

Portrayal of Jammu-Kashmir in Bollywood Narrative

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ABSTRACT

Bollywood often shows the amazing beauty of Jammu-Kashmir. However, the region is also shown as a place of socio-political conflict and complexity. The portrayal of Jammu Kashmir in Bollywood serves as a visual and narrative backdrop that both celebrates its natural beauty and raises awareness of the ongoing issues in the area. This study explores the representation of the Jammu Kashmir region in the context of Bollywood. This research goes through the portrayal of Jammu Kashmir over the decades. The aim and objective of this study are to understand the complex relationship between Bollywood and this beautiful area. The methodology of this research is an in-depth examination of how Bollywood has depicted Jammu Kashmir. The study identifies themes and stereotypes associated with Jammu Kashmir in cinemas. It would contribute to our understanding of the representation of Jammu Kashmir in Indian cinema. It would provide insights into how filmmakers show sensitive socio-political issues within their storytelling in cinemas. The research findings will offer a glimpse into Bollywood's engagement with this part of India.

Keywords: Aestheticis, Bollywood, Cinematic, Hindi Cinema, Jammu-Kashmir

INTRODUCTION

Jammu and Kashmir is the India's most known and desired part. It is also known as the "Paradise on Earth" among people. This place gives an enchanting imagination in the eyes of the author, poet, Artist and filmmakers. Its breathtaking landscapes, rich culture, lush greenery and complex sociopolitical scenery have provided a very productive creation for artistic and cinematic aesthetics. Cinema known as the mirror of a society. And the Hindi Cinema or Bollywood has played a important role in shaping socio-economic believe in Indian context. This research paper goes on a cinematic journey into the relationship between Jammu-Kashmir and Bollywood, examining how the silver screen has reflected and influenced the essence of this beautiful region. For many decades, filmmakers have been drawn to the scenic beauty of this Jammu Kashmir Valley and have made a portrayal for countless Hindi cinemas. This study examines how Bollywood's interpretation of this part of India. Researchers have journeyed through decades of cinemas, from classics to contemporary Bollywood cinemas for this study.

For understanding the dynamic relationship between Bollywood and Kashmir is not only a cultural and artistic effort but a critical exploration of how media shapes our perceptions of complex regions and their socio-political realities. This research aims to shed light on the cinematic odyssey of Kashmir in

Bollywood, offering insights into how storytelling and filmmaking impact our understanding of a place that continues to be at the centre of much debate and culture.

Review of Literature:

These papers collectively explore the representation of Jammu Kashmir and its people in Bollywood cinemas; Mishra (2001) provides a broader perspective on Bollywood cinema as a significant cultural phenomenon in India, emphasizing its role in shaping national identity and popular culture. Ataöv (2001) briefly overviews the history and conflicts in Kashmir in his writings. Then Ganti (2012) provides a broader perspective on the Hindi cinema industry. Ganti also discusses its transformation into Bollywood and its relationship with neoliberal economic ideas. In his paper Mishra (2005) discusses the rise of the term "Bollywood" and the cultural projection of various places. Kabir (2010) argues that Bollywood cinemas have increasingly portrayed Kashmiri protagonists as Muslims. Kabir also reflects the convergence of Kashmir and Islam in the cinema. Fokiya (2019) analyzes the portrayal of peace and conflict in Kashmir in Bollywood cinemas. Fokiya highlights the shift from love-romance to themes of terrorism and conflict. Farooq (2020) study about the absence of cinema halls in Kashmir since 1989. He also explores how the Kashmiri youths are associated with cinema. Shaikia (2020) discusses the importance of media in preserving Kashmiri folklore and Kashmiri culture. Ahad (2022) writes about the politics behind the representation of Kashmir's socio-economical problems in recent Hindi cinemas.

Methodology:

A qualitative research method has been used to study the portrayal of Jammu and Kashmir in Bollywood. This is a systematic content analysis of Bollywood cinemas featuring Jammu and Kashmir. A sample of films spanning different decades, genres, and themes were selected purposively. Key analysis variables included narrative focus, character portrayals, and visual depictions of Jammu and Kashmir.

Analysis & Interpretation

Junglee (1961) know to be one of the very first movies shot in Kashmir, starring Shammi Kapoor and Saira Bano; the story is about a humourless man finding his lady love in Kashmir after passing quite a many challenges and hurdles. *The film "Haqeeqat" (1964)* primarily depicts the 1962 Sino-Indian War; its themes of conflict and sacrifice resonate with the overarching narrative surrounding Kashmir in Bollywood. It exemplifies the evolving cinematic approaches to representing regions marked by conflict and complex sociopolitical contexts. The cinema's exploration of the emotional and human dimensions of conflict aligns with the thematic and aesthetic choices that have shaped the portrayal of Kashmir in Bollywood over the years. *"Kashmir Ki Kali" (1964)* connects Bollywood and Kashmir. This Shakti Samanta film starring Shammi Kapoor and Sharmila Tagore is remembered as much for its picturization of the breathtaking locales of Kashmir. The movie *"Himalaya ki Godmain" (1965, Vijay Bhatt)* tells a story of an American doctor (played by Mala Sinha) who comes to work in a remote Himalayan village. Again in the *"Aarzo" (1965, Directed by Ramanand Sagar)*, *"Mere Sanam" (1965, Amar Kumar)* and *"Janwar" (1965, Directed by Bhappi Sonie, starring Shammi Kapoor and Rajshree)* showcase the natural beauty of Kashmir in a very romantic angle. In the same year there are *"Jab Jab Phool Khile" (1965)* Starring Shashi Kapoor and Nanda. This cinema also revolves around a Kashmiri boatman who falls in love with a tourist. The songs of this cinema also became very famous that year. Raj

Khosla's *"Do Badan"* (1966) is also known for its story and amazing songs which are shots in the beautiful places in Jammu Kashmir. *"Kal Aaj Aur Kal"* (1971) is directed by Randhir Kapoor and stars his father, the legendary Raj Kapoor, along with Randhir Kapoor and Babita.

In the 1970s cinema *"Bobby"* holds relevance even now with the iconic Bobby hut scene. Some of the scenes of this cinema shots in Gulmarg. *"Roti"* (1974, Manmohan Desai) "Roti" shows how Kashmir's scenic beauty and charm were often used as a cinematic tool, enhancing the visual and emotional impact of Bollywood cinemas. The film captures the lakes and mountains of the region. *"Aap ki Kasam"* (1974), Gulzar's *"Aandhi"* (1975), Asit Sen's *"Bairaag"* (1976) are known for their powerful performances and soulful music. Those cinemas take a significant portion of their story to the breathtaking place of Jammu Kashmir. The film showcases the iconic Dal Lake, valleys and gardens. Shashi Kapoor, Rishi Kapoor, Waheeda Rehman, and Neetu Singh. This cinema tells a romantic love story spanning two generations. Another cinema *"Love in Kashmir"* (1976, Sangh Mitra) comes in the same year, which also shows the enchanted beauty of Jammu-Kashmir. *"Khoon Pasina"* (1977, directed by Rakesh Kumar and features Amitabh Bachchan and Vinod Khanna) this cinema's main story focuses on urban crime and vigilantism, and the director successfully set some of the sequences in Kashmir. Manmohan Krishna's *"Noorie"* (1979) is a love story shot in the Jammu Kashmir Vally. This cinema is an example of Bollywood's love with the Jammu Kashmir. The film captures the beauty of Kashmir : its snowy mountains and lush fields showcasing as a paradise. There is an another cinema *"Jaani Dushman"* that comes in the same year which also shows the enchanted beauty of Jammu-Kashmir. *"Love Story"* (1981, directed by Rahul Rawail), stars Kumar Gaurav and Vijeta Pandit. The film is celebrated not only for its heartwarming love story in Kashmir. But in the same year *"Silsila"* (1981, starring Amitabh, Jaya, and Rekha) Shows a complicated love triangle. The romantic songs of this cinema are set in various parts of Kashmir. After that *"Betaab"* (1983) was the biggest hit its romantic songs shoted in beautiful parts of Jammu Kashmir. Subhash Ghai's action cinema *"Karma"* (1986) has a central story on crime and justice. But the sequences and shots are set in the amazing places of Jammu Kashmir. This cinema is a perfect example of how Bollywood continued to utilize Jammu Kashmir in diverse genres. This cinema shows the incredible beauty of lush green fields, hills and lakes. Then *"Ram Avatar"* (1988) is directed by Sunil Hingorani and Anil Kapoor in the lead role. It enhances the cinema's visual splendour and adds a touch of romance. The region's aesthetics play a pivotal role in enriching the storyline and evoking a sense of beauty and enchantment. The next year *"Joshilaay"* (1989, directed by Sibte Hasan Rizvi, features Sunny Deol, Anil Kapoor, and Sridevi) and then *"Henna"* (1991, directed by Randhir Kapoor) Beautifully shows the beauty and cultural richness.

"Roja" (1992) was directed by Mani Ratnam. The cinema is about a woman from Tamil Nadu who tries to find her abducted husband, who gets abducted by Kashmiri militants during in a secret mission. This cinema also marked A. R. Rahman's cinematic debut. It was engaged whilst revealing the political nuances of the many conflicts in Kashmir. *"Dil Kya Kare"* (1999), directed by Prakash Jha, is a family cinema that explores complex emotions and relationships in the enchanting setting of Kashmir Valley. *"Mission Kashmir"* (2000) is an action-thriller cinema that is set in violent Kashmir dealing with terrorism and the suffering of common people, especially the children of the valley. It traces the insurgency problems and religious bigotry in the fabric of love, vengeance, and responsibility. The *"Samsara"* (2001, directed by Pan Nalin) movie also has some beautiful sequences from Kashmir. Then in 2003 *"LOC: Kargil"* (directed by J.P. Dutta) showed the Kashmir vally and line of control. It

was a war film about the 1999 Kargil War. While this cinema has central focuses on the war and the bravery of Indian soldiers. This cinema is also a significant example of how Kashmir Valley is portrait various genres. "*Ab Tumhare Hawale Watan Saathiyon*" (2004, directed by Anil Sharma) The film primarily revolves around the theme of soldiers and their dedication to the nation. Farhan Akhtar's film shows a fictional backdrop of the Kargil War in his movie "*Lakshya*" (2004) In the year of 2005, Bollywood shows Jammu Kashmir in various cinemas, Mani Shankar's "*Tango Charlie*" (2005) is a Bollywood war film that explores the challenges faced by Indian paramilitary forces in conflict-ridden regions. "*Bunty aur Babli*" (2005, directed by Shaad Ali) where the central story takes place in various locations including Kashmir. "*Waqt: The Race Against Time*" (2005, directed by Vipul Amrutlal Shah) is a family movie set in Kashmir's landscapes. The film captures some very fresh beauty of Kashmir. The movie highlights the versatility of Kashmir as a cinematic setting. Then Shoojit Sircar directed "*Yahaan*" (2005) which a love story set in Kashmir. This movie has a conventional story told unconventionally. The cinema is well-shot and manages the mood. Gulzar's songs are beautifully used in this cinema.

"*Tahaan*" (2008, Directed by Santosh Sivan) displays the journey of a little boy whose donkey goes missing. This movie added an extra milestone in hindi cinema. In this cinema the director shows that boys journey and then encounter with terrorism. The visuals and aesthetics of this movie were amazing. Again in "*Sikandar*" (2009), where the main theme of the movie revolves around a young boy's encounter with a lost gun. Directed by Piyush Jha's thriller "*Sikandar*" weaves the mesmerizing complex socio-political landscape of Kashmir. Which is a visually charismatic and thematically compelling cinema. It also plays an essential role in conveying the uncertainty of Kashmir's political atmosphere. The Aesthetics of the cinema add depth to the story, emphasizing the duality between the place and the underlying political complexities. In the same year "*3 Idiots*" (2009) was released. In this movie, there are some shots taken in this region. Kareena Kapoor rides her scooter which was shot at Pangong Lake. Director Aamir Bashir's "*Harud*" (2010) is set in the month of Autumn or Harud. This film sets a question, 'Who does Kashmir belong to?' This film narrates the tale of a family in Kashmir struggling to stay together after losing their son. This movie and "*Lamhaa*" (2010) show another picture of the beautiful place. In the same year Sanjay Puran Singh Chauhan directed "*Lahore*" (2010) focused around an Indian kickboxer who aims to win against all odds. "*Jo Hum Chahein*" (2011, directed by Pawan Gill) also shows how this valley has been effectively utilized in cinema to enhance the storyline or the narrative. A major part of the . "*Rockstar*" (2011) movie was done in the Jammu Kashmir. Vishal Bhardwaj's psychological thriller "*Saat Khoon Maaf*" (2011) , Sriram Raghavan's "*Agent Vinod*" (2012) and also "*Student of the Year*" (2012) movies captured some scenes in Kashmir Valley. "*Jab Tak Hai Jaan*" (2012) This Shahrukh Khan starrer romantic movie is about a bomb squad officer posted in Kashmir, waiting for his love. The 'Jiya Re' song, featuring the lead cast, was filmed in the Ladakh and Kashmir areas. The most beautiful vistas of the Kashmir Valley, which serve as the scenic backdrop for the most astounding sequences, give the movie its widespread appeal. (www.outlookindia.com, 2023) "*Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani*" (2012) also shows some scenes in Pahalgam and Gulmarg , Betab Valley, Aru Valley, and Chandanwari. Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra's "*Bhaag Milkha Bhaag*" (2013) also shows some location of Kashmir.

"*Highway*" (2014) Directed by Imtiaz Ali, the cinema was shot in the Aru Valley of Kashmir, offering the most amazing view. Its breathtaking sights in the film create a good among the crowd to watch this movie. "*Haider*" (2014), set in 1995 Kashmir, Is an adaptation of Shakespeare's Hamlet and Basharat

Peer's Curfewed Night. It is one of the finest mainstream films on Jammu Kashmir; it outrightly coincides with the personal and political. The screenplay captures Kashmir elegantly. The movie Haider includes scenes from Dal Lake, Nishat Bagh, Sun Temple, Pahalgam, Naseem Bagh, Martland Sun Temple, Sonmarg, etc. "*Bajrangi Bhaijaan*" (2015) was a super-hit cinema by Salman Khan and child actor Harshali Malhotra that was shot in mesmerizing locations in Jammu Kashmir. Like in Sonmarg, Zoji La, Attari Wagah Borger, Mandawa Shekawati region, Nizamuddin Dargah etc. "**Kabir Khan directed Phantom**" (2015). And have Saif Ali Khan and Katrina Kaif in the leading role. Some portions of this cinema were shot in Gulmarg and various places in Jammu Kashmir. "*Fitoor*" (2016) movie perfectly showcases the beauty of Jammu Kashmir Valley. As Fitoor is a love story between Aditya Roy Kapur (Noor) and Katrina Kaif (Firdaus), the filmmaker could not get any other place to signify immense love in the natural beauty of Kashmir Valley. The film shows shots near Dal Lake, Srinagar, the red chinars, meadows and the snow-carpeted landscape. "To film the love drama, the director had no choice but to use Jammu Kashmir Valley's stunning scenery to symbolize their intense love. The movie features shooting locations surrounding Dal Lake and the red chinars, green meadows, and a snow-covered environment." (www.outlookindia.com, 2023)

In "*Half Widow*" (2017), Director Danish Renzu follows Neela's journey upon losing her husband to abduction. This film adopts a realist approach, using the local language and simple dialogues that are true to Kashmir. In the same year Kabir Khan's historical war drama "*Tubelight*" (2017) features the Indo-Sino War of 1962 Kashmir. "*Raazi*" (2018) is shot in the Valley of Jammu Kashmir, where Alia Bhatt plays the role of a Kashmiri woman. Karan Johar, Apoorva Mehta, and Hiroo Hohar produced this movie at the gorgeous location of Jammu Kashmir. The film was shot in enchanting places in Jammu and Kashmir. With a localized Kashmiri setting Aijaz Khan's "*Hamid*" (2018) shows the Kashmir conflict very carefully. Also Abhishek Varman's "*Kalank*" (2019) has some sequences of Jammu-Kashmir. The film is set in pre-independence India. "*Uri: The Surgical Strike*" (2019), directed by Aditya Dhar, is a Bollywood military action film based on actual events. The film shows the 2016 Uri attack and the succeeding surgical strike conducted by the Indian Army in reply. While the primary narrative revolves around military operations, it includes sequences set in the challenging terrains of Jammu-Kashmir. This movie creates an authentic background for war-themed narratives based on actual events. The movie captures the formidable and harsh terrain of Jammu-Kashmir. Robbie Grewal's "*Romeo Akbar Walter*" (2019) shows sequences set in Kashmir. The film primarily revolves around a young man who becomes a spy during the 1971 India-Pakistan war. This movie is also an example of how this region's natural beauty creates a visual for cinema. The film also proves the versatility of Jammu Kashmir as a cinematic setting.

Findings

The study examines how the aesthetics of Jammu Kashmir's portrayal in Bollywood cinema. This research studies the elements within these films. The study aims to understand how Bollywood has used aesthetics to engage audiences in the portrayal of Jammu Kashmir. The following analysis summarizes the essential findings and insights from the research. According to the Tourism Department, 500 requests for permission to film in the Valley have been received from various filmmakers. The study reveals a noticeable transition in the aesthetic representation of Kashmir in Bollywood films. Early hindi cinemas often highlighted the region's beauty. And frequently featuring hills, lakes, and lush green fields. Aesthetic elements such as vibrant cinematography, settings, and music were the main things that

created a romanticized image of Kashmir. Iconic films like "*Kashmir Ki Kali*" (1964), "*Himalaya ki Godmain*" (1965), "*Aarzo*" (1965), "*Mere Sanam*" (1965), "*Janwar*" (1965), "*Jab Jab Phool Khile*" (1965), "*Do Badan*" (1966), "*Kal Aaj Aur Kal*" (1971), "*Bobby*" (1973), "*Roti*" (1974) etc showcased the cinematography that romanticized the region. However, As time passed the aesthetic technique moved to reflect the socio-political issues. Films started to show conflict, tension, and realism. Scenes of curfews, military presence, and social unrest are becoming more common with time. Films like "*Haider*" (2014), "*Half Widow*" (2017), "*Hamid*" (2018), "*Kashmir Files*" (2021) started presenting a more realistic and gritty view of Jammu Kashmir. Aesthetics plays a crucial role in enhancing romantic cinema. Kashmir has been a preferred place for romantic cinema in Bollywood. Films like "*Jab Tak Hai Jaan*" (2012), "*Betaab*" (1983), and "*Fitoor*" (2016) use Jammu Kashmir's aesthetics very pleasantly to enhance the emotional impact of love stories. Romantic shots in beautiful locations with melodious songs became integral to the hindi romantic cinema. It can automatically engage viewers emotionally. Also, cinema of conflict and social issues share the region's harsh realities. For example, "*Bajrangi Bhaijaan*" (2015) shows Kashmir's cultural diversity in some time. "*Harud*" (2010), "*Tahaan*" (2008), "*Sikandar*" (2009) show the family values and life of Jammu Kashmir area. This study gives an understanding of the connections between Bollywood and Jammu Kashmir. The research has shown insights the growth, impact, and challenges associated with Bollywood's cinematic representations of the Jammu Kashmir area.

Conclusion

The cinematic journey through Kashmir in Bollywood begins with a romanticized view, emphasizing the breathtaking landscapes and picturesque settings that have earned it the moniker "Paradise on Earth." This aesthetic portrayal served as a sensory experience and exceeded the boundaries of the screen. However, over the time the socio political context of Kashmir has changed. So Bollywood cinema also changed its portrayal of the Jammu Kashmir area. Before, Bollywood films focused on the scene beauty and livelihood of the Jammu Kashmir but later on hindi cinema shifted to showing the problems, complexities and harsh realities. Then the aesthetic elements became tools to reflect the tense and challenging conditions in Kashmir. One of the findings of this research is the alignment between aesthetics and narrative themes. It showed how important it is for movies to connect with the audience emotionally.

In conclusion, this study has helped to understand how Kashmir has been shown in Hindi cinemas or Bollywood over time. It raised some important questions about the impact of cinema on public perceptions and the responsibilities of the film industry. Jammu Kashmir is shown in many Hindi cinemas in various styles covered by different genres. This thing reflects various aspects of Jammu Kashmir. Also its evolving significance in India's cultural and political field. This study suggests further research of the cinematic portrayal of areas and its effect on social understanding.

Further Research Suggestions:

Conduct an audience perception study to assess how Bollywood's portrayal of Kashmir influences the opinions and perceptions of viewers. Analyze how film centric perceptions of the region affect tourist choices and behaviour. Investigate how the Bollywood influences cultural identity and self-perception among Kashmiri communities. Analyze the sociocultural implications of these portrayals. Explore the gendered aspects of Kashmir's representation in Bollywood.

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