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Family exonerated of dowry death charges

By: [Manthan Mehta](#)
September 23, 2003Yogesh Patani and
Nemichand Patani

The Session's Court exonerated four members of a Ghatkopar-based family from the charges of a dowry death.

However, the court pulled up the Pant Nagar police for fabricating evidence against the accused in the case. It has asked the Mumbai police commissioner to inquire how a case of accidental death was converted into a case of murder by the cops.

As per details, Yogesh Patani, a businessman from Ghatkopar married Sarika Kasliwal, a resident of Aurangabad on Jan 16, 2003.

Yogesh used to stay with his father Nemichand, mother Ashalata and his older brother Mukesh. Yogesh had another flat on the ground floor in the same locality.

As his wife was pregnant, the couple decided to stay on the ground floor for a few days. On March 14, 2002, Sarika was preparing snacks on the gas-stove. None of the family members were present in the flat at the time.

However, while trying to light the stove, the matchstick fell on Sarika's nylon saree, which caught fire. Sarika suffered from 95 per cent burns and was admitted to Rajawadi hospital. She made a dying declaration in front of a constable, that none of her husbands' family was to be blamed for the accident.

However, Sarika's brother Sanjay filed a First Information Report (FIR) stating that Sarika's death was due to dowry demands.

He also produced a taped conversation to prove that the accused had demanded Rs 3 lakh as dowry. However, the taped conversation did not have any reference to the money.

The police have been accused of providing false evidence. The Panchnama record stated that the police had recovered a kerosene can and a matchstick. However, the photographs taken by the police on the same day did not reveal anything.

The police had also initially disputed the dying-declaration. However, during the course of the argument, the defense lawyer was able to extract a statement from the police, which said that Sarika had exonerated the family before her death. Advocate JJ Bhanushali and Karan Mehta fought the case for the Patanis.

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