

Three-minute Ph.D.

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Romance tragedy of '*Romeo and Juliet Style*', happening in the world today and mythological. A study in Qualitative Research with special focus on India.



Every culture has its stories. From New Zealand, the Maori '*Romeo and Juliet*' legend of Hinemoa has a happy ending. Her chieftain father accepted her elopement and she and Tutanekai lived happily ever.

The Hindustani '*Romeo and Juliet*' legends, compelling as they are, all end in tragedy.

My wondering about honour killings of romantic couples in India started in the mid-90s when I heard of a man who hanged

his son in public, in front of the village temple with a crowd of onlookers, because of an illicit romance.

I also saw a BBC documentary of a Hindu man who with his wife, for 10 years tried to prevent their daughter marrying a Muslim. They eventually gave in. His final words were, *'we will not see them again but we will not become violent.'*

This study of the *'Romeo and Juliet'* phenomenon is about progress, often demanding legal backing. It is about young people challenging religious and social tradition, and being willing to die rather than surrender their love. Do murder and suicide need to continue? Is nonviolence a satisfactory endpoint?

There are many bizarre twists in the present day stories from India. The slide in front of you is of Naveen and Sonam. Finding themselves in a 'kill or be killed' situation, they chose the former and poisoned the food Sonam was preparing for the family.

In India, the tension between federal laws and village decrees is increasing. In 2011 the first capital punishment judgments against those involved with killings of eloping couples were handed down by the Indian High Court. This gives us a scenario where village councils have been using death sentences to deter the young from inappropriate liaisons, contrasted with, the federal government of India approving death sentences as a deterrent against the perpetrators.

So what is progress?

There are marital taboos in every culture.

Romance is compulsive. Eros will continue to be mischievous and shoot his darts across cultures and social standings.

Human rights are allowed or withheld by the society or family within which a person lives.

What are the goals?

Nonviolence is the first acceptable end point in a globalising world, and appropriate law and order is imperative.

Family estrangement remains a legal option.

Reconciliation is good and can happen at any time.

Acceptance which may involve renouncing of previously held convictions is very good.

Welcome and celebration is ideal.

Meanwhile, as is happening in India for the first time in 2011, safehouses are needed for eloping lovers who have nowhere to go.

FINAL WORD

In his prologue to 'Romeo and Juliet', Shakespeare says, in the

'two hour traffic of our stage ...

What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend'

This is the mandate that Shakespeare give us.

The starcrossed lovers die, but the concluding scene shows Montague and Capulet shaking hands and vowing honouring of the dead, and good relations in the future.

Our responsibility. Spread the word.

Key Words

Every culture has its legends.

Hindustani legends

Mid 90's

BBC documentary

Progress - challenge

Naveen and Sonam

Capital punishments

Progress

Taboos

Eros

Human rights allowed

Goals

Non-violence

Family estrangement

Reconciliation

Acceptance

Welcome

Safe houses

Shakespeare's mandate

Spread the word