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The Presentations of High Profile Society Crimes in Indian Films,  
*'Jolly LLB', 'No one killed Jessica' and 'Talwar' :A Critique*



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**Abstract :**

*Issues involving the crimes by high profile society have been at the center of print and visual media in India along with its wide publicity in social media. However, various aspects on these issues need to be addressed and these views are focused in the films, where directors use vast canvas to present their point of view. These three films 'Jolly LLB', 'No one killed Jessica' and 'Talwar', are few examples where the failure of the judiciary is brought to the forefront by the hands of most influential people as police, politicians, industrialists and legal system itself. This paper is aimed at giving the short account of the wrong turns taken by the system itself and the negligence of justice at the cost of common man.*

**Keywords :** *film, crimes, justice, systems, law*

## Research Paper :

A film, movies or cinema are words used synonymously for the same for practical purpose in India. The prime purpose of films remains to entertain a larger audience, which represents almost all strata of society. Similarly, films also serve the purpose of artistic and educational appeal. The film may invoke social awareness, consciousness, commentary and social change. A good film connects with the audience and along with entertainment, may provide the grounds for the motivation and inspiration. Carefully crafted film also holds the capacity to transfer the social, political, economic structures as well can part the change in the policy and activation of communities around the key social issues. The change is brought by the films in the perception of certain issues when they are brought in the different perspectives. The films hold the power to add new dimensions to the popularity conceived stories.

Indian films, beginning with '*Raja Harishchandra*' (1913), remained one of the most powerful medium of mass communication. It reflects the past and present society. The films have point of view. It has to say something about the key issue, which it deals with. It provides the interpretation and commentary regarding these issues. The film is an attempt to make a sense out of what it presents on the screen- expression, impression.

Film is also the part or parcel of mass media, which include print and visual media. Newspapers, magazines, television and social media provide a tremendous space for all kind of social interactions. However, films have special space in the minds of people. Beside all the factual presentations of the current issues and events taking place around us today are instantly brought to the people through the all available spaces, films are produced about the current issues and the filmmakers have the enough time and space to present their point of view.

This paper is the study of three films namely *No One Killed Jessica* (2011), *Jolly LLB* (2013) and *Talwar* (2015). All these movies are based on events taken place in the nation capital of India, New Delhi. However, these events got a lot of coverage on television channels and given importance in the print media. These cases were also important as it involved the high profile people as main culprits. They remained at the center of attention during their investigations and trials. The producers and directors did not choose these events simply because everybody knew them but rather it provided the opportunity to show and present the failure of our systems at the hands of inefficient people who run the judiciary systems. In addition, they question the role of media in projecting any sensitive issue and making them sensational for sheer popularity. These

films also expose the inability of the investigating agencies to go to the root of the issues and their failures to bring justice to the victims and punish the culprits.

"*No One Killed Jessica*" is film directed by Rajkumar Gupta, based on the true story of Jessica Lal murder case. In 1999, Jessica Lal, model and restaurant worker in Delhi was shot dead by Shiddharth Vashistha alias Manu Sharma on her refusal to serve drink after the bar was closed. Manu Sharma was the son of wealthy and influential politician Venod Sharma from neighboring state Haryana. Venod Sharma was a close aide of then Haryana Chief Minister Bhupindar Singh Hooda. The investigations and trials were influenced by the political, financial and law enforcement connections of Sharma family. Majority of witnesses were bribed and evidences were manipulated. Jessica's sister Sabrina and her family fought their lone battle against all the forces acting against law. The court of the law let the culprit walk free in the absence of witnesses and evidences. This created many protests from society, the case was re-opened and re-investigated, and Manu Sharma was given life imprisonment in 2006. The film has a very strong cast by Rani Mukherji (Jessica) and Vidya Balan (Sabrina).

The film provides the very emotional trauma felt by the family of Jessica Lal and the corrupt and porous law and enforcement departments. The film also highlights the political leader's influence in every field and what financial powers at their hands can do. The focus is given on how the media coverage spreads the awareness about the judiciary system's invalidity and sparks a nationwide outrage and protest. The title of the film is the frustration stating that the law is unable to prove that nobody has killed Jessica Lal as the culprit is released without being held guilty.

Another film for the discussion is '*Jolly LLB*', released in 2013, written and directed by Subhash Kapoor. The story narrates the case trial based on 1999 hit-and-run case of Sanjeev Nanda, son of industrialist Suresh Nanda. Sanjeev Nanda, returning from late night party ran over six people driving his brand new BMW. He did not stop and ran from the incident and tried to hide all the evidences. He was later traced and tried in the court. Again, with the financial power he managed to escape from the clutches of law and released without any punishment. NDTV, a leading news channel did a sting operation showing the bribe money being paid to senior advocates to make the case loose. The case was re-tried and Sanjeev Nanda was given punishment and huge fine.

The film portrays Jagdish Tyagi (Arshad Warsi), as a young aspirant lawyer who meets very prominent criminal Lawyer Tejinder Rajpal (Bomman Irani) in the session's court in Delhi, who

is defending the case regarding the charges of hit-and-run. In the pursuit of money Jagdish Tyagi files a PIL against the acquittal of accused of hit-run case Rahul Dewan. The trial begins in the court of Justice Tripathi (Sourabh Shukla). After the very long battle and many intrigues, the case ends with Rahul Dewan declared guilty and imposed with seven years jail.

The film is journey deep into the judiciary system's corruption, very high profile lawyers of Delhi, who charge huge amounts in defending their clients, and use the money to all the possible and impossible extents to manipulate the cases. On the other hand, it is also the story of the victory of a common man, represented by a young lawyer who dares to fight the just battle to bring justice to the people who are neglected by police and law. The film is anger against the system easily manipulated by the rich, wealthy; and inaccessible to the poor.

The final film for the study is 2015 film written by Vishal Bhardwaj and directed by Meghna Guljar, '*Talvar*'. It is based on 2008 double murder case of Noida, involving the murder of 14-year-old Arushi Talwar, the only daughter of doctor couple Rajesh and Nupur Talwar and their domestic help Hemraj. The investigation of the case started and ended with the parents of Arushi as the prime suspects of the murder. Police developed various theories to prove their doubts. Finally, the investigation was handed over to CBI. After many controversies, the investigating team from CBI was transferred and the new team in its closure report in 2010 named Rajesh Talwar as the sole suspect. However, the court initiated the proceedings against Talvars and convicted them based on circumstantial evidences in 2013. They are in prison and waiting for the hearing of their appeal in the higher court.

The film has powerful star cast as Irfan Khan, KonkanaSen and Tabu. Unlike the previous two films, this film provides the inefficiency to system to find out the culprits and the eagerness to convict parents without proper investigation and evidences or witnesses. In previous two cases, media played a very positive and constructive role in building social awareness against injustice. In this case media played its influence deciding the parents as the guilty of the crime they might not have committed. The film is the critique of media for its cheapness and blazed publicity enabling the public to judge the accused much before the judiciary system. The flaws in the judiciary system and people running these systems with their prejudices and limitations are also the focus of this film.

These three films clearly show the system, we expect and believe to be free of influences and corruptions, are almost broken by powerful people and their nexus with each other. Industrialists,

Police, CBI, Politicians and even people from the judiciary are vulnerable to corruption and together they manipulate the rights of common man. These films address the issues, which remained at the center of nationwide public mindset for a long time. The people of country read and watched news and reports about these incidents for a very long time. Still lot of space remained vacant from the events to the final verdicts by the courts of law.

These films are primarily explorative in nature rather than dramatization of the events. They are based on the anger of public about the failure of our systems. We Indians still believe in the solidarity of our judicial system and hope to get justice when victimized. However, we are sad to know when judiciary becomes a mechanism and acts only for selective people in selective way. It becomes a matter of fun and hypocrisy to undergo only formed procedure laid down by the laws of this land and ignore it wherever necessary. The system becomes mute in '*No One Killed Jessica*', as culprit remains intact in spite of the fore knowledge that he has committed the crime. The limitations of the judiciary become obstacles in the process of equality for justice. Judiciary becomes matter of fun in '*Jolly LLB*' when the financial power lures almost everyone including the solicitors, police, and even the justice. '*Talwar*' represents the biased media and prejudiced judiciary presumes the convicts to be guilty and forces them towards punishment even when evidences and witnesses are not in the proper position to do so.

Thus, these films promote the issue of inability of our systems to be impartial, free from corruption and influences. It is the representation of using the vast canvas of the popular Indian film industry to portray the various unknown and unattributed faces of the much discussed, debated and narrated criminal cases taken places in last decades. These films have made a lot of impact in understanding the procedures of the system of judiciary and various other agencies and individuals pertaining to those events.

### **References :**

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