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RETURN OF THE FEMME FATALE

There Is A Shift In Involvement Of Women From Being A Forced Accomplice To The Brain Behind Major Crimes

Sudha Nambudiri | TN

ROGUE GALLERY

Saritha Nair, who even used the chief minister's office as a tool to swindle the victims of the sensational solar panel scam. Over 30 cases are pending in her name.

Shalu Menon, the actress and dancer, who had been surviving in the entertainment industry with small roles in TV serials for over a decade found herself in the lime light after her alleged involvement in the sensational solar scam case.

Sobha John, holds the record for

being the first woman to be detained under goonda prevention act (KAAPA) by the police. In 2013, after getting out on bail in the Varapuzha sex scandal case, she was involved in an attempt to murder case in December and was arrested in May this year.

Sachu, a Thiruvananthapuram resident, became the first woman moneylender against whom KAAPA was invoked. The city police issued an external order against her, banning her from entering the city

for the next one year, after complaints against her piled up before the police.

Maimuna, wife of NRI business man Abdul Kareem, from Mukkom was arrested by Kozhikode police on charges of instigating her sons to murder Kareem (June, 2014)

Kavitha G Pillai from Ernakulam was arrested for cheating ₹7 lakh from a Mannarkadu native offering MBBS seat for his daughter at Anjarakkandy Medical College, Kannur (November, 2013)

Surabhi Krishna from Kozhikode

was arrested by Cheyvoor police for cheating over ₹35 lakh from over ten persons offering them jobs at the Indian Institute of Spices Research. She had also forged letter heads, emblem and signature of the director (August, 2013)

Lakshmi Varma alias Geetha, a Kanyakumari based woman had extorted over ₹70 lakh from residents of Kozhikode assuring them 10-12% for their investment. She had claimed that she belonged to Travancore royal family and was running multi-crore garment

business (April, 2013)

Hirosama, a flight attendant with Air India Express, and her friend **Rahila Cheerayi** were arrested by directorate of revenue intelligence from Karipur airport on Friday for smuggling gold valued at ₹12 crore (November, 2013)

Mahija Rethnam, P Khadeeja and P T Shareefa were arrested by Kozhikode city and rural police for engaging in illegal money lending during Operation Kubera.

Sini and Shyla Varghese, were

arrested by Kochi police for impersonating as police officers and trying to cheat a jewellery shop owner of ornaments worth ₹2.5 lakhs (June, 2014)

Kochi police arrested one **Nancy** and her husband Nasser for running a sex racket under the garb of beauty parlour in Kochi. (June, 2014)

Two women, **Soorya** alias Bindya from Alappuzha and **Ruksana B Das** from Chertala were arrested by Kochi police for blackmailing NRIs using their nude photos to extort money (July 2014)

Instances of women playing a major role in crimes are on the rise. There may not be statistics to substantiate this assumption, but Saritha S Nair or lesser known Kavita Pillai are not the only incidents of women becoming one of the main accused in crimes that have often jolted the society for either its innovative method or its brutality.

Though experts are not ready to term it as a new trend, investigating officials have started to look at the Eve's role in crimes. "If one were to look at the crime data, 2-3% of the criminals were women. In cases of girl trafficking, the operators definitely have been women," said ADGP B Sandhya.

There is no doubt that the types of crimes that are being committed by women have also become varied.

Take the case of the two women who were arrested in Kochi recently on charges of blackmailing NRIs using their nude pictures captured using hidden cameras. The presence of the male accomplice was secondary in this case.

"When women commit crimes, they plan it precisely, especially, if they have a personality problem, manic or psychotic," said Dr Shailaja Ramkumar, psychiatrist, Westfort Hospital, Thrissur. "Since the society has put several controls on women, when they break out of those restrictions, they operate in such a way that all loopholes are plugged. Very often such women have no regrets too," she said.

According to the psychiatrist the frontal lobe of the brain is strong in women.

"That's why they are successful in multi-tasking. This is part of the brain that regulates decision making, problem solving, control of purposeful behaviours and emotions. Add to it a hormonal change during a pre-menstrual cycle and you have a killer combination," she added.

Most such women don't have any regrets about what they had done, Dr Shailaja said. "Given a chance, they would go out and commit the crime again."

"The women who commit crimes have a personality trait. It must be that they have seen or been part of a crime in past, or victims out on vengeance," said Celine Sunny, research head of women study centre, Raja-giri College of Social Sciences. "Suppressed criminal tendency come out when they start thinking of committing a crime. They will also not be scared. Men commit crimes on impulse. Women plan it well and successfully commit it," she said.

Meanwhile, criminologist James Vadakumchery said internet had increased the nature of crimes involving women. "Women are good at soft skills. So in the internet era, they do very well. Initially, when police dogs were not part of the investigation, women were never caught, because nobody suspected them. Even now, the first suspect is always the male and the investigators first looks at the male involvement," he said. He added that even if the man played the active leading role in a crime, often the woman, if involved, would be the brain behind the planning of the nitty-gritties and smaller things.



Illustration: Gireesh

CHANGE IN NUMBER OF CRIMES OVER THE YEARS

| | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Kerala | 1,72,137 | 1,58,989 | 1,76,334 |
| Kannur | 2,389 | 2,707 | 2,024 |
| Kochi | 34,658 | 17,324 | 13,476 |
| Kollam | 6,440 | 7,074 | 7,769 |
| Kozhikode | 4,026 | 4,156 | 3,959 |
| Malappuram | 2,429 | 2,091 | 2,132 |
| T'puram | 6,670 | 7,253 | 10,135 |
| Thrissur | 4,864 | 6,231 | 6,477 |

CRIME STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 2013

| | Crimes reported | % contribution to all-India total | Crime rate |
|--------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Kerala | 4,06,848 | 10.2 | 1158.7 |
| TN | 4,93,099 | 12.4 | 720.9 |
| UP | 19,16,743 | 48.0 | 917.5 |

According to NCRB data, an average five cases of crime against children were reported daily in the state during 2013. As many as 637 cases of child rape were reported in the state in 2013, against 455 cases in 2012

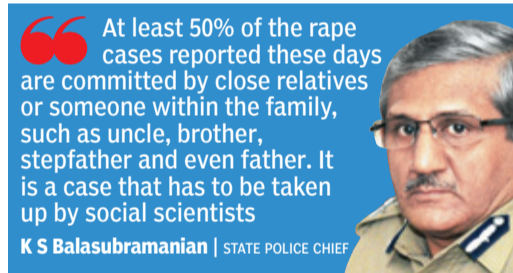
CRIME RATE IN STATE IS THE HIGHEST

Rejith Balakrishnan | TN

Thiruvananthapuram: There used to be a time when the state made headlines for the achievements in social development that were comparable to that of many developed countries, despite having a low per capita income. However, in recent times, the state has achieved notoriety with its growing crime rate.

As per the latest statistics published by national crime records bureau, Kerala is the third biggest contributor of the total crimes registered in the country last year. The state contributes 10.2% of total crimes recorded, falling behind only to Uttar Pradesh (48%) and Tamil Nadu (12.4%).

Though compared to the other two states, the contribution of Kerala is very low, what can be a worry to the law enforcers here is the state's crime rate. The crime rate of the state is 1158.7. This means for every one lakh people, roughly around 1,159 criminal cases are reported. This puts the state with the highest crime rate in the country.



K S Balasubramanian | STATE POLICE CHIEF

Though Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu recorded more number of crimes, the crime rates there are low as their population is high. The crime rate in UP and Tamil Nadu for the year 2013 is 917.5 and 720.9 respectively.

But, state police chief K S Balasubramanian said that it was unfair to compare the situation in the state with that of UP and Tamil Nadu using these figures. "Even the smallest cases get recorded and an FIR is filed in the state. The situation is different in other states," he said.

"Even last week, I was having a discussion with the officials who are involved in implementation of crime and criminal tracking network systems. They said in most other states, FIRs are not registered in cases of unnatural deaths and suicides and hence they did not get included in the crime and criminal tracking network & systems data. But I do not support this and asked our officers to include the data of every small case in the network system," Balasubramanian said.

A detailed look into the crime figures of the state shows that Kollam is the most dangerous district in the state, with a total number of 64 rapes and 16 murders.

The DGP said that majority of the rape cases reported in the state are characteristically different from those reported in north Indian states. Most rapes reported here are actually sexually exploitations over fake promises of marriages, which later turn into rape cases. "Having said so, there is an alarming rise in the number rape cases of late. At least 50% of the rape cases reported these days are committed by close relatives or someone within the family, such as uncle, brother, stepfather and even father. It is a case that has to be taken up by social scientists," the DGP said.

Children are not safe here

Gireesh P Krishnan | TN

Kochi: The state is ranked ninth in the country when it comes to crime against children. According to the data published by national crime records bureau (NCRB), on an average five cases of crime against children were reported daily in the state during 2013. As many as 637 cases of child rape were reported in the state in 2013, against 455 cases in 2012.

The state registered 41% in the crimes against children as such cases went up from 1,324 in 2012 to 1,877 in 2013. When it comes to the crimes against children, Thiruvananthapuram topped with 90 cases and followed by Kozhikode (73), Kollam (72), Kochi (71), Thrissur (49) and Malappuram (25).

"This is either because of the increase in reporting of such cases or police have to register cases in all the child abuse cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Of-

fences Act, said Meena Kuruvila, member, State Child Rights Commission. "Such cases can be prevented by making elders as well as children aware of the Act," she said.

Kollam topped the list in the number of child rape cases in the state with 38 cases, followed by Thiruvananthapuram (38), Kochi (22), Thrissur (16) Kozhikode (12) and Malappuram (9). The state also witnessed murder of 40 persons aged below 18 years in 2013 against 34 such cases the previous year.

According to the data, 2,627 cases related to crime against children, including those from the previous year, were under investigation during 2013. During probe the police found that in 18 cases the charges were false or mistaken. While final reports were filed in 39 cases, charge sheets were submitted in 1,421 cases of crime against children last year. At the end of the year, investigation was pending in 1,147 cases.

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CINEMA OF THE WEEK

Vegam (Thriller) ★★
Cast: Vineeth Kumar, Jacob Gregory
Direction: Anilkumar K G
Duration: 2 hours
Language: Malayalam
58888 code: veg

Two youths end up in a situation where they are forced to commit a theft and what happens next is a mad scramble for their lives and for the money they love to have.

Getting to like the film 'Vegam' is like stepping into marriage. There is a flurry of forewarnings about the hidden dangers, about the yawn-filled routines involved in marriage, still people get married failing to resist the rare charms marriage holds for them. Once such gems are discovered, the flaws are ignored and the banality is borne with the patience of a saint.

Vegam comes across a low-key film with a hero, who is yet to build an identity, with a supporting cast who do not flourish in a dazzling acting prowess. It brings together money, virtues, desperation of youth and spontaneous decisions which turn the course of life. Not something new, especially when the money gets packed in a bag and helpless youth find themselves scrambling after the bag. The showcase pieces of villains with huge tummies, twirled moustaches play together.

It is hard to write off Vegam as a brainless repetition of clichés for it does engage the viewer. However it happens not with a gripping consistency but certainly like the occasional, surprise breeze that brushes past our faces on a sultry day at the beach. Vineeth Kumar and Gregory get together to play the trapped youth dreaming of richness with a vigour that is sometimes really absorbing.

Director Anilkumar works within his limits often affording a few scenes that fall way too short of professional filmmaking. Still he manages to grab the attention with a story that is pretty decently told. Vegam may not make for a blockbuster thriller; however it won't leave you hopelessly disappointed, if you really nurture a heart for films.

— Aswin J Kumar

Munna Mange Memsaab (Drama/Comedy) ★1/2
Cast: Omkar Das Manikpuri, Jordiya Anna
Direction: Shareeph Mansuri
Duration: 2 hours 7 minutes
Language: Hindi (U/A)
58888 code: mun

The title pretty much sums it up. A simpleton runs from pillar to post seeking a gori mem to be his bride.

Naïve and jobless, Munna (Peepi Live's Omkar Das Manikpuri), a small-town guy, gets mocked for being ugly, right from his childhood. His mother consoles him by leading him on to believe that he is 'sundar' (good-looking). She also tells him that one day he'll marry a pretty 'mamsaab' (by pointing to a poster of Rani Mukerji).

However, the very next minute, she explains her interpretation of 'mamsaab' by showing her son another gori mem (tourist) passing by. "Someone like her," she says. He says, "Main aisi hi mamsaab se saadi karunga."

Munna grows up but continues to nurture his dream of getting married to a gori mem, just to make his mother happy. He leaves his village and lands up in a city to fulfil his dream. With great audacity, he proposes marriage to random urban women but his requests get turned down. However, there is light at the end of every tunnel. He eventually bumps into a Katrina

Kaif-like *firang memsaab*. Do they fall in love?

Ample Hindi films with a similar concept have been made before and they were much better if not remarkable. For instance, Govinda-Aishwarya Rai starrer *Albela* (2001) was a light-hearted romcom that made us smile.

While the intentions are noble here, tacky execution spoils everything. Forced humour fails to amuse and funny sounds used as background score do not compensate for the poor script. The point that the director intends to make does not come across either. His attempt at exposing the shallowness of our society that prefers 'good-looking' people fails to register. Also, performances are forgettable. The gori mem is the best actor here! Songs have no relevance to the story. There is no

'beauty' in this film...literally and otherwise.

—Renuka Vyavahare

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58888 Codes for movies

- Vegam (veg)
- Munna Mange Memsaab (mun)

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READERS' VERDICT

BOBBY JASOOS

READERS' RATING ★★

CRITIC'S RATING ★★1/2

Feisty Vidya cracks Bobby Jasoos!

Vidya steals the show!

- Vidya Balan is a live wire in *Bobby Jasoos*, bubbly and innocent at the same time. The supporting cast is equally endearing—but a detective story needs an intelligent story which is sorely missing here. Still, watch it for the feisty Bobby! | **MANNIK SHARMA**
- Vidya Balan's acting is just so good—she's proved again that she is full-on entertainment, entertainment, entertainment! | **NIRAV PATEL**
- This is a good attempt to make a different movie on the unusual subject of detectives. And Vidya's performance truly stands out. | **PRIYANKA BAGARIA**
- Bobby Jasoos* with Vidya Balan as lead is a very special film! As a detective drama, *Bobby Jasoos* is filled with delights—and a city and heroine that never sleep! |

SACHIN DHONDE

- It's Vidya Balan all the way! It's difficult to imagine anyone else carrying off this role so admirably. But the movie occasionally meanders while the music fails to stir one. | **ASHOK GOSWAMI**
- Vidya Balan has shown different shades of her skill in this movie. It's definitely a must-watch for her superb performance. The story is also quite engaging, especially post-interval. | **AKRITI**
- This film will definitely catch your attention! Vidya Balan has acted superbly! However, the ending was not so good—it could have been more gripping. But all in all, *Bobby Jasoos* is a good film and a must-watch. | **RAJEEV NARAYAN**

The jasoosi wasn't that engaging!

- The movie is quite interesting—but the climax didn't have a much-needed hard impact! | **TANVIRUL HAQUE**
- Bobby Jasoos* holds audience interest till the end but the climax really failed to entertain. | **TEJA PENUMALLI**

RATING SCALE POOR ★ | AVERAGE ★★ | WATCHABLE ★★★ | GOOD ★★★★ | VERY GOOD ★★★★★ | OUTSTANDING ★★★★★