

The Construction and Representation of Muslim Identity in Bollywood Commercial Films

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Abstract : The utmost controversial issue that Bollywood movies deal with is religious conflicts and the representation of Islam and or Muslims. The main objective of this paper is to examine that, how Muslim identity is constructed in Bollywood commercial films through the representation of Muslims and/or Islam. Two hypotheses are developed for this study, i.e., (1) Bollywood commercial films often portray the stereotypical image of Muslims. (2) The portrayal of Muslims and Islam in Bollywood commercial films is often negative. (3) Bollywood commercial films frequently construct a wrong and fake identity of Muslims through an inappropriate representation of Muslims and Islam. This study employs qualitative research techniques. To examine the hypotheses of this paper, 10 Bollywood commercial films produced in between 2000-2018 are selected purposively such as Fiza (2000), Gadar: Ek Prem Katha (2001), Company (2002), Aamir (2008), Kurbaan (2009), Anwar (2010), My name is Khan (2010), Raanjhanaa (2013), Omerta (2017) and Pari (2018). By conducting textual analyses of the above mentioned Bollywood commercial films, this paper focuses on different approaches of Muslim identity and their construction as well as representation in Bollywood commercial films in the light of scholarly work in film and cultural studies. Though 10 Bollywood commercial films are selected for contextual analysis, other Bollywood films by other directors are also mentioned in order to establish the hypotheses of this study. Framing theory is used to analyze the media contents. Findings of this study show that all hypotheses are accepted. Bollywood commercial films continually represent Islam and Muslims in incorrect ways and by doing so Bollywood commercial films construct a fallacious Muslim identity. Though the sample size of contents can be considered as a limitation of this study, the findings of the study reveal that how Bollywood commercial film is setting agenda to manipulate the image of Muslims and Islam not only in India but all over the world.

Keywords : Bollywood commercial films, Muslim identity, misrepresentation, representation, stereotypical

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