

Case Study: Shivani (Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh)

A) Case Background and Family Structure

Shivani (21) belonged to a **Kashyap family** in Luhari village, Baghpat. Her family consisted of her parents, brother Ravi, and a cousin sister who frequently visited. Ankit Prajapati, her neighbour and partner, belonged to another caste and worked as a labourer. The families lived only a few houses apart, and the relationship was strongly opposed by Shivani's family.

B) Incident Summary

Shivani and Ankit were in a relationship for nearly one and a half years and wanted to get married. After learning about the relationship, Shivani's family restricted her movement and allegedly assaulted her.

On the night of the incident, her **parents, brother, and cousin** allegedly killed Shivani by strangulation. The body was then burnt near the Yamuna river, and the ashes were immersed in the river to destroy evidence.

Ankit approached the police the next morning, which led to the arrest of Shivani's parents. Her brother and cousin remain absconding.

C) Analysis of the Case (Key Points)

- The relationship involved **caste differences**, which became a major factor in family opposition.
- The murder followed a typical pattern of **honour-based violence**, where families perceive a daughter's choice as a threat to family reputation.
- The deliberate burning of the body and immersion of ashes indicates an attempt to **destroy evidence**.
- Prior restrictions and violence by the family suggest **premeditation** rather than a spontaneous act.
- The lover, Ankit, expressed fear for his own life, highlighting continuing risks in such cases.

D) Conclusion

Shivani's killing reflects a classic and extreme form of honour-based violence driven by caste prejudice, social pressure, and family control. The case demonstrates how families may go to the extent of murder to prevent inter-caste relationships. With the parents arrested and other accused still absconding, the legal process continues, but the case underscores the urgent need for community awareness, protection mechanisms, and legal accountability.