM, CRIMINALIZING THE HUSBAND, SETTING
THEM UP FOR MURDER**

Honour killing: Between life and love (*Times of India*)

Police protection hardly helps, say activists. Standard operating procedure in the case of a runaway man and woman ends up with the woman's family filing a case of kidnapping and/or rape against the man or his family. The woman shows up as 'missing' in Haryana police's records. From November 2009 to May 2010, of the 686 people filed as 'missing' on Haryana police's website, a largish 30% are females aged between 15 and 28 years.

Police hunt the couple down. If the girl is under 18, she is forcibly returned to her family. If her age is suspect, and she refuses her family, she is packed off to a *nari niketan* and the guy is jailed. This usually takes place in the month between a couple's registering their wish to marry and the registration, which has mandatory month in-between: a provision begging to be altered. "Fear of cases filed under section 363 (kidnapping) and 366 (compelling/inducing woman into marriage) against the 'husband' drives the couple to court. If registration is immediate, such cases can't proceed," says advocate Kulbir Singh Dhaliwal. Jaipur-based activist Kavita Srivastava moots the idea of same-day registration. "The more time you give, more the problems for the couple," she says. Many couples also surface to protect their families. **In the headline-grabbing Manoj-Babli murder, for instance, the posed picture of the two garlanding each other was taken for Babli to prove that she married Manoj of her own accord.** This was the only way to ensure that the kidnapping case against her mother-in-law Chandrapati, of Karora village in Kaithal, could be quashed. **It was on that visit that the two were murdered.**

As is clear, not every couple is killed. Activists say barely a handful are murdered: what determines the fate of the target is the couple's financial independence, political clout or wherewithal to pay off the khap. Lawyers say 90% cases are 'solved.' "Nobody says a word when a politician's children decide to marry against norms. It's very selective," says Aidwa's Sudha Sundararaman. Or when couples can pay the 'fines' khaps impose, in short paying their way out. **Matters come to a head if the woman marries a lower caste guy. Her succession rights can mean property going—via the girl—into a lower-caste family.** Inter-caste, intra-village, intra-gotra are the big daddies frowned upon. But again, selective. "A khap had declared a couple brother-sister recently and nullified their marriage. We intervened and as the boy was Delhi-based and had clout, their khap revoked the decision," says Sundararaman."

See all anti-caste posts on [honor killings](#).

Posted at 02:11 PM in [caste](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [state repression](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

June 16, 2010

ANOTHER YOUNG COUPLE LYNCHED, THIS TIME IN THE HEART OF DELHI

Indian couple electrocuted for daring to marry outside caste (*The Independent U.K.*)

In a case that has stunned India's capital, [a young man] and his teenage girlfriend were tortured and murdered in a so-called honour killing, allegedly by the young woman's family, who objected to the relationship.

Over a period of several hours, the young couple were bound, beaten and given electric shocks before they died. All that time, the woman screamed and begged with her assailants—apparently her uncle and father—to spare the life of the young man whom she so wanted to marry.

“When we found the bodies, the couple’s legs and hands were tied and they were bleeding,” the deputy commissioner of Delhi police, NS Bundela, told a press conference yesterday. “The couple were electrocuted as well, but we will wait for the full post-mortem report.”

The killing of young couples who challenge the wishes of their families is not uncommon in rural India where the centuries-old traditions of caste and tribe remain little diluted. But this incident has triggered an unusual degree of outrage, both for its brutality and for its location in a city that is gearing up for October’s Commonwealth Games and a chance to showcase itself to the world.

The couple, Yogesh Kumar Jatav, 21, and 19-year-old Asha Saini, lived just streets from each other in the crowded, claustrophobic Gokulpuri neighbourhood on the edge of the city and had started their relationship two years ago. Yet despite such geographic proximity, in the eyes of Ms Saini’s family, the pair were from worlds apart; her father owned and operated a successful vegetable wholesale business, while Mr Jatav, whose parents are dead, worked as a taxi driver. More importantly, it seems, Mr Jatav was from a lower caste. [...]

When he was brought before court yesterday, Ms Saini’s uncle apparently confessed to the crime and told reporters: **“We killed them using an electric shock. Yogesh had come to our house. We don’t feel any remorse.”**



See also:

[Indian community torn apart by 'honour killings'](#) by Geeta Pandey (BBC, June 16, 2010)

Cousin Lokesh Kumar Saini says: "We had talked to Yogesh and his family in the past and told them to stay away. We had also found a good match for Asha and she was engaged. What will any parent do if they see their daughter in a compromising position with a man? What would you do if you were in the same situation?" he asks me angrily. "That's why my uncles killed them."

Another of Asha's uncles, Titoo Saini, is convinced "the killings were justified."

"We did it for our honour. Honour in our community and society is paramount to us," he says.

I ask them what honour the family has now that they are accused of murdering their own daughter?

"If she had run away with Yogesh, what honour would we have left then?" he asks.

"Moreover, that would have set a bad precedent for the other children in the family. They would have done the same. Then it would have been a slow and painful death for us every living moment. This is better," he says.

"Asha played in my arms as a baby. I carried her for her funeral. Did that not make me unhappy?"

But Titoo Saini is clear that marriage outside of caste is a bigger evil than murder.

"How can we marry outside the caste? This cannot be tolerated. Only an impotent man will accept this. If I was in their place, I would have done the same," he says.

Posted at 01:24 PM in [caste](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

April 04, 2010

ANOTHER UNTOUCHABLE KILLED FOR CROSSING CASTE LINES

Boy killed for loving upper-caste girl (*Times of India*)

NEW DELHI: Just days after a Karnal court in Haryana sentenced five men to death for their role in an honour killing, the central district police claimed to have apprehended **a 17-year-old minor and his two friends, allegedly for plotting and murdering a 20-year-old Dalit youth who reportedly 'proposed' to the former's 15-year-old sister.**

"The boy came all the way from Haryana, where his family had sent him after he fell in bad company, after news reached him that Bunty proposed to his younger sister, a Class 10 student of open school, in full public view," said Jaspal Singh, DCP (central).

According to the police, Bunty was lured to a spot near Jakhira Bridge on March 25 where, helped by Arun alias Behari (22) and a 14-year-old boy, the brother of the girl killed him.

See also:

[Yadav youth married to Dalit 'thrown down' from moving train in Allahabad, dies](#) (Express News Service, April 22, 2010)

Posted at 11:03 AM in [atrocities \(untouchable lynchings\)](#), [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

August 20, 2009

COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENT FOR BOY'S LETTER IN A SEGREGATED VILLAGE

[In Anekal, a love letter isolates a community](#) (DNA)

"The 15-year-old [dalit] boy's letter to the eight standard [upper-caste] girl enraged the girl's relatives. They came to our kheri and picked up a fight and bashed up at least eight members of our community," a girl from the Dalit kheri told DNA.

The Dalits thought it was over but the next day, when some women from their community went to fetch water from the farm, they were told to leave. "They said they won't give water to people from the Dalit community. They abused us, and **asked us how a boy from our community could dare to write a love letter**," the girl added.

It got worse. The Dalits were shooed away from tea shops in the village. They were told to stay away from Gowda farms, from where they were drawing water. Nobody in the Dalit kheri wants to talk about the incident.

Posted at 08:58 AM in [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [social boycott](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

May 01, 2008

WOMEN'S OPPRESSION KILLS

[Honour killing: 18-year-old burned alive by father](#) (*Times of India*)

The only 'crime' 18-year-old Rekha Gokavi had committed was to love a boy belonging to a poor family. Rekha was clobbered and burnt alive by her father and uncle.

Posted at 09:40 PM in [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

April 18, 2008

CASTE AND WOMEN'S OPPRESSION REINFORCE EACH OTHER

[Dalit girl beaten to death on panchayat orders](#) (NewsByte)

A 15-year-old girl was beaten to death in Mahadeva village in Kushinagar district after the local panchayat ordered her beating as punishment for having into a love affair.

The panchayat ordered that the girl be beaten 50 times with lathis (sticks) but the dozen odd young men who were asked to execute the punishment, beat the girl so badly that she died on the spot.

[...] According to reporters reaching here, Gudiya, daughter of one Bihari Bind, was involved with a local young man who belongs to upper caste.

Posted at 05:31 AM in [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

January 06, 2008

CASTE AND WOMEN'S OPPRESSION REINFORCE EACH OTHER

Girl escapes honour killing, now fights a lonely battle (IBNlive)

Nineteen-year-old Poonam's blank look speaks of the trauma she has suffered at the hands of her family. Her relatives, threw her into a canal at Tibbi, near Haryana's border with Rajasthan, and left her to die. All because she, a Jat girl, married a Dalit boy.

Posted at 04:13 AM in [atrocities \(untouchable lynchings\)](#), [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

January 03, 2008

MURDERED FOR CASTE IN CHICAGO!

Father Says He Set Fire That Killed Three (*New York Times*)

A man set a fire last weekend that killed his pregnant daughter, his son-in-law and his 3-year-old grandson, prosecutors say, because he disapproved of his daughter's marriage.

The man, Subhash Chander, who lives in Oak Forest, a suburb south of here, told investigators that he was upset with his daughter, Monika Rani, and her husband, Rajesh Kumar, for what he saw as 'a cultural slight,' said Robert J. Milan, the first assistant state's attorney of Cook County.

Mr. Chander said that the couple had married without his consent and that Mr. Kumar was from a lower caste in India than Ms. Rani's family, Mr. Milan said."

Posted at 04:43 AM in [caste](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

September 27, 2007

ATROCITY IN UTTAR PRADESH OVER INTER-CASTE ELOPEMENT

Caste war: Dalit woman burnt alive (NDTV)

The 45-year-old woman was burnt allegedly by some upper-caste villagers in Firozabad district of Uttar Pradesh.

On Wednesday, her son Bunty eloped with the daughter of an influential upper caste villager Rajveer Singh Yadav, who was opposed to the relationship.

Yadav and 3 others allegedly set Bunty's mother ablaze on Thursday.

Posted at 01:46 AM in [atrocities \(untouchable lynchings\)](#), [caste](#), [dalits \(untouchables\)](#), [inter-caste couples](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

July 14, 2007

COUPLE BELONGING TO THE SAME CASTE KILLED FOR BEING TOO CLOSE IN LINEAGE

All for 'honour' (*Frontline*, July 14-27)

This is the story of Manoj and Babli, but could well be the story of the many couples in Haryana who have lost their lives for the sake of 'honour' - family honour or community honour. In this case it is Jat honour, at Karoda village in Kaithal district.

The duo who were in their early twenties eloped on April 6 as village elders would not allow them to marry because both belonged to the Banwala gotra. Marrying a person of the same gotra is taboo in most parts of Haryana.

Marriage and other relations within one's *gotra*, a claimed lineage *within a caste* that generally encompasses many millions of people, is thought to be incestuous. In this case, the couple disappeared after setting off to visit Babli's family, who happened to be much better off. But the police wouldn't help.

As the police in both Karnal and Kaithal showed little interest in finding out the whereabouts of the couple, the family [of Manoj], despite its meagre resources, decided to investigate on its own. [...] On June 23, the bodies of the couple, with their hands and feet tied, were found in the Barwala branch canal in Hissar district.

[...]

"There were maggots on the clothes, so we requested the policemen to get them washed. Instead, they gave us some soap and water and told us to wash the clothes," said Seema and Chandrapati. "It was my brother's shirt and there was my bhabhi's bangle too," said Seema, breaking into tears.

Once Manoj's family uncovered the crime and reported it to police, they were penalized by their own *panchayat* (village council).

Karoda is among the bigger villages in Kaithal district. With a population of about 25,000, it has close to 10,000 voters, most of them Jats of the Banwala gotra, to which Gangraj belongs. The elected sarpanch of the village is a relative of Babli's family and is said to have played a partisan role in the case. "What good was the panchayat to us? They are supposed to listen to our side of the story also. Instead they have imposed a social boycott on us and a fine of Rs.25,000 on anyone who interacts with us," said Chandrapati [Manoj's mother].

[...]

A village resident explained what the boycott meant. No one would sell to or buy anything from the family; none would talk to the family or visit it; no doctor would be allowed to visit the family; in school no teacher would teach Vinod; and no classmate would talk to him.

The killers have a lot of political support:

[T]he Jat Mahasabha, a body representing the interests of Jats which is most active during the time of elections, is firmly behind Babli's family. The Mahasabha also holds strong views on social issues. In a statement to a Hindi newspaper, the Karnal Jat Mahasabha leadership extended its support to Babli's family stating that the couple had erred by getting married and that the murder was inevitable as the couple had left the accused with little choice.

But more puzzling is the silence of the political parties barring the Left, be it the ruling Congress or the main opposition Indian National Lok Dal. It is, perhaps, yet another indication of the importance parties attach to caste support and 'gotra politics.'

See also:

Haryana villagers not ashamed of honour killings (Nerve)

The killers, now in police custody, say they have done the right thing. "They brought shame on our community. Our action will set an example for others," said one of the accused.

Other villagers in Karoran feel the same way. They neither regret the killing nor are remorseful about it.

"The couple got what they deserved. Within their gotra, they were like brother and sister. They made an unholy alliance by getting married," a villager said.

By Hindu custom, people who share the same gotra are considered to have descended from the same ancestors from the Vedic age.

"This (the marriage) cannot be tolerated," the villager added. "I think no one in this village will speak against the killing."

Posted at 11:56 PM in [caste](#), [caste councils \(panchayats\)](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

February 03, 2007

LOVE AMONG DISTANT BRAHMIN COUSINS PUNISHED BY CASTE PANCHAYAT

Cousins' affair sparks new Indian honour killing horror (*The Australian*)

Locals say the panchayat, or village council, was summoned into extraordinary session to consider the 'incestuous relationship' and the pair's defiance of the family.

The couple were ordered to end their relationship. When they refused, the panchayat passed its verdict: a death sentence for lowering the standing of the Thakur community.

The punishment was slow, painful and remorseless as the mob avenged the honour of the village. Only Mahesh's grandfather showed any sort of anguish, his conscience moving him to lodge a police complaint.

An officer said yesterday charges had been laid against 12 villagers over the killings.

See also:

Getting Away with Murder by Uddalak Mukherjee (*The Telegraph* Calcutta), February 6, 2007)

It is not as if killings such as this one are restricted to the tribal belts of Pakistan or other Islamic societies. The rise in the number of murdered lovers makes it impossible to believe that honour killings are 'new' to Indian society. In fact, the first reported honour killing in Muzaffarnagar, a district in western Uttar Pradesh, which has gained notoriety for such slayings, goes back to 1993. Since then, the numbers have been rising. For instance, in Muzaffarnagar, 16 such deaths were reported in 2005 alone. Other districts in the state, such as Saharanpur, Bijnor, and now Agra, have also witnessed similar crimes. Significantly, the claim that honour killings are restricted to certain feudal pockets in north India is a dubious one. The day Gudiya and Mahesh were done to death in Nehra, Mohua Mondol, a girl from Purulia in West Bengal, was shot dead by her own father, for daring to fall in love.

It is not as if the deaths go unreported. But the method that the Indian media employ while covering such events is quite interesting. The vernacular press resorts to sensationalizing such deaths. On most occasions, there is also a hidden moral tone, which helps to legitimize the violence in the name of punishing defiance. The English dailies, as well as the electronic media, invariably point to these killings as tangible proof of the failure of the country's vast rural hinterland to keep pace with an enlightened, modern, urban India.

The caste panchayats, which often order lovers to be strangled, burnt or hacked, are found to have a direct role to play in the violence. But they are by no means alone responsible for the assault or killings; a patriarchal society's curious interpretation of 'honour' and its relationship with gender and caste are as important. But while a lot has been written on this interdependence of caste, honour and gender, caste panchayats and their sinister designs remain curiously under-reported in the media.

The caste panchayat is different from the *gram panchayat*, which is an elected body, headed by the *sarpanch*. The former draws its legitimacy from its claims of being a self-appointed keeper of tradition, customs and cultural practices, while the latter is a representative of the law of the land. However, in India's villages, it is the caste panchayat which serves as an extra-judicial agency, a parallel court of law that resolves 'private' disputes at the local level. Its macabre verdicts are often read out in the course of conciliatory meetings, known as *shalishis* in Bengal. The nature of the disputes vary — people approach the panchayat for settling altercations

arising out of inter-caste marriage, elopement as well as supposedly incestuous unions, as was the case in Nehra. A careful scrutiny of the incidents of honour killings would show that in most cases, the caste panchayats have passed judgments in an arbitrary manner, and always in favour of those who wield real power — social, economic or otherwise — to ensure that the *status quo* remains undisturbed. A runaway couple, guilty of defying time-honoured traditions, is invariably doomed once the kangaroo court steps in.

Significantly, it is not as if only couples hailing from different castes are murdered. Mahesh and Janaka, a married couple from the same caste, were abducted from Kanpur and taken to Chak Kushehari, their native village in central Uttar Pradesh. They were first tortured for two days, then taken to a paddy field where they were left to die after the bride's father and his henchmen slit their throats. What binds the killings in different parts of the country is the violence that is inflicted on the victims. **The caste panchayat will not tolerate any resistance to a set of archaic rules, which determine individual lives in the rural hinterland. The gruesome deaths are meant to remind the men and women the price one pays for love.**

Posted at 02:17 AM in [caste councils \(panchayats\)](#), [honor killings](#), [inter-caste couples](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

November 25, 2006

CASTE AND WOMEN'S OPPRESSION REINFORCE EACH OTHER

Untouchable burnt to death after accusing high-caste man of rape (*The Independent UK*)

Asha accused a local upper-caste man of raping her last year. It was no small matter for her to go to the police in Indian rural society, where being a victim of rape is still considered deeply shameful.... In the villages, a man accused of rape may be found guilty and punished by the courts. But a woman who comes forward as a rape victim is certain of her punishment by society. She faces little prospect of marriage, and life for an unmarried woman in the villages is bleak.

Posted at 12:51 AM in [caste](#), [inter-caste couples](#), [women](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

September 20, 2006

BOMBAY: LOWER-CASTE MAN WHO MARRIED BRAHMIN WOMAN HACKED TO DEATH ALONG WITH HIS FATHER, NEPHEW, AND FRIEND

High price for defying caste, family (*Express India*)

“Papa is a mild man, but my mother and Dileep were violent. They were very proud of being Brahmin...thought women should never answer back, not make any choices. It just made me more determined to disobey them.”

In October 2003, still an undergraduate student, Sushma capped that disobedience by leaving home and marrying neighbour and boyfriend Prabhu in the Bandra family court. Seven months on, she found herself a widow.

Today, Sushma stays with her surviving in-laws, and says even if her now-freed parents try to call her or build a bridge, she is never going back. But she adds quietly, “The truth is, I belong neither here nor there.”

Studying for a masters degree, Sushma works with an NGO to keep herself and daughter Sona going. Days short of turning two, the cherubic girl is her mother’s solace. Sushma says, “She is stubborn like me. I dream that she will become a pilot someday.”

For herself, Sushma has aspirations of joining the police force. “Otherwise, I am resigned to a lonely life.”