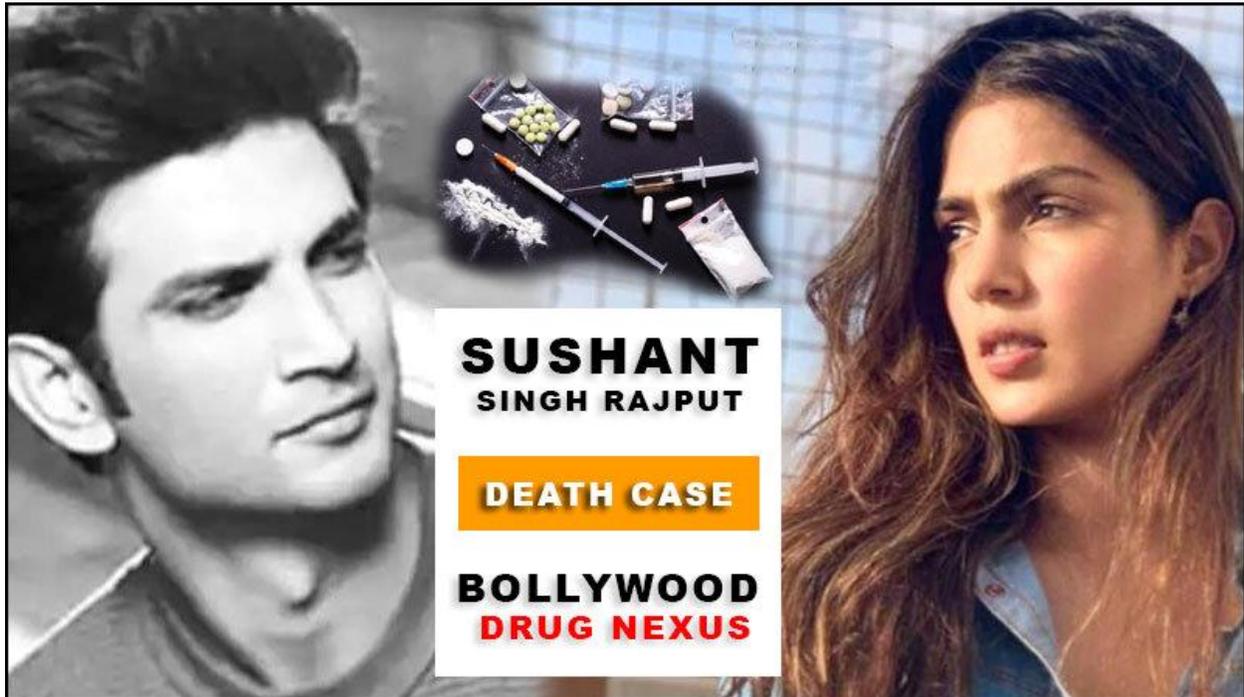


SSR Death: Murky Mystery Getting Muddier

By Dr Neelam Batra-Verm



Revelation of Drug angle in Sushant Singh Rajput's death seems to have opened up a mysterious 'black box' of nexus between 'Bollywood and Drug Cartel'.

With new expose coming every single day – love, conspiracy, depression, suicide, embezzlement, extortion, murder, drugs, rape, trafficking; mafia – police – politician nexus – it certainly is the right material of not one but many Bollywood movies and a couple of novels.

Sushant Singh Rajput's murder has laid open the hideous connection between crime and Bollywood. With the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** taking over the case, many powerful heads are expected to roll as the pawns have already started chirping like canaries.

Tireless campaigning by SSR fans'

It was **actress Kangana Ranaut's** rant on social media about the use of drugs and deliberate sidelining of aspiring and talented small-town actors, which was picked up by SSR fans as a campaign for a probe in the mysterious 'suicide' of SSR.

Kangna Ranaut was one of the first ones to raise issue of nepotism and exploitation after Sushant's death when Mumbai Police theory concluded it as suicide. It was only after

Sushant's young fans and family started calling a foul play in his death that a widespread demand for probe gained ground and led Supreme Court of India direct the case to CBI.

Ever since, a new angle is added every day in the investigation along with a parallel social media trial. Due to leaking of details of the investigation, it is becoming murkier and muddier.

Doubts have been raised by SSR fans over the police theory who were not ready to believe Police as reports of contamination of crime scene, irregularities in the statements given by various people present at the crime scene and the deliberate botching up of evidence – especially the fact that even after the autopsy, his time of death was not determined, highlighted the Mumbai Police's attempts to deliberately shove the death as yet another depression story.

This is the first time in the history of crime in India that the call for justice for anyone has been so loud, clear and focused.

Kangna Ranaut Takes on Politicians

Kangana's bold stance has certainly put her life in danger as she has been threatened not only by the Mumbai Police but also ruling politicians in the Maharashtra government who have asked her to stay away from Mumbai or else.

In a twitter statement she claimed, *@kangna ranaut "If narcotics Control Bureau enters Bollywood, many 'A' listers will be behind bars if blood tests are conducted many shocking revelations will happen. Hope @PMOIndia under swatchh Bharat mission cleanses the gutter called Bollywood,"* tagging even the Prime Minister's office.

She even challenged the likes of Ranveer Singh, Ranbir Kapoor, Ayan Mukerji, Vicky Kaushal to take a blood test and prove her wrong. She claimed that all of them were addicted to cocaine. After being threatened by Sanjay Raut of the Shiv Sena, she tweeted, "I feel I am in PoK and not India."

With a couple of high-profile arrests, it seems now the Narcotics Controls Bureau has made headway in connecting Bollywood with drugs.

Evidence is emerging that Sushant's self-proclaimed **girlfriend Rhea Chakravarty** was secretly feeding drugs bought by her brother Showik and some prescribed by her father, who is supposedly a retired doctor from the Army. Right now, Indians are questioning the authenticity of this doctor's credentials.

Drug Laws in India

Despite rigorous punishments and stringent laws, India today, is one of the highest consumers of drugs in the world. Opium was first introduced to India in the 900 BC when the Arab merchants, who came to India with it to be used as medicine for its analgesic effects, which was misused and people were addicted.

Soon after, when the British came to India, they started cultivating it due to its lucrative value. Time and again, attempts have been made by governments to curtail its misuse.

Finally, in 1985, the **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act** was enacted to fight drug trafficking in the country and criminalizing the cultivation, import and export of these substances.

The Act was amended a few times since, making punishments more stringent, trafficking and possession a non-bailable offence. Possession of Commercial quantities of banned substances can result in 10-20 years of rigorous imprisonment not excluding hefty fines.

While it has always been believed that the drug-addicted age group varies from 18-35 years, surprisingly, in Bollywood, the average age has gone up higher if news reports are to be believed.

Bollywood-Drug-Police Nexus

Ironically, in Bollywood, which has largely been an unregulated industry, some actresses like Pooja Misra and Kangana, have time and again claimed that they were deliberately fed drugs to make them vulnerable to abuse. Pooja Misra is on record to have named Salman Khan and his brothers for deliberately spiking her drinks with drugs, many times.

It is a known fact that no drug mafia can operate on its own without the full support or connivance of the local police and government of the time. Trafficking drugs is an organized crime and cannot function without political clout.

Till some time back, drugs were brought to India via Afghanistan, Pakistan via the Indian Ocean from Dubai. But now, there are reports that drugs are being brought into the country from the US, Thailand, Brazil and North America as well, while the police look the other way.

No wonder, Mumbai Police, well aware of the drug cartel involved in Sushant's murder, and therefore hurriedly tried to brush his death as a suicide and close the case. Just like they did in Disha Salian's death, like Jia Khan or Praveen Babi's death.

While CBI is probing Disha's case due to its links with Sushant's, it is highly unlikely their precedents will ever get justice. Sri Devi's death, which conveniently occurred in Dubai, with her husband as the only eyewitness, remains suspicious until today. It is difficult to believe that a grown woman drowned in a bathtub, no matter how drunk she was. She wasn't swimming in a river!

It cannot be denied that Bollywood-mafia links have been advent since the time the industry came into being. Starting from the days of Karim Lala, a gangster in the forties to Haji Mastan, Vardha Bhai, Dawood Ibrahim, Chotta Rajan or Rajan Nair, all have had their

tentacles in Bollywood. Since Bollywood was an unorganized industry, producers had to depend on funds supplied to them by the mafia to make their films.

In return, filmmakers made films on gangsters, portraying them as Robin hoods or forced them to let their girlfriends play the leading heroines. Way back in the nineties, the fact that members of Bollywood paid the mafia for their protection was common knowledge.

The murder of Gulshan Kumar of Tseries and the attack of Rakesh Roshan in 2001, have all been allegedly connected to the mafia. No wonder, many in Bollywood have not openly come out in support of justice for Sushant, as that would mean, threatening their own lives and making them vulnerable to the angst of the gangsters.

Internet is abuzz with pictures of Bollywood stars like Anil Kapoor with Dawood Ibrahim, Mandakini and Dawood Ibrahim, Monica Bedi and Abu Salem, Mamta Kulkarni and Chota Rajan. Sona was the first Bollywood actress to marry a gangster. Dawood had also had links with the famous Pakistani model Anita Ayub, because of who Dawood killed producer Javed Siddique as he had refused to cast her in a movie. Shahrukh Khan has been seen with Chota Shakeel but also allegedly threatened by Abu Salem.

Then Sanjay Dutt's biopic Sanju, brought out the drug-disease within the industry out in the open and his real-life links with the Dawood gang and riots of 1993 in Mumbai, thus depicting a dirty picture for Bollywood. These are just a few examples of the ever-present nexus.

Recently, a video shared on the social media by an Akali Dal MLA where several Bollywood personalities like Deepika Padukone, Shahid Kapoor, Vicky Kaushal, Ranbir Kapoor, Arjun Kapoor and Malaika Arora along with others, were seen in a drugged state at a party hosted at Karan Johar's residence, is now going viral and confirming that there is some truth to those rumours.

Rapper Hard Kaur had confirmed in an interview that though earlier it was just *ganja* that used to be provided at parties, but these days it is cocaine. "If you don't do coke, you are not cool. Doing drugs has become a show-off factor, as Cocaine is an expensive drug. It is like the gang that stays together, snorts together."

People connected to Bollywood confirm that there can be no party without the presence of drugs. Drugs have always been a way of life and no private party can be underway without the same.

"Drugs are spread out on a table and bingeing starts. A variety of drugs are arranged on a table and wives and girlfriends are all part of the merriment," so said a Bollywood insider.

Which would mean, children of the industry people have grown up watching their mothers and fathers indulging in illegal drugs and learnt early on that to survive in this industry, drugs are unavoidable?

Therefore, it is not difficult to understand Sonam Kapoor's statement, on the issue of nepotism, that attracted hatred among the netizens. "Yes, I am here because of my father Anil Kapoor and I am privileged. That's not an insult, my father has worked very hard to give me all of this. And it is my karma where I'm born and to whom I'm born. I'm proud to be his daughter." So bit it! But she forgets that her father has also been seen hobnobbing with the likes of Dawood.

Decoding SSR Case

Events of the past few days have confirmed that Sushant Singh's murder or suicide (till it is concluded) was a result of him being caught in a dangerous game of drugs, embezzlement, love, conspiracy, NGO and what not.

Maybe he knew too much and was ready to disclose or he refused to be part of this dangerous ring. New revelations in this case are coming up every day. Latest theory trending is that SSR was killed as he had been apprised of exploitation of girls from an NGO, he had started at the behest of the Chakravartys.

Prior to that, the alleged gangster Imtiaz Khatri (videos are circulation online of Khatri piling on in SSR's car and SSR being evidently uncomfortable of his presence), had asked SSR to start an NGO which he refused and then Rhea was planted in his life, who reportedly sweet-talked him to start one. But when he learnt from Disha about the exploitation of girls in that NGO, he threw Rhea out.

No wonder he was scared when he told his sisters that they would kill him too. And the second body along with Sushant's that was transported in the ambulance, is alleged to belong to that young girl belonging to his NGO, as she was allegedly hiding in his house.

SSR murder mystery is too deep and three months on, the case has only unravelled the first layer, which is the drug angle. Sources have recently revealed that many of SSR friends too have either died under mysterious circumstances or just disappeared or in hiding.

Steve Pinto was a friend of Disha and on his Insta page, had been giving hints that she did not slip as claimed by the police. Sources allege that he was killed in an accident after SSR died.

Manmeet Grewal, a TV actor and friend of SSR and Crime Patrol actress Pretksha Mehta, were both found hanging similarly as in the SSR case, no suicide note was left. Jalebi casting director Krish Kapur, with no medical history, suddenly died of brain haemorrhage.

Another friend Anandi Dhawan, who allegedly was working on a dream project with SSR, is nowhere to be found. Undoubtedly, SSR murder is murkier than it is believed.

Yet, his fans patiently wait for justice and want to know every little detail. Other than CBI conducting its investigation, his fans are conducting their own. They certainly hope that this precarious and threatening nexus is broken so no more Sushants, Dishas, Jia Khans or Divya Bharti's are sacrificed at the altar of selfish traffickers in the garb of film making. SSR, a small town bright talented boy, who had achieved his dreams and had many more lined up and working towards it, was a role model for millions of youngsters. That is why the angst of the youth is contagious; blowing up his fan following to a billion from all over the world. And the youth will not rest the case till the truth is revealed. Whodunit?

Dr Neelam Batra-Verma Author 1971: A War Story