

Can we bring up kids telling them not to fall in love with someone from another caste?

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- Round Table India

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*In the **Swathi murder case**, as mainstream media increasingly plays the role of judge and jury, while evidence gathering, judgement based on facts and adherence to the rule of law takes a back seat, it does immense disservice to the victim's rights as well as the accused's rights. In the process, it also reveals the reinforcement of status quo in caste and patriarchal relationships between people. Radhika examines the socializing processes explicit in the responses to the murder of Swathi and critiques the demands to follow caste supremacist behaviour in gender relations at various levels – individual, family, celebrities, institutions and media. ~ Round Table India*

What is the centrality of the multiple advice being given to non-brahmeans in the Swathi murder case? Are the arguments placed by commentators, celebrities included, aimed at abolishing lack of egalitarianism in society or is it to systematize inequality?

If it is not to systematize inequality, then why is it an acceptable argument to build gender parity questions when inherent casteism of the girl's family is not questioned; which incidentally, could be a murder motive too.

The advice thus far given to non-brahmean males are: 1. don't pursue (stalk) women. This, when we do not have evidence that the murdered girl was stalked or there was a relationship interest. 2. "accept no," from women. Accept no at any point in a relationship or out of it, not because we know it is the choice of women, but because there could also have been an unspoken social limitation in the manner of "you are not of my caste," rejection, which can also create violence not to be mixed up as a case of gender violence, which would be an attempt at simplicity and deliberate ignorance and diversion. Unless addressed, there can be no safeguard against this type of violence in a modern society. After all, can we bring up our kids telling them not to fall in love with (someone from) another caste? We are not sure if such advice was given to the murdered girl, but calls for a probe.

Is it fair in these debates to leave unaddressed the creation of a terribly constricted social environment where a healthy mingling of both sexes is prevented through casteism? Why haven't these become debatable points?

Also there is this advice to parents to bring up children "properly so that other Ramkumars are not created." How was the conclusion drawn immediately that the implicated Ramkumar has not been brought up properly? The case is in court and is inconclusive. How was it arrived at that Ramkumar is the guilty one? On the other hand, why is there no question on whether the murdered girl was brought up properly to face society? Was she casteist? Has the girl's conduct been probed? And there is the question of whether it is possible to ensure healthy respect, just because a person is from the opposite sex, despite their in your face casteism? There simply could be other motives too but were sought to be concealed by the family of the victim.

And then, why was there not a single piece of advice given to brahmeans?

Why didn't anyone tell them to tune themselves to be egalitarian in society and reflect the same in their interactions in society; to work towards prevention of rising crimes triggered by restricting social spaces and opportunities?

Following the context of Swathi's murder being put out by police, taken at its face value, which I disagree with, but almost every adviser appears to agree, shouldn't advice have gone out also to fathers on how to bring up daughters with a healthy outlook upon society and fellow beings? And to families to accept and engage with a daughter's choice?

According to the police report, the girl called her murderer names. Then why are the advisors silent on this behaviour of the girl while they accept other aspects of the police report? Is it acceptable for a girl to berate? Shouldn't there have been advice given on acceptable social behaviour and healthy engagement with humanity and members of the opposite sex in particular. Saying no is acceptable. Is it acceptable behaviour to berate another person? Was there a casteist / racial sting? Why aren't these issues engaged with?

Why is no question being asked whether a 21st century family is bringing up their children with a restricted view of marrying only into their castes, if we take the police report at face value? How many brahmeans have married out of caste? Was this a reason for the murder? Haven't we berated Vanniyar and Thevar castes for casteist behaviour? Why are Iyers and Iyengars exempt from being berated for the same? Finally, what is meant by proper upbringing? Is it about teaching children about honouring caste limits in society? Teaching children choice limits, especially when life is all about exploration and brahmean children are taught that there are no limits at all for them. For example, in India which caste is taught to accept rejection and which caste teaches their child that their choice is limitless? Which caste teaches black is beneath? Which caste teaches that one caste merits to carry itself singularly as beautiful while deliberately berating others and their good looks? Which caste teaches that BE degree and software industry is good and worthy and farming is bad and farmlands and livestock maintenance are useless? What is the established pattern here?

In seeking to advise only a particular section of society, isn't the celebrity society irresponsibly arguing to reinforce casteism?

Is it not fair then to tell brahmeans to confine their lives to an exclusion, an agrahara for all their needs if their fear of "society" is so high? Why do they go out into the society? And after going out why do they expect a society to limit itself and be decent in dealing with them, while they are limitless, shameless and indecent to everyone?

So, what are these advices if not arguments supporting perpetuation of brahmeanism in other words.

And finally a piece of advice to award winning columnist Gnani Sankaran (on social media) who wanted Ramkumar's to not be produced in society hereafter. Well, Gnani should realize that if not for Swathi, Ramkumar wouldn't have happened at all.

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