



Belly Khatun was allegedly burnt to death for dowry

Fact finding Report

Odhikar

On 22 August 2011 at around 12 noon, Belly Khatun (21) was killed by her husband Md. Anwar Hossain, brothers-in-law Ariful Islam Dolon, Md. Ahsanul Islam Meno, father-in-law Md. Nurul Islam, sisters-in-law Anjuara Khatun, Mossammat Sabina Khatun, brother-in-law Md. Zoblu Hossain and her husband's uncle Abdur Sattar; who poured kerosene on her in the Batia village of Shahjadpur Upazilla of Sirajganj district. Belly's father, Md. Yusuf Ali filed a case in the Shahjadpur Police Station of Sirajganj as a plaintiff. The case number is 21 and dated- 23/08/11, under section 11(ka)/30 of the Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Daman Ain 2000 (Amended in 2003).

On 22 August 2011, police arrested Belly's brother-in-law Md. Zoblu Hossain and her uncle-in-law Abdur Sattar. At present, they are out on bail. Belly's husband Anwar Hossain is still absconding and the other accused people are out on bail from the Court.

Odhikar conducted a fact-finding mission. During this Odhikar interviewed-

- Relatives of the deceased
- Eye-witnesses
- Doctor
- Police Superintendent and the investigating officer.



Photo - Belly Khatun

Md. Yusuf Ali (50), Belly's father

Md. Yusuf Ali told Odhikar that on 21 March 2008 his daughter Belly got married to Anwar Hossain, son of Md. Nurul Islam of Batia village. He informed that at the time of marriage he gave Anwar 65,000 taka in cash. After 1 month of the marriage, Anwar demanded 25,000 taka more. Then he sold his cow and gave his son-in-law the money. After one year, Anwar again demanded 50,000 taka to buy cow. When he refused to pay, he (Anwar) started physically abuse Belly. When Belly was pregnant, Yusuf Ali brought her home. After two months of her delivery, members of Anwar's family took Belly back to her in-laws home. After few days, Anwar again gave pressure for money. On 19 August 2011, Belly was badly beaten by Anwar. Then Belly went to Anwar's elder sister, Shirin's home in Norina village. From there she called her mother and told her to either give the money or take her home. Then Shirin convinced Belly to go back to Anwar's home. The next day on 20 August 2011, Belly called her mother and told her that Anwar beat her again. At around 11.30 in the morning of 22 August 2011 Anwar called Yusuf Ali. Anwar told him to come to his house quickly as Belly was very ill. Yusuf Ali and his wife left for Anwar's home in Batia village and reached there at around 1 pm. They found the home empty. Seeing them, the neighbours came and said that Belly had been burnt and taken to Shahjadpur Hospital. Then they went to Shahjadpur hospital but did not see anyone of Anwar's family. After that, Yusuf Ali called Anwar's elder brother Ariful Islam Dolon and he told them to go home as they were taking Belly to Bogra hospital. So they went to Anwar's home again and asked the neighbours about the incident. Then a neighbour named Rezaul informed them that on hearing screams they came and saw Belly burning. He heard her asking for help and saying that they set fire to her. Then they put out the flames and took her to the hospital. At around 5 in the afternoon Anwar's elder brother Ariful Islam Dolon and neighbour Raju Ahmed brought Belly's body home and kept it in the yard. Then they informed Saiful Islam, the Chairman of Narina Union Parishad. Saiful Islam proposed Yusuf Ali to settle the matter through mediation, but he refused and went to the Police Station to file a F.I.R¹. Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Shahjadpur Police Station, Josim Uddin and Sub Inspector (SI) Kongkon Kumar Bishwas came to take the body to the morgue. Anwar and other members of his family fled after hearing that police were coming.

On 22 August 2011 Police arrested Anwar's uncle Abdur Sattar and his cousin Md. Zoblu Hossain and put them in custody. The next day on 23 August 2011, the Police Superintendent of Sirajganj Police Station, Md. Mosharof Hossain inspected the place of incidence. He believes that Ariful Islam is a Union Parishad member for this reason police is not trying to arrest perpetrators.

¹ F.I.R- First Information Report.

Md. Rezaul Karim, eye-witness

Md. Rezaul Karim told Odhikar that on 22 August 2011 he heard a scream and ran to where it came from. There he saw Belly burning and saying 'they killed me'. He asked the family what happened then Anwar's sister-in-law Anjuara Khatun said the Belly set herself on fire from an electric spark and another said that she set fire to herself by first pouring kerosene on her body.

Dr. Yunus Ali, Doctor of Ibne Sina Diagnostic Centre of Shahjadpur

Dr. Yunus Ali told Odhikar that at around 1.30 in the afternoon of 22 August 2011 a burn patient named Belly was brought to his chamber. He found the patient in a critical condition and after giving the first aid he suggested she be taken to Bogra hospital. He was absolutely certain that the patient had been burnt by using firewood.

Raju Ahmed, Anwar's neighbour

Raju Ahmed told Odhikar that on his way home from Shahjadpur he heard that a burn patient from Batia village had come to the chamber of Dr. Yunus. Then he went to see the patient and found it was Anwar's wife Belly. Belly was conscious when he went to see her. Dr. Yunus suggested she be taken to Bogra or Enayetpur quickly. Then Raju, Anwar and Ariful Islam Dolon started for Bogra in a microbus taking Belly with them. During the journey, Belly died and they came back to Anwar's home with the body. Anwar and Dolon said him that Belly doused herself with kerosene before setting herself on fire.

Saiful Islam, Chairman of Narina Union Parishad

Chairman Saiful Islam told Odhikar that Ariful Islam Dolon is a member of the Narina Union Parishad. At around 1.30 in the afternoon of 22 August 2011 Dolon called him and said that the wife of his younger brother Anwar died by setting herself on fire. Ariful asked him to come to Anwar's home quickly. Then Saiful Islam went to Batia village and tried to make a settlement with the plaintiff (Belly's father).

Sub Inspector (SI) Kongkon Kumar Bishwas, the investigating officer

Sub Inspector (SI) Kongkon Kumar Bishwas told Odhikar that at 6:00 in the evening of 22 August 2011 Belly's father Md. Yusuf Ali came to the police station and filed a F.I.R. against 8 people. In the F.I.R he mentioned that his daughter was burnt and killed. Then the Sub Inspector went to Batia village and saw Belly's body lying in the yard. He went to the room where the incident took place and saw that all electric lines were active and found a burnt piece of cloth on the floor. He said that everything would be clear after the post-mortem report came. He also said that he is trying to arrest the accused and on the day of incidence two of them were arrested.

Md. Mosharof Hossain, Police Superintendent of Sirajganj

Police Super Md. Mosharof Hossain told Odhikar that on 22 August 2011 Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Shahjadpur Police Station, Josim Uddin informed him about the matter. On 23 August 2011, he went to Batia village and ordered the arrest of the accused after proper investigation.

Odhikar's Statement

The kind of incident of violence against women for dowry is increasing. From the fact finding mission it is apparent that police are not showing any interest because Anwar's elder brother Ariful Islam is a Union Parishad member. The weak performance of police and the support of influential local people are making this crime more terrible. Odhikar demands the Government take initiatives to create mass awareness and to use the law for the victim to prevent this crime.

-End-