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Book Review: Redhanded 20 Criminal Cases that shook India

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The Book “RedHanded 20 Criminal Cases That Shook India” has been written by Souvik Bhadra and Pingal Khan. It was published by Rupa Publications India Pvt Ltd. The printed price of the book is Rs. 295 but readers can get it at Rs. 271 on Amazon and the number of pages is 217 only readers can easily complete this book in 2-3 days.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Souvik Bhadra and Pingal Khan both completed their law degree from the National University of Judicial Sciences. After graduation, Pingal co-founded a National Law Firm and Souvik is a co-founder partner at Ashlar Law Firm. The authors dedicated the book to their late Professor Durgadas Banerjea and their parents.

ABOUT THE BOOK

It is crystal and clear from the name of the book that it contains 20 criminal cases which shocked the citizens of the country. The introduction of the book begins with a quote from George Bernard Shaw, that criminals are died at the hands of men, not by the hands of the law. The cases are most heinous and brutal. It contains famous and grievous cases of murder, rape, and terrorist attacks, corruption, and monetary scams which grab the media attention also.

Media trials had been done in these cases. Every coin has two sides in some cases media trial made the accused punished by the court but whereas in some cases smeared the victims and the accused. There is a famous quote under criminal law, "Innocent until proven guilty".

ANALYSIS

The book has 20 famous cases which went through media trials also. Every new case starts with some quotations. I am highlighting those cases which I found most heinous and barbaric. It takes hardly 2-3days to complete the reading. The first case is 'The Hetal Parekh murder case'. On 5 March 1990 Hetal Parekh an 18years school-going found dead at her home. There was no direct evidence of the offense and based on circumstantial evidence Dhananjay Chatterjee was found guilty of such a heinous offense. The Supreme Court consider it as the rarest of rare cases and sentenced Dhananjay for capital punishment. He was hanged on 14 August 2004. When he was about to hang he said, "He was innocent and had not committed any offense." This case made me think did justice has been done or was it the media who proved him guilty.

Media is the fourth pillar of democracy that performs its function freely and fearlessly. It plays a massive role in the Priyadarshini Mattoo and Jessica Lal Case to provide justice to the victims. These cases highlighted how a person can misuse his power and easily escape from the sentence. I appreciate the contribution of the media to fight against injustice and politicians. Both cases were different but I am comparing both cases because the two young ambitious girls lost their lives due to the spoiled son of a rich father. Priyadarshini Mattoo was raped and brutally murdered by Santosh Kumar son of a Police officer JP Singh. Jessica was only shot by Manu Sharma because she denied him to serve the alcohol. It takes years to get justice. Media played a most important and impactful role to ensure that the accused won't escape from the punishment.

Other shocking cases are, The Naina Sahni and Nithari Killing case which gets me goosebumps. These cases are examples of the most heinous and inhuman offenses. Sushil Kumar killed his wife Naina Sahni and chopped her body into pieces. The offense was recognized when his servant was disposing of the body parts in the barbeque. The Supreme

Court sentenced him to life imprisonment and said the offense is brutal but the brutality does not justify capital punishment. There is no word to define the cruelty level of the Nithari Killing case. It was the rarest of rare cases and I believed that capital punishment is also not enough to justify with the victims. How can someone be so devil? Killing the number of children and consuming their flesh, he was an animal living in civil society. I won't be able to believe after committing such barbaric and inhuman crime how an accused to appeal for mercy petition.

It needs to be understood why would someone commit such acts? When such crimes take place every person starts criticizing the accused or victims but I don't see anyone who spoke about the reason behind such offenses. The author also describes those cases which reform the existing laws of India, like the Vishaka Case. It was a landmark judgment that set guidelines for sexual harassment at the workplace. Parliament framed the law of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, Redressal) Act in 2013.¹ It took 16 years to form and came into force on 9 December 2013.²

The Parliament attack and 26/11 attack shook the whole country, how such an incident took place at a crowded place in daylight. It raised the question of the security of the country. But I salute all armed forces who risk their lives to protect the public who stuck at The Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, Nariman House, and The Oberoi Trident Hotel on 26 November 2008. In the 90's era, the biggest scam was done by Harsad Mehta who is also known as Big Bull. He took advantage of loopholes in the Indian Banking system. There were various politicians and businessmen also involved. Harstad Mehra made a sentence in front of the media that he bribe the Prime Minister, P.V Narasimha. But he was not able to prove his allegations. After this scam, lots of amendments were done by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Stock Exchange Board of India (SEBI). Later on, in the 2000s there was one scam done by Ketan Parekh. The author titled it "The Return of the Bull".

Except for these cases, the author also described the cases which were highlighted by the media and shook the country. Like- Stamp Paper Scam, Jain Hawala Case, Rajiv Gandhi

¹ Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, Redressal) Act 2013

² *Ibid*

Assassination, Sanjay Dutt, and Charles Sobhraj Cases. The author explained each case in simple and easy language which most famous case of Criminal Law.

CONCLUSION

Books are uniquely portable magic. Reading is a good habit it helps to enhance knowledge and improve vocabulary. I recommend this book to the reader. The language, font size, and price everything is good. Readers either can purchase hardcopy or softcopy from Amazon. It is easily available in the market. After the end of every case, the authors brief the whole case and share their opinions. I liked it most. It makes me analyze whom we should blame for the offenses is the accused or their circumstances or the victims or the government. But it is necessary to reform the law. Today's scenario differs from those when the criminal laws were framed. I loved to read this book.