

Portrayal of Muslims Characters in the Indian Movies

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Abstract

The basic purpose of this research article is to analyze the hidden message of the Indian movies and the religious conflict therein. Bollywood movies are admired by millions in India and Pakistan and also in the West. Although these films appear to target audience having interest in romantic stories, but actually these productions are multilayered and have underlying meanings. Thus, controversial issues such as the religious conflict between Muslims and Hindus and the international conflict between India and Pakistan are also the subject of Bollywood movies. This study explains the partiality of Indians as they portray Muslims and Pakistanis in their movies as terrorists and negative minded people. This paper argues that using such stereotyped images Indian cinema communicates strong political

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messages to its audience and tends to exacerbate the existing conflicts.

Introduction

Motion pictures are considered the cheapest means of entertainment, cultural projection and socialization. For every audience the film performs a different function and has different meaning. In this age of media conglomerates, media moguls and media hegemony in the formation of mental picture is not merely the creation of our personal experiences, but print and electronic media including movies also contribute in the creation of these mental pictures.¹ The images shown by the movies have certain imprints on the minds of the viewers. Movies are like dreams or fairy tales which take the viewer to different or sometimes, incredible worlds. Movies' contribution in image making is inevitable. As movies develop the image, in the same way they can distort the image. It is a very effective tool of propaganda. This paper aims to study how Indian cinema attempts to influence its audience through the images and propaganda used in the movies.

Historically, India² is known for its flexible characteristic of absorbing the traits of other nations, whether these nations came as invaders or immigrants. The rich history of India, which is spread over thousands of years, is a witness of this mingling of cultures and traditions of various nations. Numerous monuments and

1 Muhammad Imtiaz Shahid, *Mass Communication* (Lahore: The Caravan Press 2003), 348.

2 Republic of India is the seventh largest country by the geographical division, the second most populous country and the largest democracy in the world. India has a coastline of over seven thousand kilometers. It borders Pakistan to the West; China, Nepal, and Bhutan to the North-East; and Bangladesh and Myanmar to the East. Since its independence, India has had sectarian violence and insurgencies in various parts of the country, but has maintained its unity and democracy. It has unresolved territorial disputes with China, which escalated into the brief Sino-India War in 1962; and with Pakistan, which resulted in wars in 1947, 1965, 1971 and in 1999 war in Kargil. In spite of the territorial clashes and dispute of Kashmir, there are cultural and religious clashes as well between India and Pakistan.

prodigious edifices in India have a proof of this combined culture and heritage which these nations share together. This cultural heritage is abundantly reflected in Indian movies. Cinema has also inherited a strong literary tradition. Conventionally, literary traditions in India were oral which were later transcribed. Most of the literary traditions were the reflection from the Holy Scriptures of Hindus like *Vedas*, *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. Since religion is the part of daily routine life of Indians, these traditions have certain significance. Participation in different rituals and religious ceremonies is mandatory part of their life. Thus, along with other cultural inheritance, literary traditions and depiction of religiosity have also found their way into the media.

Indian film industry stands among the largest industries of the world and it produces huge number of films every year. Mumbai is the key place regarding the production of films and the industry is known as Bollywood—an Indian adaptation from Hollywood. Besides Bollywood, there are some other strong and noticeable cinema industries like Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, Malayalam and these industries are actually language based industries which reflect their regional culture and tradition.³

India is the world's largest country in terms of ticket sales; this shows the interest of Indians that they are fond of entertainment and movies. The popularity of Indian films is increasing throughout the world especially in those countries where the large numbers of Indians are dwelling.⁴ In terms of viewership and cultural impact, Bollywood competes with Hollywood as the most influential cinema on the globe. Indian production

3 Lakshmi Srinivas, "The Active Audience: Spectatorship, Social Relations and the Experience of Cinema in India," *Media Culture Society*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (2002), 155-73.

4 Mark Lorenzen, "Go West: The Growth of Bollywood", *Creative Encounters*, Working Paper No. 26 (2009), 16.

companies are acquiring a global outlook by becoming more streamlined, efficient and competitive.

A huge number of Indians are fascinated by Bollywood movies as well as western population is also captivated by them. The viewers also include majority of Pakistanis who are attracted due to the fascinating stories and glamorous characters. In fact, people of Pakistan admire Indian movies and Bollywood stars much more than their own movies produced by Lollywood (local Pakistani cinema) stars. In spite of the religious, cultural and regional conflicts the Indian movies are popular in Pakistan.

Bollywood movies apparently open to us as typical love stories with melodious music and attractive dancing but they are not only restricted to it. The movies also highlight the controversial issues like religious conflict of Hindus and Muslims and also presented in the form of bilateral politics played out between the hostile states of Pakistan and India.

The conflict between India and Pakistan has a long history, embedded in the religious identities of Muslims and Hindus. Muslims who entered South Asia in 7th and 8th centuries managed to preserve their distinct religious identity over the centuries. Although Muslims and Hindus lived in peaceful coexistence for the most part of their common history, under the British imperial rule, the religious differences became the basis for emergence of separate communal identities that finally culminated in the division of subcontinent into the states of India and Pakistan. The communal tension was inherited by the newly created states. After more than 60 years of separation, the conflict has not subsided. There have been four Indo-Pak wars during this period and both states are still at loggerheads. This enmity has an additional dimension within India i.e., allowing religious prejudice against Muslims. Since the Hindus are in an overwhelming majority, Muslims are somewhat marginalized and discriminated. Indian Cinema reflects both these biases i.e. against Pakistan and against Muslims in its movies.

During the initial years after independence, the Indian film industry had many Muslim producers, directors, writers and actors. At that time the discrimination did exist, but was not very visible. However, over the decades, the prejudicial trends have become more pronounced. This trend has also grown because of specific government agenda aimed at achieving political ends from entertainment industry.

Although Indian movies were banned during 1980s and 90s in Pakistan, but now the Pakistani viewers can enjoy them in cinemas as the ban has been lifted to promote friendly relations among the two countries. Therefore, Indian movies have a direct influence upon Pakistani viewers. This influence seems to be a continuation of the Indian foreign policy in 1950-70s to capture Pakistanis with the help of its cultural commodities like films, radio and T.V. Moreover, popularity of Bollywood in other parts of the world has also provided impetus to expand this propaganda abroad.

This study debunks the partiality of Indians as they portray Muslims and Pakistanis in their movies as terrorists and negative minded people all over the world. Apart as not only to profit from the conflict between religious communities, but also to gain viewership at domestic level seems to be the aim of Bollywood.

Muslims Characters in Bollywood Movies

As discussed, Bollywood is the reflection of India's day to day life and thought. The depiction of Muslim characters in Bollywood film from *Nawabs* [Urdu: nobility], *Badshah* [Urdu: king] and aristocrats to rascals, thugs, terrorists, streetmen and hooligans is very gradual and systematic. The alternation of Muslims from philanthropists to terrorists is the reflection of changing perception about Muslims in the Indian society. *Shah Jahan*, *Mumtaz Mahel*, *Anarkali*, *Mughal-e-Azam*, *Mere Mehboob*, *Bahu Begum* and *Chaudwien ka Chand* were the type of movies, which portrayed Muslims as rulers and showed their resplendent

past. The theme of such movies was affirmative in the perspective of Muslims.

It was in the 70s, when the scenario of movies began to change regarding the presentation of Muslims, and they depicted the Muslims as indolent and futile Nabobs,⁵ who squandered their money on prostitutes. The names of some of the movies, which presented Muslims as lethargic and inactive are *Mere Hazoor*, *Pakeezah*, *Umrao Jaan* etc. The movies *Nikah* and *Bazaar* were rich and fertile in content but negative in intent.

The development of Muslims as the characters of underworld was the hallmark of the 70s and 80s movies. Though the Muslim characters remained anonymous, yet the viewer could recognize the appearance as Arab, wearing specific costume, carrying briefcase and puffing cigar. This types of presentation of the Muslims became direct and clear in the late 80s and 90s and *Ghulam-i-Mustafa* and *Angaar* are its examples.

Beside, there are a few movies, which depict and present the issue of Hindu-Muslim communal riots. But these movies are made with semi-willingness. The presentation of the Muslim characters as terrorists and extremists reached its pinnacle after 2001. Due to terrorist attacks of 9/11, the political scenario of entire world was changed and Muslims and Muslim countries became the direct victims of the wrath of the West and the rest. Subsequently, they were accused and suspected by everyone and everywhere. The incident of 11/26⁶ added fuel to the fire of years' long enmity between two countries.

5 British rendition of Nawab. The term refers to a certain type of rulers in British period that were dependent on the Paramount power and had little authority left to rule their states.

6 The terrorist attacks in Mumbai, the largest port city of India, on 26 November 2008. The suspects were considered to be intruders from Pakistan.

A review of the selected Bollywood movies shows that a majority of the movies portray Muslims negatively. This challenges Bollywood's position as only an entertainment media. If Bollywood has no political agenda as such then it has to change its perception about Muslims. It needs to adopt an unbiased approach towards their portrayal. It should deem Muslims as normal human beings with complexities and issues and not as stereotyped characters. Recognizing fanatics within Hinduism can be a counter-balance strategy which may enable viewers to understand that extremists can exist in any given community. Labelling Islam as a terrorist or peace abhorring religion is certainly a misplaced assumption. Bollywood needs to ameliorate their views and ideas about Muslims and Islam, more so because Muslims are the largest minority in India.

A number of research works are available on how the image of Muslims is distorted in Bollywood. Faiza Hirji in her article entitled "Change of Pace? Islam and Tradition in Popular Indian Cinema" analyzed the role of Islam in Bollywood movies. According to her, Islam being a mandatory organ of Bollywood is always portrayed in heinous and obnoxious way. Hirji has discussed how the norms of terrorism, violence and intercultural misunderstanding are associated with Islam.⁷

Victor A. Vicente in his work "Construct of Asia in Indian Film and Film Songs" has highlighted that the costumes, dances, soul-touching music being the embellishment of the movies arrested the huge number of audience from across South Asia and around the globe. The research divulged that depiction of West Asian especially Islamic West Asian culture has become a peculiar quality of Bollywood movies. Movies like *Mission Istanbul*, *Bombay to Bangkok*, *Chandni Chowk to China* are

7 Faiza Hirji, "Change of Pace? Islam and Tradition in Popular Indian Cinema", *South Asian Popular Culture*, Vol. 6, No.9 (2008), 57-69.

sufficient for the instance of the movies which are presentation of Asia vs. India or West vs. India.⁸

Filming the Gods by Rachel Dwyer is one of the towering works in the field. It is evident from the title that religion and Indian cinema is central topic of the book. Dwyer has highlighted the role of Muslims as the integral segment of the Indian Cinema from inception to pinnacle. The Bollywood movies could not be oblivious of the role of Muslims which they played in form of musician, singers, film makers, producers, directors and actor etc. in real life.⁹ In her other works, "Representing the Muslim: the Courtesan Film in Indian Popular cinema," Dwyer has concluded that in these films, Islamic culture is located in a woman who lives outside a respectable society. That woman in movies was portrayed as a lady of easy virtue, i.e., prostitute who was exotic and desirable. The role represents a socially unacceptable sexual but non-reproductive femininity like beloved of the *ghazal*¹⁰. On the contrary, the Hindu woman was presented within the bounds of marriage and the family.¹¹ Indian cinema has also been discussed in an edited work by Dwyer, *Pleasure and the Nation: the History, Politics and Consumption of Public Culture in India*.¹² Kesavan,¹³ Nirajana¹⁴ and Islam¹⁵

8 Victor A. Vicente, "Constructs of Asia in Indian Film and Film Song," *The Journal of Comparative Asian Development*, Vol. 9, No.2 (2010), 293-319.

9 Rachel Dwyer, *Filming the Gods: Religion and Indian Cinema* (NY: Rutledge, Taylor & Francis, 2006).

10 A genre of Urdu poetry.

11 Rachel Dwyer, "Representing the Muslim: the Courtesan Film in Indian Popular Cinema," in Tudor Perfit and Yulia Egorova ed., *Jews, Muslim and Mass Media* (NY: Rutledge Cruzan Taylor and Francis Group, 2004), 78-92.

12 Rachel Dwyer & Christopher Pinney, *Pleasure and the Nation: The History, Politics and Consumption of Public Culture in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004).

13 Mukul Kesavan, "Urdu, Awadh and the Tawaif: The Islamicate Roots of Hindi Cinema," in Zoya Hasan, (ed.) *Forging Identities: Gender, Communities and the State* (Delhi: Kali for Women, 1994).

14 Tejaswini Nirajana, "Integrating Whose Nation? Tourists and Terrorists in 'Raja'," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (1994), 79-82.

have also expounded praiseworthy work on the image of Muslims in Bollywood cinema. However, these research works have not discussed in detail as to how the image of Pakistanis is being presented in the Indian movies. Thus to fill this gap, present research seeks to study the image of Muslims as well as Pakistanis used in Bollywood and how this image is constantly related with negative and stereotypical characters.

Data Collection and Analysis

This study is based upon the qualitative analysis of the famous Indian movies released during the last decade or so. The research is very much significant as it intends to reveal the underlying meanings of the stories presented by Indian cinema in the name of culture. Beneath the sugar-coated message, there is an enormous amount of negativity for Muslims and as well as for Pakistan. The identity of Muslims is regularly and repeatedly challenged. After conducting pilot study of Indian movies, the following hypothesis has been developed and tested:

The proportion of negative portrayal of Muslim characters would be greater as compared to the ratio of positive image of Muslims in Indian movies.

Purposive sampling was used to verify this hypothesis. The focus was on the movies that take up the issues related to Muslims and Pakistan. The sample includes only Hindi movies and thus this analysis, by and large, reflects the perception about Muslims in northern India as embodied by the Hindi cinema.

In order to confirm reliability, selected scenes were visualized twice. To elaborate the portrayal of Muslims in an understandable manner, the overall impression of selected films from the sample has been given as précis.

15 Maidul Islam, "Imaging Indian Muslims: Looking through the Lens of Bollywood Cinema," *Indian Journal of Human Development*, Vol.1, No.2 (2007), 61-84.

Categories

All the samples were categorized in three types: Positive, Negative and Mixed films. Positive films are those which contain truthful portrayal of Muslims. Social conditions of Muslims in India and conflict with Pakistan are realistically highlighted. Instead of using negative stereotypes, these movies present Muslims as real characters with positive frame. They can have positive qualities such as love for peace and respect for universal ethics. They have got an urge to stand for humanity and betterment of mankind.

In negative films, which Muslim characters are painted black and their image is distorted. They are usually presented as criminals, slum dogs, terrorists, doing mean jobs and using slang language. The portrayal of Muslim females as prostitutes also comes under the same cover.

The movies which expound nearly equal proportion of negative and positive Muslim characters fall in the category of mix movies. For example, a movie charge as well as a positive such character would be known as the mix movie. In other cases, the negativity of a character is rationalized by explaining the circumstances and the character is not portrayed as inherently evil.

Analysis

The research is quantitative as well as qualitative in its nature. The data clearly shows that the portrayal of Muslims in Indian films is mostly negative. Table 1 describes the survey that the number of negative films (75.60%) is far greater than the number of positive films (12.20%). Through this analysis, we can easily discern the paucity of positive attitude and reverence for Muslims in Indian cinema. The survey highly agrees with hypothesis that the proportion of negative portrayal of Muslim characters would be greater as compared to the ratio of positive image of Muslims in Indian movies.

Table 1: CATAGORIES OF INDIAN MOVIES AS PER PORTRAYAL OF MUSLIM CHARACTERS

Total numbers of Films	Positive Films	Negative Films	Mixed Films
41	5(12.20%)	31(75.60%)	5(12.20%)

The list of all the movies included in sample is given in Annexure-1.

DETAILED QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED MOVIES

A. Positive

1. “Main Hon Na” by Farah Khan

Mainly, the movie depicts that the common people of India and Pakistan want to become friends. When the Indian politicians and government tend to promote friendship and try to resolve clashes, there are some extremists in Army who react against it. Those who want good relations with Pakistan are considered *ghadaar* [Hindi: traitors] and fifth columnists. They are also killed for this. The movie shows a character “General Bakshi” who tells in an interview that “50 Pakistani prisoners would be released”. After this controversial statement some conservative Indians try to kill him but he is saved. Later on, reactionary Hindus threaten to kill him if he supports the Pakistan-India friendship. Also the movie shows the unbearable and severe conditions of Pakistani prisoners who are arrested due to taking the name of Pakistan. Overall, the movie presents a wish for peace on both sides of the borders and highlights that few miscreants within India want to sabotage the peace process. The movie has an inward looking critical approach and gives out a positive message.

2. “Chak De India” by Yash Chopra

In the super hit picture of 2008, a Muslim hero, Kabir Khan, is shown as a devoted, dutiful and honest man. In the beginning, he was dubbed as a traitor and disloyal person who deceived his team as the coach resultantly team won the cup and Indian team lost the men's hockey World Cup

tournament because of him. However, he proves himself as the coach of women's hockey team and was eventually accepted as a patriot.

B. Negative

1. "Veer Zaara" by Yash Chopra

This is a love story which revolves around a Muslim girl 'Zara Hayat' who falls in the love with a Hindu boy named "Veer Partab Singh". She leaves all her traditional, social and religious values to adopt Hindustani culture. In this movie, Muslims are ridiculed in a very tactful and disguised way. Hindu's attitude towards Muslims is shown congenial while the Muslims are portrayed as greedy, hostile and having weak will power and weak determination. In fact, it is an evident propaganda against the Two Nation Theory.

2. "Fanaa" by Yash Chopra

It is a typical love story in which the hero, Rehan, has dual identity and the heroine Zonnie is shown as a patriot Muslim character. The grandfather of Rehan is the leader of a Mafia. Muslims are verily depicted in this film repugnant and repulsive who were responsible for all the sabotage.

3. "Sarfaroosh" by Johan Methew Mathon

In 'Sarfaroosh' Muslims are pictured as terrorists and smugglers of ammunition and narcotics through the Pakistani border Rajhistan's town Bahid with the help of trained camels. Muslim character named "Sultan" is a terrorist, having links with authorities/groups in Pakistan and disrupts the law and order in India. It is also evident by the story of Sarfaroosh that Pakistan provides refuge to the terrorists. The officers of Pakistani Agency ISI (Inter Services Intelligence) support the terrorists. These terrorists say prayers in the mosques and commit genocide which is termed *Jihad* by the Muslims.

4. “Garv” by Punit Isar

In this movie “Zafar Sapari” is a Muslim character who is the agent of ISI and is involved in train bombings and smuggling of weapons in India. He has links with the underworld and is responsible for all the chaos in India.

5. “L.O.C. (Line of Control)” by J.P. Dutta

Another example of anti-Pakistani film which highlights the situation of Pak-India border i.e., L.O.C. at Kargil, is “L.O.C.”. The characters that are playing the roles of Indian Army use abusive and bigotry language to demoralize Pakistani soldiers. It also blames *Mujahidin* that they being the *Atank Wadis* [Hindi: terrorists] want to separate Ladakh from Kashmir. Indian army men are shown brave and determined whereas *Mujahidin* and Pakistan army men are presented cowardly.

6. “Ab Tumharay Hawalay Watan Sathio” by Anil Sharma

Pakistan's intervention in India is portrayed by highlighting *Jihad* as terrorism. Especially, Muslims are considered responsible for creating disturbance on the special events e.g. *Holi* and *Dewali* (religious events of Hindus) by killing innocent people of India. In contrast, Indians are shown as peace loving nation. Indian forces capture Tiari Chowki, former East Pakistan in 1971 War and wave their own flag at that place.

7. “Border” by J.P. Dutta

It is a big budget anti-Pakistan movie with a total spending of INR 9.5 crore. It has a simplistic plot of good and evil. It depicts India as a “brave” country. Some Indians support the evil plans of Muslims who wanted to weaken the roots of India. At several instances, through actions and dialogues the Indian army is presented as a dedicated force to save India from its enemy Pakistan.

Dialogues of film “Border” against Pakistan and Muslims

Ajj say tumhari har goli per doshman ka nam hona chahye.

[From today onward, your every bullet should carry the name of enemy]

Pakistanio tum ghateya say ghateya batain kartay ho, humari zameen per qadam rakhnay ki koshish na karna.

[O Pakistanis! You speak rubbish; never attempt to place your foot on our land]

Pakistanion ko pagal kutay nay kata hay jo border cross kar kay yahan ain gay.

[Are the Pakistanis rabid that they would cross the border to approach here?]

Mery doshman mery bhai mery hamsaye.

[My foes, my brothers, my neighbours!]

8. "Dev" by Govind Nihalani

It is picturized in the context of Hind-Muslim riots which frequently erupt in various parts of India. Muslim politician named Lateef intentionally triggers Hindu-Muslim riots to create difficulties for his political opponent. Dev, an honest police officer, is shown as a neutral character who considers criminals as criminals, neither Hindu nor Muslim. He, along with the patriotic commissioner Tej, tries to bring things back to order. The hero of the film is Farhan Ali. He becomes a pawn in the hands of Latif and is used for attacking a Hindu temple. The incident triggers riots in the city. The division of Hindus as positive and Muslims as negative characters is very clear in this movie. Moreover, the notion that Muslim miscreants have links in Pakistan is also highlighted. Apparently, honest and dutiful police show prejudice by humiliating Farhan Ali during investigation in a train Journey. For example, have a look at the following exchange of dialogues:

Policeman: Koe saman hae?

[Is there any luggage?]

Farhan: Haan hae.

[Yes, there is.]

Policeman: Chek krao..... yh kia hae?

[Get it checked What is it?]

Farhan: Khatt hae.

["A letter"]

Policeman: Urdu men hae? Pakistan se aya ho ga? Koe rishtay daar to ho ga, Pakistan main?

[Written in Urdu? Is it from Pakistan?... There might be some relative in Pakistan?]

Farhan: Maray walid ka khatt hae, Bombay se. Waisay agar koe hota Pakistan main tou?

[My father's from Mumbai what if I had someone in Pakistan, then?]

Policeman: Tou Farhan sahib kuch din ham ap ko apna mehman rakhtay aor achay traeky se khatir madarat kartay.

[If you had, we would have taken you as a dungeon-guest and serve you sufficient food.]

9. "Zameer" by Rohit Shetty

The basic theme of the movie is that in the age of terror, evil is inflicted upon innocents in unprecedented events like the Mumbai blasts, 9/11 and the parliament attacks to name a few. The movie starts with *Vande Matram*¹⁶ to reinforce the concept of India, The Great. The movie proceeds further by the report of anti-terrorist unit which describes the terrorist group at the forefront of such activities is called the *Al-Tahir* and the leader of the group is Baba Zahir. Thus, terrorists are labelled as Muslims. On the other hand, the Indians are portrayed in positive manner by giving them typical strong Hindu names like Col. Ranjiv Singh Ranawat. The negative character of Baba Zahir shown as terrorist is a bearded man who greets his brother by saying. "Thanks to Allah, our mission has been successful". This shows Muslims responsible for all the terrorism. Pakistani Army is also shown operating against the Indian interests and providing refuge to the terrorist organization *Al-Tahir* in a camp at the mountains. The camp is attacked by Indian Army. While capturing Zahir Khan, Col. Ranjiv exclaims, "I can hardly help it Zahir

16 Official Indian national song; distinct from Indian national anthem.

Khan, killing dogs is forbidden in our country” referring to Pakistanis as dogs.

The movie aims to show the Muslims as the real culprits of an attack at the Indian parliament. They escaped after the attack, hijacked the Indian plane and captured innocent people. In the end, the Indian army and police killed them and became victorious. This film portrays Muslims as negative and bad characters. Even the sweeper of the airline is Muslim who helps the fugitives by providing them with weapons in the plane. Muslims are also portrayed as cruel, terrifying the innocent travellers of the plane.

The dialogues of Indian characters are against the Muslims and Pakistan, e.g. Col Ranjiv says, it is not right to “bark so much about a country given to Muslims as charity and weapons given as alms.” After barging into mosques and temples like coward and killing innocent women and children, Muslims are still alive because Indian government has stopped the army from killing them. This is the climax of the whole movie where the real hatred for Pakistan surfaces and the concept that “Pakistan a charity” is shown clearly. The Indians are shown with very strong integrity and respect for authority and for their government.

10. “Gang” by Mazhar Khan

This film is about Akram, Ranjit, Philip and Karun who are Muslim, Sikh, Christian and Hindu, respectively. They live together. Except Akram all are gentlemen belonging to middle class. Akram is a bad guy who instigates them to make a gang for wrong deeds. It is shown that Akram makes plans to earn money by hook or crook and is happily involved in illicit activities while Karun, Ranjit and Philip are dissatisfied because of their conscience. Another character, Aslam Khan, a big terrorist is also a Muslim.

Muslims are portrayed as greedy, murderers, and cheater. In the end Ranjt, Philip and Karun with bravery and wisdom handover Akram and Aslam Khan to the

police when they learn about Aslam Khan's plan for a suicide bombing.

11. "Wednesday" by Ronnie Screwvala

Muslim characters namely Ibrahim Khan, Ikhlāq Ahmad, M. Zaheer and Khurshid Lala are presented in disgusting and detestable way. There is no ambiguity in perceiving theme of the movie which is terrorism and Muslim characters are embroiled in these activities. The film expounds that Muslims are dissolute and must be exterminated by Indians.

12. "Kachey Dhaagay" by Milan Luthria

The movie starts off as a love story of a Muslim woman and a Hindu man, which later on turn into an illicit relation ended up in giving birth to a baby boy. The Hindu man marries a Hind woman and deserted her. The Muslim woman, who is the daughter of a Maulvi, brings up her child by telling him that his father is dead. The child joins a terrorist group that is run by Muslims. Hindu man has another son from his Hindu wife. In the end, the Muslim son (Aftab) wants to marry but the parents of the woman discourage him because he does not know about his father. At the end, the mother and the son meet the father and lead a good life. In this movie the image of Muslims is stigmatized by showing a Muslim girl involved in illicit relations and inclination of a Muslim child towards terrorism.

13. "Ye Dil Ashiqana" by Aruna Irani

The story is about a Muslim terrorist group "Lashkar-i-Zeest" whose head Mirza Ashraf-ul-Haq, a Pakistani, is arrested by Indian force. He is shown involved in bomb blasts in India and as murderer of innocent Hindustanis. The hero of the movie is Karan who loves Pooja. Another Muslim character is Itimash Jalal who planned to free Ashraf-ul-Haq from prison. Itimash Jalal hijacks an Indian plane by paying off the crew. 118 passengers are in the plane including the heroine Pooja. The hijackers land the

plane on an old airport and ask the Indian government to free Ashraf-ul-Haq from the prison otherwise they would kill a passenger after every half an hour. The Indian government accepts their demand but Karan (The hero) gets access to the plane and kills all the hijackers. The Indian government gives him a prize. In an interview Karan humiliates the Muslims by saying;

“Wo hamaray mulk k dushman hain. Main in se ye kehna chahta hon, kh hmari sarhadoon par kharay sepaheon se laroo, par in k liay tou aik Hindustani ashik he kafy hae. 1971 se 2001 tak yh baywakooof abhe tak yh nhe samjh pae. Keh tidian tadaad me kitny bhe keon nah hon, ghaseet kr nhe lay ja sakteen.”

[They are the enemies of our land. I ask them to have a fight with our soldiers at our borders. But, only an Indian patriot would be sufficient for them. From 1971 to 2001, these fools could not understand the fact that locusts even in a large count can't drag anything away.]

14. “Hindustan Ki Qasam” by Kumar Mangat

The movie starts with *azaan*¹⁷ to put *Mujahidin* in focus. A Pakistani Army Chief is shown as a traitor who provides the list of *Mujahidin* to the RAW.¹⁸ A procession is held between both the countries to promote brotherhood. *Mujahidin* together with Pakistan Army try to sabotage and destruct it but fail. The commander of *Mujahidin* named Shah Jee has links with the ISI. The plan is to worsen the relations between the two countries by killing Pakistani premier in the visit of India, but Indian Army sabotaged this plan. Pakistani Army and ISI are criticized in following dialogues:

“Kis maqsad ki bat kr rhay ho tum, do mulkoon ko larany ko tum apna mqsad kehtay ho. Kia hasel ho ga tumahy zameen ki chhati ko laho lahan kr k. Ye kaisi bhuk hai jo roti ki bajie serhadon ko nigalna chahti hai.”

[Of which aim are you taking about? Is it your aim to set the two countries on combat? What will you get for a bloodbath over the land?

17 The Muslim call to prayer.

18 The Research and Analysis Wing- India's External Intelligence Agency.

What sort of hunger is it that desires to devour the land in place of bread?]

15. "Wanted" by Boney Kapoor

"Wanted" is one of the hit films of 2009. Muslims are shown as relentless and ruthless criminals who are responsible for every scuffle which happened in the city. Muslim character "*Ghani Bhai*" is shown as the don of the underworld who is the scourge of the city. Over all, Muslims are presented quite badly.

C. Mixed Films

Mixed films included in the sample for this research are: *My name is Khan*, *New York*, *Kurbaan*, *Sawarya* and *Delhi-6*. First three movies beautifully exhibit the tragic incident of 9/11. Two out of three, namely "My Name is Khan" and "New York" very sympathetically expound the scenario related to the Muslims post 9/11. These movies expose the disposition of Muslims in America. They depict the Muslims partially negative. The stereotype of Muslims as terrorists is not challenged. However, the Muslim characters are innocent and give out the message that all Muslims are not terrorists; but some are. The suffering and troubles of Muslims in day to day life after the onset of 9/11 is the burning issue of these movies. "Kurban" is about the terrorist activities of Muslims in the context of 9/11. Because of its neutral positive character Ryaz, the movie is placed in mixed category. The film 'Delhi-6' was released in 2009. It is basically a mixed film in terms of Muslims. In this film, the hero, Roshan, is portrayed as a philanthropist and pacific person. He came from New York and after enduring several catastrophes, he eventually adjusted in the community where multi-religious people were living. Besides this, there are Muslim characters that partake negatively in the film and arouse the feelings of repulsiveness for Muslims.

Discussion

The Bollywood wave has penetrated throughout Pakistan. Indian films which are primarily about love, consumption

and affluence, apparently devote small concerns to the actual political and socially critical issues. However, these movies have underlying political motives which can be discerned by critical viewing. Indian cinema successfully utilizes the cover of entertainment to conceal its political motives.

According to Vinzenz Hediger, an expert in cinematic studies:

Entertainment films are particularly suited to tackling the issue of social conflicts. Popular cinema in particular, with its dramatic turns of events and concise formulae, is ideal for highlighting social conflicts in an effective manner that will reach a broad span of people. In addition, popular films always have to be relevant. In other words, cinema-goers must be able to relate what is happening on the screen to what is going on in their lives." Popular films "... have to be successful, because they are so costly to produce."¹⁹

However, from the analysis of Indian cinema, one can conclude that popular films are not being used for highlighting but enhancing social conflict within and outside Indian society.

Despite being a big multi-cultural and multi-lingual society and acclaimed democratic state, there are certain instances in India that show the hatred of Hindus against the Muslims. Bollywood movies are showing this religious conflict by presenting Muslims as negative minded people. Muslims are also given the small and low standard characters like sweepers and peons in the Indian films.

As discussed earlier, the images that Indian cinema has come to use for Muslims are that of ruffian swindlers, mafia dons, assassins and sex-workers etc. A recent addition is the image of terrorist. Traditional Muslim attire is used to depict these characters. *Shalwar-qameez* (Pakistani dress), *dupatta* [Urdu: Head-cover used by

19 Vinzenz Hediger, The Hindu-Muslim Conflict in Bollywood Films: The Religious Conflict as a Blockbuster <http://en.qantara.de/The-Religious-Conflict-as-a-Blockbuster/8746c8815i1p510/> accessed 8 December, 2011.

Muslim women], *tasbeeh* [Urdu: rosary] and beard are used to stereotype Muslims as negative characters.

At times the prejudice against Muslims seems to be paradoxical. Besides the negative portrayal, Muslims and Hindus work together in the Indian film industry. In fact the religious pluralism does not end there; the members of other religious groups are also active in the film sector. Moreover, there are different examples which show unprecedented behaviour of Indians. For instance, a very popular actor, Hrithik Roshan's fans are aware about his marriage with a Muslim woman, but still they admire him. On the other hand supporters of the right wing Hindu party BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) called for a boycott of Amir Khan's movies "Fanaa" just because he advocated for giving adequate compensation to Muslims who were affected by the construction of a dam in Gujarat. Later, Hindus advised him to simply apologize because actors are there to sing, dance and entertain public and not to express their own opinions. But except Gujarat the movie became a huge box office success in the country's remaining states. Thus the attitude towards Muslims is varied in India at different times. However, the cinema seems to be more adept at tapping the negativity generated by strained communal relations and the positive aspect is usually ignored.

As the image of Muslims all over the world has changed after 9/11, likewise the Bollywood (Indian) filmmakers got license to portray Muslims as terrorists and present "Jihad" as *natak* [Hindi: drama] to achieve political goals. After analyzing the content of many Indian movies, this notion of hatred and rivalry against Muslims in Indian cinema is fully supported. Indian film makers highlight cross border terrorism in their script and blame Pakistan for terrorist activities in India, e.g. Mumbai blasts, Hindu-Muslim clashes in Gujrat, attacks on Akshardhm (Hindu temple complex in Delhi) and on the Indian parliament etc. by using Muslim names of villains and terrorists and by stigmatizing their rituals and beliefs.

Some Hindu directors tried their utmost to distort the image of Islam and Muslims and to fix it in the viewers' minds that the Muslims are the 'bad guys' and instigators of violence. Hindus present themselves as nationalists and Pakistanis as greedy perpetrators of terrorism whose only aim is to acquire money.

Conclusion

Indian media has mastered the art of promoting their way of life. India has managed to educate its huge population through its media. Using its wide outreach, Bollywood also functions against its neighbouring country, Pakistan, and misses no opportunity to malign it. No doubt Indian film industry dominates everyday life in Pakistan. However, some of the Bollywood productions seem to incite hatred on both sides of the border. They use the propaganda for psychological warfare. Pakistanis are very clearly shown as enemies of India and portrayed as barbarians: brutal, arrogant, ruthless as well as physically and psychologically deformed. Because of their biased content, few years back the Pakistani government banned the showcasing of such type of propaganda movies to avoid stir of emotions.²⁰

All in all, it can be deduced from the analysis that among the productions that touch upon the issues related with Muslims and Pakistan, the number of the movies which depict and render the Muslims as brutal and rogue is greater than the number of the movies which present and portray Muslims in positive frame of mind. Their presentation of Muslim character as negative and reprobate increased during 1990-2005. The images used to represent the Muslims are a reflection of the prejudices prevalent in India against Muslims and Pakistan alike.

20 Urdu Daily *Jang*, Lahore, 20 February, 2002.

Annexure-1

S.No.	Name of the Movie	Producer/ Director
Negative		
1.	Veer-Zaara	Yash Chopra
2.	Sarfaroosh	John Mathew
3.	Insan	K. Subhash
4.	Ab Tumharay Hawalay Watan Sathio	Anil Sharma
5.	Zameer	Rohit Shetty
6.	Border Hindustan Ka	Yogesh Baradwaj
7.	Maa Tujhay Salam	Mahendra Dharinal
8.	Agnipankh	Dhillin Mehta
9.	Gang	Mazhar Khan
10.	Pinjaar	Chandra Prakash
11.	Dewaar	Vinod Doshi
12.	The Hero	Anil Sharma
13.	Ye Dil Ashiqana	Aruna Irani
14.	L.O.C. (Line of Control)	J.P. Dutta
15.	Indian	Depak Rai Sharma
16.	Jaal	Vinod Shah
17.	Qayamat	Harry Baweja
18.	Ghaddar	Anil Sharma
19.	Dev	Goind Nihlani
20.	Mission Kashmir	Vidhovindar Chopra
21.	Hidustan Ki Kasm	Kumar Mangat
22.	Elan	Vikram Bhatt
23.	Apharan	Parkesh Jha
24.	Dil Jalay	Harry Baweja
25.	Kachey Dhaagay	Milan Luthria
26.	Garv	Punit Isar
27.	Lakshya	Farhan Akhtar
28.	Border	J. P. Dutta
29.	Wanted	Boney Kapoor
30.	Wednesday	Neeraj Pandey
31.	Fanaa	Yash Chopra
Positive		
1.	Rang Day Basanti	Rakesh Omprakash
2.	Meine Dil Tujh Ko Diya	Sohail Khan
3.	Main Hoon Na	Farah Khan
4.	Chak de India	Yash Chopra
5.	3 Idiots	Vinod Chopra
Mixed		
1.	New York	Yash Raj Films
2.	Kurban	Karan Johar
3.	Dehli 6	Rakesh Omprakash
4.	Sawariya	Sanjay Leela Bhansali
5.	My name is Khan	Karan Johar