

Bride, Betrayal & Bloodbath: Marriage Ceremony or Murder Conspiracy?

Aastha kumari

Law Student, BBA LL.B
ICFAI University, Dehradun

1. Introduction

A wedding is often seen as a holy union – a moment of joy, oneness, trust and a promise of growing old together. But what if it hides something much darker behind the smiles and vows. The recent high-profile cases in India have shown wedding where love was just disguise and the real plan was to murder.

This article is titled “Bride, Betrayal and Blood Bath: Marriage Ceremony or Groom Murder Conspiracy”, that will show the shocking truth behind these stories. It reflects how a bride, traditionally seen as pure and loyal, becomes the one who betrays. The term “blood bath” conveys the brutal reality pre-planned murder. The question, “Marriage Ceremony or Groom Murder Conspiracy,” forces us to think: whether these weddings were real or just a plan to kill the groom? Maybe it was an escape from the forced marriage, driven by parents or fear of opening up about her past relationship.

From the Meghalaya Honeymoon Murder, to the Meerut Drum Case, and the Bijnor killing for a government job, these cases not only show the betrayal of a partner, but of marriage itself. These are not just random acts, but signs of deep emotional, legal, and social issues. This article explores these spousal murder cases not just as crime but as outcome of legal loopholes, psychological instability, and social pressure.

Murder Behind the Mandap: Recent Spousal Murder Cases

Case study 1: - The Meghalaya Honeymoon Murder case Raja (29) and Sonam (25) were newlyweds who just begun their honeymoon in Meghalaya. They checked out of homestay in Nongriat village on May 23, 2025, but soon after, Raja disappeared. His body was found ten days later, deep in a gorge near Weisawdong Falls. Shockingly, Sonam Surrendered in Uttar Pradesh, revealing a chilling conspiracy. Police suspect multiple failed attempt before the final act, pointing to a premeditated plan with her lover’s involvement. The case symbolizes an emotionally entangled but calculated betrayal.

Case study 2: - The Meerut drum murder case Muskan Rastogi, a beautician, murdered her husband with the help of her lover Sahil Shukla. Driven by extramarital affair, the duo sedated and strangled Saurabh, hiding his body in a sealed cement drum. A foul Odor led to the discovery of the corpse, unravelling the plot. Both were arrested under IPC sections 302 and 201. This case is not just about infidelity; it represents methodical cruelty and an utter disregard for human life.

Case study 3: -The Bijnor Railway Job Murder Case In Bijnor, Shivani allegedly strangled her husband Deepak Kumar, a railway technician. Her motive, as per investigators, was to acquire his government job through a compassionate appointment. Though she initially claimed natural death, autopsy reports exposed strangulation. She now faces trial under IPC Section 302. This case highlights how financial desperation, when mixed with opportunistic motives, can drive someone to cold-blooded homicide.

Understanding the Surge: Why are spousal murders increasing?

The increase in such brutal cases isn't just coincidental. It reflects deeper psychological, social, and legal issues.

1. Lack of Healthy Exit Options

In many Indian family, the divorce is still seen as shameful, especially of a women. So instead of separating peacefully, some people take extreme step to escape the marriage.

2. Financial Motive

Some murders are solely driven by financial gain. E.g. getting a government job through a spouse's death, like the Bijnor case.

3. Narcissistic or Antisocial Personality Traits:

Some killers show personality disorder where they have no empathy, guilt, or moral boundaries. They see their partner as an obstacle to their personal goals.

4. Forced Marriage

Many people, especially women, are pushed into marriage without their consent. They feel trapped with no way out, leading to extreme decisions. Like The Meghalaya Honeymoon Case.

5. Stigma Around Mental Health

The stigma around mental health prevents people from recognizing emotional problems early and getting help. This silence and negligence often turn a small conflict into major tragedies.

You may think that these are some exceptional cases but the **National Crime Record Bureau(NCRB) Murder Data (2018-2022)** shows some other trends:

Nearly **10,000 murders happen each year** in India due to family disputes. These conflicts between husband and wives. Love affairs and financial motives are also major reasons behind homicides in India.

Legal Lens: How Indian Law Deals with Spousal Murder

Spousal murder cases in India are largely tried under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) now Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) invoking:

Section 302 IPC/Section 103 BNS – Punishment for murder

Section 120B IPC/Section 60 BNS – Criminal conspiracy

Section 201 IPC/Section 238 BNS – Destruction or concealment of evidence

Section 34 IPC/Section 3(6) BNS – Acts done in furtherance of common intention²

In the Sonam Raghuwanshi case, the police invoked Section 120B due to the accused's alleged conspiracy with her paramour. Similarly, the Meerut Drum Murder case reflected joint liability under Section 34,

where the wife and her lover planned and executed the murder together. The Bijnor case, though seemingly individual in execution, may still attract conspiracy charges if evidence reveals planning with any third party.

However, Indian criminal jurisprudence lacks graded classification of murder (e.g., first-degree vs. second-degree), as is common in the U.S., where premeditated, cruel, or especially heinous murders (like spousal homicides for personal gain) attract enhanced sentencing.

Exposing Legal Loopholes and Gaps in the system.

1. Judicial Aspect: No Gender Shield in Murder Cases

Murder laws under Section 302 IPC/Section 103 BNS apply equally to men and women. However, courts often face social pressure when women are accused, making trials emotionally charged and sometimes biased in favour of the female accused.

2. Relaxation in Bail Provisions for Women under CrPC: A Double-Edged Sword

Section 437 CrPC/Section 480 BNSS offers women bail leniency even in heinous crime like murder. Originally intended from the protection of women, this provisions sometimes helps the accused of heinous crime secure bail easily by portraying themselves as vulnerable, delaying in justice for victims.

3. Misuse of Protective Laws: A Shield Turned Sword

Protective Laws like Section 498A IPC/Section 85 BNS and Domestic Violence Act are sometimes misused. In Meerut Drum Case, the accused tried to portray herself as a victim of Domestic Violence to gain sympathy and legal advantage.

4. Weak Forensic Implementation: As Highlighted by NITI Aayog

The NITI Aayog's 2023 Forensic Infrastructure Report pointed out the major gaps in India's Forensic System like shortage of labs, outdated equipment, and delay in evidence analysis. These weakness often result in poor investigation quality and weaker cases in court.

5. Policy Vulnerabilities as Motive:

Government policies like the Compassionate Appointment Scheme unintentionally create motives for family-targeted crimes. In Bijnor Case, the prospect of securing a government job became the key reason behind the murder, exposing dangerous loopholes in such welfare scheme.

Road to Reform: Closing the Gaps and Preventing Future Crimes

1. Gender-Neutral Judicial Approach:

Court should decide murder cases based on evidence and intent, not on gender of the accused. Both genders should be treated equally by law without emotional or social bias.

2. Stricter Bail Provision for Heinous Crimes:

For serious offences like spousal murder, bail conditions for women should be reviewed carefully. Court should demand strong justification even if the accused is a female, especially in case of pre-planned or brutal murder.

3. Prevent Misuse of Protective Laws:

Protective laws like Section 498A and Domestic Violence Act should be used for genuine victims only. False claims must be strictly punished. Courts should cross-check domestic violence history before accepting such defences in murder trials.

4. Strengthening Forensic Infrastructure:

Following the NITI Aayog 2023 recommendations, the government must increase forensic labs, hire trained experts, and reduce testing delays. Faster and accurate forensic reports will help in building stronger evidence and securing timely convictions.

5. Policy Reforms to Reduce Financial Motives:

Schemes like the Compassionate Appointment Policy need stricter eligibility checks. Government jobs should not be granted without detailed investigation if the death of the spouse is sudden or suspicious, to avoid murder for monetary gain.

6. Mandatory Psychological Assessment of Accused:

In spousal murder cases, courts should make mental health evaluation mandatory. This will help in understanding the emotional and psychological state of the accused and prevent repeat offenders.

7. Promoting Mental Health and Relationship Counselling:

There should be more government-funded counselling centres in both urban and rural areas. Pre-marital, marital, and anger management counselling should be promoted to help couples resolve conflicts before they turn violent.

Conclusion: When Love Turns Fatal—A Call for Urgent Reform

Spousal murders represent one of the most heartbreaking betrayals in human relationships. They are not just isolated acts of violence but reflections of deep-rooted social pressures, emotional breakdowns, and legal system failures.

The cases from Meghalaya, Meerut, and Bijnor expose how a mix of forced marriages, financial desperation, mental health stigma, and legal loopholes can turn a sacred bond like marriage into a site of planned murder.

India urgently needs to shift its focus from just punishing offenders to preventing such crimes altogether. Strengthening forensic systems, closing legal loopholes, ensuring gender-neutral justice, and most importantly, making mental health support and marital counselling easily accessible are the need of the hour.

Unless these reforms happen at both policy and social levels, the veil of love and marriage will continue to hide dark conspiracies, and trust will keep turning into tragedy.

References**Government & Legal Documents:**

1. National Crime Records Bureau. Crime in India 2022, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, Chapter 4 – “Murder”, Table 4.4. <https://ncrb.gov.in/en/crime-india>
2. Indian Penal Code, 1860 – Sections 302, 120B, 201, 34, and 498A. <https://www.indiacode.nic.in>

3. Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 – Section 437 (Bail Provisions for Women).
<https://www.indiacode.nic.in>
4. Model Penal Code, § 210.2, American Law Institute (1985). <https://www.law.cornell.edu>
5. NITI Aayog. Forensic Infrastructure in India: A Status Report, Government of India, 2023.
<https://niti.gov.in>
6. Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), Government of India. Compassionate Appointment Guidelines. <https://dopt.gov.in>
7. National Health Mission. National Mental Health Programme (NMHP).
<https://nhm.gov.in/index1.php?lang=1&level=2&sublinkid=1066&lid=607>
8. Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (Act No. 45 of 2023, effective 1 July 2024). Full text PDF:
https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/250883_english_01042024.pdf
9. Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (Act No. 46 of 2023). Full text PDF:
https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/2024-04/250884_2_english_01042024.pdf

News Media Articles (Case References):

1. India Today. (2025, June 11). Meghalaya Honeymoon Murder: Sonam planned to push Raja herself if hired killers failed.
<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/meghalaya-honeymoon-murder-sonam-killed-raja-raghuvanshi-raj-kushwaha-indore-2738928-2025-06-11>
2. India Today. (2025, June 10). Sonam told family something bad would happen if forced to marry Raja.
<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/meghalaya-honeymoon-murder-case-sonam-raghuvanshi-told-her-family-something-bad-would-happen-if-made-to-marry-raja-says-his-brother-2738749-2025-06-10>
3. Times of India. (2025, June). Raja Raghuvanshi was killed in the fourth attempt: Meghalaya Police.
<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/raja-raghuvanshi-was-killed-in-the-fourth-attempt-meghalaya-police/articleshow/121810338.cms>
4. Hindustan Times. (2025, June 12). Sonam Raghuvanshi, Raj Kushwaha admit relationship in Meghalaya murder case.
<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/meghalaya-honeymoon-murder-sonam-raghuvanshi-raj-kushwaha-admit-to-their-relationship-raja-raghuvanshi-101750818708418.html>
5. Times of India. Meerut Drum Murder Case.
<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/meerut/meerut-drum-murder-case/articleshow/119787941.cms>
6. Hindustan Times. (2025, April 9). Bijnor Woman Killed Husband for Railway Job, Autopsy Reveals Strangulation.
<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/bijnors-muskan-arrested-for-killing-husband-for-govt-job-meerut-murder-case-saurabh-rajput-heart-attack-mystery-101744063481804.html>
7. Times of India. (2025, April 10). UP railway techie's death: Wife held for murder, wanted husband's job. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/meerut/rly-techies-death-wasnt-heart-attackit-was-murder-reveals-autopsy-wife-held/articleshow/120043285.cms>