



Sheuly Begum in Munshiganj was killed allegedly for dowry

Fact Finding Report

Odhikar

Sheuly Begum (28) got married to cable operator Azizul Haque Liton to save her father and her family. This was her second marriage – a marriage that cost her life. Her mother Rahima Khatun alleges that Sheuly's husband, Azizul Haque Liton (40), a cable operator of Anarpura village under Gojaria Police Station, killed her. After Sheuly's first husband divorced her, she began living at her parents' house with her five year old daughter. Sheuly's father Mohammad Iman Hossain hardly made enough as a rickshaw-puller to support his family of seven including his wife, three daughters, son and granddaughter. To extend help to the family, Sheuly worked as a labourer at Sino Bangla Company in Bhatar Char area of Gojaria. Quite often on her way between work and home, Sheuly received proposals from Azizul Haque Liton, son of Fazlul Haque Sarkar of Anarpura village under Gojaria Police Station of Munshiganj to date him. As Sheuly did not respond, Liton threatened her that he will not let her father pull rickshaw in the area. At one point Liton even threatened to kill Sheuly's father. In order to save her family's reputation and her father's life Sheuly had agreed to Liton's proposal. Liton wanted to have a pre-marital relationship with Sheuly. When Sheuly refused, Liton took her to his friend Rahim's house in Anarpura village, took her sign on a piece of paper and said they have been married under the customs of court. However, Sheuly realised that Liton had cheated her. Sheuly informed Baluakandi Union Parishad's former member Mohammad Habibur Rahman about the matter on August 28, 2009. Habibur Rahman got Liton and Sheuly married with a dower of Tk 3 lakhs. However, Sheuly received no dower after marriage instead Liton demanded Tk 1 lakh from her as dowry. Giving and receiving dowry are both punishable offences according to Dowry Prohibition Act, 1980. Liton physically assaulted her for dowry. Sheuly's mother Rahima Begum took 3 loans of Tk 10000 from Bureau Bangladesh (a private organisation) and gave Liton a total of Tk 30000 as dowry. Liton still kept on assaulting Sheuly for dowry. After their marriage, Sheuly left her job at Sino Bangla company on Liton's demand. On January 3, 2013 Sheuly Begum went missing from 8:00pm. She could not be found anywhere. On January 5, 2013 at around 1:30pm, Sheuly Begum's body was found some 300 yards east of number 16 Uttar Shahpur Government Primary School. Sheuly's mother Rahima Begum filed a case as the complainant at Gojaria Police Station against Azizul Haque Liton and 2/3 unknown people of Anarpura village in Gojaria Police Station of Munshiganj district under section 11(Ka)/30¹ of the

¹ Section-11 (Ka): If the husband of a woman or his father, mother, guardian or any other person on behalf of the husband, causes death or attempts to causing death, be punished with transportation for life and also with fine, in both case; Section-30: Whoever instigate to commit an offence under this Act and the offence is committed or an attempt was made to commit the offence in consequence of the instigation, or, whoever abets another to commits an offence under this Act, shall be punished with the punishment provided for the commission of the offence or for the attempt to commit the offence.

Prevention of Women and Children Repression Act, 2000 (amended 2003). Case number: 3; dated: 05/01/2013. While the case is currently undergoing investigation, the police could not arrest Azizul Haque Liton, as he is absconding.

Odhikar carried out a fact finding mission into the incident. During the fact finding mission Odhikar interviewed:

- Sheuly Begum's relatives
- The doctor who conducted the post mortem
- The person who bathed the dead body and
- Members of the law enforcement agencies



Photo: Sheuly Begum (The photo has been published with permission from her family)

Rahima Begum (45), Sheuly Begum's mother:

Rahima Begum informed Odhikar that her daughter Sheuly Begum was first married to a man named Kamal of Holodia village under Lowhajong Police Station of Munshiganj district. Five years after their marriage, after the birth of their daughter, they got divorced. Kamal did not pay for his daughter's expenses. After her divorce, Sheuly began to live at her house with her daughter. Rahima's husband is a rickshaw puller. It was difficult for him to run a family with three daughters, one son and a granddaughter. Sheuly took up work at Sino Bangla in Bhatar Chor area of Gojaria Police Station to relieve some pressure from her father. When her daughter travelled to work, Liton annoyed her by giving her indecent proposals. When her daughter did not agree, he threatened to not let Sheuly's father pull rickshaw in the area and kill him. To save her father's life Sheuly agreed to his proposal. On August 28, 2009 Liton and Sheuly got married. A few months after their marriage, Liton pressured her for dowry that would sometimes lead to even physical assaults. Liton rented a house beside her house, where he used to come and go as he wished and beat up Sheuly quite frequently for dowry. Unable to bear Liton's abuse Sheuly came to her and told her everything. After that she took Tk 10000 twice i.e Tk 20000 in total from Bureau Bangladesh (a private organisation) and then lastly on February 29, 2012 she took another Tk 10000 as loan and gave it to Liton through Sheuly as dowry. On January 3, 2013 at around 8:00pm she went to her daughter Sheuly's house and saw that the door was locked. When she could not find her even after searching her everywhere, she informed the neighbours about her daughter going missing. On January 4, 2013 at around 11:00am Mohammad Habibur Rahman, an acquaintance of her from Baluakandi village informed her that on January 3, 2013 at around 11:00pm, he saw Azizul Haque Liton and 5/6 other unknown men on the east side of number 16 Uttar Shahpur Government

Primary School. After hearing the news she went to Liton's mother's house. She did not find her daughter there and when she asked Liton's mother about Sheuly, she did not get any answer. On January 5, 2013 at around 4:00am Liton called her and said that there is no need to look for Sheuly. He told her that Sheuly was a "loose woman" and that is why he has ended their relationship. He further told her to collect her belongings from Liton's house. On January 5, 2013 at around 1:30pm her son Yousuf Ali told her that Sheuly's body was found on Siddikur Rahman's bamboo bush on the east of their house. She immediately went there and found the body lying on the ground with her hair messed up, black marks under her neck, lips parted and blood clots on her back. When the news of Sheuly's body being found spread, the police of Gojaria Police Station came in the evening and took it for post mortem. Rahima filed a case as the complainant regarding this matter at Gojaria Police Station against Azizul Haque Liton and 2/3 unknown people of Anarpura village under Gojaria Police Station of Munshiganj district under section 11(Ka)/30 of the Prevention of Women and Children Repression Act, 2000 (amended 2003). Case number: 3; dated: 05/01/2013. On January 6, 2013 Sheuly's body was brought home in the evening and was buried at Shahpur graveyard after Maghrib prayers.

Mohammad Habibur Rahman, former member, Baluakandi Union Parishad, Gojaria, Munshiganj:

Mohammad Habibur Rahman told Odhikar that even though Liton and Sheuly got married with a dower of Tk 3 lakh on August 28, 2009, Liton did not give the money to Sheuly. A few days after their marriage, Liton put pressure on Sheuly for dowry. As a result Sheuly's mother Rahima Begum took Tk 10000 loan from Bureau Bangladesh three times and gave Tk 30000 to Liton as dowry. Liton kept on harassing Sheuly for more dowry money. On January 3, 2013 he went to the dock in Gojaria for some work. At around 11:00pm, when he was returning home, he saw Azizul Haque Liton and 5/6 other men on the east of 16 Uttar Shahpur Government Primary School in the light beaming from his torch light. When he asked Liton what he was doing there, he answered that he is working on the connection of a cable television line. On January 5, 2013 at around 2:00pm, Sheuly's brother Yousuf Ali informed him on mobile phone that Sheuly's body was found in Siddikur Rahman's bamboo bush on the east side of 16 Uttar Shahpur Government Primary School in Uttar Shahpur village. He went to see Sheuly's body on receiving the news and saw the deceased lady's hair messed up; there was black mark under her neck, her lips were parted and blood clot on her back.

SI Abdullah Al Mamun, Gojaria Police Station, Munshiganj:

SI Abdullah Al Mamun told Odhikar that on January 5, 2013 at around 3:00pm, on orders of Gojaria Police Station's Officer-in-Charge (OC) Mohammad Jahangir Hossain, he went to Siddikur Rahman's bamboo bush located 300yards east of 16 Uttar Shahpur Government Primary School in Uttar Shahpur village and saw Sheuly Begum's body there. He prepared the inquest report of the body. In the inquest report he mentioned that there was about black mark of a blood clot measuring five inch in length on the middle of her back, there were black marks on her legs and under her knees as well and there was semen on her genital area. The body was brought to Gojaria Police

Station and from there it was sent to Munshiganj Sadar Hospital for post mortem. On January 6, 2013 at around 12:00pm, Sheuly's body was handed over to her family. Sheuly's mother Rahima Begum filed a case for the murder of her daughter as the complainant at Gojaria Police Station against Azizul Haque Liton and 2/3 unknown people of Anarpura village in Gojaria Police Station of Munshiganj district under section 11(Ka)/30 of the Prevention of Women and Children Repression Act, 2000 (amended 2003). Case number: 3; dated: 05/01/2013.

Mohammad Jahangir Hossain, Officer-in-Charge (OC), Gojaria, Munshiganj:

Mohammad Jahangir Hossain informed Odhikar that accused Azizul Haque Liton was absconding and so he could not be arrested. Sub Inspector Abdullah Al Mamun was given the responsibility of investigating the case initially. Later, SI Khaled was given the responsibility to investigate the case instead of SI Abdullah Al Mamun.

Dr. Ehsanul Karim, Resident Medical Officer, Munshiganj Sadar Hospital:

Dr. Ehsanul Karim told Odhikar that Sheuly Begum's body was brought to the morgue in the morning of January 6, 2013. He performed the post mortem on the body. The samples have been sent to Mohakhali Chemical Lab in Dhaka. Details can be known once the reports arrive.

Mosammot Jibunnessa (50), woman who bathed the body:

Mosammot Jibunnessa informed Odhikar that on January 5, 2013 at 2:00pm she got to know from Sheuly's mother Rahima Begum that Sheuly's body was found on Siddikur Rahman's bamboo bush beside their house. After hearing the news she went to see the body and noticed the body bearing black marks in the neck and there was a long mark of blood clot on the back. On January 6, 2013 in the evening, when the body was brought home after the post mortem, she performed the bathing ritual of the body. Later, the deceased was buried at Shahpur Graveyard.

Odhikar's view:

In recent times, violence on women for dowry has alarmingly increased. In the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1980, it is stated that both giving and receiving dowry are punishable offenses. Still, due to lack of awareness and pressure from the socially influential quarters, violence related to dowry is continuing. Odhikar demands that Azizul Haque Liton, accused in the murder of Sheuly Begum be arrested as soon as possible and brought under a free and fair trial. According to information obtained from the office of Munshiganj district's Superintendent of police, 33 cases of rape and 114 cases of violence against women have been recorded in 2012. During the time, 7 women lost lives because of dowry. According to the information obtained from Munshiganj district's Prevention of Women and Children Repression tribunal, 293 cases of violence against women were filed only in 2012. Among them, the accused have been released in 26 cases and the remaining 267 cases are being processed. Odhikar urges the government to bring the cases that are being processed under the attention of Government Prosecutor and ensure proper trial. Moreover, Odhikar demands that the government create mass awareness against dowry and use the law in favour of the abused.

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