

Representation of Islamic Subaltern Struggles in 'FIR' Movie: A Cinematic Analysis

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Abstract

Cinema is a form of art and entertainment that uses moving images, sound, and storytelling to convey narratives, evoke emotions, and communicate ideas. This study presents a comprehensive cultural film analysis of "FIR," focusing on the representation of Islamic subaltern struggles as depicted within its narrative structure and visual composition. The analysis delves into how the film encapsulates the complexities of identity, agency, and resistance among marginalized Muslim communities in contemporary society by employing a framework rooted in cultural studies and film theory. The paper begins by contextualizing the movie within its socio-political landscape, exploring the historical and cultural factors contributing to portraying Islamic subaltern identities. It examines key themes such as systemic oppression, cultural stereotypes, and the intersectionality of gender and class, highlighting how these elements shape the characters' lived experiences. Furthermore, the study analyzes the film's cinematic techniques, such as mise-en-scene, sound design, and editing, revealing how these artistic choices enhance the narrative's emotional depth and political commentary. Through close readings of pivotal scenes, the paper illustrates how the film uses visual symbolism and narrative arcs to portray Islamic subalterns' struggles for justice and recognition. The analysis also engages audience reception, considering how "FIR" challenges dominant narratives and invites viewers to empathize with the struggles of marginalized communities. By foregrounding diverse perspectives and complex characters, the film acts as a counter-narrative to mainstream representations, fostering a deeper understanding of resilience and agency within these communities. This study posits that "FIR" not only reflects the multifaceted realities of Islamic subaltern struggles but also serves as a critical cultural artifact that interrogates societal norms and encourages dialogue on representation, identity, and justice issues in a polarized world.

Keywords: Cinema, Marginalized communities, Muslim, Oppression, Subaltern.

Introduction

Representing marginalized communities in cinema fosters empathy, challenges stereotypes, and drives social change (Kamble & Biswal, 2023). Films like "FIR (Faizal Ibrahim Raiz)" serve as poignant examples of how cinema can portray the struggles of subaltern communities, such as the Islamic community, in a nuanced and impactful manner. Against the backdrop of a politically charged India, "FIR" intricately explores the life of a Muslim protagonist falsely implicated in terrorism, shedding light on issues of religious profiling and broader socio-political challenges faced by Muslims in contemporary

Indian society. Such cinematic narratives raise awareness and provoke critical reflections on prevalent societal issues, contributing to a more inclusive and empathetic dialogue (Mohankumar S & Srija V, 2023). In the context of increasing communal tensions and negative stereotypes surrounding Muslims in India, the film "FIR" stands out by humanizing its Muslim characters and shedding light on their struggles against systemic bias and injustice. Drawing from research on the portrayal of Muslims in Indian cinema (Jalarajan Raj & Suresh, 2023). "FIR" challenges prevailing narratives by depicting the protagonist, a young Muslim man, navigating false accusations and societal prejudices, mirroring the real-life experiences of many individuals facing discrimination based on their religious identity. This aligns with the broader discourse on the urgent need for inclusive narratives that promote secularism, diversity, and social justice in Indian society (Ahmad, 2022). The film's narrative approach exemplifies a crucial effort to counter negative stereotypes and foster empathy towards marginalized communities, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the complex socio-political landscape in India. The film "FIR" narrative delves into critical themes such as religious profiling, the presumption of guilt, and the pursuit of justice, reflecting the broader challenges encountered by the Islamic subaltern community. Through the protagonist's journey from being wrongly accused to advocating for his rights, the film sheds light on societal and institutional biases, resonating with audiences and prompting contemplation on the injustices faced by marginalized groups. This compelling storyline mirrors real-life struggles and underscores the impact of biases on individuals within the Islamic subaltern community, emphasizing the need to address systemic injustices and advocate for equality and fairness in society (Pemberton & Aarten, 2018). Cinematically, "FIR" employs various techniques to underscore its themes and enhance its storytelling. The film's direction, cinematography, and performances work in tandem to create a gripping and emotionally charged narrative. Realistic settings and authentic portrayals add depth to the characters and their experiences, making the story more relatable and impactful. Focusing on the protagonist's personal and emotional struggles, "FIR" fosters a sense of empathy and understanding among viewers. The film "FIR" reception among different audiences highlights its cultural significance, with diverse reactions shaping its impact. Drawing from the influence of cinema on far-right terrorism imagery in the United States, the film's portrayal of a Muslim character accused of terrorism sparked controversy. Conservative groups criticized its sympathetic depiction, challenging prevailing narratives on national security, while liberal and progressive viewers lauded its critique of religious profiling and advocacy for civil liberties. This dichotomy in responses mirrors broader societal debates on sensitive issues, showcasing how films can both challenge and reinforce cultural norms and beliefs. The film's bold approach and compelling storytelling resonated differently across various audience segments, emphasizing the complex interplay between cinema, societal values, and political ideologies (Rich, 2020). The film "FIR" had a significant impact on cultural discourse in Tamil Nadu, particularly regarding the Islamic subaltern community. It sparked discussions about the treatment of Muslims in society and the media, leading to a reassessment of prevailing prejudices and biases. Through its portrayal of Muslim characters with nuance and empathy, the film played a role in fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by the Islamic subaltern community, promoting a more inclusive perspective. This shift in narrative representation aligns with the broader historical context of Islamic literature and the importance of portraying cultural and religious diversity accurately. By highlighting the struggles and experiences of Muslim individuals, "FIR" contributed to reshaping perceptions and promoting social inclusivity in Tamil Nadu. The cinematic analysis of "FIR" delves into how the film portrays Islamic subaltern struggles and influences cultural discourse in Tamil Nadu. Drawing from the insights of various research papers, particularly those focusing

on the representation of marginalized communities in Indian cinema (Malarvizhi & Thiyagarajan, 2024), this analysis explores how "FIR" utilizes thematic elements, character portrayals, and audience reception to advocate for social justice and challenge systemic biases. This study underscores the roles of cinema in acting as a mirror and propelling changes that prevail over social attitudes through wider influence functioning behind this Prejudice, the subsequent inclusion and empathy it creates which is central to any meaningful change affecting marginalized groups thereby sustaining substantial shifts occurring among contemporary Indian society.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for analyzing the representation of Islamic subaltern struggles in the movie "FIR" through cultural film analysis can be enriched by integrating insights from various research contexts. Stuart Hall's theory of representation, which posits that media constructs rather than merely reflects reality, is pivotal in understanding how "FIR" uses language, symbols, and images to convey complex narratives about Islamic identities and experiences. Nadira Khatun's exploration of the changing image of Muslims in Bollywood films highlights how sociopolitical contexts influence the portrayal of Muslim identities, which is crucial for analyzing whether "FIR" challenges or reinforces existing stereotypes (Khatun, 2024). Raymond Williams' concept of cultural hegemony further aids in examining how "FIR" negotiates cultural power relations, either aligning with or opposing dominant societal narratives, thus revealing the ideological underpinnings of the film. This is complemented by Walaa Taha's critical discourse analysis of Hollywood films, which investigates how linguistic features shape the audience's perception of Muslims, providing a framework to analyze the film's narrative structure and character development within its cultural and sociopolitical context (Taha, 2023). By incorporating these theoretical perspectives, the analysis of "FIR" can uncover the semiotic processes that underpin its narrative and visual strategies, revealing how the film constructs and communicates cultural meanings and identities related to Islamic subaltern struggles. This comprehensive approach underscores the active role of representation in media, the negotiation of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses, and the cultural codes that shape audience interpretations.

Research Methodology

A comprehensive cultural film analysis method can be employed to analyze the representation of Islamic subaltern struggles in the movie FIR. This analysis begins with a thorough literature review to identify existing research on Islamic subalternity, its cinematic representations, and key theoretical frameworks. The theoretical framework for this study includes postcolonial theory, which helps in understanding the historical and political contexts of Islamic subaltern struggles, and cultural studies, which analyzes the representation of these struggles in the film (Hall, 1997). Content analysis examines the narrative structure, character development, and recurring themes and motifs related to subaltern struggles. Special attention is given to the dialogues and visual aesthetics, which reveal the cultural and social contexts of the film. Contextual analysis considers the historical and cultural background of the Islamic subaltern struggles depicted in FIR and the film's production context, including the director's vision and the intended audience (Spivak, 2023). Reception analysis explores critical reviews and audience reactions to gauge the film's impact and how it resonates with viewers. Comparative analysis may be used to draw parallels with other films that address similar themes of Islamic subalternity. Applying the theoretical framework, the analysis delves into specific scenes and elements of FIR to uncover the film's cultural significance and

how it portrays Islamic subaltern struggles. The analysis concludes with a summary of findings, reflecting on the film's role in representing and potentially challenging societal perceptions of Islamic subaltern identities. This structured method provides a nuanced understanding of how FIR serves as a cultural text that both reflects and influences societal discourses on Islamic subalternity (Hooks, 2014).

Historical Context of Islamic Subalternity in Tamil Nadu

The Islamic community in Tamil Nadu has a rich history dating back to the 7th and 8th centuries when Arab traders settled along the Coromandel Coast, establishing early Muslim communities in towns like Kayalpattinam, Nagore, and Kilakarai. During the medieval period, these communities flourished, integrating culturally and politically under the Chola and Pandya reigns, which led to the construction of significant mosques like the Nagore Dargah and Kilakarai Jumma Masjid. However, British colonization disrupted traditional economic structures, presenting new challenges for the community (Raja, 2023). Contemporary studies on financial inclusion reveal the impact of financial awareness, access, and quality on the Indian Muslim minority, highlighting the need to address marginalization (Ishtiyahq Nadeem, Waheed, & Fathima M.S, 2024). Muslims in Tamil Nadu face barriers in education and employment, political marginalization, and negative media portrayals, all contributing to their socio-economic disadvantages and sense of alienation (Dr. Shaneha Tarannum, 2024). The Tamil film "FIR (Faizal Ibrahim Raiz)" delves into the historical and socio-political dynamics of the Islamic community in Tamil Nadu, intertwining personal and collective experiences of marginalization and identity struggles. The movie reflects educational advancements and the impact of the Aligarh Movement on Muslim educational activities in Tamil Nadu (Chandra & Thilagam, 2022). Additionally, it aligns with broader trends in Tamil cinema, which increasingly address social issues like caste disparities and gender discussions (Swetha.S, 2022). The film highlights Faizal's struggles with systemic biases and societal stereotypes, mirroring the historical socio-economic challenges faced by Muslims in the region. Faizal's difficulties in securing employment and facing unjust accusations resonate with the community's historical barriers in education and employment, characterized by lower literacy rates and limited access to professional opportunities, perpetuating economic disadvantages. The narrative of "FIR" emphasizes themes of resilience and empowerment, reflecting the broader quest for dignity and justice within the Muslim community in Tamil Nadu. The film portrays Faizal's journey to vindicate himself and uphold his identity amidst formidable obstacles, symbolizing the community's ongoing efforts towards educational and economic empowerment. This narrative aligns with the Progressive poetic tradition's aim to address social injustices and advocate for political reform, showcasing how art can amplify marginalized voices and contribute to broader societal discourse. Furthermore, the film's depiction of media sensationalism highlights how negative stereotypes are perpetuated, exacerbating the cultural challenges and prejudices faced by the community. Understanding these experiences is crucial for creating a more inclusive society and providing culturally safe environments for marginalized communities (Soman & Koci, 2023).

Cultural Identity and Representation

The portrayal of Islamic cultural identity in the Tamil film FIR (Faizal Ibrahim Raiz) delves into the internal struggles and external challenges faced by the Muslim community in Tamil Nadu, echoing themes in Islamic literature. The protagonist, Faizal Ibrahim Raiz, embodies the complexities of being a Muslim in a society plagued by prejudice and stereotypes, particularly the association of Islamic identity with extremism, a notion challenged in the film through critiques of sensationalist media coverage and societal

suspicion. This narrative aligns with the broader discourse on cultural identity, emphasizing the importance of authentic representation to combat Islamophobia and promoting understanding of diverse cultural experiences. Additionally, the film's exploration of societal biases and wrongful accusations reflects Muslim communities' ongoing struggles for equality and recognition, resonating with the themes of cultural identity and representation found in various literary works. The film "FIR" delves into the resilience and strength within the Muslim community, exemplified by Faizal's unwavering determination to clear his name and assert his identity, reflecting the broader socio-political and cultural dynamics shaping Muslims in Tamil Nadu (Kumaragamage, 2022). The challenges faced by the Muslim community, including discriminatory personal laws, are highlighted, emphasizing the quest for acceptance and belonging amidst societal prejudices. Additionally, the film underscores the importance of solidarity, heritage, and empowerment within Islamic cultural identity, portraying scenes of family life, religious practices, and community interactions that offer a rich depiction of Muslim life in the region. Through Faizal's journey marked by struggles for justice and recognition, "FIR" provides a poignant commentary on the complexities of maintaining one's cultural and religious identity in the face of adversity. The Tamil film FIR (Faizal Ibrahim Raiz) intricately portrays Islamic cultural identity through symbols, attire, language, and traditions, offering an authentic depiction of the Muslim community in Tamil Nadu. Drawing from the rich Islamic literary tradition in India, the film likely incorporates symbols like the crescent moon and star, the prayer rug, and the Quran to underscore the characters' deep-rooted faith and devotion. The depiction of the mosque as a central symbol highlights its significance as a place of worship, gathering, and solidarity. Traditional attire, including men in kurta-pajamas or pathani suits and Muslim skullcap and women in hijabs and burqas, reflects the practices of modesty and respect deeply ingrained in Islamic culture. The film's portrayal aligns with the cultural identity construction through language choice observed among Tamil speakers in India, emphasizing the importance of symbols, attire, and traditions in representing the Muslim community's identity authentically (Eldho & Kumar, 2024). The incorporation of Tamil and Arabic dialogue in "FIR" reflects the linguistic diversity and religious heritage of the community, with phrases like "Assalamu Alaikum" and "Insha'Allah" seamlessly integrated. The film vividly portrays Islamic traditions such as daily prayers, Ramadan fasting, iftars, and Eid celebrations, offering an authentic depiction of Muslim characters' spiritual practices. By weaving these cultural specifics into the narrative, "FIR" not only showcases the unique identity of the Muslim community but also addresses themes of cultural pride, societal prejudice, and the resilience of marginalized groups, providing a respectful representation of Islamic life within the Tamil context.

Character Development and Subaltern Voices

In "FIR (Faizal Ibrahim Raiz)," the protagonist Faizal Ibrahim Raiz embodies the struggles of young Muslims in Tamil Nadu, facing wrongful terrorism accusations that highlight the pervasive discrimination and profiling endured by the Islamic subaltern community. Faizal's narrative underscore's themes of injustice, resilience, and the unwavering quest for redemption amidst societal and institutional biases. This portrayal resonates with the broader exploration of Muslim characters in literature, countering stereotypes and depicting the multifaceted experiences and resilience within the Islamic community. The novel delves into the complexities of navigating systemic injustices and the enduring pursuit of vindication and societal acceptance. Interactions with Faizal's friends and community members in "FIR" offer a multifaceted view of the Islamic subaltern community, showcasing diverse responses to challenges like terrorism and discrimination. Some characters provide support, while others express fear and skepticism, reflecting

internal conflicts and varied reactions. These interactions highlight the pervasive fear of unfair targeting and the pressure to prove loyalty to the nation. The series paints a vivid picture of systemic challenges and resilience in Tamil Nadu's Muslim community, emphasizing themes of identity, prejudice, and perseverance. "FIR" offers a nuanced portrayal of the complex realities faced by the Islamic subaltern community, emphasizing their struggles and strengths (Khan et al., 2024). The Tamil film "FIR" depicts subaltern struggles and resistance against systemic oppression. Drawing on themes of caste discrimination and social injustice, the film echoes historical anti-caste narratives demanding equality for the marginalized. It aligns with the trend in Tamil cinema where filmmakers from diverse backgrounds, including Dalits, represent their lives authentically and challenge past misrepresentations (Jehoson Jireh, 2024). By giving voice to the protagonist's struggles, "FIR" sheds light on the broader fight against systemic oppression experienced by subaltern groups, reflecting the ongoing battle for social justice and equality. The protagonist's journey symbolizes the broader resistance of marginalized groups against unjust systems, shedding light on issues like racial profiling, discrimination, and misuse of power by authorities (Moolla, 2023). Through his resilience and determination to seek justice, the protagonist embodies the struggles of subaltern communities, highlighting social and institutional biases. This narrative mirrors themes of resistance and empowerment found in feminist dystopian novels and the representation of Islam in anime. Supporting characters amplify themes of unity and communal struggle, underscoring the importance of unity, support, and justice (Rahaman Zahin, 2022). Their interactions and alliances contribute to the portrayal of resistance against dominant ideologies, showcasing how a cohesive community can advocate for social change. Visual and linguistic symbols in films convey subaltern resistance. Analysis of *Gangubai Kathiawadi* (2022) and *Black Panther* (2018) highlights symbolic resistance against injustice and postcolonial discourse (Kulaya Pongpan, 2023). "FIR" amplifies subaltern struggles, emphasizing resilience and strength in their quest for justice and equality. Acknowledging the historically contingent nature of civil society and the defining role of the state in shaping struggles is crucial (Rekhviashvili, 2023). Ultimately, "FIR" sheds light on the challenges faced by marginalized groups and their fight for a just society.

Narrative Techniques and Storytelling

The narrative development in the Tamil movie "FIR" likely aligns with the exploration of narrative abilities in Tamil-speaking children with hearing differences, emphasizing the importance of storytelling for conveying experiences (Venkatraman, Ganesh, & Muthu, 2024). The portrayal of sexual ferocity in Tamil movies, as seen in Chennai productions, may influence the depiction of systemic injustices and subaltern issues in "FIR," potentially shaping the protagonist's struggles and societal context (Karupiah, 2023). The sentiment analysis techniques proposed for Tamil language sentiment analysis, especially the Long Short-Term Memory model, could be instrumental in understanding how the film's narrative structure evokes empathy and sheds light on marginalized communities. The film "FIR" employs a compelling narrative structure that immerses the audience in the protagonist's challenges, unveiling his backstory and the discrimination he faces through poignant flashbacks. Character development is pivotal, showcasing the protagonist's personal growth as a reflection of broader issues like racial profiling and systemic bias. The film utilizes visual and linguistic symbolism, including protest scenes and clashes with authorities, to underscore themes of resistance and resilience, highlighting the individual's struggle against oppression and the collective resilience of marginalized communities (Sanyal, 2024). By intertwining these storytelling elements, "FIR" delivers a powerful message on social justice and equality, emphasizing

the importance of solidarity in the fight for a more just and equitable society. The Tamil movie "FIR" intricately integrates and portrays the struggles of the Islamic community, shedding light on their experiences of prejudice and systemic discrimination, reflecting real-world challenges faced by many in the community. Drawing from the rich history of Islamic literature in Tamil Nadu and the narrative tradition of Islamic Tamil literature, the film delves into the protagonist's journey as a young Muslim man navigating through legal battles and societal bias, exposing pervasive stereotypes and institutionalized racism encountered by Muslims. This thematic exploration aligns with the broader cinematic trend in Tamil films like "Pariyerum Perumal" and "Kanni Maadam," which address social injustices and marginalized communities, advocating for equality and empowerment. The film "FIR" likely aims to raise awareness about the challenges faced by the Islamic community, emphasizing the need for societal change and inclusivity (Kumar et al., 2022). The narrative presented in the film "FIR" sheds light on the impact of prejudices on the protagonist's personal and professional life, showcasing how these biases influence his relationships, career opportunities, and sense of self. The film realistically portrays media sensationalism, and the stigmatization faced by Muslims, highlighting the community's ongoing struggles. Through the protagonist's unwavering pursuit of justice and truth, "FIR" not only underscores the resilience and fortitude of the Islamic community but also advocates for a deeper understanding and empathy towards their challenges, advocating strongly for social justice and equality.

Social Realism and Cinematic Techniques

The film "FIR" utilizes realism to authentically portray the everyday lives of the Islamic subaltern community, capturing their struggles and experiences in a nuanced manner. By adopting a realistic narrative style and focusing on mundane yet significant aspects of daily life, such as family interactions, communal prayers, and cultural practices, the film provides an intimate insight into the personal and social spheres of the Islamic community (Alraddadi, 2024). Through detailed scenes, it highlights the challenges faced by the community, including societal prejudices, economic hardships, and the constant scrutiny of law enforcement, all depicted with a grounding in realism to make their experiences relatable and poignant. By eschewing melodrama and sensationalism, these portrayals effectively engage audiences with the struggles and aspirations of the Islamic subaltern community, fostering empathy and understanding towards their lived realities. Such realistic depictions, as demonstrated in different media forms, not only enhance emotional impact but also contribute to a deeper appreciation of the diverse narratives and identities within these communities, ultimately challenging stereotypes and promoting inclusivity in storytelling. In "FIR," cinematic techniques play a crucial role in portraying subaltern struggles through the masterful use of camera angles, lighting, and sound. Close-up shots and tight framing effectively capture the protagonist's emotional turmoil and isolation, highlighting the personal impact of systemic discrimination. Additionally, low-angle shots are skillfully employed to depict oppressive power dynamics, especially when portraying law enforcement and authorities, creating an intimidating and overbearing presence on screen. These techniques not only enhance the audience's immersive experience but also provide a visceral portrayal of the challenges faced by subaltern individuals, emphasizing the struggles and injustices they endure within the societal framework (Bouclin, 2024). The use of lighting and sound design in cinema plays a pivotal role in conveying emotions and themes, as seen in the portrayal of uncertainty and fear faced by the Islamic community through dim, shadowy scenes and the severity of their plight through harsh, stark lighting in interrogation scenes (Wang, 2024). Additionally, the sound design, including a tense ambient score during conflict moments and diegetic sounds like the call to prayer

or marketplace noises, further enhances the narrative's depth and emotional impact, grounding the story in the community's everyday reality. These cinematic techniques not only vividly depict the struggles of marginalized communities but also evoke profound emotional responses, immersing viewers in the characters' quest for justice and dignity.

Intersectionality and Social Hierarchies

The film "FIR" delves into the intersectionality within the subaltern Islamic community, showcasing the compounded discrimination faced by the protagonist and his community. It explores how religion, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity intersect to create a complex experience of marginalization, with the protagonist navigating religious prejudice, economic instability, and limited opportunities (Khan et al., 2024). Additionally, the film sheds light on gender-specific challenges faced by women in the community, highlighting the struggle to balance cultural expectations with the pursuit of independence, thus expanding the narrative scope of intersectionality. This portrayal aligns with the broader scholarly discussions on the multifaceted nature of discrimination and the importance of recognizing intersecting realities within marginalized communities. "FIR" delves into the intricate struggles faced by characters grappling with multiple forms of discrimination, shedding light on the complexities of their experiences (Anwer & Chaudhary, 2024). The interactions portrayed in the narrative, such as encounters with law enforcement's racial profiling and media-driven stereotypes, vividly illustrate how intersecting identities shape their daily realities and hinder their quest for justice and equality. By presenting a nuanced depiction of intersectionality within the Islamic subaltern community, the novel underscores the urgent need to comprehend and address these intertwined oppressions to advance social justice and foster a more inclusive society. The portrayal of social hierarchies and power dynamics in "FIR" sheds light on the systemic inequalities faced by the Islamic subaltern community, reflecting broader societal structures. The film meticulously represents the protagonist's life as a microcosm of these inequalities, emphasizing the barriers imposed by religious and socioeconomic status. Authority figures like police officers, government officials, and media personnel are depicted with dominant camera angles and imposing body language, highlighting their power and control, while the protagonist and his community are often shown in vulnerable positions, emphasizing their marginalized status (Renata & Mustofa, 2023). This representation aligns with the concept of the subaltern, showcasing the struggles and challenges faced by marginalized communities within the film's narrative, contributing to a deeper understanding of the complexities of social dynamics and power structures. The dynamics portrayed in the film "FIR" effectively highlight the entrenched biases and discriminatory practices that maintain social hierarchies. The wrongful accusations and mistreatment of the protagonist by the police exemplify the prejudiced power dynamics that criminalize and oppress minority communities, shedding light on the systemic injustices prevalent in society. Furthermore, the film delves into internal hierarchies within the community, exploring how factors like gender and age influence status and authority, thus emphasizing the complexities of power dynamics within different social groups (Nathansohn, 2019). By critiquing these pervasive power imbalances, "FIR" prompts a critical reevaluation of the systemic structures that perpetuate inequality and injustice, advocating for a more equitable and just society (Varghese, 2020).

Themes of Discrimination and Resistance

The film "FIR" intricately weaves key themes of discrimination faced by the Islamic community, offering a poignant critique of societal biases and systemic injustice. It delves into the pervasive nature of religious

profiling, showcasing how the protagonist, a young Muslim man, is unfairly targeted and accused solely based on his religious identity. This theme is further amplified by the depiction of law enforcement practices, where prejudiced policing and wrongful accusations illustrate the institutional discrimination that Muslims often encounter (Yilmaz, 2023). Additionally, the film aligns with the broader context of Muslim Diasporic Cinema, which aims to claim a Muslim identity unapologetically without defining its aspects, depicting the everyday lives of Muslims and their struggles against discrimination and stereotypes (Shiekh, 2023). Through these narratives, the film highlights the impact of inequality, disadvantage, and discrimination on Muslim family life, emphasizing the urgent need for policy solutions that address these issues. The perpetuation of stereotypes by the media, as highlighted in various research papers, plays a crucial role in exacerbating public mistrust and fear towards the Islamic community. Biased reporting and sensationalized news coverage contribute to the dissemination of inaccurate and harmful representations of Muslims, impacting their social interactions, job opportunities, and overall community relations. This negative portrayal extends beyond legal and media realms, influencing everyday life and perpetuating discrimination. By shedding light on the social isolation and economic hardships faced by the Islamic community, films like "FIR" humanize their struggles, fostering empathy and advocating for a more just and equitable society, thus emphasizing the multifaceted nature of discrimination and the need for societal change. The portrayal of resistance and resilience against oppression in "FIR" aligns with various scholarly perspectives on acts of defiance and collective action. The protagonist's unwavering pursuit of justice amidst adversity reflects personal resilience and a refusal to yield to oppressive forces. Additionally, the community's solidarity and collective resistance, as depicted in the film through support for the protagonist, peaceful protests, and legal challenges to injustice, underscore the strength derived from communal unity and shared goals (Merriman, 2023). These actions exemplify how individuals and groups can mobilize against systemic injustices, showcasing the power of perseverance and solidarity in the face of adversity. The importance of familial bonds in resisting oppression is highlighted in various contexts, showcasing how families provide emotional and moral support to protagonists facing discrimination. The narrative emphasizes the power of perseverance and hope through small but significant victories, such as finding unexpected allies and gaining public support, underscoring the significance of resistance and resilience in the face of injustice. These representations inspire audiences to support ongoing struggles for equity and human rights, showcasing the crucial role of familial support and collective resilience in combating discrimination and promoting social change (Murry et al., 2023).

Impact of Socio-Political Climate

The release of the Tamil film "FIR" in 2022 coincided with a tumultuous socio-political landscape in India, shaped by the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic led to significant disruptions in social and economic structures, exacerbating existing challenges (Perumal et al., 2022). The government faced criticism for its management of the pandemic, as well as contentious issues like the farmers' protests and the implementation of new agricultural laws. Against this backdrop, "FIR" emerged as a cultural artifact reflecting and responding to the complex socio-political environment in the country (Rajendran et al., 2022). During a period marked by heightened scrutiny of media and entertainment content, there was a notable focus on narratives that either aligned with or challenged prevailing political sentiments. The film "FIR" delved into themes of terrorism and Islamophobia, resonating deeply within this charged atmosphere and reflecting contemporary socio-political tensions. By portraying a Muslim protagonist wrongly accused of terrorism, the film engaged with ongoing debates on religious profiling

and civil liberties, thus emerging as a culturally and politically significant release. This portrayal underscores the impact of media in shaping perceptions of Muslim identity and the broader discourse on nationalism and historical struggles, as explored in mainstream Indian cinema. The representation of the Islamic subaltern community in the Indian context, as depicted in media such as the film "FIR," is deeply influenced by contemporary events and political dynamics. The portrayal of Muslims in the media during heightened communal tensions and a polarized socio-political climate often reflects negative stereotypes and prejudice (Amanullah et al., 2024). This environment of suspicion and bias against the Muslim community, fueled by issues of national security and religious identity, shapes narratives where Muslim characters are frequently depicted in stereotypical and unfavorable roles. In such scenarios, narratives like "FIR" focusing on a Muslim protagonist wrongfully accused of terrorism serve to highlight and challenge these prevalent biases and prejudices, shedding light on the challenges faced by the Islamic subaltern community in the face of such societal dynamics. The film "FIR" delves into the intricate relationship between media, political rhetoric, and the marginalization of minority communities in India, echoing the themes explored in various research papers (Sharma, 2024). By portraying the protagonist's quest for justice, the film challenges stereotypes and sheds light on the struggles faced by the Islamic subaltern, emphasizing issues of discrimination, identity, and the pursuit of truth within a biased system. Through this narrative, "FIR" serves as a powerful commentary on how current events and political dynamics influence the portrayal of marginalized groups in Indian cinema, offering a poignant reflection on the impact of societal realities on cinematic representations of minority communities.

Audience Reception and Cultural Impact

The film "FIR" received a diverse reception, showcasing its intricate themes and socio-political nuances. Tamil cinema enthusiasts lauded the movie for its compelling storyline, powerful acting, and courageous exploration of delicate topics such as terrorism and Islamophobia, with critics appreciating its efforts to humanize the Muslim lead character and challenge stereotypes prevalent in Indian cinema, marking a departure from mainstream portrayals of Muslims. However, the film also encountered backlash and controversy from certain factions, indicating the contentious nature of its narrative and the bold stance it took on sensitive societal issues. The varied reactions to "FIR" underscore the film's impact in sparking discussions and reflections on complex social realities within the cinematic landscape. The dichotomous reception of the film "FIR," with conservative audiences and nationalistic groups expressing discomfort over its sympathetic portrayal of a Muslim character accused of terrorism while liberal and progressive viewers appreciated its critical stance on religious profiling and advocacy for civil liberties, highlights the polarized nature of contemporary Indian society where cinema serves as a battleground for ideological conflicts. This scenario reflects the broader historical context of how mainstream Indian cinema has shaped Muslim identity narratives, particularly in the context of Indian nationalism and the Indo-Pak Partition, where stereotypical perceptions have influenced public opinion and collective identities. Furthermore, the study on film ideology and literacy emphasizes the importance of critical engagement with movies to provoke discussions on representation, justice, and communal harmony, showcasing how films like "FIR" can entertain while also stimulating meaningful dialogue on societal issues. The Tamil film "FIR" made a significant impact on cultural discourse regarding the Islamic subaltern community in Tamil Nadu by addressing critical issues of religious profiling and discrimination. The movie, released in a politically charged environment, featured a Muslim protagonist wrongly accused of terrorism, resonating with many who felt marginalized by mainstream media representations. "FIR" challenged stereotypical

portrayals of Muslims by humanizing its characters and depicting their struggles against systemic bias and prejudice, thus bringing to the forefront the challenges faced by the Islamic subaltern community in the region. The film "FIR" sparked crucial conversations about the treatment of the Islamic subaltern community in Tamil Nadu, prompting reflections on societal and institutional challenges faced by Muslims. Its reception highlighted existing divides in public opinion while opening dialogue on civil rights, religious freedom, and social justice. By addressing these themes, "FIR" contributed to a broader understanding and empathy towards the Islamic subaltern community, influencing cultural narratives and promoting inclusivity in Tamil cinema and society.

CONCLUSION

The film "FIR" powerfully explores the struggles of the Islamic subaltern community in contemporary India. Through its gripping narrative and empathetic character portrayals, it challenges stereotypes and highlights systemic biases that marginalize Muslims. By focusing on the personal journey of its protagonist, "FIR" humanizes the experiences of those wrongfully accused based on their religious identity, prompting broader reflections on justice, prejudice, and civil rights. The film's depiction of religious profiling and the presumption of guilt resonates with the real-world challenges faced by many Muslims in India. It underscores the pervasive impact of institutional and societal biases and fosters empathy and understanding among viewers. The realistic settings, strong performances, and emotionally charged storytelling contribute to a deeply engaging cinematic experience. The reception of "FIR" highlights its cultural significance. Praised for its bold approach to sensitive issues and nuanced portrayal of a Muslim protagonist, it also sparked controversy, reflecting broader socio-political divides in India. In Tamil Nadu, the film significantly impacted cultural discourse regarding the Islamic subaltern community, encouraging a re-evaluation of existing prejudices and biases. "FIR" demonstrates the power of cinema in influencing societal attitudes and initiating social change. By addressing critical themes like religious profiling and the quest for justice, the film entertains, educates, and inspires. It exemplifies how cinema can represent marginalized communities, challenge dominant narratives, and foster a deeper understanding of the injustices faced by the Islamic subaltern community. Ultimately, "FIR" stands as a powerful reminder of the capacity of film to influence societal attitudes, promote empathy, and advocate for a more just and inclusive world.

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