

# Hindu-Muslim Relationship in Bollywood in post 26/11: A Content Analysis of Movies (2008-2018)

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## Abstract

This study investigates the representations of Hindu-Muslim relationship in Bollywood movies from 2008 to 2018. It is assumed that after 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks, which are known as 26/11, conflicts between Hindus and Muslims have escalated. Since Indian people are extreme fans of movies, especially Bollywood movies, in this regard, it is expected that media could play a significant role in increasing or alleviating the conflicts by influencing people's attitudes and opinions. This research seeks to examine the extent and modality of the representation of Hindu-Muslim relationships in Bollywood after the 2008 Mumbai attacks. The study was conducted through a content analysis of 11 Bollywood movies, which were selected from 70 Muslim-characters-based movies. Favorable, unfavorable, neutral and unclear were the four factors through which the movies' contents were analyzed. The overall analysis of these factors indicate that 66.17% of the scenes were favorable, 14.70% were unfavorable, 2.94% were neutral, and 16.17% presented unclear images of Hindu-Muslim relationship in Bollywood movies. The results also indicate that Bollywood is not only depicting a positive image of this relationship, but also tries to tighten the bonds of the two religions, and in a broader sense, ties the two neighboring countries, Pakistan and India.

**Keywords:** Bollywood, Hindu-Muslim relationship, Mumbai Attacks 26/11, Representation

## 1. Introduction

Despite its rivalry with a number of its neighbors, as well as a number of controversies surrounding its more recent history, India, as the world's largest democracy, is generally considered a peaceful nation with an eclectic and harmonious population (consisting of various religious and cultural groups). The nation has not only the largest Hindu population in the world, but also has the third largest Muslim population in the world with more than 100 million Muslims living in the country. Nevertheless, the cultural and religious harmony in India, since its independence in 1947, has been tested on a number of occasions. In particular, the Muslim-Hindu communal harmony and socio-political sensitivity are important areas that have challenged India's domestic policies and international image. This article examines the contemporary representation of Islam and Indian Muslims, as portrayed in Bollywood movies.

Nowadays, the media plays a crucial role in shaping people's minds. As an example, after 26/11 attacks, Bollywood actors and celebrities have given their condolence to the people who have lost their family members through different types of media, to create a peaceful atmosphere and prevent Hindus from further serious riots and actions that are based on ignorance. They have also acted in various movies to convey the message that those who committed the 26/11 attacks have been terrorists and were not their fellow citizens. In other words, Bollywood actors did not adopt the anti-Muslim feelings, as those implemented in numerous Hollywood movies, because of the unity mentioned before.

Moreover, since Indian history reveals significant contradictions, several Indian filmmakers have targeted this history and its nationhood to produce movies, while it may change during

the time as the target audience is changing (Srivastava, 2009). Numerous Indian movies are based on reality in general, and historical issues in particular, several of which, such as *The Dirty Picture*, *Sultan*, *Tiger Zinda Hai*, and *Sanju* will be investigated in this research.

This article aims to apply content analysis on a few selected movies to analyze the Hindu-Muslim relationship in post 26/11 attacks. Separately, this research will attempt to answer the validity of the existence of adverse Hindu-Muslim representation in Bollywood by independently examining and analyzing numerous movies along with an admixture of primary and secondary sources. However, the article will argue that despite these references, the popularity and aura that surrounds Muslims as actors, producers and related movie making agents (e.g., movie songs, music, and choreography) in Bollywood have increased in the years following the 26/11 attacks.

Additionally, it will be pointed out that in reality, much of the negative images presented for Muslims and Pakistan as terrorists was further fueled by the 2008 Mumbai attack, known as India's 9/11 and called 26/11. These attacks led to a rise in Hindu nationalistic stance against Muslims. The increased terror alerts and circumstances since 2008, combined with political ambitions to gain from such circumstances, have thus surged an increase in the local and international audience to be wary and critical of genres and alleged ulterior motives (such as conspiracies) in Bollywood. For example, one can consider a recent ban of an Indian Bollywood movie on historical and religious grounds in Muslim Malaysia (Latiff, 2018), and a movie that was banned for Hindu audiences, and attacked by all India's religions (Pandey, 2014).

This paper first presents a brief explanation of the two religious

groups (Muslims and Hindus) and their main struggles and division in India. It then discusses Bollywood and its most influential and famous actors, and the relation of the actors with one another. Following that, the paper states the main problem it addresses as well as its main research questions. The next part of the article will be a review of the literature, followed by research methodology, in which content analysis as the primary method used in this paper, the turning point of the paper, and the procedures of data sampling will be explained. The paper will then discuss its main findings on the representation of Hindu-Muslim relations in Bollywood movies.

## **2. A Brief Explanation of Hindu-Muslim Relations, their Divisions and Struggles**

Throughout centuries, Hindu and Muslim cultures have significantly integrated across India; Muslims, alongside Hindus have had important functions in Indian politics, economics, and culture and both groups have had peaceful cooperation during history. As an example, one can cite the commission of Akbar, the Mughal Empire, to translate Hindu masterpieces into Persian (Ahmed, 2008), or Girish Chandra Sen who was the first to produce the complete translation of Quran into Bengali in 1886 (Akter Banu, 1992). Peerzada Salman, a cultural critic, asserted that after the partition of India in the 1950s, Muslim writers, actors, and musicians made a significant contribution to the growth of India's cultural industry (Shams, 2013).

National census of India declared that India has the largest number of Hindus (1.2 billion or 79.8% of the Indian population) and the third largest number of Muslims (14.2% of the Indian

population); in fact, almost 10% of the world's Muslim population live in India. Its people and history are also culturally and linguistically linked to neighboring countries, Pakistan and Bangladesh; together, the three countries represent more than 30% of the global Muslim population (Sen Nag, 2018).

In comparison with other religious communities in India, Muslims have a much higher Total Fertility Rate (TFR). Sociologists Roger and Patricia Jeffery state that socio-economic conditions are the chief reason for the higher birth rates of Muslims rather than religious determinism (Niaz & Siddiq, 2018). Indian Muslims are weaker and less educated, compared to their Hindu counterparts. The well-known Indian sociologist, B.K. Prasad, states that infant mortality rates among Muslims are about 12% lower than those among Hindus, since India's Muslim population lives in town compared to their Hindu counterparts (Niaz & Siddiq, 2018).

The outlined partition of India in the Indian Independence Act 1947 led to the termination of the British Indian Empire and the British Raj (Khan, 2007). This brought about conflicts between the newly established states of India and Pakistan, and also dislocated a large number of people (approximately 12.5 million). Loss of life is estimated from several hundred thousand to a million. Calculations of the numbers of individuals crossing the borders between India and Pakistan in 1947 vary from 10 to 12 million (Talbot & Singh, 2009). An atmosphere of mutual aggression and uncertainty was created by this partition between India and Pakistan, which has troubled the two country's relationship to this day. This partition affected the life of Muslims who have stayed in India, as well as that of Hindus who have stayed in Pakistan. Two-thirds of the Muslims inhabited Pakistan (east and West Pakistan) after the

partition of India in 1947. However, one third inhabited India. According to 1951 statistics, 7,226,000 Muslims moved from India to Pakistan (both west and east), whereas 7,249,000 Sikhs and Hindus went from Pakistan to India (both West and East) (Ahmad, n.d.).

The attention of most of the researchers who have worked on the Hindu-Muslim relationship is mostly on the Indo-Pak relations as there were always conflicts between Muslim and Hindu since the partition. For instance, one can refer to the famous story of the destruction of the Babri mosque on December 6, 1992, which was performed by a religious Hindu group called 'kar sevaks' (Momin, 2017), organized by an Indian right-wing Hindu nationalist organization (Vishva Hindu Parishad). This incident resulted in India's worst religious riots since the country's independence (Saberin, 2017). In subsequent riots, nearly 2000 people were killed (Basu, 2017).

Moreover, bomb explosions in Indian cities and trains were mostly assigned to Muslims, for example, the bomb explosions of 2006 and 2008 in Mumbai were attributed to Pakistani Muslims. As the turning point of this study is the 2008 bomb explosions in India, this incident will be completely elaborated in the following sections. India has confronted with terrorism and several regional groups, which has resulted in an inclination among many Indians for the separation of the two groups (Datta, 1998). As an example of regions that wish to declare their partition, are always struggling, and have numerous riots, one can refer to Jammu and Kashmir (since 1947), who always suffer from the quarrels between India and Pakistan.

### 3. Bollywood, actors and their relationship

In 2014, a research was conducted to investigate the number one production of each country (in culture or visual art); not surprisingly, for India it was movies. India is the world's largest producer of movies, with a global audience of more than 2 billion (Dean, 2015). There are also more Muslim actors and producers in India than those in Hollywood (Matova, 2016).

India makes almost a thousand films annually, according to a trade paper published last year, in 2012, India produced 1,602 movies from all its different language industries: Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu language cinema industries. Hindi cinema, or Bollywood according to the brand name, has an exceptional global extent and a powerful hegemony in South Asia, and it has ultimately the same meaning as 'Indian cinema' (Maderya, 2015). Moreover, many argue that Muslims have historically dominated the leading roles, finances, and production of films in Indian movie industry (Indiamarks, 2015; Gopal, 2017).

Before analyzing the movies, due to the interviews of great newspapers with certain Muslim actors such as Shahrukh Khan (Shams, 2013) and Saif Ali Khan (Dedhia, 2014), one can suppose that as the most well-known actors of Bollywood are Muslims, their heroic role links the unity of Hindu and Muslim religions. However, in the acting of Salman Khan and Kareena Kapoor in *Bajrangi Bhaijan*, the actors also try to tighten the bonds between Pakistan and India. This indicates that Bollywood movie industry not only attempts to strengthen the relationship between the two religions, but also endeavors to strengthen the relationship between the two nations.

As stated in *Forbes*, *Hindustan Times*, *BCC*, and *California*

*Times*, the most astonishing and famous actor in Bollywood is Shahrukh Khan. His popularity is more than the popularity of Hollywood's Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt together. In numbers, more than 4.5 billion people across the globe know him, and more than 3.2 billion people are his fans. In an article published in *The New York Times' Outlook Magazine*, Shahrukh Khan (2013) writes that sometimes he became "the unintentional aim of political leaders who decide to symbolize me all wrong and unpatriotic things about Muslims in India". He later stated that he had sometimes been criticized for having a soft place for the nearby Islamic country Pakistan, and had been forced by certain Indian leaders to abandon India and go back to his "original homeland."

Similar to other renowned Muslim Bollywood actors, Khan has an ancestral origin in Pakistan's Peshawar city (IANS, 2014). Khan is reckoned to be India's most well-known superstar and is enormously well-liked among Hindus and Muslims. He has starred in nearly 75 movies, which include the greatest box-office hits in India. Khan is possibly India's most famous and favored actor both inside and outside India. About the threat that he had received from LeT (Lashkar-e-Taiba), and the fact that he was advised to go to Pakistan so that he could be secure, he mentioned that he would like to tell those who advise him to go to Pakistan, that they are secure and delighted in India, they have an incredible Republic, they are free, and enjoy a secular lifestyle in India (Shams, 2013).

Khan has a troubled relationship with Hindu groups (the right wing) in India, especially the far-right Shiv Sena. Sena has a considerable support base within Mumbai, which is India's financial capital as well as home to Bollywood. The party is acknowledged for speaking publicly against Pakistan and Muslims. In the year 2010, Shiva Sena boycotted Khan's film "My Name is



Khan" (a story about the life of an American Muslim after 9/11, who had autism) after Khan's speech supporting Pakistani cricketers who played for the Indian Premier League. Khan rejected to make an apology for his words to Sena's late chief and ideologue Bal Thackeray.

Interestingly, Shahrukh Khan's wife is a very well-known Hindu producer and designer named Gauri Khan. There have been several interviews with Khan asking about his religion and his wife's, and the religion of their children. He has answered that everyone has his/her own religion, and his kids, too, could choose their own religion. In fact, it is interesting to mention that many actors in Bollywood have married to the opposing religion, such as Sohail Khan, Saif Ali Khan, Imran Khan, Farhan Akhtar, Irfan Khan, Arshad Warsi, Zayed Khan, Fardeen Khan, Arbaaz Khan, Naseeruddin Shah, Shahrukh Khan, Nargis, and Amir Khan.

#### **4. Problem Statement and Research Question**

World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence in the following manner: "to intentionally use physical power, or threat, against oneself, another individual, or a group/community, which either results in psychological harm, injury, death, mal development, or deprivation " or has a high likelihood of them (WHO, 2019). There are three main categories regarding Violence: 1- Self-directed (a person inflicts violence upon himself or herself). 2- Interpersonal (which is committed by another person/ a small group of people). 3- Collective (violence committed by larger groups, e.g. states, political or military groups, terrorist organizations, and so on) (WHO, 2019). Violence can happen physically, sexually, psychologically, and emotionally. Several

instances of religious violence have been inflicted on Muslims since the Independence of India in 1947; violent attacks against Muslims by Hindu mobs led to a series of occasional factional violence between the minority Muslim communities and the majority Hindu (Patel, 2017; Mahmood, 2018). According to Abul Kalam Azad in *India wins freedom* (1988), only 48 hours after India's independence celebration on August 17, 1947, harsh attacks commenced towards Muslims who were still living in India. As an illustration in both Eastern and Western Punjab, Hindus attacked Muslims brutally and robbed their houses and possessions. Soon after, the same situation happened in Delhi (Azad, 1988, 437-438). Collective violence is also divided into structural violence, economic violence, and interpersonal violence regarding family and intimate partner.

Numerous researchers argue that Muslims in India are suffering from violence and discrimination inflicted upon them by the Hindu population, and that this violence has increased since 2006, and especially since the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks (Hirji, 2010; Ali et al., 2012; Ebrahim, 2017; Ali, 2017; Kumar, 2016; Yousfani, 2012; Ayyub, 2018; Apoorvanand, 2018). Extremist Islamic groups (whom the author of this study believes are not Muslims in reality) were responsible for these attacks.

Since a concept's meaning depends on how it is represented, productions of the culture such as movies can affect public opinion and can create or change the identity of people. In other words, movies can create or establish the identity of a group of people and can contribute to making an image of them in public opinion. Besides, representations affect people's minds in a society (Hall, 1999). As a result, if Bollywood illustrates Hindu-Muslim relationship in a negative way, it will prove that these elements

exist in the Indian society as well, and will encourage the two religions to continue to behave negatively toward one another. Therefore, to understand the modality of the relationships between Hindus and Muslims in the Indian society, the article has employed content analysis of eleven selected Bollywood movies, according to the box office. The process of (unbiased) movie selection will be explained in the sampling section of the article (see below). Based on the above-mentioned arguments, this article's research question is as follows:

How is the Hindu-Muslim relationship represented in  
Bollywood movies?

## 5. Literature Review

Professor Rachel Dwyer (2017), from the School of Oriental and Asian Studies at the University of London, claims that Bollywood fictions of the cinema are like “modern mythology” conjoining the diverse epics, fables, and legends that construct the rich and fruitful cultural basis of the subcontinent. In her book, she argues that the existence of modes of representation (both subtle and obvious ways) are destabilized and reorganized by intense socio-political and economic pressure. Dwyer instead explains the way religious beliefs are moderated via cinema by displaying the superstitions and everyday rituals as pop religion (one section of her book is called “Pop Hinduism”), and a method of supporting traditional value systems as well as traditional codes of ethical and moral behavior. She has recourse to a range of films to indicate the way in which India's major religious elements are integrated into the ethical scope of the narrative and its features to check cultural coordination and religious tolerance. Bollywood movies primarily

utilize religious philosophies in order to strengthen the secular establishing principles of the Indian nation-state through encouraging “an all-Indian morality” upfront the developing religious fundamentalism and fanaticism that destabilize both national and international politics (Dwyer, 2017).

According to Shahzad Ali *et al.* (2012), conflicts between Hindu and Muslim groups widely exist in India. In their article, they analyze the hidden message of Indian movies and the religious conflict therein. They argue that although Bollywood films appear to target the audience having interest in romantic stories, these productions are actually multilayered and have underlying messages. Thus, controversial issues, such as religious conflict between Muslims and Hindus and the international conflict between India and Pakistan are also a recurrent subject of Bollywood movies. Their study explains the partiality of Indians as they portray Muslims and Pakistanis in their movies as terrorists and negative minded people, and argues that using such stereotyped images, Indian cinema communicates strong political messages to its audience and tends to exacerbate the existing conflicts.

Ahmed Al-Rawi (2014) explores the way in which certain non-Western films looked upon the 9/11 attacks and their influence on the lives of Muslims living both in the West and in their homelands. He studied six films from India, Pakistan, Turkey, and Egypt. According to Al-Rawi, most of the examined films had massive budgets and were the highest earning movies in the countries where they were produced. In the films discussed by Al-Rawi, militant Islamic groups such as Al-Qaeda are hated and condemned for being non-conformist, corrupt and wicked. Additionally Al-Rawi believes that these films portray identical themes and the results of his research indicates that they all depict

the way in which Eastern and Western cultures have spread similar concepts and goals in the world. Al- Rawi continues, “like what Fred Halliday asserts about the tale of a ‘shared Muslim identity’, the films declare that all Muslim countries do not have the same, Islam. As searching the controversial issue of aggressive Islam, the 9/11 events are used as a theme in a different local milieu that varies geographically, stating that it is of significant domestic importance” (2014, p. 1). The films examined by Al-Rawi focus on the high level of fear felt by Muslims living in the West after the September 11 tragedy and stress that Islam cannot be connected with terrorism because lack of knowledge and political interests, as opposed to religious or cultural dissimilarities, are the chief causes of hostility. Al-Rawi concludes that Hollywood has had a significant role in the negative portrayal of Arabs and Muslims since its early days in the beginning of the 20th century, but following the events of 9/11, it further developed an anti-Islamic attitude because of the illegal activities of a few fanatics. Al-Rawi suggests that this view by Hollywood, adopted since 9/11, will surely threaten the unity of Muslims and Hindus in India.

Moreover, Al-Rawi provides several examples of Anti-Muslim attitudes in India itself. He believes that the supporters of religions are not in charge of the actions of few unrepresentative members, while nations as a whole cannot be blamed for the wrong actions of a few political leaders. He provides several examples of Hollywood movies to argue that the media initiated dehumanizing the enemy and presenting him/her like an animal. These movies try to represent Muslims as the ones who want to destroy America. He states that after 9/11, many movie-producing companies in Muslim countries felt the need to expand beyond national borders to revise the public attitude about them. India can be a great example of such attempts.

Al-Rawi focuses on the films that display the unity of religions (Hindu, Muslim, Sikh), and the turning point of his research is 9/11, unlike the turning point of this study which is the 26/11 (2008 Mumbai attacks). In fact, his assertion that Hollywood's historic negative image of Islam and Muslims has been boosted by the sad events of 9/11 can be corroborated in a 2009 detailed study of Hollywood movies by Jack Shaheen.

Tania Roy (2009), in his article "India's 9/11", which was written after the incidents of Mumbai, discusses the hermeneutical force and pliability of the 9/11 idiom through recognizing the explanatory structure of the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai. She investigates two regular developments within the civic spaces of the city. On the one hand, an urban, upwardly moving class, and an elite took the role of the citizen-subject in the immediate repercussions of the attacks. On the other hand, emerging a common survivor-spectator indicated the suspension of other, competing forms of public memory, narration and identification that have been approved since the 1990s, in the logic of the Hindu-Muslim 'riot'.

Mehdi Zehra (2017) believes that India is as an example of the phobia of religions, which defines "Muslim" as a religious category that is sequentially incompatible with being Indian. Through historical, political, and psychoanalytical discussions, she also indicates the way in which Muslims are not just discriminated against or treated unfairly in various fields in India, but are also prejudiced due to being seen to inhabit a religious identity. "The prejudice is not because of being Muslims but because of being religious. It is obvious especially in Indian subcontinent Muslims identify themselves with not just their religious identity but to a great extent through their regional identity" (Mehdi, 2017, P.238).

Mehdi expresses that Islamophobia and phobia of religion may have an identical meaning for certain people, but she insists that they do not convey exactly the same meaning. In certain parts of her paper, she juxtaposes the Hindu and Muslim community. To display her assumption with her own experience, in the final part of her paper, she draws on her experiences across countries, India and the United States, in cities both of which are home to her: New Delhi where she was born and New York where she was born again.

Ghassem-Fachandi (2012) explains in his book the Hindu nationalism and Anti-Muslim violence in India. He discusses the 2002 struggle, which happened between the Hindu travelers and Muslim duffers at a railway station in Gujrat. After the incident, the ruling nationalist BJP blamed Muslims in Gujrat and incited Hindus to take revenge. These incidents led thousands of people to death, most of whom were Muslims, while another ten thousand were displaced and forced to move from their homes. In his book, Ghassem-Fachandi looks at the way in which the media (movies and newspapers) fueled the massacre, and offers “a strikingly original interpretation of the different ways in which Hindu proponents of ahimsa became complicit in the very violence they claimed to renounce” (2012, pp. 185-212).

Moreover, Dwyer (2017) conducted a content analysis of two Indian movies: *P.K* and *Bajrangi Baijaan*. He believes that these movies have illustrated religious groups in a new and different way through displaying their beliefs and practices. He analyzed these Hindi films and their relation (production and screening, which date to 2014 and 2015).

Other authors and researchers have also insisted on the unity and peaceful relation of Hindus and Muslims. Williams (2007) stated

their relationship as brotherhood, and his focus was on the Varanasi state. Quayum (2015) conducted a content analysis of the literary works of the two famous 20th-century Bengali writers, Rabindranath Tagore and Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain. He believed that they endeavored to embrace the term “other” in their work and have attempted to tighten the unity of Hindus and Muslims.

## 6. Research Methods

Content analysis is an appropriate method for analyzing the representation of Hindu- Muslim relations in Bollywood movies. Content analysis is “The systematic reading of texts and symbolic matter not necessarily from an author’s or user’s perspective” (Krippendorff, 2004). Krippendorff and Berelson are among the most well-known researchers who have used content analysis and have proposed widely-used theories of content analysis. This method has six main stages: selecting content for analysis, developing units of content, preparing content for coding, coding the content, counting and weighting, and drawing conclusions (Know Your Audience, 2012). Depending on what one analyzes, content can be verbal print media, visual media, visual print media, artistic productions, personal documents, and open-ended questionnaire or interviews (Krippendorff, 2004).

This article has considered 26/11 or November 2008 Mumbai attacks as its turning point. This incident is also known as the Indian 9/11, and is of significant importance for the Indian people since it occurred in Mumbai itself, which is the home to Indian movies and Bollywood. Moreover, compared to 9/11, 26/11 bombings were near Indian people and in their city.

Acharya and Marwah (2010) scrutinize the November 2008



attacks in their article and describe the way in which the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the group that was in charge of the carnage, could act with notable freedom to plan and launch the attacks. Without the existence of (a) a powerful organization, and (b) state support that enabled the group to weather the post-9/11 storm and retain a robust organization, attacks like those in Mumbai in November 2008 would not have been feasible. Knowing LeT's connection with the Pakistani state, which empowers the group to preserve a strong organization, deciding to launch attacks in India is practically unavoidable. It is believed that the attacks could have been launched or fueled by parts of the Pakistani military or intelligence services in order to bring about a change in Pakistan's role in the U.S.-led War on Terror.

The Mumbai attackers came by sea from Karachi in Pakistan. Between November 26 and November 29, 2008, ten terrorists attacked ten targets in the city of Mumbai. It lasted almost 60 hours for the Indian security forces to defeat the terrorists and make the city safe, mainly the hotels (Taj Palace and Oberoi Trident) and the Jewish Centre in the Nariman House, where the terrorists fought a long and pitched battle with the commandos of the Indian National Security Guards (NSG). One hundred and sixty six people, including twenty-six foreign nationals were killed, and about 304 were injured in these attacks. From the terrorists' point of view, it was a successful operation albeit the capture of the only remaining terrorist Mohammad Ajmal Amir Kasab.

A significant aspect of these attacks is the tremendous impacts that they had on India, Pakistan, and the international community. The attacks, focusing on foreigners, guaranteed international media coverage, while the attack that was launched at the train station killed ordinary Indian citizens with impunity. Moreover, the attacks

built tensions and hostility between India and Pakistan, which was indeed one of the terrorists' strategic goals.

Moreover, Nissim Mannathukkaren (2010) asserts that the terror attacks on Mumbai in 2008 were of the worst attacks that India has gone through in recent years. It evoked ultimate horror because it was broadcasted on television at the same time. It seemed in resemblance with many 'media events' like the Gulf Wars and '9/11' in nature. Its performers, members of the terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba, terrorized the city for three days, targeting a number of its best-known places and killing nearly 166 people. In a three-day onslaught that began on November 26, 2008, the terrorists targeted well-known and luxury places in Mumbai, including the Oberoi Trident at Nariman Point, the landmark Taj Hotel at the Gateway, Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, and Leopold Café. These attacks, which happened after 9/11, worsened the already-terrible situation of Muslims in the world. At the time of the attacks, the nationalist party was in the ruling party. Mumbai suffered significant destruction; Indian people (not only Hindu and Sikh people, but also Muslims) lost their lives, and India underwent severe financial deficits. The 26/11 attacks were also targeting the symbolic icons of the city, which had political and economic significance for the Indian nation.

### **6.1. Sampling**

For choosing the films, the author first searched via the keyword "box office of Indian movies," and found several websites, among which three were chosen. Box Office India is an Indian website designed only for Indian movies; Koimoi includes movies from both Bollywood and Hollywood, but the focus of the site is on

Bollywood and is an Indian website. Finally, IMDb is a non-Indian reliable international website. Comparing all three websites, the results of the grossing and verdict of a movie in all of them were the same.

To prevent from being bias, the author had to select the movies to be studied rationally. For selecting the movies, the author listed all the movies that were produced each year (over a period of eleven years) from 2008-2018. The second step was to select those who had a Muslim role (a leading role or even a minor role) in order to analyze the relation between Hindus and Muslims. Muslim roles in the movies were determined through an examination of the movie's cast list: Muslim cast names indicated a Muslim role. After limiting movies to the field of having even a single Muslim role, as the study aimed to analyze only one movie from each year, the best way to choose among them without any bias was to refer to the grossing and the verdict of each movie. These elements indicate how much a movie has sold during a year, its popularity, and the votes that it received. In the third stage, the author analyzed each movie's verdict and grossing. Since at least fifty movies were produced each year, to ease the process of movie selection, only the movies that were blockbuster, super hit, hit, and semi hit were selected. The study chose the movies with a higher verdict and higher grossing. The movies that were nominated to be on the list, as well as their verdict, are illustrated chronologically in Table 1.

**Table1. Name of the potential and the final selected movies**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Movies</b>	<b>Selected movie</b>
<b>2008</b>	1- Jannat → Super hit 2- Race → Hit 3- A Wednesday → Hit 4- Jodhaa Akbar → Semi hit	<i>Jannat</i>
<b>2009</b>	1- 3idiots → All time blockbuster 2- Ajab prem ki ghazab kahani → Super hit 3- New York → Hit 4- Wake up sid → Semi hit	<i>3 idiots</i>
<b>2010</b>	1- My name is khan → Hit and more grossing than other movies 2- Once upon a time in Mumbai → Hit 3- Peepli [live] → Hit 4- Tees Maar Khan → Semi hit 5- Ishqiya → Semi hit	<i>My name is khan</i>
<b>2011</b>	1- The dirty picture → Super hit 2- Zindagi na milegi dobara → Hit 3- Don2 → Hit 4- Rockstar → Semi hit	<i>The dirty picture</i>
<b>2012</b>	1- Ek tha tiger → Blockbuster and highest grossing movie 2- Rowdy rathore → Blockbuster 3- Omg – oh my god! → Super hit 4- Agneepath → Super hit 5- Jab tak hai jaan → Hit 6- Bol bachchan → Hit 7- Kahaani → Hit 8- Ishaqzaade → Hit 9- English vinglish → Semi hit 10- Jism 2 → Semi hit 11-1920: evil returns → Semi hit 12- Talaash → Semi hit	<i>Ek tha Tiger</i>

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<b>2013</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Dhoom3 → All time blockbuster and highest grossing movie</li> <li>2- Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani → Blockbuster</li> <li>3- Aashiqui 2 → Blockbuster</li> <li>4- Bhaag milkha bhaag → Super hit</li> <li>5- Grand Masti → Super hit</li> <li>6- Raanjhanaa → Hit</li> <li>7- Race 2 → Semi hit</li> <li>8- Special 26 → Semi hit</li> <li>9- Kai po che → Semi hit</li> <li>10- ABCD - Any Body Can Dance → Semi hit</li> <li>11- Fukrey → Semi hit</li> </ol>	<i>Dhoom3</i>
<b>2014</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Pk → Super hit and highest grossing movie</li> <li>2- Ek villain → Super hit</li> <li>3- Happy new year → Super hit</li> <li>4- Heropanti → Hit</li> <li>5- Bang bang → Semi hit</li> <li>6- Jai ho → Semi hit</li> <li>7- Gunday → Semi hit</li> </ol>	<i>PK</i>
<b>2015</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Bajrangi bhaijaan → All time blockbuster and highest grossing movie</li> <li>2- Talvar → Semi hit</li> <li>3- Piku → Hit</li> <li>4- Nh10 → Hit</li> </ol>	<i>Bajrangi Bhaijaan</i>
<b>2016</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Sultan → Blockbuster</li> <li>2- Airlift → Super hit</li> <li>3- Neerja → Hit</li> <li>4- Ae dil hai mushkil → Hit</li> <li>5- Kapoor &amp; sons → Hit</li> <li>6- Pink → Hit</li> <li>7- Dear zindagi → Semi hit</li> <li>8- Ki &amp; ka → Semi hit</li> </ol>	<i>Sultan</i>
<b>2017</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Tiger zinda hai → Blockbuster</li> <li>2- Fukrey returns → Super hit</li> <li>3- Jolly llb 2 → Hit</li> <li>4- Hindi medium → Hit</li> <li>5- Raees → Semi hit</li> </ol>	<i>Tiger Zinda Hai</i>
<b>2018</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Sanju → Super hit and highest grossing movie</li> <li>2- Baaghi 2 → Super hit</li> <li>3- Raazi → Super hit</li> <li>4- Parmanu: the story of Pokhran → Hit</li> <li>5- Padmavaat → Plus</li> <li>6- Bioscopewala → Semi hit</li> </ol>	<i>Sanju</i>

## 6.2. Content category and coding unit

Ashraf Khan and Bokhari (2011) have divided their research variables into three categories. The categories identified by these authors in their study were classified as favorable, unfavorable, and neutral. As in certain cases, due to lack of evidence, it is difficult to mark a variable as the three mentioned categories, the study has added another category: “unclear”. This means if the content is positive, it is coded as favorable; if the content is negative, the movie is coded as unfavorable; if the scene is neither of them, it is coded as neutral, and if none of them, it is coded as unclear. This article has created a table counting the number of scenes that are favorable, unfavorable, unclear and neutral.

## 7. Findings

The favorability of Hindu-Muslim relationship in the selected movies has been illustrated in Table 2. The article has analyzed this favorability by investigating the behavior of the main characters of the movie with the opposite religion.

**Table 2. The favorability of Hindu-Muslim relationship in selected movies**

Hindu-Muslim Relationship				
Favorability Movies	Favorable	Unfavorable	Neutral	Unclear
<i>Jannat</i>	6	0	0	1
<i>3 Idiots</i>	3	0	0	0
<i>My Name is Khan</i>	4	5	0	4
<i>The Dirty Picture</i>	1	0	0	0
<i>Ek Tha Tiger</i>	1	1	0	3
<i>Dhoom 3</i>	5	0	0	0
<i>P.K.</i>	1	0	0	0
<i>Bajrangi Bhaijaan</i>	6	2	0	2
<i>Sultan</i>	3	0	0	1
<i>Tiger Zinda Hai</i>	7	0	2	0
<i>Sanju</i>	8	2	0	0

By favorable relationship, the study means that the relationship between Muslims and Hindus are suitably and properly.

- A) All the characters' relations with Hindus in *Jannat*, except Zahir, which is unclear, are favorable.
- B) The relation between the three characters with Hindus in *3 Idiots* is favorable.

- C) The relation of Rizwan, Hasina, Razia, and Sameer with Hindus in *My Name is Khan* is favorable. It is unclear about Abdul, Sajida, Emran, and Dilawar. Zakir and Faizal Rahman's relation with Hindus are unfavorable. Hindu relation with Muslims has been depicted as unfavorable in three different scenes. First when the movie gives a flashback to 1993 attacks by Hindus, second, when Rizwan's living place has been attacked by Hindus, and third when Hindu students beat Rizwan in his school.
- D) The relation of Abraham with Hindus in *The Dirty Picture* is favorable.
- E) The relation of Zoya with Hindus in *Ek Tha Tiger* is favorable. Abrar's is unfavorable. Firoz, Prof. Kidwai, and Nazar Jang's are unclear.
- F) The relation of all five characters with Hindus in *Dhoom 3* is favorable.
- G) The relation of Sarfraz with Hindus in *P.K.* is favorable.
- H) The relation of Shahida, Chand Nawab, Razia, Rauf, Maulana Saheb, and Bu Ali with Hindus in *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* is favorable. Hamed Khan and Amir Qureshi's is unfavorable. Shamsheer Ali and Kamel Yusof's is unclear.
- I) The relation of Sultan, Aarfah, and Barkat with Hindus in *Sultan* is favorable. Kubra's is unclear.
- J) The relation of Shada, Zoya, Firdaus, Azan, Sana, Naghmeh, and Hasan with Hindus in *Tiger Zinda Hai* is favorable. Abrar and Javid's is neutral.
- K) The relation of all the characters with Hindus in *Sanju* is favorable. However, two scenes depict the unfavorable relation of Hindus with Muslims, i.e. first a reference to the demolition of Babri Masjid by Hindus, and second when Hindus threaten Dutt's family as he was helping Muslims.



## 7.1. Discussion

The author of this article has considered two facts in the article's analysis: 1- terrorists are not Muslims and 2- religion matters, not nationality. When the study mentions/discusses Muslims, it refers to those living in India.

### A. Terrorists are not Muslims

It is believed that terrorist groups such as the ISIS are not real Muslims; rather, they are mainly political actors (Acharya and Marwah, 2010). In *Tiger Zinda Hai*, the amount of violence inflicted by the ISIS has been depicted, when ISIS members kill an American reporter and a Pakistani nurse, and brainwash people like Hasan. However, as the ISIS members are not considered Muslims, their data is not included in the affluence and statistics of the research.

However, one may think about the way in which these groups are represented in movies. The study has gathered the data about ISIS members, as illustrated in the movie *Tiger Zinda Hai*; the details are as follow:

- The behavior of others toward Abu Osman, Hakim, and Baghdavi is unfavorable.
- The behavior of Abu Osman, Hakim, and Baghdavi toward others is unfavorable.

### B. Nationality or religion?

In its movie analysis, this study has only considered the movie cast's religion, not their nationality. This means that if a person

talks about a Pakistani person badly, or if a Pakistani person misbehaves, it is not counted in the data analyzed in this study, as the illustrated factor in such cases is nationality, rather than religion. The violence depicted in *Ek Tha Tiger* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* against Muslims is entirely because of their nationality, which is Pakistani. Other examples that are not included in the data analyzed in the study are as follow:

- There is a scene in *Ek Tha Tiger* where Tiger kills Firoz, a spy for Pakistan, which is illustrating an unfavorable behavior.
- In *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, Hindi people attack and run into the embassy of Pakistan in India and start to beat the Pakistanis, which is again showing an unfavorable behavior.
- Again, in *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, Pakistani police officers beat Bajrangi, as they assume that he is an Indian spy.
- When Rasika's father realizes that Shahida is Pakistani (in *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*), he says: your people are killing our people, so you should not be here.

## 8. Conclusion

Marrying a Hindu person in Islam is a religious taboo, and Muslims are forbidden to marry non-Muslims. Marrying a Hindu illustrates how much a Muslim has crossed his/her religion, and for which underlying reasons. In the analyzed movies, this religious taboo was observed five times:

1. Zoya's marriage with Arjun in *Jannat*
2. Khan's marriage with Mandira in *My Name is Khan*
3. Zoya's marriage with Tiger in *Ek Tha Tiger*
4. Sarfraz's marriage to Jaggu in *P.K.*
5. Nargis's marriage with Sunil Dutt in *Sanju*

In addition, an interesting point in the Indian context under study is that in Islam, there exists the notion of Tabara (staying clear and away from people who are enemies of Islam and the AhlulBayt). Indian Muslims, however, as they are living in a society where great number religious enemies to Muslims dwell, simply do not follow this notion (again doing a taboo), and this is only to save the unity that was mentioned earlier in the article.

Table 2 explicitly illustrates the statistics of Hindu-Muslim relationship analyzed in all selected movies. It highlights the fact that among all the 68 characters in the analyzed movies, 45 character's relations with Hindus are favorable (66.17%), 10 have unfavorable (14.70%), two have neutral (2.94%), and 11's is unclear (16.17%).

From these statistics, it can be derived that the relation between Muslims and Hindus is in general depicted in Bollywood movies as favorable. As mentioned before, the fact that many Indian Muslim celebrities such as Sohail Khan, Saif Ali Khan, Imran Khan, Farhan Akhtar, Irfan Khan, Arshad Warsi, Zayed Khan, Fardeen Khan, Arbaaz Khan, Naseeruddin Shah, Shahrukh Khan, Nargis, and Amir Khan have married Hindu people can signal the unity of Hindus and Muslims, as well as the importance of the Indian nationalism.

In this paper, it has been assumed that the conflicts between Muslims and Hindus have increased after the 2008 Mumbai bombings, and their relationship has gone in an unfavorable upward path. However, this study's results, based on the analysis of selected movies, indicate that indeed not only do Muslim-Hindi relations remain favorable, but rather the unity of Hindu and Muslim have even increased. If one compares Hollywood after 9/11 and Bollywood after 26/11, he/she will realize that Hollywood

has depicted Muslims rather severely, whereas Bollywood has maintained its previous (before (26/11) approach toward Muslims, which illustrates the fact that they also do not count terrorists as Muslims. Moreover, it can be seen in *My Name is Khan*, *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, *Ek Tha Tiger*, *P.K.*, *Tiger Zinda Hai*, and *Sanju*, that the movie's story and crew have endeavored to tighten not only the bonds between Hindus and Muslims, but also Pakistan and India.

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