

A TALE OF BETRAYAL NEERU'S DEATH: IS IT MURDER OR SUICIDE?

- By Staff Reporter

Kathmandu, June 18: The husband, father-in-law and mother-in-law of Neeru Manandhar of Kopundole, are expected to be presented before the District Court tomorrow after 24 days in custody for allegedly killing the wife and the daughter-in-law.

Neeru, 23, had died on May 18 mysteriously, which her husband and in-laws say was a suicide, but the girl's father Mukunda Das Shrestha, a Reader at the Tribhuvan University, said it was a clear case of murder by torture and beating.

The swollen blue mark around her neck and several other marks on her body signify that she was mercilessly beaten before she was killed, he alleged.

The father had registered the First Information Report (FIR) to the police that his daughter had died on May 18 due to the beatings and torture.

Neeru was found hanging on the round iron staircase at the verandah. The girl's father said when Neeru was brought to the Bir Hospital she was already dead. Shrestha was informed by the victim's husband Binay Manadhar on telephone about her death at about 10:30 in the evening, about one-and-a-half-hour after the incident happened.

When Neeru was brought to the Hospital, she was already dead. But Neeru's father, citing the statement of Dr. Rameshwore Shrestha, a doctor at Kanti Children's Hospital, and also his neighbour, was first brought to see Neeru by her family. "Dr. Shrestha told the police that she was virtually dead when he checked her and that it was the doctor who suggested the family to take Neeru to Bir Hospital," said Reader Shrestha.

Neeru's father also said the neighbours, who knew about the incident only the next day, told the police that they had heard a lot of noise and sound of beating on that evening, then suddenly everything had remained quiet.

The father even claimed the neighbours told him that Neeru was forced to severe suffering and even physical torture in her house. "It was she who had to do all the household chores."

Neeru's father also said when the policemen reached Manandhars' house after the incident, they had found the big house very orderly and clean and there was no servant. "That means it was my daughter who 'had' to do everything," Shrestha said. "All the evidences of death were also cleaned up before investigation."

Her friends and colleagues at HIMS Boarding School at Maharajgunj, where she used to teach, also said that Neeru used to complain about maltreatment by her husband and in-laws.

Theirs was a love-marriage. Both Neeru and Binay had studied together at Saraswati Boarding School and sometime after their schooling, Binay started hankering after Neeru. But the father said he did not know anything about the affair. Then Neeru, youngest among the five daughters, eloped and they got married on 2056 Poush 6.

Since she eloped, Neeru had no contact with her family. The father said her bad days started after one and a-half-month of marriage.

After her death, Neeru's father said there might be some tampering in the post-mortem report.

He said he even doubted the doctor's intention. The doctor at the Teaching Hospital, where the post-mortem was done, wanted to see the place of 'suicide', talk to the neighbourhood doctor, who had seen Neeru after the alleged hanging, and even the Manandhar family before submitting the post-mortem report.

In the post-mortem report, Neeru's father said he has found out that the doctor has said 'hanging/suicide'. Doctors say it is unusual. "In the post-mortem report we only write the cause of death, not how it happened," said a doctor.

Shrestha said the culprits must be punished for their crimes. "It could also be my daughter's fault. She never told us anything about what was happening to her, otherwise we would have found a way out."