

Portrayal of Kashmir in Select Bollywood Films: Qualitative Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The valley of Kashmir has often attracted the Bollywood filmmakers for one reason or the other. So far more than 90 Hindi films have been shot in the valley. From being mere a beautiful location to a serious issue, Kashmir has always been a subject of interest for the filmmakers of Hindi cinema. Prior to 1989 when political unrest broke out in the valley, it was beautiful mountains and gushing streams that would bring them to Kashmir, however post-1989 Kashmir conflict formed the theme for several Hindi films. The current study is an endeavour to understand the relationship between Kashmir and Hindi cinema. It enables to analyse the portrayal of Kashmir, and Kashmir conflict in particular, through the medium of cinema. It also helps understand the change of context in Bollywood movies vis-à-vis Kashmir.

Since Bollywood is India's most powerful cultural and social indicator, it does provide a glimpse into how the average Indian looks at Kashmir. Therefore, it was deemed worth to conduct the research. The study involved Content Analysis of seven selected Bollywood films made on Kashmir post 1989. In these films, portrayal of Kashmir was analysed. Depiction of Kashmiri characters and use of dialogues was also assessed.

So far various studies have been conducted separately on Bollywood and Kashmir and a few on their relationship with each other. However, most of them intend to study the portrayal of Muslims in the Hindi films or how Muslims are looked upon by the Bollywood. Hardly any study intends to discuss the in-depth analysis of the change in the portrayal of Kashmir in Hindi films over the last two decades.

KEYWORDS: 1989, Bollywood, Conflict, Hindi Cinema, Kashmir.

1. INTRODUCTION

Bollywood is an informal term popularly used for the Mumbai-based Hindi language film industry in India (Time Magazine, 1996). It is the largest film producer in India and one of the largest in the world (Wasco, 2003). The name is a Portmanteau of Bombay (the former name for Mumbai) and Hollywood, the center of the American film industry. Bollywood is commonly referred to as Hindi Cinema, even though 'Hindustani', understood as the colloquial base common to both Hindi and Urdu, might be more accurate (Ramesh, 2008).

Kashmir caught Bollywood filmmakers' imagination after the Eastman colour was introduced in India in the early 1960s, though very few black-and-white films had been shot in Kashmir earlier. So far more than 90 films been shot in the valley. But more often Kashmir has been nothing more than a setting for Hindi filmmakers.

There are a very few films with a lead Kashmiri character. Notable among these are *Jab Jab Phool Khile* (1965), *Kashmir Ki Kali* (1964) and *Noorie* (1979). But generally speaking,

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