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In between Real and Rhetoric: Kashmir in Indian Cinema

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ABSTRACT

The valley of Kashmir is known everywhere throughout the world for its magnificence and appeal. Set like a jewelled crown on the guide of India, Kashmir is a multi-faceted precious stone, changing its tones with the seasons-dependably extremely wonderful. The Kashmir valley is arranged around 300 kms from Jammu crosswise over forested gorges and soaks mountain passes. The emerald valley of Kashmir is supported in the Himalayas, under the precious stone blue skies, against the foundation of snow-topped mountains. It is an enchantment place where there is shiny streams, waterways, crisp water lakes, pine, deodar and chinar backwoods, snow clad mountains, shimmering waterfalls, shikaras, green glades and verdant inclines loaded with blossoms of energetic hues. It is an oval level more than 5000 feet high and confined by three Himalayan extents – the Karakoram, Zanskar and Pir Panjal. Two noteworthy Himalayan extents, the Great Himalayan Range and the Pir Panjal ranges.

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In between Real and Rhetoric: Kashmir in Indian Cinema

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I. INTRODUCTION

The valley of Kashmir is known everywhere throughout the world for its magnificence and appeal. Set like a jewelled crown on the guide of India, Kashmir is a multi-faceted precious stone, changing its tones with the seasons-dependably extremely wonderful. The Kashmir valley is arranged around 300 kms from Jammu crosswise over forested gorges and soaks mountain passes. The emerald valley of Kashmir is supported in the Himalayas, under the precious stone blue skies, against the foundation of snow-topped mountains. It is an enchantment place where there is shiny streams, waterways, crisp water lakes, pine, deodar and chinar backwoods, snow clad mountains, shimmering waterfalls, shikaras, green glades and verdant inclines loaded with blossoms of energetic hues. It is an oval level more than 5000 feet high and confined by three Himalayan extents – the Karakoram, Zaskar and Pir Panjal. Two noteworthy Himalayan extents, the Great Himalayan Range and the Pir Panjal ranges.

II. INDIAN SILVER SCREEN AND KASHMIR

Indian silver screen which is one of the world's greatest film businessess, makes the world's greatest film group of onlookers. It constitutes different classes of movies delivered over the India, including the true to life culture of Mumbai alongside the true to life conventions of territories, for example, Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh. India is the world's biggest film creating nation and produces a great many movies consistently. Indian movies to a vast surviving

across the board all through the world and have been an incredible impact in the general public. The Indian film assumes an extraordinary part in changing the impression of individuals. Nonetheless, Hindi movies represent half of the aggregate Income created from silver screen in India. The arrangement of 100% outside direct Venture has influenced the Indian film to advertise alluring for remote undertakings, for example, twentieth Century Fox, Sony Pictures, and AOL Time Warner and so on.

When it comes to Bollywood, Kashmir always being a symbol of love and romance. The beautiful scenic valleys and Pasture laden mountains of Kashmir caught the eye of Indian film maker.

Kashmir which is believed to be one of the most beautiful places on earth is known for its beautiful and natural scenery and verdure throughout the world. Beauty beyond imagination makes Kashmir a paradise. It is not enough to say that Kashmir is beautiful. The natural beauties of Kashmir have earned the title “the Switzerland of East” and “the Heaven on Earth”.

A large portion of the pre-89 Bollywood cinemas shot in Kashmir or about Kashmir, scarcely speak to any constituent of Kashmiri personality - be it culture, dress, cooking, music, or dialect. However, the post-1989 films totally changed image of Kashmir for Bollywood, media houses, potential sightseers and the common man.

There are around more than 70 film been shot in Kashmir valley, but for Hindi film makers Kashmir was merely been a film set and nothing more than that. Hardly there are instances when Kashmiri culture and other aspects have got a chance to be portrayed in these films.

From the 1960's to 1970's Kashmir in Indian cinema was known for romance and there is abrupt change from 1989 when the insurgency was started. As a result more militancy projected films were shot by keeping all the real culture and character of Kashmiri's aside. But again in these films the actual Kashmir's culture has not been filmed and the characters' were limited to houseboat owner or shikara riders. Some of the prominent films shot during that time was 1965 movie *Arzoo*, *jab jab phool khile (1965)* and *Kashmir ki kali (1964)*.

Bollywood has been closely associated with Kashmir since very long. Numerous films have been made in Kashmir, be it *Aap Aaye Bahaar Aayee*, *Jungle*, *Kashmir Ki Kali* or the later works like *Roja*, *Mission Kashmir* or the recent one *Tahaan*. However, Kashmir's portrayal in these films has always been questioned. Militancy in Kashmir' as a topic has always appealed to Indian film makers. It has been getting immense attention from Bollywood directors, but they are unable to break any Stereotype and Failed to deliver real picture of Kashmir and the more commercial aspect of films has made by the film makers.

In a movie like *Kashmir ki Kali* and *Roti(1974)* the beauty of kashmiri women has been presented. The actual culture and character of Kashmir again missing in between the lines of the natural scenery and the romance. The culture which both Kalhana and Mirza Haider Doughlat had praised was somewhere buried in portrayal of romantic Kashmir and the terrorised Kashmir.

One of the major films that used Kashmir as a background was *Roti (1974)*. The film was directed by Manmohan Desai and starred Rajesh Khanna, Mumtaz, Om Prakash, Vijay Arora, and Nirupa Roy. The film story is about Mangal (Rajesh Khanna), a criminal, who escapes from jail and comes to Kashmir after apparently killing a person on the train. He takes shelter in home of the man he killed in the train to hide himself from the police, where he meets Bijli (Mumtaz) and

falls in love her. *Roti* tried to replicate the Kashmiri traditional dress, *pheran*, and a head scarf that was supposed to a traditional Kashmiri head dress. But that was about it, Kashmir or Kashmiri culture was more or less again reduced to a scenic set.

Tahaan which means merciful, is a new age film on Kashmir capturing the state of today, stories of the ordinary family, caught in the midst of cross-border terrorism and between the eternal conflict of good and evil. Like the state of Kashmir and its people, simplicity forms the core thread of the film, build around the love of a young lad with his pet and the manner in external factors, including terrorism, threatening the peaceful world. *Tahaan* is the only film that shows some real culture, tradition and the life of rural Kashmir. There is a heart-breaking shot, where the houses of Kashmiri Pandits are shown burnt with no inhabitant living in them. It depicts the pain of Kashmiri Pundits, who lost their ancestral houses, whereas houses of Kashmiri Muslims, which were burnt in different encounters, have not been given any space. The film overall also shows bias and prejudice of the director, who has only shown Kashmiri Pundits part of the exile and not what a Muslim Kashmiri still lives with.

Abdul Raof Mir (2008) concludes that even though various films have been made on Kashmir, only a modicum of films or none of these films portrayed indigenous cultural space of Kashmir. The celebrated brotherhood between Kashmiri Pandits and Kashmiri Muslims was never tried to be publicized by film makers. It was only in Jagmohan period in Kashmir, the animosity aroused in non-communal Kashmir. The political structures were structured in a manner that led to communal confrontation in the Valley. The people who had lived sine centuries harmoniously became the victims of communal politics, thus leading them to exterminate each other. This phenomenal catastrophe was portrayed in films in

enthusiastically without letting people to question the veracity.¹

Ananya Jahanara Kabir (2010) examines the depiction of the Kashmiri protagonist in three popular Indian films, viz *Roja* (1992), *Mission Kashmir* (2000) and *Yahaan* (2005) in order to argue for a new emphasis, cumulatively evident through these films, on the Kashmiri as Muslim in the history of Bollywood's long engagement with the Valley of Kashmir. In analysing closely the visual, narrative, cinematic and affective aspects of this development, and in contextualising it against global and local politics of Islam, the article aims to contribute to a better understanding of how Kashmir and Islam, while topics with separate discursive genealogies within Bollywood, have converged decisively at a certain historical juncture, so as to open up new possibilities for the ideological cooptation of the Kashmir conflict and the place of Muslims in India, by the popular cinematic apparatus.²

Bollywood has been overlooking the roots of Kashmir conflict by focusing more on beauty of Kashmir in its films and depicting so called bravery of Indian soldiers unnecessarily. As per the study, Kashmiri's are projected as unconventional victims of the dispute rather than active participants.

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¹ (Mir, Abdul Raoof. 2006-2008, '*Changing Face of Kashmir in Bollywood*,' M.A Dissertation in Communication, Sarojini Naidu School of Fine Arts and Communication, University of Hyderabad)

² (Kabir Ananya, Jahanara. December 2010, '*Contemporary South Asia: The Kashmiri as Muslim in Bollywood's New Kashmir Films*' (Routledge, Vol. 18 Issue 4).

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