

CRIME & CITY**Sex, murder, wives****M BHASKAR SAI**

Chennai, June 20:

The two shocking pieces of crime ? husbands killed by their wives to continue with their illicit affairs ? have shocked the conservative Chennai out of its slumber as the cloak of prudery has been ripped apart with dramatic and disturbing force.

The shock here is on two counts: The first one is the cultural one, a sense of disbelief as what is happening to the the good old tradition that the city prides itself on. And the second is psychological, due to extreme kinkiness in the crime and that too women being behind the brutality.

In the first incident that took place amidst the cool quietude of Munnar on Sunday, a Chennai-based newly married man, who had been there for honeymoon, was killed by his new wife and her paramour. The wife had tipped her illicit suitor about their tour programme, and the man too obligingly arrived to violently bump off the unsuspecting husband, in order to lead an 'uninterrupted life of love and bliss'.

In the second in Madhavaram yesterday, a lawyer's wife heartlessly killed him to pursue her affair with his nephew. The woman, who first gave sleeping pills to him, later attacked him with an iron rod.

In both the cases, the wives initially told the police that their respective husbands could have been killed for jewels and money. Only after repeated interrogation and investigation could the police zero in on the real motive and the criminals.

But the two incidents do not seem isolated. It points to a new trend, and also women, long romanticised and almost deified in the local context, may not be as docile as was made out. Gender quality has arrived pretty fast into the portals of crime and kink.

Noted sexologist and psychotherapist Dr D Narayana Reddy says, 'apart from sex, one should see this as a mental imbalance, as there should definitely be a reason that had provoked the wives to take such a decision. Either it could be the torture of the husband, motivation of the paramour or some unavoidable family problems. Persons who are forced to kill their husbands cannot be mentally equilibrated persons. They are certainly abnormal.'

Many others says it is not love that drives them blind. 'True love will never hurt anyone,' says R Ramakrishnan, a sociologist. 'For love to end in brutal murders is paradoxical'.

But are there any other 'abetting' reason? Yes, says city-based psychologist and sociologist C R Celin. 'Other than motivational factors, our films and TV serials play a major role in changing the attitude of women. Most of our television soaps are based on illicit affairs only. Also, there can be other factors like sex.' Her point is if you bring in promiscuous women to your house through TV, she will soon show up in reality too.

But filmmakers don't buy this idea of 'morally corrupting' the masses.

Susi Ganesan, director of the movie '*Thiruttu Payale*', which was based on the storyline of a wife having an affair with a friend of her husband, says, 'I have taken the knot of the story from the day to day real life stories which appears regularly in news papers. Nothing is my imagination and just a reflection of the happenings of the society.' He says reel reflects the real, and not the other way round.

Maybe. Or may not be. True, most wives still are truthful and caring, and the two incidents of the week may not reflect a larger trend.

Yet, deep down, most agree that women of today are made of different mettle. As a wise man said in a Tamil movie several decades ago, kolaiyum seival pathini. Indeed.

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