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Stereotypical Representation of the Muslim characters in a Bollywood movie

Sarfarosh

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By

Rajan Tiwary

Symbol No: 00006138

T.U. Regd.No:9-2-467-0161-2011

Central Department of English

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Abstract

This paper studies the stereotypical representation of Muslim characters and Indian nationalistic ethos in famous Bollywood movie Sarfarosh. The movie deals with the cross-border terrorists and smugglers in which Amir Khan (Rathod) acts as a Hindu ACP assigned to rattle the network of smugglers. Formerly, Salim, a Muslim police officer was given the duty to deal with the terrorist network but as soon as Sultan escapes from his custody killing three constables, the department loses its trust upon him and the case was given to Rathod. Salim feels the minority status of being a Muslim but Rathod eases his dissatisfaction making him good accomplice in the case. It shows that Bollywood is promoting Hindu-Muslim fraternity in Indian society but at the same time, represents cross-border Muslims as terrorists and sells the hatred against Pakistani Muslims shaped by the discourses of patriotism and nationalistic ethos in Indian society. At the same time, it cashes on the deteriorating image of Muslims in recent years in Western media representations satisfying the psychological demand of the Western audience. This research also analyzes the discursive foundation of Indian hatred against the Muslims outside India analyzing the reasons behind Hindu-Muslim rift and religious riots and partition of Pakistan as an independent nation, ever minority status of the Muslim community along with the reasons behind stereotypical representation of Muslims in Bollywood movies.

Key Words: Stereotype, representation, nationalism, minority, orientalism

This research paper attempts to see the stereotypical representation of Muslim characters and its representation of Indian nationalist ethos in Bollywood movie *Sarfarosh* that casts Bollywood superstar Amir Khan in lead role. Overall trend of representation of cross-border Muslim community and Pakistan is not found to be unbiased and positive in Bollywood; mostly the Islamic characters are represented as terrorists. But in case of the representation of Indian Muslims, the representation is improving and the fraternity between Hindu and Muslim is promoted in Bollywood in the recent times. It is not only the case with low-budget venture but even the high-budget and superhit movies also stick to the same formula decimating the cross-border Muslims with negative and villainy representations. A number of Bollywood films create meaning and geopolitical narratives through dialogue, raw images, settings, characters, and historical contexts. The aim of this study is to examine the stereotypes shown by mainstream Bollywood cinema and the nationalistic politics behind it. The socio-cultural foundations that generated the biased discourses regarding minority Muslim community are also discussed with the help of various Muslim scholars specialized in the Hindu-Muslim relation in India and Pakistan in this paper. At the same time, the anti-Muslim approach and media representation of the Muslims in negative lights in Western media and academia are also brought into debate.

This study examines the contemporary Indian film *Sarfarosh* that explore sub-continental Indian history in terms of Hindu-Muslim communities with a particular focus on insecurity, mistrust and suspicion between them and their representation in the mass media and Bollywood movies. This paper reflects upon the existing paradox in understanding Islam and its depiction in the Indian mass-media, particularly films. It is a particularly relevant and significant topic not only because of the contemporary

significance of Islam in world affairs but also because the role of film is a highly significant contemporary topic in its own right.

Muslim characters have been misrepresented in most of the Bollywood movies ever since the advent of the motion picture in the course of time. But this trend is seen changing in the recent years and Indian Muslims are given more positive representation in comparison to cross-border, Pakistani Muslims. The conflict between India and Pakistan can be seen as the conflict of Hindu and Islamic religion and most of the Muslim characters are often projected as “terrorists” intending to dismantle the Indian democracy. This research paper using a Bollywood movie named *Sarfarosh* tries to explore its misrepresentation of Muslim characters in effort to critique the film industry. *Sarfarosh* clearly pictures cross-border Muslim characters and even the Muslim characters having connection with them as blood thirsty. It pictures cross-border Muslims as terrorists and smugglers. Muslim character named “Sultan” is a terrorist, having links with other terrorist groups in Pakistan. So, we can see how badly Muslim characters are depicted in the Bollywood’s stereotypical representation. This study reflects upon the existing dichotomy in understanding Muslim people and its depiction in the film.

India has one of the largest Islamic populations, it occupies almost seventeen percent of India’s total population but Muslims are still a minority community. Even though a large portion of this minority community has been influential in shaping the Hindi film industry, today the role of Hindi movie hero is still occupied by the North Indian male. Around the time of 1947 when India was rife with communal violence, movies used the Islamic representation to promote national unity. Some historical movies highlighted the Hindu-Muslim relationships of the subcontinent, to prove that, India’s past doesn’t belong to any one community. But the portrayal of Muslims in

Hindi cinema had changed in the 1947 August after partition and in the 2000s after 9/11. According to Vinzenz Hediger, an expert in cinematic studies:

Entertainment films are particularly suited to tackling the issue of social conflicts. Popular cinema in particular, with its dramatic turns of events and concise formulae, is ideal for highlighting social conflicts in an effective manner that will reach a broad span of people. In addition, popular films always have to be relevant. In other words, cinema-goers must be able to relate what is happening on the screen to what is going on in their lives.

Popular films . . . have to be successful, because they are so costly to produce.

(3)

Hediger has pointed to the commercial motive behind movie making. Movies are business and they have to catch the sentiment of the majority of viewers. What is the social belief regarding the images represented in particular movie plays a great role and thus, that determines the commercial success of the movie. However, from the analysis of Indian cinema, one can conclude that popular films are not being used for highlighting but enhancing social conflict within and outside Indian society. A film would not gain popularity if it showed Muslims in India as terrorists – as a result, several movies told stories of Indian Muslims who became terrorists outside India. Movies in this time frame portrayed Muslims as either evil or meeting their demise. Basically, Muslims those have got cross-border connection, are not properly represented in Hindi cinema today – they are only shown to fit a stereotype. This trend began after partition.

Sarfarosh is a 1999 Indian action drama film. *Sarfarosh* released in 1999, is John Matthew Matthan directed, written and produced film based on the mounting conflict between India and Pakistan and starred Aamir Khan, Sonali Bendre and

Naseeruddin Shah. In this film, Vikash Sivaraman plays the wonderful role of cinematographer and dialogue is composed by Hriday Lani and Pathik Vats. The film portrays a genuine contrast between the two sides; Hindu and Islam. It discusses how socio-cultural and regional differences are produced and how geopolitical meanings of 'we' and 'they' are narrated and constructed through Bollywood. This film constructs an image of identity, belonging and difference, emphasizing that Hindus and Muslims are Indians however some legacies and suffering brought on during the partition of British India are still alive in memories when discrimination and exclusion are practiced in their ancestral homelands.

In *Sarfarosh*, Muslims are pictured as terrorists and smugglers of bullets and drugs through India-Pakistan border; the bordering district depicted is called Rajhistan and a small town of Rajhistan called Bahid becomes the hub for the terrorists. They smuggle arms with the help of Camels. Muslim character with cross-border connection, named "Sultan," is a terrorist, having links with authorities in Pakistan and tries to disrupt the law and order in India. It is also evident by the story of *Sarfarosh* that Pakistan provides protection to the terrorists. The officers of Pakistani Agency Inter-Services Intelligence support the terrorists.

The film deals with an Indian police officer's fight to stop cross-border terrorism. When Ajay Singh Rathod (Aamir Khan) is a young college student, his brother is killed and his father gravely and permanently injured by terrorists. Ajay is inspired to enter law enforcement - every criminal, he says, reminds him of the men who tore apart his family - and quickly rises to the rank of assistant commissioner. He is assigned to crack a weapons-smuggling operation that is arming bands of village militiamen, backed ultimately by Pakistani intelligence service, with the assistance of a network of local elements within India. One of the critics named

Piyusha critiques this movie as, “Although movie is over 3 hrs long but time just flies by. Topics like terrorism, crime, patriotism are dealt with a great aplomb. How arms are smuggled through border and reach naxalites or bandits, how the police functions, movie makers had clear idea of” (12). Piyusha praises the ability of the movie-maker to depict the crime-related activities precisely. Not only the crimes but the movie also deals with other issues like terrorism and patriotism.

Western as well as Indian dominant discourses regarding the Muslim community, its representation and domination are responsible for the formation of negative mass perception about Muslims around the world. Several researches have been done regarding representation of Islam in Western world as well as in Indian sub-continent. Edward Said (1987) in *Orientalism* offers historical insights on the representations of Muslims and Islam. He argues that the dominant Orientalist and colonial discourse, since World War II, have been progressively constructing a frame of reference to the world about Islam and Arab Muslims. Islam was continuously represented as a threat, something to be feared or a form of subversion.

Iqbal Shailo in *CINEJ Cinema Journal* writes about three movies including *Sarfarosh* about the same issue of contemporary Indian nationhood:

Deepa Mehta’s *Earth*, Ashutosh Gowariker’s *Lagaan* and John Matthew Matthan’s *Sarfarosh* are primary examples of how movies portray Indian nationhood, identity crisis, mistrust, disbelief, terror and suspicion. These three movies reflect a more inclusive Indian society by discussing past events through the personal experience of contemporary characters in such a way that the audience garners a better understanding of India’s past and colonial legacies while constructing discourses of unity, brotherhood, mistrust and differences.(109-110)

Shailo rates the movie as a realistic depiction of Indian nationhood, identity crisis, mistrust, disbelief, terror and suspicion. The impact of the past, the historical and cultural attitude about the aspects of society, have affected the present of its contemporary characters. The audience becomes aware of the discourses of unity, brotherhood, mistrust and differences over the various times of past and present.

Sarfarosh is a Bollywood movie in which in majority of the scenes, Muslims are portrayed negatively. This is because of the conflict between India and Pakistan, and as we know that Pakistani are Muslims. It seems that Bollywood has some vested political agenda in its representation of Muslims; it needs to change its perception about them. It appears that it needs to adopt an unbiased approach towards their portrayal. It should deem Muslims as normal human beings with complexities and issues and not as stereotyped characters. Labeling Islam as a terrorist or peace abhorring religion is certainly a misplaced assumption. Bollywood needs to ameliorate their views and ideas about Muslims and Islam, more so because Muslims are the largest minority in India.

Mohammad Rafi Bhat, Kounser Iqbal, and Shugufta Akhtar, PhD Scholars of University of Kashmir in *International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced Studies* state :

In the film “Sarfarosh”, the character with the Islamic belief is portrayed as one who is beleaguered at the loss of faith in his patriotism due to his Islamic countenance. He in fact quips in the movie “I am no less Indian than you are because I am a Muslim.” Sometimes, the interpretation in a typical Indian movie could hover on the bizarre portraying Muslims as anti-national and those who show solidarity only with Islam, to the extent of supporting the enemies of the nation across the border. (453)

The writers see that Islamic appearance or countenance of the character readily serves the role of weapon with which the loss of faith on patriotism can be represented. The Bollywood film *Sarfarosh* depicts characteristics of the sub-continent, especially its people and politics yet is not only a form of entertainment but a vocal media for debate around geopolitical meaning and discourse. Here an example of representation of good characters Salim as he belongs to Mussalman community:

If you have a death wish, go and kill yourself! You've got 3 constables killed!
Who's responsible? Stay outside. I'll call you in later. Salim doesn't work on this case anymore. I'll explain it to him. The whole department is saying that he let Sultan off . . . because he is a Mussalman. (42:50-43:26)

The view of the department regarding dubious role of Salim appears to be negative while Rathod's treatment and faith on Salim is positive and ground breaking and his faith in him helps overall police department to change its stereotyped view as soon as the question of patriotism arises regarding its Muslim officers. The cinematic representations, portraying the Hindu ACP Ajay as an unquestioned patriotic person and Muslim officer Salim as having possible relation with terrorists through the department's attitude is motivated by the Bollywood industries' economic and political interest and it is ideologically motivated. The Bollywood representation of the Islamic lead character over the Hindu protagonist is because Indian film industry is grounded in India's stereotypical representation of the Muslim rooted in their history of partition in 1947 but Rathod's faith upon Muslim shows that the conventional representation of Indian Muslim characters is still changing and they are being represented in more positive lights in the recent times. Salim is a patriotic Indian Muslim; as patriotic as Hindu ACP Rathod is in the movie that remarkably underlines the change in the representation of Muslims in Indian cinema breaking the

conventional representation of Islamic characters in negative lights after partition.

A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of particular type of person or thing is called stereotype. In social psychology, a stereotype is an overgeneralized belief about a particular category of people. Stereotype encourages prejudice and may arise for a number of reasons. To believe unfairly that all people or things with a particular characteristic are the same or an often unfair and untrue belief that many people have about all people or things with a particular characteristic. Stereotype is generalized because one assumes that the stereotype is true for each individual person in the category. While such generalizations may be useful when making quick decisions, they may be erroneous when applied to particular individual. Representation is the use of signs that stand in for and take the place of something else. It is through representation that people organize the world and reality through the act of naming its elements.

Similarly, if an abnormal behavior is frequently seen in particular person or group or a character in a work of arts such as movies and novels is represented in such a way that audience recognizes them from frequent recurrences in particular literary traditions is a stereotypical character. A mistaken idea or belief based upon their outlooks, which may be partly true or false about particular group of people is stereotype and stereotyping people refers a type of prejudice because what is on the outside is a small part of who a person is. Salim speaks following words when he talks angrily with Rathod for his exclusion from the case and given his role to a Hindu ACP:

You write some exams, you become an officer . . . and you sit right on top of my head! And you'll do what you want with me! Because I am a Mussalman! Now I know! In this country it's a crime to be a poor man! And it's a worse

crime for those like me! Go away, sir. (45:19-45:40)

Here we find stereotypical representation of Mussalman in movies *Sarfarosh* where police officer Salim was suspended because of his name belongs to the Mussalman family. People just judge through the rooted belief that all Mussalmans are criminal, which begins from the partition period. Stereotypes usually involve applying general traits or characteristics to group of people, which is harmful and hurtful. Writers of literary works choose to implement stereotypical characters in the stories because it can connect with the audiences and help for directing to think about a particular group of people or characters in a certain way, either positively or negatively. Actually, as the movie advances we see that Salim is not treated by Rathod as Salim himself assumes and the stereotype is only in the concept of Salim. But, his view about a Muslim is both stereotyped and full of the psychology of being a minority and socially excluded.

In this way, stereotypes can also use in literature to help tell a story. Whether they are a minor or a major character, stereotypes can help an author construct a story. It may help a writer to explain a character's personality, action and developing other pieces of the story more fully.

Our guest this evening is world-famous. The famous singer, Gulfam Hassan.

Our guest this evening is also our host. He belongs as much to Pakistan as much as he belongs to India. He spent his childhood here. And he grew up there. His ghazals are written there. But his music belongs here. May I present

Janab Gulfam Hassan. (15:25-16:12)

The way of presenting a character in movies like this is because of that characters greatly affect how people worldwide perceive religion, race, cultural communities and the relations between two different countries with worst relationship like India and

Pakistan. Stereotypes are common in various cultural media, where take the form of dramatic stock characters. The instantly recognizable nature of stereotypes means that they are effective in advertising. So, storytellers have drawn from stereotypical characters and situations to immediately connect the audience with new stories.

Interesting thing is that Indian society shows less bias upon the prominent Muslim singers, musicians and lyricists even when they visit India for the musical programs. At the beginning part of the movie, Pakistani ghazal singer Gulfam Hassan is shown to be warmly welcomed. The anchor proudly welcomes him, “I know, Gulfam sahib. But queens aren't sacrificed for pawns. And it won't cost my country anything were you to die. You aren't Pakistani. You're just a refugee” (2:10:09-2:10:18). There is bias against as Pakistani Muslim in India but sympathy for a refugee. So, Hassan is given the name of a refugee.

And we will do it forever. For our wound is deep. It won't heal so easily. We want you and your children to come for generations... to remember the injustice that was done to us. And every time our weapons wreak havoc, you will remember. Remember our pain! Remember the wound you inflicted on our community! (2:14:04-2:14:35)

It is clear that the cultural prejudice against the Pakistani Muslim is based on the experience of partition. There is an orientalist approach regarding Pakistani Muslim in Indian social psychology.

Ziuddin Sardar takes Orientalism as an incorporate theory which has been ever modified and propagandized according to time and context as well as in cultural arena. He quotes “Orientalism is memory, imagination and present utility in a process of representation that structures knowledge and information as such orientalism cannot be appreciated only as academic discourse, it is the cultural discourse in the

widest possible sense, is simply what is known and taken for granted” (117). Sardar says, Orientalism has become more endemic, innate and diverse. It has been around for a so long time that it is the predisposition that forms the sense of reality itself for the west. So such scene of illusion created in discourse to deceive oneself and create a mentality of colonist dichotomy of ‘we’ (the superior) and ‘they’ (the inferior). In the film, several characters such as Gulfam Hasan, Sultan, Haji, Bhiran Bhai, Bala Thakur, Pakistani Police officer, Major Beg and Salim are portrayed as stereotypically by mainstream Hindus. This portrayal helps to create the discourse and lead to establish colonialist mentality that forms the social conception that Muslims are terrorists.

Walsh and Poole in their *Dictionary of Criminology* define terrorism as “a mode of violence involving the systematic use or threatened use of murder, injury and destruction to immediate or shock to target group wider than the immediate victims or to create a climate of terror”. The original use of term ‘terrorist’ in English can be traced back to French revolution. Some of the characters are represented as spreading violence in India. As one of the Pakistani police officer states, “That’s our mandate. Find the disgruntled elements. And help them. Give them guns. And money. Let them get used to it. This is war. And this war we have to win” (10:37-10:52). In the above lines, the police officer encourages people to create activities of violence by providing guns and money, supporting them in every aspect just to create imbalance in India. The police officer is portrayed as a focal point of Indian hatred and he thinks that they will win war against India when they support people who would blast the bombs and conduct the violent activities in India.

Likewise, Muslims as presented as involved in criminal activities from their early age. When Sultan’s mother says, “Sultan was 21. He killed his first man. I threw

him out of the house. It's been years...I haven't seen him. I didn't look for him. And he hasn't come to see me.”(46:34-46:55)Sultan’s mother reveals that he murdered a man when he was in early twenties and ran away. This signifies that Muslim characters are criminal from their early age. At the first scene of the movie, a villainous character named Biran Bhai robs the bus and kills all the passengers. He is presented as negative character in the film. Haji also does the same job of transporting guns from Pakistan though he runs a travel agency in India. As A.C.P Rathore says, “Gulfam Hassan! We loved him so! We respected him so much! And he cheated me! He betrayed my country! I won't let him walk away alive! If you want to live, kill Gulfam Hassan. Then you and Shafi can leave.”(2:09:15-2:09:27) Hassan betrayed the people of India even he is well known and respected all over the world though he is muslim. Here, Hassan as a famous gajhal singer is also presented as suspected character. He in the name of artist encourages terrorism in India.

For Said, Orientalism is the discourse created by the westerners by generating political, social, ideological and imaginative power over the orient. The relationship between occident and orient is a relationship of power of domination and of varying degrees of complex phenomena. Said further argues:

The relationship between occident and orient is a relationship of power of domination of varying degree of complex hegemony, and is quite accurately indicated in the little of K.M. Panikkar’s classic Asia and western dominance. The orient was Orientalize not only because it was discovered to be ‘oriental’ in all those ways consider common place by an average nineteenth century European, but also because it could be that is submitted to being oriental. (5-6)

Thus, the westerner always dominate the orient because of its power. Occident are

more powerful economically and militarily because of which orient always has to surrender. In the film, Muslim characters seem powerless. Here, Indian mainstream Hindus create political and social discourse to hegemonize specifically Muslims of Pakistan. Most of the Muslim characters in film are treated as inhuman and as terrorist. On Ajay's investigative team is a brooding Muslim police inspector named Salim (Mukesh Rishi), who is scrutinized and surveilled by his co-workers. Salim chose to be a police officer in the city for his and his family's well-being and security, but he is discriminated against and scrutinized by senior officers at the department. He is sincere and devoted to his duties in all aspects and chases criminals who happen to be fellow Muslims. Thus, he prefers to be a true Indian rather than a Muslim. His nationalistic outlook is not properly valued by the police department, and the police department suspects Salim has been siding with Muslim criminals. His "Muslimness" is a fundamental question and concern in the film. Inspector Salim loses his courage and complains to the Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Ajay Singh Rathod (Aamir Khan), a middle class Hindu, and asks to have his name removed from the investigation. At that time Salim has got harsh but pathetic comment that in India it is a sin to be poor and he is a sinner for the same. Thus Salim believes he is being treated unfairly and discriminated against due to his race and faith. When Salim hands over the case to the ACP Rathod, he narrates to Salim the brutality and cruelty he and his family faced and how these experiences led him to become a police officer. The following dialogue between Rathod and Salim is significant:

Rathod: The reason behind telling you all this is not that I am concerned with my home, not at all—but I am concerned with my country.

Salim: What, these are not related to my country too?

Rathod: Maybe not. That's the reason you're running away from your duties. I

consider my country as my home and I don't need any Salim to save my country. (1:01:30-1:01:50)

The conversation between the two police officers is very symbolic in the film. Both share a love for the homeland, and are determined to save the country from any wrongdoing by perpetrators. But both are viewed by society as being different in identity and faith. That's why Rathod repeatedly tries to prove that Salim genuinely loves his country and his roots in India. Rathod manipulates Salim's Muslim identity, and subsequently reminds him that India is not his country by repeating "maybe not." It may be noted here that all Muslims in India face allegations from various quarters of society as the partition implanted an imagined Muslim identity in the minds of hundreds and thousands of Hindus in India. Ajay also meets a contemplative, philosophical 'ghazal' singer whom he has admired since boyhood, Gulfam Hassan (Naseeruddin Shah), and enjoys a sweet romance with Seema (Sonali Bendre), a girl he had a crush on in college. As Ajay's investigation gets closer to the truth, he comes into greater and greater peril, and learns that some of his friends are not as trustworthy as he thinks. In the end, the bad characters are dead and good characters get justice.

"Hegemony" is the notion that colonizers create domination by force rather by consent. In other words the colonized willingly accept to bring ruled because they think the ruling class is superior to them. This term is important for describing the success of imperial power over colonial people because colonial regimes achieved domination through manufacturing consent of the colonized. Ania Loomba redefines Gramscian Notion of 'Hegemony' by saying that "Hegemony is power achieved through a combination of coercion and consent" (29). After the partition of India, all the muslims of Pakistan started to be treated as an enemy of India. Muslims are taken as terrorist and responsible for creating violence in India. Indians started to dominate

muslims in different sectors like military force, government services, public places and so on. In the film, by portraying muslim characters as less trustworthy, ruling group try to achieve power through the combination of coercion and consent. Salim has been suspended from the police mission and sent to take care of Goddam because he was unable to catch Sultan and his team. One of the senior police officers charges Salim as responsible for the death of three Indian constables and involved in the escape of Sultan. Whole department has shown mistrust upon him only because he is a Muslim officer. They doubt upon his ingenuity and are unwilling to let him continue with the case anymore. Hindu-Muslim rift and the Hindu officers not trusting a Muslim officer whatever genuine he is represents a stereotype commonly used in Bollywood movies.

Salim is fired from the mission because he could not capture the criminal group and also because he is Muslim. He is blamed for not killing Sultan because he is also Muslim. This shows the hegemony of Indians upon Muslims not only of Pakistan but also of India even involving in government services. This signifies the fact that Hindu Indian never trusts Muslim and suspects their activities.

From those scenes *Sarfarosh* provides the issue of Nation rather than religion. Nationalism is feeling that people have about being loyal to and proud of their country often with the belief that it is better and more important than other countries. *Sarfarosh* tells a story of conflicting ideologies of identity, and how Pakistani intelligence recruits Muslim people from India to create instability within the territory of the country. The film discusses how, on one occasion, a Pakistani top military official is ordered to carry out a proxy-war in India. It shows how Muslims fleeing India during the partition were forced to find a place to live, while refusing to identify as members of the Pakistani nation. In the film, those who left India for Pakistan fifty

years after independence are still regarded as refugees “muhajir”. Even Muslims who left Pakistan for India are misunderstood, particularly over their faith and beliefs. They are either judged by Indian Hindus to be Pakistani agents or treated as second class citizens within their ancestral homeland. Moreover, this movie deals with the issue of nationalism more than religion. In the movie *Sarfarosh*, Pakistani vocalist Gulfam Hassan, played by actor Naseeruddin Shah is presented as he perpetuates and encourages the spread of terrorism in India. ACP Ajay Singh Rathod, a resident of Mumbai, is a very big fan of ghazal singer Gulfam Hassan. Gulfam is Indian by birth, but had to move to Pakistan as a child during partition. Deeply scarred due to the experience, he is still happy that the Government allows him to live in his palatial residence whenever he comes to India. Gulfam finds a huge fan in Ajay, who used to attend his programs as a child. This character is a Muslim character and presented as a terrorist indirectly because he encourages the terrorist act and plays the role of mediator between peoples to deliver the armed weapon. His character is also inhuman that in one scene he tortures an innocent lamb.



Figure-1, Gulfan tortures an innocent lamb (1:29:45).

This lamb is a symbol of innocent people who are being victimized by the Gulfan.

This scene tries to show that how much Muslim people are inhuman in nature. Unknown to Ajay, Gulfam is working for the Pakistani intelligence which is attempting to create havoc in India and create a proxy war between both sides. This is done only because of the motif to dismantle the Indian democracy and spread the violence in the places. This shows the stereotypical ideology of Bollywood film makers to present as a terrorist.

Another Muslim character named as Sultan, also represented as a terrorist wants to spread violence within the India. Sultan escaped from his clutches and he had played vital role for terrorist attack and later he forced to hide because of this reason. Pradeep Rawat played the role of sultan.



Figure-2, Sultan character (left side) (1:32:53).

In a scene, he was in the encounter with the main protagonist Ajay who became seriously injured but this encounter also results in the death of Bala Thakur. Though Sultan and his right-hand man Shiva manage to escape, but Sultan lost a large consignment of lethal arms and ammunition meant for terrorist Veeran and his terrorist acts around the country. Sultan is later assassinated on Gulfams orders because of his failure and false information is leaked that he has escaped to Pakistan.

This character is also a Muslim and shown as active terrorist to spread violence in India. He is shown as a person who has a strong link with Pakistan. In this regard, researcher Maidul Islam says:

While dealing with the misrepresentation and stereotypical image constructions of Indian Muslims, it is important to analyse two hit films of the late 1990s, when there was a prominent rise in Hindutva politics at the Centre. One of these is *Border* (1997), and the other is *Sarfarosh* (1999).

Bollywood is presenting Muslims as terrorists and portraying Islam negatively over the time. The movies where Muslims characters were being humiliated are being hits on the box office as well. This kind of stereotyped representation of Islamic characters is based on the discourses constructed by the Indian, Hindu leaders after partition but this researcher argues that this trend is also changing and Salim is represented in more positive and patriotic role even when he is a Muslim.

Inspector Salim, a Muslim inspector also treated badly in the film though he shows the Indian patriotic feelings but being a Muslim he was not easily trusted by Protagonist Ajay. He is taken off from the Special Action Team when a notorious gangster Sultan escapes his clutches and he is severely reprimanded by his superior for this failure and for cuing the death of three other officers in the attempt. Despite being an honest and upright police officer with the best intelligence gathering network in the force, Salim is rueful that he is being given second class treatment because he is a Muslim and is being perceived as having let Sultan escape because he was a Muslim as well. His anger at the system doesn't lessen when Ajay, who was his junior, is told to head the team. Ajay wants Salim on the team, but Salim refuses because of humiliation fear. In one scene of the movie, Salim says to Ajay, "Listen to me sir, don't call Any Salim that this country is not theirs."



Figure-3, Salim delivers dialogue against the protagonist Ajay (1:18:36).

Here, any Salim symbolically refers to those peoples whose name is Muslim oriented. This shows the real view of people who generalized the Muslims people as a terrorist. But Rathod soon realizes the honesty and patriotism in Salim and treats him positively. Muslims are treated around the world as Edward Said in “Islam as News” critique the non-Islam’s ways of seeing to the Islamic people, he says “hence the frequently caricatures of Muslims as oil suppliers, as terrorist, and more recently, as bloodthirsty mobs (188)”. So it clears the concept that Non-Islamic people do not understand the Islamic people, and even Bollywood is not exception to that. But this trend of looking at all the Muslims in the same biased way is somewhat receding in case of Salim and Bollywood announces the changing attitude towards the Muslim characters.

There are various discursive foundations not only in West but also in India that form the negative social perception of Muslim community. It is not surprising that Bollywood exploited the social perception and psychology for a long time after partition. Muslim scholars explore the base of the anti-Muslim socio-cultural discourses prevalent in Indian society. In his book *Islam, Nationalism and the West*,

Iftikhar H. Malik writes:

In post-Khomeini and post-Soviet years, demonization and stigmatization of Islam in media and academia have already become a cliché where erstwhile Orientalists have found new companions from among the politicians, strategists, political analysts, novelists, journalists and similar opinion groups eager to club and cajole Muslim sensitivities. While the world needs a more egalitarian attitude, with a fresh start, Muslims seem to have been cast in the role of 'global enemies' and 'bogey-men' out to deny the world well-deserved fruits of liberal democracy. (20)

Malik points out about the degraded image of Muslims around the world at present times and their sensitivities are frequently targeted and attacked. Media and academia have demonized and stigmatized the image of Muslims in recent decades of post-Khomeini and post-Soviet era. The degradation of Muslim image is not only applies to the case of Indian Muslims but it is a worldwide phenomenon. Muslims are represented as global enemies and bogey-men that deprive the world of the liberal democracy and its benefits.

Since liberal democracy is essentially Western model of governance model and the Muslim are found to their own state models rejecting the Western models and frequently apply the laws reciprocal to Quran, they are charged with various biased labels. They are associated with fundamentalism, terrorism, chauvinism and authoritarianism by the Western media and their representation in the media is negative. Their represented images are generally found to be exaggerated misimages. The Western attitude to the Muslims is not good according to Malik:

Fundamentalism, terrorism, chauvinism and authoritarianism have become the Muslim portion, where barbarian instinct, nurtured in rural/tribal settings,

amplifies the 'otherness' of a trans-regional community itself internally torn apart by forces of oppression, stagnation and external indignation.

Exaggerated misimages, stemming from exotica or 'invented' in a narrow historical context and augmented by selective episodic details, constitute Muslim history, as notable liberal and conservative strands in the West and elsewhere articulate on a *real* Muslim threat to the liberal, democratic and plural traditions. (20-21)

Muslims are generally represented in negative ways. They are regarded as the enemies of the Western values and they have to bear external indignation and otherness around the world as a community. It is torn apart internally by oppression, stagnation in its rural, tribal settings. Muslims are invented by West in narrow historical contexts and selective episodic details are used to decimate their reputation further. Western model of liberal, plural and democratic tradition feels threatened by the Muslim community and so, the West represents Muslims as fundamentalist and resistant to change according to the global modernity.

Generally, Islam is regarded as a political ideology more than the religious one because of its construction of political community on the basis of religious community. The ruling hierarchies are adopted from the religious traditions in most of the Islamic rules. Malik points out:

Historically, unlike Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Judaism, the construction of a political community through a powerful religious commonality overriding ethnic or class-based variations does make Islam a *political* ideology. The other religious traditions were latterly adopted by the ruling hierarchies for whatever reason but in early Islam it was religion which reversed the process with Prophet Muhammad himself establishing the city-

state of Medina. (101)

The adoption of hierarchy from the religious tradition in the ruling mechanism was religious in early Islam and it reversed the process with which Prophet Muhammad himself established the city state in Medina. Just because the state and its ruling mechanism and power hierarchy borrowed from religion unites Islamic communities Islam becomes more a political ideology than religion. This phenomenon is not seen with other religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Judaism.

The reason behind the Indians thinking Muslims as enemies and treating them as other does not a total copy of Western prejudices and their representation. The Indians have local experience of the suspicion to them that is established in Indian society after 1947. But the Indian attitude to Islam is more or less similar to the Western attitude. They regard them as terrorists. Number of Indian intellectuals also contributed to establish the hatred towards Muslims in their number of analyses:

The post-1947 Indo-Pakistani bickering, Hindu-Muslim riots in India and a gradual Hindiization of India have not allowed an open and bold debate on issues of Muslim identity, changes since independence and overlapping interaction with the non-Muslim communities. Islam, in an unstated manner, is concurrently considered both separatist and trans-regional. For Indian nationalists and the Hindu nationalists, Islam is *foreign* and Pakistan is a living proof of this un-Indianness. Not merely the Hindu fundamentalists but even several liberals like K. M. Panikkar, Radhakrishnan and Nirad Chaudhary have also tended to canonize Indian Islam as the Other. (108)

The historical and intellectual contexts that ruined the image of Muslims in India include the rife between Hindu and Muslim leaders for separate nations India and Pakistan in post-1947 scenario, Hindu-Muslim riots in India and gradual Hindiization

of India that did not leave room for the debate on the issues of Muslim identity. Muslims were started to be regarded as separatists and trans-regional. Indian nationalists started to regard Muslims as foreign and the Pakistan was regarded as the proof for their foreignness. Not only the Hindu fundamentalists but also many of the liberals regarded Muslim as alien and created the social belief that they are un-Indian and Other.

The cultural image of the Islam community was demoted to the position of distrust and cultural prejudices and the Muslims were started to be seen as terrorists and war-mongers. This image of Muslims persists till today and the Bollywood thrives on the movies based on terrorist representation of Muslims. Such movies become popular around the world because they also satisfy the need of Western audience that generally considers Muslims as fundamentalists and terrorists besides the Indian audience. *Sarfarosh* is one among the Bollywood movies that sells on the market chiefly because of the (mis)representation of the Muslims as terrorists.

Salim is not trusted in the movie for the operation against the gang of criminals and cross-border terrorists. His responsibility is given to Rathod because he is a Hindu and thus, socially perceived as the real enemy of the Islamic terrorists and extremists. But Rathod realizes the need of Salim and requests him to help him. Salim is critical of the administration and overall Indian attitude for the mistrust they show to him. He has got the sense of being marginalized, biased and socio-cultural minority and his frustration is apparent when he responds to Rathod's plea for help:

Salim: Go and save your country and save your own home. What necessity of me is there then?

Rathod: No, I really need Salim. I need not only one Salim but ten Salims to save this home.

Salim: Not only ten, you will find ten thousand if you can trust them. Don't ever try to say to anybody that this country is not his home.

Rathod: I will never say it. I will never. (1:03:29-1:04:29)

The dialogue shows the minority status and lack of trust upon Muslim characters in Indian society. Rathod asks for Salim's help to save home; here home refers to the motherland India. Salim aptly puts the argument that he could get the help of thousands of Salims if he could trust them first. The lack of trust and continual social prejudice that India is home for Hindu not for Muslims is very problematic for the unity of Hindus and Muslims. There is continual sense of being marginalized and an outsider, a cultural minority. The sense of being minority is established long ago in India, before the time of Indian Independence and even the Hindu leaders sowed the seed of mistrust creating the discourses as the voice of majority Hindu ignoring the minority Muslims.

At the time of Independence, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote his autobiography as a leader of majority Hindus but Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the spokesperson of all Indian Muslims did not write an autobiography suggests his minority status. In his book *Islam and Nationalism in India*, M. T. Ansari points out the minority experience of Indian Muslims:

It is significant that Mohammad Ali Jinnah never wrote an autobiography, despite the perception that he was the sole spokesman (Jalal, 1994) of all Indian Muslims. However, there are autobiographies by other Muslims, including a fragment of an autobiography by Mohamed Ali, an equally prominent leader of the struggle for independence. His largely ignored autobiographical fragment is of special interest since it can help one study the logic of the minoritarian enunciation of selfhood. (6)

Ali Jinnah did not write his autobiography. Other prominent Muslim leaders like Mohamed Ali have written an autobiography and that helps scholar figure out their logic of minoritarian selfhood. Indian Muslims were minority at that time and it is no surprise that their representation of the majority was negative. This Muslim representation persisted in the Indian society till now and Muslims are considered as terrorist and there are numbers of ethnic mistrust and suspicions between Hindus and Muslims. Bollywood capitalizes on this social misrepresentation of Muslims. Ansari draws contrast between Nehru's autobiography and Mohamed Ali's autobiography and clarifies their different position at that time:

Nehru could look back at his autobiography five years later, in 1940, and feel that, though written by someone else, it still was a story; elsewhere he calls it an "egotistical narrative of my adventures through life, such as they were" (595). On the contrary, Mohamed Ali's is another story altogether. His introspection during enforced leisure brought him up against the fact that his life was not a story, or at least did not have a story that could be taken for granted, and his autobiographical endeavour acquires political overtones, in fact becomes a political project of minoritarian enunciation. (7)

This observation presents the ground to discuss about the status of socio-cultural status of Hindu and Muslim in Indian society. It is because of their minority status, cultural rift with Hindu community, mistrust and ethnic-prejudices; it comes to no surprise that they demand their own independent country, Pakistan. Nehru's autobiography becomes a fiction almost five years later and it did not match his life altogether but Mohamed Ali's autobiography has got more political overtone as well as exposition of the minority status of the Muslims in India.

Iqbal Singh Sevea discusses the nature of nation and nationalism in Islam in his book

The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal:

Culture, religion and the other aspects of the nation were organically linked.

Thus the culture of each nation, itself a religious community, was intrinsically linked to its religious precepts. In Iqbal's *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, he attacked Spengler's assertion that Muslims were part of the Magian cultural group and took pains to demonstrate the originality of Muslim thought, refusing to accept any definitive influence that Greek thought could have had on the development of Muslim culture. (150)

In Muhammad Iqbal's Islamic model of governance, culture, religion and nation are organically linked. Culture of the nation itself is connected to religious community and religious values for him.

Western understanding that Muslims as fundamentalists, terrorists and resistant to the liberal democracy and modernization is the result of this unique character of Muslim culture. Islamic model of governance connects the culture, religion and nation. The negative image of Muslims in India can also be seen as affected by the Western representation of Muslims but the reasons of negative image of Muslims in India are more local and based on their experiences of Muslim frustration for being marginalized socially and given un-Indian status. *Sarfarosh* became commercially successful movie capitalizing on the Indian and Western bias upon the Muslim community.

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