



**MONASH** University

**The Reception of Bollywood in Malaysia (1991-2012):  
A Contextual Study**

**Rohini Sreekumar**

Master of Communication and Journalism

**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at  
Monash University in 2015  
School of Arts and Social Sciences**

## Copyright notice

© The author (insert year). Except as provided in the Copyright Act 1968, this thesis may not be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the author.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Declaration</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>List of Illustrations</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Note on Referencing</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Acknowledgement</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Chapter 1 - Introduction</b>	<b>13</b>
1.1 Research Questions .....	17
1.2 Aims and Objectives .....	17
1.3 Methodology and approach .....	18
1.3.1 Context in this study .....	22
1.3.2 Method .....	22
1.4 Period of Study .....	24
1.5 Thesis structure .....	25
1.6 Key word	28
<b>Chapter 2 - Literature Review</b>	<b>29</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	29
2.2 Defining Bollywood .....	29
2.3 Bollywood and its unique style, form and content .....	33
2.4 Globalising Bollywood .....	38
2.5 Exploring the diverse Bollywood reception .....	42
2.6 Southeast Asian connections .....	47
<b>Chapter 3 - Malaysia and Bollywood: A Historical and Contextual Overview</b>	<b>50</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	50
3.2 Early Indian influences .....	51
3.3 Bollywood Influences .....	55
3.4 Bollywood in the Bumiputera era .....	66
3.5 Bollywood in the post-1990 era .....	68
3.6 Bollywood in 1990s and thereafter: A Case study .....	72
3.7 Conclusion .....	82

<b>Chapter 4 - Mapping the Discourse: Bollywood in the Malaysian Media</b>	<b>84</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	84
4.2 Who writes on Bollywood? .....	85
4.3 Star Gossip - the earlier attempt to discuss Bollywood .....	89
4.4 Bollywood as a threat .....	91
4.5 Bollywood and religious insecurity .....	96
4.6 Bollywood for branding .....	99
4.7 Bollywood performances .....	106
4.8 Conclusion .....	111
<b>Chapter 5 - Perils of Bollywood: Islam, Morality and Bollywood in Malaysia</b>	<b>115</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	115
5.2 Politics and Islam in Malaysia .....	116
5.3 Islam and popular culture .....	124
5.4 Denunciation of Bollywood .....	132
5.5 Threat and popularity .....	134
5.6 Bollywood films banned in Malaysia .....	139
5.6.1 <i>Bombay</i> (1995) .....	140
5.6.2 <i>Sarfarosh</i> (1999) .....	142
5.6.3 <i>Fiza</i> (2000) .....	144
5.6.4 <i>OMG - Oh My God</i> (2012) .....	145
5.6.5 <i>Race 2</i> (2013) .....	146
5.7 From threat to political skirmishes .....	150
5.8 Conclusion .....	152
<b>Chapter 6 - Datuk Shah Rukh Khan: Identity, Stardom and Branding</b>	<b>155</b>
6.1 Introduction .....	155
6.2 SRK as a quintessential/pan-Indian figure .....	156
6.2.1 SRK as a Social Representation of India .....	157
6.2.2 SRK as a Global Indian .....	160
6.2.3 SRK as an icon of fluid sexuality .....	163
6.2.4 SRK as a liberal Muslim .....	171
6.3 Beyond the Nation - A transnational approach .....	173
6.4 Shah Rukh Khan and his persona in Malaysia .....	175

6.4.1	SRK and major sites of his stardom in Malaysia.....	176
6.4.2	Masculinity and Malay film of 1990s .....	185
6.4.3	SRK and his performance .....	189
6.4.4	SRK as brand ambassador .....	195
6.4.5	SRK and religious advantage .....	198
6.4.6	Malaysian tourism: Promotion and branding.....	203
6.5	Case Study .....	207
6.7.1	<i>One 2 Ka 4</i> (2001) .....	207
6.7.2	<i>Don: The Chase Begins Again</i> (2006) .....	211
6.6	Conclusion .....	217
<b>Chapter 7 – Conclusion</b>		<b>220</b>
7.1	Research Findings .....	220
7.1.1	‘Malaysianisation’ of Bollywood .....	221
7.1.2	Malaysianisation and transnational Bollywood studies	228
7.2	Self-reflection .....	231
7.3	Future directions .....	233
7.4	Conclusion .....	233
<b>References</b>		<b>235</b>

## **ABSTRACT**

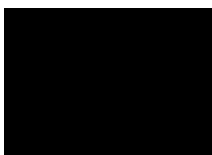
Bollywood films are increasingly drawing scholarly attention for their global appeal and reception. Transnational studies have examined the reception of Bollywood in Australia, Britain, Scotland, South Africa, Russia, the United States of America, Bangladesh and Nepal. However, academic work on the Southeast Asian reception of these films is scarcer. This research seeks to fill this gap by looking at the reception of Bollywood in Malaysia from 1991-2012.

The thesis adopts a contextual approach where the reception of Bollywood is situated within the broader Malaysian socio-political and religious contexts. Bollywood, which reached Malaysia as early as the 1930s, has an audience that goes beyond the nation's Indian diaspora. The thesis uses qualitative discourse analysis to look at the representations of Bollywood in the Malaysian media, and the broader context of such representations. As Malaysia has a long history of screening Bollywood movies, this thesis adopts a linear historical approach, tracing developments in Bollywood's appeal, which then serves as a foundation for the rest of the study.

It is revealed that Bollywood is not only a part of Malaysian film culture, but that it also forms a part of Malaysian socio-politics. This shows a "mainstreaming" of Bollywood films in the Malaysian context, which, in this thesis, is termed 'Malaysianisation'. The study shows that Bollywood in Malaysia has a dual and contradictory image – as a religious threat and as a marketing tool to help brand Malaysia overseas. This unique representation and reception reflects the contradictions existing in the larger Malaysian socio-political sphere, which also substantiates the concept of Bollywood's 'Malaysianisation'.

## **DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE**

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.



**Rohini Sreekumar**

**29 April 2015**

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

### Chapter 3

- Figure 3.1 Screenshots of P. Ramlee in *Hujan Panas* (1953)
- Figure 3.2 Screenshots from *Hujan Panas* showing how Ramlee displayed the class differences in the Malaysian society
- Figure 3.3 Colash of P Ramlee and Raj Kapoor
- Figure 3.4 Screenshot of a song enacted by P. Ramlee in *Hujan Panas*
- Figure 3.5 Screenshot from the film *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* - Rahul at the funeral pyre.
- Figure 3.6 Colash of the first few scenes from *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*
- Figure 3.7 Screenshots of a scene from the film *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*

### Chapter 4

- Figure 4.1 Facebook page on Bollywood
- Figure 4.2 Tourism Malaysia Campaign themed on Bollywood
- Figure 4.3 Poster - *Merchants of Bollywood*
- Figure 4.4 Brochures of Bollywood dance schools

### Chapter 5

- Figure 5.1 Screenshots from the performance of Madonna in the Grammy Awards, 2006
- Figure 5.2 *The Star* article on Erykah Badu
- Figure 5.3 News article from *International New York Times* (Malaysian Edition) showing blackened faces of pigs
- Figure 5.4 Screenshots from the film *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998) depicting Hindu customs/religious practices
- Figure 5.5 Poster - *Race 2* (2013)
- Figure 5.6 Poster - *Race 2* (2013)
- Figure 5.7 Screenshot from the telefilm – *Shabrukb Khan Malaysia* (2011)

### Chapter 6

- Figure 6.1 Promotional material featuring SRK with cigarette



- Figure 6.2 National Athlete Fund Launching, Malaysia
- Figure 6.3 Facebook fan page on SRK
- Figure 6.4 Bachchan, the ‘angry man’ of Bollywood
- Figure 6.5 Idiolects of SRK
- Figure 6.6 Idiolects of SRK
- Figure 6.7 SRK and Amitabh Bachchan as host of the show, Kaun Banega Crorepati Season 3 and Season 4 respectively.
- Figure 6.8 Pocket Cartoon - ‘Senyum Kambing’ in *Utusan Malaysia*
- Figure 6.9 Screenshots of a song from *One 2 ka 4* featuring KLCC Twin Tower and KL Tower
- Figure 6.10 Screenshot of a song from *One 2 Ka 4* featuring Malaysia
- Figure 6.11 Screenshots of a song shot on the hills of Batu caves
- Figure 6.12 Screenshots of a song shot at Forest Research Institute Malaysia
- Figure 6.13 Screenshots of a song shot at Malacca Beach
- Figure 6.14 Rock with ‘Rukan Muda’ written over it
- Figure 6.15 Screenshot – *Don: The Chase Begins Again*
- Figure 6.16 Screenshots – *Don: The Chase Begins Again*
- Figure 6.17 Screenshots – *Don: The Chase Begins Again*
- Figure 6.18 Screenshot – *Don: The Chase Begins Again*
- Figure 6.19 ‘Escape scene’ shot at KLCC Twin Towers - *Don: The Chase Begins Again*
- Figure 6.20 Climax scene of *Don: The Chase Begins Again* shot on the Sky Bridge, Langkawi
- Figure 6.21 Screenshot featuring Malaysian Police Force - *Don: The Chase Begins Again*
- Figure 6.22 Screenshot featuring Malaysian Police Force - *Don: The Chase Begins Again*

## **NOTE ON REFERENCING STYLE**

This thesis uses American Psychological Association (APA) style for referencing. A separate section on filmography is not provided, but the films are listed along with the other works in the Reference list.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to extend my deepest and sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. Jonathan Driskell, (School of Arts & Social Sciences, Monash University, Malaysia), and Dr. Sony Jalarajan Raj (Department of Communication, MacEwan University, Canada) for their excellent guidance, interesting insights and warm encouragement throughout my candidature.

I would like to express my earnest appreciation to the panel members who judged me through the different milestones in my research candidature. I'm also grateful to my external reviewer, Dr. Mary Ainsle (Faculty of Arts, The University of Nottingham, Malaysia) for her valuable insights and comments. I thank Associate Professor and Deputy Head of School (Research), Dr. Marco Buente, for his encouraging and amicable support during the review processes.

I take this opportunity to thank all my research cohorts in School of Arts & Social Sciences for providing a jovial and non-competitive environment where everyone openly shared their experiences and opinions regarding research and academics. I'm especially grateful to my close companions, Jacqui and Parvathy, who were always there to cheer me up and encourage me in all my endeavours.

I extend my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to my 'Ettan' who believed in me and extended his incomparable mental support and affection towards me to face the challenges and meet the requirements in this journey.

I'm very thankful to the School of Arts faculty members, Associate Prof. Sharon Adeline Bong and Mr. Callum Gilmore for their congenial mentorship and companionship.

I also thank the staffs (and ex-staffs) of School of Arts specially Mr. Mohammed Ismail, Ms. V. Bawani, Ms Tan Mei Sie, Ms. Cynthia Ng and Ms. Yvonne Chan for their valuable administrative support and assistance. I also wish to thank Mr. Hassan Yusuf for his assistance on library resources.

This thesis would not have been possible without the support and love of my family - my grandfather, dad, mom, brother and sister-in-law. I'm grateful beyond words to my parents who believed in me and extended their boundless support and motivation though they were miles away from me, thanks to 'Skype'.

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my beloved Grandmother who is always an inspiration and a role model in my life for her brave decisions, commitment and courage.

Thank you all for being with me in this journey.

Rohini Sreekumar  
Monash University  
April 2015

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

When the Lumiere Brothers exhibited their silent movie clips in Mumbai's Watson's Hotel in July 1896, newspapers referred to it as the 'Miracle of the Century'. It fired the imagination of many Indians who were already familiar with the concept of moving images on the screen, through traditional folk acts like shadow and puppet play. It's been a century since the first film was released in India in 1913. Though it started as a humble attempt to educate the public, film in India soon emerged as a flourishing industry.

Though writings on Indian cinema didn't appear until the late 1960s in the form of historical anthologies and film reviews, serious academic interventions began only in the early 1980s. By this time, Indian cinema had conquered international cultural discussions for classical art films of directors like Satyajith Ray, Mrinal Sen and Shyam Benegal. A shift of interest from art cinema to commercial films was gradual. Shoemith (2002) has stated that when he presented a paper on Indian cinema at one of his conferences, his colleagues were surprised about why he wanted to talk about a cinema that nobody knows about. In his own words,

Australian colleagues were puzzled as to why I would talk about a cinema [...] which was totally under-theorized and culturally inaccessible. Indian colleagues were puzzled about why I wanted to talk about what they regarded as rubbish. (p. 74)

From an under-theorized and culturally inaccessible entertainment medium, Indian cinema has evolved to become a highly discussed cultural product. As part of the global promotion of *'Brand India'*, film is increasingly emerging as a significant export for India with a sizeable expatriate market eager to engage with the popular culture of their homeland or ancestry (Athique, 2011). This new interest also saw the transition from the comprehensive discussion on 'Indian cinema' to a more specific

regional language industry, Bollywood, one of the most prolific industries in the world producing an average of 1000 films per year ( Matusitz & Payano, 2011). Though India never had a national film industry, Bollywood began to take its berth, as it crossed borders and started conquering foreign box offices and international audiences. The result of which is the increasing number of academic works on Bollywood on its globalising effects, diasporic experience, international and transnational reception characteristics.

With Bollywood being the most profitable and successful cultural and entertainment product of India and crossing geographical borders, it is one of the most discussed and proliferated topics in film research. As such, the reception of Bollywood and its influence in cultural readings of those films in their respective milieu, have been gaining momentum. While counties and continents like Australia, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Russia, and the United States, have been research locations for initial studies, an intervention into its reception in Southeast Asian countries has been considerably lacking. Hence, this study seeks to analyse the reception of Bollywood in Malaysia, a significant part of the East Indies (an area that came under Indian cultural influence). Malaysia serves here as an example of an already engaged export market for Indian cinema, mainly Bollywood. The complexity of Malaysia; multiple ethnicities, religions, patterns of migration, its nascent status as a leading international technology services provider, and the nation's emergence as a global economic power, position it as a significant site for further investigation into cross cultural and transnational studies. The thesis argues that Bollywood is not only part of Malaysian film culture, but that it forms a larger part of Malaysian socio-politics, thus showing a mainstreaming of Bollywood films in the Malaysian context which I term 'Malaysianisation'. This 'Malaysianisation' reflects the larger social-political realities in Malaysia, the key aspects of which are found in the reception of Bollywood in Malaysia.

Malaysia, a nation with a diverse ethnic population consisting of three major groups – the Malay majority, and the Chinese and the Indian minorities, has long displayed an appreciation for Indian cinema that transcends race and ethnicity (Khoo 2006, p. 90). The presence of an Indian diaspora in Malaysia, many of whom originate from migrant workers recruited to work on tea, palm oil and rubber

plantations in the early 1890s after the abolition of slavery, can be seen as the original impetus in the success of many Indian films shown there (Lal 2003). Even before that, Malaysia, as the centre of major sea routes, witnessed a constant cultural interaction as Indian traders began to settle there and the Malay traders came back from India laden with Indian customs, cultures, folklores, stories, and art forms (Van der Heide, 2002, p. 66). After colonization, this cultural inspiration and invasion was even more substantial and led to the first film in Malaysia in 1933, *Laila Majnun*, directed by an Indian, B.S. Rajhans, and produced by the Singapore-based Motilal Chemical Company of Bombay, an adaptation of a 1931 Indian movie of the same name.

Indeed from its inception, Malaysian film has displayed a certain affinity with Indian culture and the early influx of Indian directors in the Malaysian cinema ensured that the content was closely linked with Indian cinema and mythology. This explains how Malaysia became one of the key markets for Bollywood films, which provide considerable space to the leisure activities of millions of Malaysians, both urban and rural, despite its differences with the Malay identity and culture.

While explaining Malaysian film and its connection with the Indian film industry during the early period of Malaysian film development, the 1950s, Van der Heide (2002) said that, though there were two language films from India, Tamil and Hindi, Malaysian audiences preferred the Hindi films mainly because they had little dialogue and more spectacular song and dance sequences. At this point, it is necessary to make it clear that this thesis confines its focus only to the Hindi language films, which are popularly known as 'Bollywood'. Considering both of these film industries for analysis is beyond the limit of this thesis as both have very different styles of narration, mise-en-scène and reception. Though both are Indian language films, Tamil films are viewed only by Southern Indians, particularly the Tamil community, as they are not subtitled in Malaysia. The difference in appeal between Tamil and Bollywood films are considered in details in the analysis chapters.

It is interesting to note that, unlike now, Hindi films were not subtitled when they were first released in Malaysia, but they still continued to fascinate audiences. Latif (1981) confirms this continuing interest for Hindi films by pointing to the success of the film, *Bobby* (Kapoor & Kapoor, 1973), which was popular among non-

Indian Malaysians, even though it was neither dubbed or subtitled (p. 199). This fascination is still present today, to varying degrees. However, not all Bollywood films are released in Malaysia, as only the high budget commercial projects, or films with popular actors like Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan or Salman Khan are distributed for foreign release.

This study fills the gap in the current scholarship by documenting the reception of Bollywood in Malaysia during a period of over two decades from 1990 to 2012, and focuses primarily on Bollywood films, media reports, public documents, Bollywood box office reports in Malaysia, selected Bollywood films released in Malaysia and film reviews, which are supplemented by secondary sources like books on the history of cinema and personal comments made by film critics and film clubs. It offers an opportunity to examine the interaction of cultural and historical factors in the creation of cinematic reputations and the production of film history.

The research is only an initial step into the wide range of possibilities for academic work on Malaysia and its reception of Bollywood. Hence, this is an ambitious attempt to record facts and to investigate and analyse the interest for Bollywood in Malaysia. As previously mentioned, Bollywood studies are gaining momentum with the cross-border flow of these films, their actors and cultural intermediaries like song and dance shows across the globe. A greater part of this study has been located within the Indian diaspora and their reason for bringing Bollywood to the international market. However, aside from Indian diaspora, there has been a new wave of interest among non-Indian audiences, which has scarcely been discoursed in academia. Though this gap will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, at this point it could be mentioned that in transnational reception studies, it is the context of reception that makes the difference, not the diaspora. Unlike other reception studies that have taken a diasporic approach to the analysis of Bollywood (as it is an Indian cultural product) this thesis tries to prioritize 'Malaysians', rather than 'Malaysian Indians' or 'Indian diaspora'. Hence, the context is given more importance here. This is further elaborated in the methodology section. However, as the thesis progresses, it will eventually be made clear who the audience for Bollywood is and how they differ/resemble each other in their attitudes towards Bollywood.



## **1.1 Major Research Questions**

- (1) What does Bollywood films mean in the Malaysian context?
- (2) How are Bollywood films represented in the media discourses? In what ways are these representations shaped by the political, religious and cinematic contexts in Malaysia?
- (3) What does this reception says about broader Malaysian society?
- (4) What knowledge does this reception add to the cross-border reception studies on Bollywood?

## **1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Study**

The main aim of this research is to identify how Bollywood films have been received in Malaysia and to what extent this reception is unique from its global reception.

It also aims at analysing the reviews written on Bollywood films and the insight they give into the status of these films in Malaysia. This involves investigating a large body of newspaper and journal articles, with particular attention to Bollywood film. Though not a comparative study of the reception of Bollywood in India and Malaysia, the analysis has adopted a comparative tone, as it was necessary to differentiate the discourses and the readings of Bollywood films in Malaysia.

While looking into the specific significance of Bollywood in Malaysia, this thesis will shed light on the meaning of certain Bollywood films in the Malaysian social, cultural and religious milieu. By analysing the popularity of Bollywood films, the thesis also aims to identify the ideological significance of these films in the Malaysian context. One of the major concerns of this thesis is also to examine the stardom of Shah Rukh Khan in Malaysia with consideration of the industrial, religious and political context of his stardom. This is in relation to the 'Darjah Mulia Seri Melaka', a Malaysian honorary award that confers him with the title of 'Datuk', a title of respect.

### 1.3 Methodology and Approach

This study intervenes in the area of reception studies by drawing on the work of Janet Staiger and Barabara Klinger who are concerned with the historical, cultural and institutional contexts for producing meaning and significance of films in a society. Klinger (1994) argues that meaning of a film is “dependent on their social location and the predispositions of their receivers, thus subjecting to negotiation through time and circumstance” (p. 34).

Reception is a broad term in cultural and media studies encompassing a wide array of meanings and methods of analysis. As Machor and Goldstein (2001) put it, a thorough reception could be “any social practice of consumption” (p. 206). They also hint at the fact that all audience study is reception study and all reception study is also audience analysis. This problem in defining and making boundaries resulted in different ways of understanding reception. According to Culler, “it is not a way of interpreting works but an attempt to understand their changing intelligibility by identifying the codes and interpretative assumptions that give them meaning for different audiences at different periods” (1981, p. 13). Eagleton (1983) sees it as a social and historical theory of meaning in which he posits that meaning is never identical with itself, but different context produce different meaning. Andrew (1995) brought out a similar concept of reception, which he calls “cultural hermeneutics”. For him, “a cultural history of a film should undergo a review of the conditions and context within which these films and their representations are made, in order to be understood as controversial or trivial” (p. 22). By taking all these concepts into account it can be understood that reception study is not about truth finding or hermeneutics (Staiger, 2005). It is all about the significance of a medium or cultural product and its use by the audience, situating it in the context within which it takes place. What does a text mean, for whom and in what circumstances? All these definitions clearly underline the fact that reception studies do not find the meaning of a text, but the significance of a text in the society. This thesis uses Janet Staiger’s and Barabra Klinger’s ideas on reception study to analyse the international reception of Bollywood in Malaysia.

Staiger's seminal work, *Interpreting Films* (1992), kick-started a thorough critique of the methods and theories that film theorists used to interpret texts. With her context-oriented film theories, she explored the possibilities of using cognitive frames of reference advanced by Bordwell's (1991, p. xv), cultural studies and linguistics in the analysis of films. Staiger argues that reception study is preferable to textual study as it emphasizes "the historical relationship between real readers and texts, actual spectators and film" (p.8). Her approach is the "historical explanation of the activities of interpretation" (p. 212). She rejected the text-oriented theories postulated by Roland Barthes under the argument that those theories consider texts as controlling and providing information for the "reader's routine and learned activities" (p. 36). It assumes that the reader is under no obligation to resist the meaning of the text. Nevertheless, she also rejected reader-activated theories, pointing out that this approach highlights the features of the audience and the influence of these features in their reading experience, thereby taking the analysis away from the features of the text. Considering the reader's subjective interpretation of films, which are influenced by their psychological and academic features, according to her, these theories ignore the text and put the audience/readers under the category of mass readers.

The reception studies approach asserts that meaning is not located in the material of the text or in the interpretation of the audience, but in the context. Readers do not just decode a text, but the context of their interpretation has a considerable impact on the way they understand or accept the text. According to her, if one needs to understand the interpretation of moving images, it is vital to understand the historical elements. Here the text is not discarded, but considered as providing 'sense-data' (p. 48), which is interpreted according to the multiple determinations that the audience has. This act of interpretation is situated within different historical and cultural events.

In fact, Staiger's second book *Perverse Spectators: The Practise of Film Reception* (2000) is a continuation of her first book, *Interpreting Films* in using her context-oriented theoretical approach. She offers a series of essays on the different ways of analysing the reception of texts by audience. She calls the audience 'perverse' mainly because they use the film in their own way and place it under their own interpretation.

The actual circumstances of exhibition and the pleasure sought by audiences in watching those films are so perverse, that it depends upon the context rather than the text itself. She was against the claim that certain forms of film evoke certain fixed reactions from the audience and instead argues that a single film may have different meanings and interpretations for diverse audiences. However, she is of the opinion that these interpretations are never infinite, but have a limit. The historically available parameters or strategies of interpretations restrict the infinite interpretation of a particular film.

So the major concern here is how to analyse the films, if the meaning is produced by the subjective interpretation of the audience, which varies according to the audiences' characteristics. It is at this juncture that she begins to theoretically examine a variety of responses and reactions of audiences using diaries, private conversations, and letters to newspapers editors, posters, news items and gossip columns. She considers these as 'traces' (p.1, 118, 163) of an encounter between audience and text, and form the primary source of data or documentation for analysis. These traces are analysed, examined and positioned for propositions. The documents are used not to excavate the meaning of the text, but to understand the significance of the film for particular audiences. In a similar line of reference, she examines the film *JFK*, which was criticized by post-modernist theoreticians as a delineation between fact and fiction through a deliberate analysis of the newspaper reports of the films, and reached a conclusion that the controversies surrounding the film were not because of its vague documentary fictional approach, but rather because of confusion surrounding the official history of Kennedy and the popular non-official versions of history.

Barbara Klinger's *Melodrama and Meaning* (1994) also takes a similar historical approach to analysing the films of Douglas Sirk by considering the various social contexts and circumstances in which the films have been viewed since their release in the 1950s. She identifies how Sirk's films have been characterized as "subversive, trash, classic, camp and vehicles of gender definition" (p. xv). Klinger explores the need for a historical dimension in recognizing the roles of historical and social factors to identify the cultural politics of films. According to her, the film's meaning lies not in the text or audience, but in the discursive environment in which the meaning is

created. Hence, her analysis of Sirk and his films is based on the role of cultural forces in the process of interpretation, and on a larger scale, it sheds light upon the intricate relationship between a text and its meaning. The institutional, cultural and historical context enables these different definitions of the same film. She argues that interpretation is always influenced by forces that produce a sensibility or opinion and depends upon a large and diverse cultural framework (p. 160). These opinions, which they take with them to enjoy the movies, are formed through a series of texts, film related or not, such as; posters, ad campaigns, reviews, film promos and interviews with the director or other persons associated with the respective films. Klinger has taken a similar approach in analysing the digressions or cinematic detour in spectator interaction, where the social and intertextual agencies have been pointed out as the factors leading to a particular way of spectatorship rather than the textual meaning (1989).

Klinger (1997) also posits that cross-cultural reception is another level of a film's meaningful existence. This consideration is the key to using this approach for the thesis. As she argues, the meaning of a film is so malleable that texts are adopted or embraced differently at different national contexts. This also hints at the necessity of taking the transnational or cross-border film analysis from the ambit of diaspora to a broader social and political context. This makes a huge difference in looking at the transnational reception of Bollywood, to think beyond the diasporic meaning, making a more contextual analysis of these films. The need arises, as Bollywood's reception anywhere outside India, is a cross-cultural process, bringing another level to its meaningful existence. Hence social and historical factors along with the context of reception form major criteria for the meaning making. Moreover, in examining the reception of a film industry like Bollywood whose audience and popularity are spread across the globe, in a particular sub-continent or society, the most sensible method will be to look into the context and circumstances in which these films have been received, rather than tying it to a particular set of theoretical assumptions. As far as Bollywood's connection with Malaysia is concerned, it is more historical rather than an aftermath of globalization; it becomes essential to frame a historical analysis of film as an investigation of the intertexts and context, which surround a film's text.

### **1. 3. 1 Context in this Study**

There are two key points that this thesis draws from the works of Staiger and Klinger in analysing the reception of Bollywood reception in Malaysia – the importance of context and historical approach. A historical approach becomes necessary here, as the Indian cinema reached Malaysia in the early 1930s, the fascination and impact of which is carried over to the present. Nevertheless, it is necessary to understand the differences (if any) in reception or appeal of an industry that has a long history of inception in Malaysia which could possibly reflect its appeal in the post-1990s period as well.

Equally important is the context of reception in Malaysia. In examining the reception of a film industry like Bollywood whose audience and popularity are spread across the globe, to a particular sub-continent or society, the most sensible method will be to look at the context and circumstances in which these films have been received. Also, this reception is not limited to the ‘viewer’; but to other institutions in society, such as the political sphere and religious organizations. Malaysia, being an Islamic State, has severe censorship laws, which restricts the freedom of expression in all entertainment and media industries. In a country where the indigenous films struggle to make it at the box-office, a foreign industry like Bollywood has easily found a place here. It is in this regard that the contextual factors - socio-cultural, political and religious factors - are a significant part of the reception of a film. The reason for using Staiger’s approach (reception study) is that textual or film analysis is not always adequate when considering the transnational reception of a film.

### **1. 3. 2 Method**

Staiger’s and Klinger’s ground breaking works have opened up the possibility of moving away from the clutches of pure theory in analysing film history to a broader way of analysing the archive materials and documents such as news items, legal contracts and posters. In this thesis, media discourses form the primary data and has been used to analyse the ideologies related to the reception of Bollywood in Malaysia. Extensive archival materials, mass media news reports, personal blogs,

social media postings and fan pages have been collected and analysed for the purpose of this research. However this thesis will not use audience interviews as the primary source of information. There are many reasons for this. The main issue rests in the nature of the topic itself - it is an initial academic intervention into the influence of Bollywood in Malaysia, and hence requires a foundational and broader perspective. This also has practical difficulties in narrowing the research, and hence defining audience samples would be tricky as Malaysian audience consists of three main ethnicities, and hence sampling these audience into specific demographic details become impractical. Moreover, interviews may yield only some personal comments and clarifications but will not necessarily reveal any contextual information on the reception of a film industry.

As a result media discourses have been chosen as a method of analysing Bollywood reception in Malaysia. As Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) stated, “Discourse analysis is not a single approach, rather, it is a series of interdisciplinary approaches that can be used in different ways” (p. 1). Whatever the approach is, context is important in discourse analysis. According to Fairclough (1995), critical discourse analysis is not only about analysing the texts, but its interaction with the social context. Hence the meaning of the texts or discourses could only be understood in its complete sense only if its context has been analysed. This is of particular significance for this research as it adopts a contextual study propagated by Staiger and Klinger, thus supporting and complementing each other. Therefore, this thesis will analyse cinematic discourses to identify the ideologies related to the reception of Bollywood in Malaysia. I’m using the discourses to analyse how these are generated or organized to create certain meaning, and the conditions from which these discourses emerged. This simply means that discourses would be read by focusing on the context of its publication. However I’m not looking at the possible gaps in the literature; neither am I looking at the framing of these discourses or the power relations expressed through language. Instead, discourses are used in this research to identify the ways in which Bollywood find place in media discourses, and based on which factors it is being defined. Rather than looking at the legitimacy of these discourses, they are used to understand the broader context in which Bollywood is thus discussed.

In a cross-border reception study, news discourses could possibly speak volumes about the cultural phenomenon in the specific context because these news discourses are limited to the national boundaries due to the language and the news contents particular to each society. Hence these discourses reflect the specific social context within which it is produced. As far this research is concerned, it is the discourses that give a broader outlook on the characteristics of Bollywood reception in Malaysia. Hence the study adopts a qualitative critical discourse analysis where Bollywood discourses from three main print newspapers - *Utusan Malaysia*, *New Strait Times* and *The Star* and, two main online newspapers - *Malaysiakini* and *Free Malaysia Times* - are considered for analysis, along with a wide range of online materials like blog postings and Facebook pages on Bollywood.

#### **1.4 Period of Study**

This study documents the reception of Bollywood in Malaysia in a post Wawasan 2020 or Vision 2020 period, from 1991 to 2012. As Bollywood has been in Malaysia since the 1930s (as theatre releases and tent shows), this reception study has to focus on a particular time period in order to be tangible. Though convenience and practicality are the major concerns in this regard, such a period is significant both for Malaysia as well as Bollywood. Wawasan 2020 is a set of goals or ideals proposed and introduced in 1991 by Tun Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, the then Prime Minister of Malaysia. Vision 2020 is not only a declaration aiming to build a self-sufficient society having economic prosperity, but it also signifies a mission to build a nation with a Malaysian identity and culture (Bangsa Malaysia or Malaysian Nation, rather than a Malay nation) in an era of globalization. Hence, the period after the declaration of this vision serves as a critical period in the analysis of a foreign film industry like Bollywood, a significant entertainment medium. This period is of particular interest as the Vision 2020 calls for the nation to achieve a self-sufficient, psychologically liberated progressive society with strong morals and ethics. Moreover, this period also saw political insurgencies and a financial crisis that made the context of analysis of an entertainment industry more remarkable. Amidst these concerns, it is useful to



look into the reception of a foreign entertainment medium and how it's been received in Malaysia.

As far as Bollywood is concerned, 1991 was a milestone year in that Bollywood had become a globalised entertainment medium crossing borders in a commercial wave due to the economic policy and liberalization of trade restrictions on domestic cultural products and exports by India. It was after 1991 that Bollywood films started considering the potential of global audiences as well as the need to represent a diasporic audience in its films. Despite the fact that Indian films reached Malaysia long before 1991, and considering the stance of Malaysia after 1991, it is imperative to look into this particular time period of reception for Bollywood in Malaysia.

## **1.5 Thesis Structure**

The proposed thesis has seven chapters - Introduction, Literature Review, four analysis chapters and a concluding chapter.

Chapter 2 – *Literature Review*- This chapter aims at reviewing academic works on Bollywood that enables not only an understanding about the bulk of literature on the Bollywood film industry as a cultural and commercial product, but also uncovers the gap in this literature that this research will fill. The chapter identifies studies focusing on the international reception of Bollywood especially the diasporic experience of watching and consuming Bollywood. In this work, the reception is usually restricted to the diaspora while the meaning of the film in a broader socio-political context remains unidentified. Moreover, most of the studies have looked at the appeal of Bollywood in a western context, and it is significant to note that the flow of Bollywood within the Asian boundary is the least explored in the academic field

The major research investigation begins from the third chapter. The first analysis chapter, Chapter 3 - *Malaysia and Bollywood: A historical and Contextual Overview* - looks into the historical connection between the two countries – Indian and Malaysia. It provides a brief history of Indian influences in Malaysia: Indian people in

Malaysia, cultural similarities, Indian influences in Malaysia including arts and cultural forms and the Indian cinematic influences and interests in Malaysia. The major conclusion drawn from this chapter is that though Bollywood reached Malaysia as early as the 1930s, its popularity in Malaysia, particularly during the 1990's, was both due to its key features (mainly song and dance sequences) and the particular context in Malaysia that was favourable for Bollywood. The 1990's saw the emergence of new Malay filmmakers who experimented with modern themes, but the audience's inclination was towards the more familiar themes, such as teen love stories and melodramas, which were provided by Bollywood.

Chapter - 4 - *Mapping the Discourses; Bollywood in the Malaysian Media* - As discourses form the primary object of analysis, this chapter is laid out in a manner that provides an overview of the types, sites and themes of Bollywood discourses. It includes news articles and reviews on print media as well as online media like social networking sites, blogs, institutional websites, etc. The chapter works within the framework of a discourse analysis, involving an analysis of the media texts within their social, political and religious contexts. This chapter is aimed at gaining a sense of how and what the Malaysian media discusses in regards to Bollywood. After looking at the Bollywood journalists in Malaysia, the chapter categorizes the discourses into different themes in order to get a sense of what has been written about Bollywood and in which context. The chapter not only shows the popularity of Bollywood in Malaysia, which forms a continuation of what has been examined in the previous chapter, but also highlights certain conflicting ideologies associated with the consumption of Bollywood in Malaysia, which makes the reception unique and distinct. Hence two aspects found to be conflicting are further analysed in detail in the succeeding chapters.

Chapter – 5 – *Perils of Bollywood; Islam, Morality and Bollywood in Malaysia* - One of the more significant discourses covers the moral and religious issues relating to Bollywood films in Malaysia. While Bollywood dance and stage shows are the most reviewed element of Bollywood in any of its international reception studies (with Malaysia contributing nothing new or different), it is the concept of 'threat' posed by a foreign film industry like Bollywood (which reached Malaysia as early as the 1930s) that has been the least explored. Religious leaders have come out with staunch

criticism against Bollywood for its negative impact on Malay society. Moreover, many films have been banned in Malaysia for religious reasons. This chapter looks into the negative aspects of Bollywood in Malaysia, taking into consideration the Islamic leaders' attitude towards Bollywood and the Malaysian government's system that bans many films (including Bollywood) on the grounds of religious sentiment and morality. This necessitates the research to look into the relevant religious, political and historical context of Malaysia.

Chapter – 6 - '*Datuk*' *Shah Rukh Khan; Identity, Stardom and Branding* - Amidst the opposing factors like popularity and threat, Bollywood was never banned completely from theatre release in Malaysia as it has been in Bangladesh, a Muslim nation. In fact, Bollywood enjoys political endorsement in Malaysia even though Islamic leaders consider it a threat. Even the Bollywood star, Shah Rukh Khan's (SRK) religious identity of a Muslim is used to promote Malaysia as a tourist destination and brand Malaysia. One of the other major focuses of this chapter is to understand the political and religious context of the Bollywood star SRK's appeal and how his stardom surpassed cinematic boundaries to reach the level of a brand ambassador. In Malaysia, the fascination for this actor has a new dimension where his global appeal is used to promote tourism and ultimately ended up with him being given the title of 'Datuk' in 2008. Moreover, to date, SRK holds a strong media presence in Malaysia, and forms a major part of Bollywood discourses through traditional and online media. Therefore the specific aim of this chapter is to analyse the stardom of SRK in Malaysia, as well as the role Khan has played in the reception of Bollywood in Malaysia. One of the other major concerns of this chapter is to understand the political and religious context of his appeal and how this was used by the Malaysian political sphere.

Chapter – 7 – *Conclusion* – In this final chapter, the major findings are presented in two parts – (i) 'malaysianisation' of Bollywood (exploring the concept) and its significance in contemporary Malaysia and (ii) the implications of this in the transnational reception studies on Bollywood.

## 1.6 Key Words

There are certain terms used in the thesis that could potentially confuse a reader. The thesis uses the word 'Bollywood' as synonymous to Hindi language films, and does not include any other Indian language films. Such a clarification arises as Malaysia is a thriving market for both Bollywood and the Tamil language film industry and therefore some of the sources have confused these identities under the Indian banner. Also, Bollywood is an accepted term now used by film scholars around the world to denote the Hindi language films. Though some of the scholars (for instance, Dudrah, 2006) use it to refer to a wider film and media entertainment industry, largely operating out of Mumbai/Bombay, this thesis uses it in its original denotation for Hindi language films

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the academic works on Bollywood that enables not only understanding the bulk of literature on the Bollywood film industry as a cultural and commercial product, but uncovers perceived gaps in the literature, that this research will fill. The theoretical and scholarly works on Bollywood will also help to establish the main points that this thesis explores. From Shoemith's (2008) bewildering experience of talking about Indian cinema to an incredulous academic audience who consider this cultural entity as 'rubbish' and 'under-theorized', Indian cinema under the banner of Bollywood is being examined by an increasing number of scholars.

The chapter starts with distinguishing and defining the term Bollywood through the works previously published, and includes looking at the specific features of the aforementioned industry. This is followed by a broad category called 'Globalising Bollywood' which is separated into two parts; the first section examines the concept of the globalization of Bollywood and the second, looks at the diverse transnational reception studies of Bollywood. This leads to the final part of the chapter that identifies the gap in the literature and the significance of this study.

#### 2.2 Defining Bollywood

One of the main features of globalization, when analysed from a cultural point of view, is the hegemonic attitude of certain cultures in drawing all other cultures towards it through the dissemination of consumer goods or lifestyle (Friedman, 1994). Marsden, Nachbar, and Grogg (1982) observe that films are one of these features of a society that has the potential to disseminate culture and traditional values. This is the reason why film receives the most attention both in social and academic discussions. The Indian film industry can be correlated to Friedman's

consumer product of a hegemonic culture that now captures the imagination of millions of people around the world.

Though it was after 1991 that Bollywood films began to reach global markets in abundance, even before that, through films of directors such as Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak, the Indian film industry attained a significant place in the discussions of world cinema. Though these directors are the classic filmmakers of the Bengali film industry, cultural globalization of India is now carried out by the Hindi film industry, Bollywood. Nevertheless, Bollywood is conceptualized as a national film industry when viewed from a global perspective with its expanding global market.

The Indian film industry has become a major part of life for the Indian people (Dwyer & Patel, 2002). Though there have been different ideas on what constitutes a national film industry in India, most often it is Bollywood that is seen as the national cinema, with its national and global popularity. According to Dwyer and Patel (2002) an Indian national cinema should identify class relationships and should address the broad and diverse culture of India, and this could be found in Bollywood films. Bollywood began to be read as a representation of the Indian film industry, even though India has many other types of regional language films. Becoming a model for all other regional films, it sets the status of an 'all-India cinema' (Mishra, 2013), creating a shared experience and transforming them to an abstract national subject. By saying this, he takes most of his ideas from Rajadhyaksha's (1997) 'abstract national subject'. As a result of this deconstructed image, it surpasses language, class and cultural differences, by catering to varied sections of society, from "illiterates" to "sophisticated urbanites" (Mishra 2002, p. 4). Similar to the claims made by these writers, Kakar (1981), is taking Anderson's concept of imagined community, that Indian cinema 'transgresses social and spatial categories in its diversity' and produces an image of national consumption that crosses religious and language boundaries to play an active role in the imagining of a national secular identity (p. 13). He considers Bollywood a major influence of an emerging 'pan-Indian popular culture', stimulating a sense of national unity. This has also made Bollywood a much-discussed cultural industry in the contemporary world, finding its place among the classical and historical discussions of film industries like Hollywood and French films.

However, in the past two decades, a number of books have been published on Bollywood and most of them have used textual analysis. There has been a stream of works that connect sociology and cultural studies with Bollywood films. Viridi's (2003) *The Cinematic Imagination: Indian Popular Films as Social History* is notable for juxtaposing mainstream Hindi films as a fiction with the socio-political context within which they are produced and exhibited. Through a series of case studies and close readings of films, she claims that family is the main subject on which these social conflicts have been staged, and each period of Indian socio-political history has been contemplated in the films of that respective period. From the post-colonial contradictions of democracy and nation development as well as political insecurities and globalization, Bollywood films have even identified and represented the gender equalities and inequalities prevailing in India. For instance, by watching the films in chronological order, it shows the changing role of women from the enduring mother and wife to an astute and independent working woman, representing the character of a modern Indian woman in a globalized world.

Mishra (2002) has used a similar framework of sociological analysis of Bollywood films. He interprets the complexity of the genres of musicals, romance, melodrama and nationalism over a period of nine decades. This includes a close look into the changing ideological approach of the nation-state theme, the association of traditional folk art forms, epics in the form and structure of films, and the social and ideological shifts in popular cinema. Through a psychoanalytical approach, where he employs a kind of autobiographical and nostalgic summary of his early film going experiences, he examines the popular melodramatic films as indigenous and adapted versions of the cultural forms and epics of India like the Mahabharatha, Ramayana, and the paintings of Raja Ravi Varma. Furthermore, he builds a bridge between Hindu fundamentalism and Bombay cinema linking the historical events of Independence, partition, the destruction of the Ayodhya Mosque and the subsequent breach between Hindus and Muslims, with popular Hindi films. Relating to this, he says that it is the quality of Bollywood that cuts across religious and cultural differences and confers it with a pan-Indian image. Dudrah (2006) also tries to revive the interest on sociology of films by looking at the relationship between film, culture and the audience. Through participant observation and interviews, he argues that

there is an assemblage of fantasy, reality and diaspora's own articulation in these films that offer an understanding of their diasporic sensibilities connections. He also considers a case study on Shah Rukh Khan to state that how SRK has risen into prominence due to his character of urban diaspora in the diaspora-themed films and the increasing globalization of these films. He suggests that the Bollywood films create an image of urban India or urban diaspora which is reconfigured by the diaspora which in turn reshape the Bollywood films.

Among the massive lists of works written on Bollywood films, Gopalan's (2002) *Cinema of Interruptions* stands apart from the rest, due to its novel outlook on defining Bollywood. She offers a reading of interruptions in Indian films, which according to her are a set of factors like intermission, song and dance, and censorship that have artistic consistency in making films uniquely Indian. For example, she argues that the intermission in Indian cinema plays a very significant role other than just a break in the long narrative; it has the function of structuring the plot or bringing to it new sensibilities or genres. Thus she breaks the stereotypical analysis and theoretical interpretation of Bollywood movies and provides a fresh outlook in which to evaluate the films. She says that the pleasure in watching films is a neglected area in Indian film studies, claiming that interruptions are fundamental to the gratification of this cinema. The pleasure from a film is achieved by the audience only when they are familiar with the conventions of a genre – such as action or romance. She suggests that Indian cinema must be read from the perspective of a cinephiliac or cinema fetish, the way in which she herself has committed to this book. She states,

...more often than not, by calling attention to our viewing habits  
within the diegesis and naming it love, contemporary Indian films  
have closed the gap between the screen and the spectator... (p. 3)

She continues that the interruption she mentions accelerates the compulsive communication between spectator and screen, and goes on to say that analyzing Bollywood or Indian films through the Hollywood film theories cannot adequately account for the characteristics of it. However, she doesn't propose any theory but focusses her attention on pleasure, which is the primary condition of engagement in



film theory. By looking at the interruptions, she discards film theories, and proposes a theory that makes the cinematic experience a personal engagement at the core of it.

The works discussed so far consider the sociological significance and meaning of Bollywood. The greater significance of this has made scholars shift their focus to the specific form and contents of Bollywood films that speak more about its role in society, and will be discussed in the next section.

### **2.3 Bollywood and its Unique Style, Form and Content**

As Bollywood is an art that adopts its own set of characters and components, the major focus of many researchers is to look at the individuality of Bollywood – its text, its song and dance sequences, fantasy and romance. Most of these studies have centred on the cultural impact of these elements upon Indian as well as foreign viewers (Dwyer and Patel, 2002; Nandy, 1998; Vasudevan, 2000). This is further examined by Tyrell (1998) who considered Bollywood not just a third world art film, but a highly commercialized global industry characterized by the emotional and wandering storylines embellished with song and dance sequences in its three stages. However, Kakar (1981) gives prior significance to the emotional storylines in Bollywood films, as he considers it a genuine effort to indulge and reflect on the various human relationships of Indian culture (p. 13).

Many academics (e.g. Kakar, 1981; Nandy, 1989; Srinivas, 2005) have theorized Bollywood as consisting of fantasy, but their definition and conclusions differ to a greater extent. Kakar (1981) considers Bollywood a collective fantasy, which forms a bridge between desire and reality. Here fantasy is not used as a whimsical, eccentric or trivial idea, but “as a world of imagination fuelled by desire and which provides us with an alternative world where we can continue our long standing quarrel with reality” (p. 26). Nandy (1989) replaces desire with needs and anxiety and considers film as a way of expressing and manipulating the fear and anxiety of ‘Indian self, threatened by the conflicting demands of numerous life-styles and normative frames’ (p. 44). He adds that, film provides an organized fantasy to defend against the gap produced by social changes in society. Among the proponents of fantasy, Srinivas’ (2005) definition of fantasy stands apart. She tries to explore the

role of fantasy in the cinematic representation of globalization. By suggesting that the representation of globalization in these films has different uses for different audience, she tries to describe these categories of audiences and their specific cinematic experiences. For instance, middle class audiences try to consider anything foreign (location, character, incident) as known and familiar, validating an upper middle class lifestyle; whereas a non-resident Indian will often 'link transnational experience with nostalgic, grounding images of India' (p. 27). For her, these fantasies in film, culturally educate the viewers.

While fantasy has been the core of many scholarly discussions on Bollywood, a greater part of the Bollywood research is also concerned with the impact of and the role played by song and dances in these films, as they are one of Bollywood's most distinguishing feature. Jaikumar (2003) noted that there is an indisputable relationship between drama, music, and dance that combines to make a Bollywood film. He raises doubt about the narrative justification of songs, but believes that these visual elements have the capacity to reach diverse audiences irrespective of their language differences or barriers by decoding the meaning from the images and emotions articulated by them. Tirumala (2009) states that there was a gradual change in the perception towards Hindi film dances from a mere film adaptation or documentation to a highly respected art form performed at various contexts in India and abroad. However Altman, R (1981) gave a thoughtful explanation of the same; he states that these song sequences 'operate as a dual-focus model', where the film couple represents the binaries. Such a structure demands audiences to be sensitive to different parallel happenings and their comparison rather than the meaning or progression. While he was hinting at the Hollywood musicals, it is also applicable to Bollywood song sequences that may not narrate progression, but help in reinforcing the onscreen emotions.

Gopal and Moorti (2008) devoted an entire book to the concept of Bollywood dance and songs crossing borders. They argue that Bollywood's appeal stems from the musical talents behind it, including music directors and choreographers, who through the actors display this talent by combining their respective traditional art forms to create a product that crosses cultural barriers and forms a national artefact. In fact the very formula of Bollywood film packed with

song and dance in a two and a half hour reel, is itself the unique selling feature of a Bollywood movie among international audiences. Nevertheless, as these song and dance sequences use non-verbal communication, it becomes much easier to empathize with the characters, recognize the diversity of the society, and thereby create a 'common culture in a linguistically fragmented nation' (p. 14). Thus it can break down barriers of linguistic and geographical differences, creating an insightful relationship between film and nationalism. Gopal & Moorti (2008) uses Appadurai's concept of 'deterritorialization' (1990a) for elucidating the power of songs and dance in creating Indian identity. Deterritorialization, the result of globalization, creates new markets for film companies and art impresarios who thrive on the desire of the deterritorialized population to engage with the homeland (Appadurai; 1990a, p. 36). Often Indian films are broadcast on television channels without subtitles despite the fact that many in the Indian community no longer speak the languages of India. Gopal and Moorti (2008) further argue that the diasporic population share a similar experience through watching Indian cinema, which construct a global public culture and an imagined community as proposed by Anderson (1991). Indian movies have become a significant part of Indian popular culture both at home and in the diaspora, challenging the cultural flow from west to east.

Kao and Rozario (2008) focus specifically on Bollywood pop music and dance. They argue that in response to the demand of the diasporic audience, pop music in Bollywood, which is now a primary ingredient of Bollywood films, indicates an attempt to demonstrate the modern post-globalised India to the diasporic audience. It shows a contemporary India rather than a traditional one. However, she argues that it also shows Bollywood tactics of enthralling a foreign culture and reflecting it as something indigenous to India. This also shatters the stereotypical role of women or Indian girls as being obedient and traditional. Kao and Rozario (2008) analysed the impact of song and dance in Bollywood movies in a diasporic land by critiquing it with Anderson's (1991) 'Imagined community'. As such, the diaspora, being an imagined community displaced from their nation, gives significance to an imagined space found in the cinema of Bollywood that bridges the gap between the displaced and their community. They form an imagined space through shared cultural practices and media, in which the major share is for film. Therefore an intimate

connection is made between Bollywood and the diaspora by an act of imagination. Kao & Do-Rozario (2008) find *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham* (Karan Johar, 2001) and *Kal Ho Na Ho* (Nikhil Advani, 2003) an excellent example of how imagined space is realized and how it relates to this imagined community. Musicals generate completely unique imaginative spaces through inventive and experimental approaches of choreography and cinematography (p. 313).

Among the western authors who have researched Indian songs, perhaps Manuel (1997) was more convincing in his Marxist-influenced assessment of Indian film culture. He writes that songs are “often [. . .] little more than digressions gratuitously inserted into the plot” (Manuel 1997, p. 175). On the film genre as a whole, he concludes, “the ultimate effect of such cinema, given its refusal to confront Indian reality, can only be alienating” (Manuel 1997, p. 174). Instead they take pleasure in song and dance, embracing them as cultural links to their own people. Manuel adds that music cuts across cultural barriers, so even though the ideologies of the local ethnic group does not coincide with the global flow of media because of language differences and references, they still fall under a wider national Indian ideoscape that the different groups can relate to. (Appadurai, 1990). Similarly, the ethnic diversity of India can be explored through song and dance, where the language becomes less important. Therefore, Manuel concludes that the significant diaspora that ethnoscaapes have facilitated for the consumption of Indian films in a diasporic country, primarily achieved through the television, has contributed to an ‘imagined Indianness’ of the population (Appadurai (1996: 32).

As part of this globalisation, Indian popular cinema, after the 1990s introduced some new stylistic conventions, apart from the song and dance sequences. These conventions appealed to both the native and diasporic audiences, which have been at the core of these discussions (Gokulsing & Dissanayake, 2004; Desai, 2007; Annamalai, 2001). For instance, foreign locations, Hindi-English dialogue mixing, foreign culture and attire have become the formula for almost all movies after 1990. Desai (2004) argues that the new Bollywood movies involve foreign locations, and the characters are themselves diasporic or, even if they are ‘desi’ (meaning ‘native’ in Hindi), the character is set in such a way that they move around quite comfortably between India and the West, creating a positive image of such characters. He adds

that the formula of the three B's - Beauty Queens, Bytes and Bollywood - is the real motivation for western audiences (Desai, 2007).

David, DeAlwis (2010) and Annamalai (2001) explore their interest in Bollywood dialogue, particularly the English-Hindi code switching dialogue of Bollywood films. When David (2009) assumed this code switching as the strategy to make Bollywood movies popular in a global market, Annamalai (2001) noted that Hindi-English code switching in Bollywood films serves the purposes of bridging the linguistic gap, indicating the intensity of relationships and as symbolizing their image status. This is possible as the use of English suggests the education level of the characters and that helps in presenting the above issues.

With the globalisation of the Bollywood industry, film locations and story settings have gradually changed. Kaur and Sinha (2005), suggests that the use of a foreign location is one of the factors that has helped Bollywood become a popular entertainment outlet among the Indian diaspora. Whether it is for a fantasy song sequence or as a narrative setting, films are making location a key element of film promotion. Ganti (2004) is also among the proponents of this foreign location and fantasy formula. While she agrees that foreign locations have become the inevitable element of post-1990 Bollywood films, she argues that this location has no relevance to the story of the film. Martin-Jones considers foreign locations as delivering real-life experiences for tourists. He says that repeated use of the same location gives a 'geographical specificity' (p. 54) that would in turn provide a 'real experience' as opposed to 'fantasy', to the Indian tourists, as well as NRIs.

These unique concepts of Bollywood, according to most scholars, make the films successful and enjoyable among global audiences as they cross language and cultural barriers. It is significant in this research as well, since apart from the films, Bollywood song and dance are especially popular amongst Malaysians, the evidence for which is the presence of numerous Bollywood dance schools there. As such, for any analysis of the global reception of Bollywood, these features become very important.

## 2.4 Globalising Bollywood

Most of the works on Bollywood after 2000 have extended their focus to a global audience taking into account the industry's global outflow, and increasing cross border activities and audiences. Moreover, a considerable volume of work on Bollywood is based on globalisation and the global journey of Bollywood in which the major issue of investigation are economic transition, business tactics and the westernisation of Bollywood film. For Rajadhyaksha (2003), globalization isn't necessarily American - the Indian film industry can be read as a global industry, 'spinning the screen fantasies' of millions of fans around the world (p. 25). In this way globalization is from east to west, complicating the conceived notion of western supremacy. According to Lorenzen & Taeube (2007), Bollywood's unique elements of dance and emotional drama have made it a strong brand on its own. Moreover, because of its strategic budgeting and quality of production, it finds advantage in export. This is evident in the profit of certain Indian movies, in that their export sales are higher than their domestic revenues (Pillania, 2008). In terms of capital, star-quality, and technology, Bollywood cinema is now competing in the international market. It was the deregulation of the market policy in India in 1991, through the LPG policy (liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation) that helped Bollywood films with foreign promotion and release. Credit must be given to the delivery and distribution platforms that this ICT era provided the filmmakers through satellite and Internet, which enabled the global visibility of these films (Thussu, 2008).

As the overseas market was rapidly growing, foreign distributors were demanding extensive changes in the style of Indian film narratives to help them conform to international standards in terms of content, presentation and length (Chawla, and Majumdar, 2006). From domestic social satires, Bollywood began to experiment with diasporic characters and foreign locations. As Thussu (2008) argues, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (Chopra & Chopra, 1995) is one of the major films that celebrates Indian life in a foreign land, and was followed by many other films. With *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (Johar & Johar, 1998), Indian films began to capture the top ten list of British film weeklies and box-office revenues.

Bose (2006) asserts that it is Hollywood's universal appeal that the Indian film industry is attempting to replicate. In regards to producing cinema that is more 'universal' in structure and content, the Indian cinema has become more visually oriented, with less dialogue, more emotions, and incorporating increasingly western conventions of exposition, conflict, climax, and resolution. Moreover, Sinha (2010) observes that the westernisation of Bollywood is evident in film casting. He states that in the quest for the western look, many western actors are now appearing in films like *Lagaan* (Khan & Gowariker, 2001) and *Kites* (Roshan & Basu, 2010). Many movies such as *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, *Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna* (Johar & Johar, 2006), *Yaadein* (Ghai & Ghai, 2001) etc. are made with NRI (Non-Resident Indian) characters which tend to make them one of the highest foreign exchange revenue earner for India. Desai (2007) explains that the production companies who are forming partnerships with foreign film companies have accelerated the international look of Bollywood movies. For example this has been the case with Reliance Entertainment (India) and Dream Works (USA) which co-produced hits like *War Horse* and *Midnight Express*. Production companies such as UTV and Eros Entertainment are listed in foreign stock markets like London's Investment Market, and have full-fledged operational offices abroad. Desai concludes that Indian cinema can be viewed as oppositional to the traditional cultural imperialism, which views culture as flowing from west to east. He asserts that as a result of this internationalization, celebrity endorsement and aggressive marketing through international brands, foreign audiences are now familiar with the top Bollywood actors. This is illustrated in regards to the film *Life in a Metro* (Basu, Screwvala & Basu, 2007), which featured a relatively unknown cast, but one that included Shilpa Shetty, fresh from her much-publicized stint on Britain's *Big Brother* reality television program.

As the research on the Globalization of Bollywood began to multiply, scholars began to focus more on the role of the Indian diaspora in the global reception of Bollywood. There is a significant amount of work offering a diasporic study of Bollywood movies dealing with either the reception of those movies in a diasporic country or with the representation of the diaspora or the NRI in the Bollywood films. These studies however have taken the geographically separated

Indian diaspora as a generalized single entity based on Anderson's concept of an imagined community.

Mehta and Pandharipande (2010) state that the sizeable Indian diasporic communities have reached significant numbers in many of their respective nations and therefore now command an increasingly visible presence at their national box offices. Indian films bond these expatriate audiences to their homeland. Mishra (2002) points out that even though diasporic audiences have existed since the 1950's, it was only after the 1990s that they emerged as a decisive force in the construction of a cultural citizenship. This was the period when the Indian government introduced the ambitious LPG policy that opened up the global markets for Indian and foreign companies, including the entertainment industry to invest in the Indian markets. This enabled the counter flow of cultural elements from east to west (David, 2007; Mishra, 2002). Mishra (2002) postulates that the relationship of Bollywood to the Indian diaspora is a two sided coin whereby the diaspora uses Bollywood to construct its identity, and Bollywood in turn uses the diasporic audience's lifestyle and luxury as subject matter in its films (p. 236).

*DDLJ* sets the trend for 'return of the nation' movies and a new identity of a globalised India (Mehta and Pandharipande, 2010). Until then, films with diasporic themes did appear but with a negative portrayal of Indians in a westernised culture, such as the films *Purab aur Pashchim* (Kumar & Kumar, 1970) and *Maine Pyar Kiya* (Barjatya & Barjatya, 1989) (ibid.). As part of identifying the positive nature of the Bollywood formula, they raises a unique justification of the use of songs as an element to "protect Indian culture from foreign expressions and impurities" (p.9). The Indian censorship board officially bans kissing scenes or any 'un-Indian displays of affection', and grades those movies as 'A' (adults only). Songs serve to be a neutralizing element, in sanitizing love scenes and cutting any "un-Indian" scenes from the film with the use of song lyrics. Such a depiction of sexuality, according to the writer, serves to be the most stimulating eccentricity of Indian popular cinema (Ibid.).

Sen (2010) adopts a different perspective on the globalization of Bollywood movies. He maintains that in the quest to woo global audiences, precisely the Indian diaspora, Bollywood films are revamped in many ways. Two of the most significant



efforts were to make Bollywood competitive with Hollywood and to deconstruct the themes in such a way that that a diasporic citizen could identify with the “Indian subjects within the film fantasy.” (p. 148). He identifies a Hindutva-liberalization Dyad on Bollywood films which had significant moral and political impetus upon that period. By Hindutva-dyad he means that there were an increasing interest for anti-Pakistan and anti-Islam themes in Bollywood films in the late 1990s and early 2000 as in the case of films like *Border* (Dutta, 1997) and *Sarfarosh* (Matthan, 1999) which were also commercially successful. He adds that the articulation of Bollywood into a traditional family melodrama in the 1990s is significant with the figure of the new Hindu father and the discussion of patriarchy. This patriarchy is connected with Hindutva. For instance, his moral and ethical perspectives based on his religion influence the central plot of the film. He considers the father as the powerful “repository of modernity” (p. 149), which is expounded on by his rich textual analysis through three movies *Mohabbatein* (Chopra & Chopra, 2000), *Ek Rishta: The Bond of Love* (Darshan & Darshan, 2001) and *Baghban* (Chopra & Chopra, 2003) in which the actor Amitabh Bachchan is used to represent the figure of an emblematic father.

Based upon two other popular Bollywood films, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* and *Pardes* (Ghai & Ghai, 1997), Uberoi (1998) addresses the internationalization of middle class Indian families. These two films demonstrated the possibility of preserving Indian tradition and identity in a foreign land. Above all, it is the Indian family system that represents their tradition in these films. While the film *DDLJ* showed that Indian identity can be maintained in a global world, the other film, *Pardes*, showed that the definition or image of the social institution of family could not be completely conserved.

Through Lacanian psychoanalysis, Thakur (2010) analyses the confused image of India to be globalised taking into its ambit the cultural and social milieu. Through a detailed reading of the female characters in the film *Dor* (Hiptoola & Kukunoor, 2006) he argues that Bollywood films could not fully retract from the traditional feminine values, and struggle to create a balance with the rhetoric of liberated India. According to Thakur, films like *Dor*, *Guru* (Ratnam & Srinivasan, 2007) and *Yun Hota To Kya Hota* (Boxwala, Shah & Shah, 2006) that celebrate a

liberated India, do this with a level of individual freedom, enjoyment and liberalization.

As an offshoot of the diasporic study and globalization, some of the works have looked at the crossover phenomenon and the emergence of international cinema amidst deterioration after globalization. Hannerz (1992) writes that because of the cross-cultural flow and increased inter-connectedness, it is no longer easy to conform to an ideal type of local culture. Therefore, culture cannot be considered to be fixed in a particular area, but is instead specialized in new ways. The same is applicable to the medium of film, where there cannot be an exact definition of national cinema, even though films carry diverse cultural elements. Many of these films are wholly or partially concerned with diasporic communities or at least aim at these audiences by introducing a hybrid culture, society and life through which the diaspora can connect with their homeland (ibid.) According to Brown (2009), transnational cinemas are either a privilege or a need, as with the difference between Bollywood and Iranian cinema. In some cases the concept of national cinema exists because of its transnational quality, but not so in the case of Iranian films, which were backed by American production companies and aimed at international film festivals and diverse audiences. So the idea of Bollywood movies in the mind of a diasporic audience is linked with their transnational quality through their location, storyline and cast of actors, who are well branded abroad. As Brown suggests, a 'third' cinema is evolving which is not bound to a continent by its identity, or nationalism, but towards a more international identity.

## **2. 5 Exploring the Diverse Bollywood Reception**

A recent development in Bollywood film studies is to break the generalisation of the global Bollywood reception and to consider a more geographically defined and restricted analysis. This is significant considering the vast audiences and markets of reception for Bollywood movies, and the particular pattern of reception that each of these different nations offer. Though not a linear or chronological development, we can comprehend that there is an increasing number of academic works that look at the Bollywood reception at specific locations and countries. While, they cuts across

the previous divisions of this literature review (like Bollywood form, content, style, globalization and diaspora), these studies narrow down the general diasporic studies of Bollywood to a more specific local reception of a global cinema.

As such, studies have been done on Bollywood in the USA, (Punathambekar, 2005), the Caribbean (Manuel, 1997), Bangladesh (Raju, 2008), Scotland (Martin-Jones, 2006), Australia (Athique, 2011; Hassam and Maranjape, 2010), Canada (Hirji, 2010) and Nepal (Shresthova, 2010).

Punathambekar, tries to show that, by setting the diaspora into a great Indian family, the film *Kabhi Kusbi Kabhi Gham (K3G)* (Johar & Johar, 2001) connects the everyday struggles of a transplanted Indian in the United States, to a larger project of cultural citizenship. The success of *K3G* in the US is mainly because of the narrative shift of this film from the traditional effort of Bollywood to portray foreigners in a negative light. Through an ethnographic study, he argues that *K3G*'s representation of Indian identity runs through three major themes – class, family and citizenship.

In a similar way, Manuel (1997) examines the role played by Indian film in the musical culture of indo-Caribbean. In a broader sense, he also describes how ethnic Indian communities in the Caribbean rely on Bollywood films as a link to their homeland. As opposed to other Indian diaspora in any other places, he asserts that first generation Indo-Caribbeans were a secluded community having no direct connection with their homeland. They were mostly peasants from economically oppressed regions of India. This encouraged a deliberate effort among them to retain and practice Indian culture within the limited exposure they have to their homeland. As a result of this, musicals in the form of informal performances, bhajans (devotional songs) and festive performances became prominent features in reaffirming and sustaining Indian culture there. This also saw the advent of a new genre of musicals called tan-singing consisting of a mix of classical, semi-classical and ghazal styles accompanied by various instruments. Bollywood only added a new dimension to this cultural practice. These films provided a direct link to their homeland, which was previously lacking. However, besides bringing these expatriates their culture, for others who didn't understand the language, they still enjoyed the songs and the style of the films. Hence, films with no subtitles are broadcast on

television capturing large audiences. For several decades, Hindi film songs were the only popular music of the Indo-Trinidadians and Guyanese.

Raju (2008) examines the reception of Bollywood films in Bangladesh, a country where they are officially banned for theatre release, but popular through cable channels and pirated DVD's. He considers not only the films, but also its intermediaries, which he refers to as 'cultural paraphernalia', such as film posters, advertisements and the songs that entertain in public transport vehicles. He states that Bollywood plays an important part in the lives of ordinary people through cable television and pirated DVDs. He identifies that even if Bollywood is a popular leisure activity, the State is considering Bollywood films as part of Indian cultural imperialism and, as such, a national enemy, considered to be a dangerous and damaging force in the construction of a particular kind of nationalist discourse.

Bollywood's role in Nepal is examined by Shresthova (2010) in the light of the country's socio-economic and political relationship with India. She suggests that there is a persistent influence of Bollywood films on the indigenous film industry as well as on the audience, which prevents the domestic films from attaining a higher degree of originality. By giving prior focus to the dance schools and dance culture, she asserts that classical dance forms are replaced by the people's demand for modern art forms, and this modernity is achieved and inspired from Hindi film songs. This is visible particularly in the arts and dance schools where the focus is given to Bollywood dance numbers rather than classical Nepali art forms. Even Nepali films are largely indebted to Bollywood for their style and narration. This resulted in a failure to generate a distinct voice for Nepali films, thus spreading the fear of 'Indianization' and political dependence.

Martin-Jones (2006) looks at the Bollywood film industry from the perspective of a mutually beneficial cultural product. He examines the popular Indian film shoots on location in Scotland, which have financial and cultural implications for both countries. He identifies three major sources of revenue for Scotland from Bollywood films – money spent on locations, box office money and revenue from tourism. Even though most of the films use foreign destinations for song and dance, as an extension of the Indian landscape, Martin-Jones focuses his attention on how the film, *Pyaar Ishq aur Mohabbat* (Rajiv Rai, 2001), uses Scotland not

only as a tourist destination, but also how this has influenced the aesthetics of the film among tourists. As opposed to the arguments made by scholars (like Ganti, 2004; Mishra, 2002) on how foreign locations have been used as a pure fantasy or spectacle, Martin- Jones claims that the repeated use of the same location gives a ‘geographical specificity’ (p. 54) to those locations, that would in turn provide a ‘real experience’ (as opposed to ‘fantasy’) to the Indian tourists, as well as NRIs. He goes on to illustrate this with the example of *KKHH* and *Kandukondain Kandukondain* (Dhanu & Menon, 2000), in which Eilean Donan Castle has been used for theme songs to establish a fantasy, but in reality it gives an impression among the Indian middle class that these locations are attainable. One of the main factors to note in this article is that the writer uses ‘Bollywood’ to refer to the different Indian language films in general which is not admissible as regional cinema in India is widely different from each other, each having its own cultural specifications.

Bollywood’s reception in Australia is explored specifically by the works of, Hassam and Paranjape (2010) and Athique (2008). Hassam and Paranjape (2010) identified that the relationship between Bollywood and Australia is an outcome of the convergence between three entities - globalizing Bollywood, the Asian population in Australia and the vibrant South Asian diaspora. By exploring some historical incidents of Bollywood films in Australia, the authors identify the cultural flow from Asian countries through these films. However, as seen in the previous article by Martin-Jones (2006), in this study the term Bollywood is used to represent not only Hindi language films, but other Indian and South Asian film industries as well.

Athique (2008), however, conducted a study through a series of interviews exploring the manner in which Indian movies reach the Australian audience and how this audience is defined. He uses a cultural field approach, where the varied nature of cultural relations surrounding the Indian movies constituted by a media community is taken into account. By media community, he means something similar to the ‘imagined space’ of Anderson (1991). He identified the audiences, as multi-racial, which include a mixture of Indian diaspora, Australians, Greek, Lebanese, etc. in cinemas that are declining with the increase of relatively cheap DVDs (pirated or for rent) as well online platforms for movie consumption. The study identifies that the fascination for Bollywood among Indian diaspora is something that they brought

with them from their home country before migrating to Australia. It is suggested that the migrant population's interest towards Bollywood movies arose because the mainstream media neglected their cultural needs, and this get satisfied through Bollywood films which is available mainly as cheap DVDs.

Similar to Australian reception studies, the reception of Bollywood in South Africa is explored by two main works – Ebrahim (2008) and Hansen (2005). Ebrahim (2008) considers Bollywood to be a crossover phenomenon, which she labels as the 'mainstreaming' (p. 64) of Bollywood films in South Africa. She argues that such a mainstreaming of Bollywood is the result of the association between Bollywood and South African film industry not only through the MOUs (Memorandum of Understandings) as the one between the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF) of South Africa and National Film Development Corporation Limited (NFDC) of India, but through the increasing use of South Africa as their film location.

Ebrahim's work on the South African reception of Bollywood films has in fact been inspired by another study done by Hansen (2005) who tries to observe the unusually positive reception of the film *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* in South Africa that kicked off the popular reception of Bollywood films there. Viewing from a post-apartheid perspective, he states that prior to the release of *KKHH*, Bollywood films had been 'radicalized' (p. 240) and their release restricted to the areas mostly populated by Indians due to the culturally rooted theme and style of the films. *KKHH* is the first film that carried an English subtitle and was shown in theaters in white majority areas. According to him, *KKHH* was a modern Indian film with a westernised vision of India, in all aspects – dress, location, language, schools and summer camps – which the western audiences identified with. For the Indian diaspora, the modern Indian identity shown in these films was comfortable to identify with as it showed 'female beauty and elegance of designs and sets – essentially commodities marketed as India's contribution to the global cultural economy' (p. 250).

Hirji (2010) also examined the Bollywood reception in Canada based on South Asian identity formation and meaning. She examined the role of Bollywood films among Canadian youth, or precisely, South Asian Muslim youth. Hirji put her

focus on the interaction of religion and ethnicity within Bollywood films and its impact on the Canadian youth, especially in a post 9/11 era, where the media has a profound impact on Muslim youth. She also looks at the film *KKHH*, as delivering a modern Indian image that captures non-Indian audiences as well.

Apart from a few studies, most of the work on the reception of Bollywood identify similar themes. While some of them analysed the diasporic sentiments towards these films, others gave importance to the song and dance sequences in creating a common platform of entertainment. For most of these studies the focus was on the Indian diaspora to identify the meaning-making process involved in viewing Bollywood films. When looked at from an international perspective, such an approach limits the possibilities of evaluating a cultural entity that crosses borders to reach an entirely new geographic and cultural location. Apart from the diaspora, there is a significant non-Indian audience who enjoys these films. Moreover, apart from the audience experience, there are many other 'audiences' or 'receivers' who make the context for its reception, which includes politics, religious institutions and cultural societies that define the international film industry. If looking at it from this perspective, among the transnational reception works evaluated here, it is Martin-John's analysis of Bollywood in Scotland and Ibrahim's exploration into the African reception of Bollywood that opened a new perspective in defining global Bollywood's reception. While they didn't completely refrain from considering the diasporic populations, they also considered other possible factors or diverse approaches like political and industrial association and mutual economic benefits that gives a broader understanding of the transnational reception of Bollywood.

## **2.6 Southeast Asian Connections – Identifying the Scope of this Study**

Apart from Raju's (2008) insights into the consumption of Bollywood in Bangladesh and Shresthova's (2010) analysis of Bollywood's influence on Nepalese cultural and art forms, there are not many articles or books that examine the transnational flow of Bollywood movies within Asian territories. It's surprising, when looking at Southeast Asia, as there is no serious research on the reception of

Bollywood there. However, Bollywood has managed to develop a strong market, with audiences mostly comprised of people who are not part of the Indian diaspora. Nevertheless, Gopal and Moorti (2008) state “that Indian cinema has a long history in this area, and it was Abdulallyi Esoofally who was responsible for introducing Indian movies to the Southeast Asian audiences.” (*Encyclopedia of Hindi Cinema*, 2003). He was known as ‘the tent showman’, and was one of the pioneers of film exhibition and distribution in early 1900’s. He travelled through countries like Burma, Ceylon, Singapore and Indonesia, introducing moving images or films with the aid of tent bioscopes. They write that Indians who were dispersed and had migrated to provide labour for the British Imperialist power had turned to cinema to revive the memories of their homeland. Today Bollywood is still a popular entertainment medium in those geographical areas.

The scope of this study lies in this area. Malaysia is a country with a significant history of Indian diaspora, and the reception of Bollywood is a historical phenomenon, which dates back to the early 1930s. As a major link in the sea trade route, Malaysia witnessed constant cultural interactions, which according to Heide were mainly from India and Hong Kong. He adds that the narratives of Mahabharata and Ramayana, the great epic Sanskrit poems of India, have been incorporated into the traditional art forms of Malaysia like Wayang (shadow puppet show) and Bangsawan (Malay Opera). After colonization, this cultural inspiration and invasion was even more substantial and led to the first film in Malaysia in 1933, *Laila Majnun* (Christy & Rajhans, 1933), directed by an Indian, B.S. Rajhans, and produced by the Singapore-based Motilal Chemical Company of Bombay, which was an adaptation of a 1931 Indian movie of the same name. With inspiration and influence from the Indian films, the early Malaysian films gave prominence to song and dance sequences. Indeed from its inception, Malay cinema (Malaysian cinema was largely Malay cinema because it was only on Malay language that films were made in Malaysia during for several decades in the Malaysian film history) has displayed a certain affinity with Indian culture, with Khoo (2006) noting that ‘cultural elements of India’ had ‘long influenced Malay culture’, and that the early influx of Indian directors in Malaysian cinema ensured that the content reflected ‘Indian cinema and mythology’ (p. 90).



Except for a few references in works on Malaysian film like Van der Heide's (2002) book *Malaysian Cinema: Border crossings and National Cultures* and Khoo's (2006) *Reclaiming Adat*, Bollywood's reception in Malaysia has not been a serious research topic in academic discussions. The reason for such an absence of scholarly work on Bollywood in countries like Singapore, Burma, Indonesia and Malaysia could be related to the delayed interest in these areas, as the film industry was struggling to find a face and global image. This is particularly true with Malaysia as there are only very few academic works that dealt with film in Malaysia. Malaysian films, since their inception, were severely censored and lacked funding, which at different stages acted adversely on the production and reception of these films. Apart from the films of a few filmmakers like Yasmin Ahmad and Amir Muhammad, Malaysia's presence in the global film market was very meagre. Hence, film schools, film research and even University Film studies departments are still at an early stage.

Apart from this gap of knowledge in the Southeast Asian reception of Bollywood, this literature review also identified transnationalism in Bollywood research limited to the binary of homeland and diaspora, where diasporic meaning making and consumption is actively analysed. In the case of the Malaysian reception of Bollywood, cultural familiarity also plays a vital role, even if one overlooks the Indian diaspora, Malaysia has multi-faceted cultural and regional influences from India and this is dealt with in detail in the upcoming chapter. Nevertheless, the study takes the Malaysian political and religious context as a pivotal factor in defining the Malaysian reception of Bollywood in a Muslim majority country and having religious and social restrictions at different levels of social life.

## Chapter 3

# Malaysia and Bollywood: A Historical and Contextual Overview

### 3.1 Introduction

*... 'Mekanik' [a Malaysian film]...incorporated a Bollywood musical sequence, which, while parodying the stale format of Bombay cultural cinema, also satirizes the desires of a Malay audience, infatuated with Bollywood...<sup>1</sup>*

As a continuation to what was discussed in the literature review regarding the historical presence of Bollywood, this chapter will examine not only the cinematic connection, but also the cultural and religious ones between these two nations. In Malaysia, Bollywood's history can be traced back to the 1930s when Indian talking films began to emerge and flourish. Though this research focuses on the period after the 1990s, without a brief history on a period before that could possibly result in a gap in analysis. Hence, while setting the foundation for the analysis of the reception of Bollywood in a post 1990 period, this chapter will bring forth the broader cultural association in a pre-1990 period that will enhance the meaning of reception of a foreign cultural product. Accordingly, this chapter integrates the history of India's association with and influence in Malaysia with the main focus of this study, which is Bollywood's reception in a post-1990 period.

The chapter is not purely an analysis chapter, but a combination of film analysis, discourse analysis and reviews of historical and academic works. The sections are arranged into different periods in the development of Malaysian film and give

---

<sup>1</sup> Khoo, G .C (2006) Reclaiming Adat. Vancouver: UBC press, pp. 104- 103

prominence to the Indian influences on Malaysian filmmaking during this period. Such an approach will divulge not only the historical influences of Indian culture and film, but also the continuing interest for Bollywood films, while considering the cinematic, social and religious contexts in Malaysia. This groundwork is necessary as the research covers a particular period, post-1990. Towards the end of the chapter, with a case study on the film *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (Johar & Johar, 1998), a look at the salient features of Bollywood will explain why these films are commercially successful and popular.

Starting with the early Indian influence on the Malaysian religious sphere, society and arts, this chapter divides the history of film and its Indian influences into three subsections - Indian influences from the release of the first Malay film of the Studio era, the Bumiputera era and the post 1990 era. This will be followed by a case study that further elucidate the features that make Bollywood films appealing in Malaysia.

### **3.2 Early Indian Influences – a Broader Outlook**

The presence of an Indian diaspora in Malaysia, many of whom originated from migrant workers recruited to work on the palm oil and rubber plantations in the early 1890s after the abolition of slavery, can be seen as the original impetus in the inflow of Indian films in Malaysia. Though the main influx of migration began after the 1880s when Kuala Lumpur was the Capital of Selangor, smaller numbers reached Malaysia to work in coffee and sugar plantations prior to the 1890s (Hooker, 2003). When indentured labour was abolished in 1910, free Indian labourers came to Malaysia not just to work on the plantations but also as clerks and bankers, specifically those from the Tamil community. The majority were from south India, with a few Sikhs from the Punjab province representing northern India.

Prior to this, the country, being an archipelago and a meeting point of two major sea routes linking India and China, was a cultural hub and Indian and Chinese traders began to settle there. This cultural exchange was bi-directional; Indian traders settled for business purposes in Malaysia, and Malaysian traders returned from India with Indian

customs, culture, religious practices, folklore, and art forms (Van der Heide, 2002). Sir Richard Winstedt in his book, *Malaya and its History* (1933) notes that though Malaya was open to influence from China and India, it was India that made an impression on the spiritual, religious, cultural, political and material life of Malaya. The driving force behind the immigration of Indians to the Malay Peninsula was trade and commerce; hence the major influence was on the coastal regions of Malaysia. The result was the transformation of the coastal land into “Indian-style “cities, in which the ruler was defined as God on earth, in the reincarnation of the Hindu gods of Shiva and Vishnu (Van der Heide 2002, p. 66).

The earliest Kingdoms on the Malay Peninsula were Hindu Kingdoms, the most notable of them being Kedah and Malacca. Winstedt (1933) notes that,

The Indians, who built the oldest temples and chiselled Buddhist inscriptions in Sanskrit as early as the fourth century A.D in Kedah, must have been preceded by traders who sailed to and fro long before Brahmins and monks and literate adventurers brought the Hindu religion and Buddhism and Sivaite ideas of royalty, and carved Sanskrit inscriptions to which India itself had not long been accustomed. (p. 24)

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries A.D, small Indian Kingdoms began to appear in the east and northwestern coastal areas of the peninsula. The first state of Indian style was Langkasuka (now Kedah) a Hindu-Buddhist Kingdom. Similarly, Parameswara or Iskandar Shah formed the Melaka Empire, after his conversion to Islam, the last king of Singapore.

Winstedt notes that India not only influenced the spiritual life of Malays, but also influenced their everyday life - from alphabets, political system and law to sculpture and weaving. While exploring the religious identity of Malaysia, India plays a crucial role as Indian traders brought Islam to Kedah in the 12th century which until then was a Hindu

empire. The spread of Islam in Malaysia was not a planned Islamic mission, but a gradual influx of Islamic influence from Indian traders who reached the Malaccan strait and Kedah, the major port areas. The descendent of the first king of Langkasuka (now Kedah) Merong Mahawangsa, Phra Ong Mahawangsa became the first King to convert to Islam, changing his name to Sultan Mudzafar Shah I (Hooker, 2003). It was the island and coastal regions that were most heavily influenced by Islam as the traders came from Gujarat and Bengal (coastal regions of India) and in turn assimilated to this religion as a result of the Persian influence. Melaka then evolved as an Islamic Sultanate with signs of Hinduism (Winstedt, 1933). While the initial conversion was confined to the affluent section of society including the rulers and kings, it soon began to filter down to the masses.

One of the major contributing or influencing factors of this 'Indianization' is the introduction of the stories of Mahabharata and Ramayana, which were adopted in Malaysian art forms such as Wayang or puppet shows and other written versions like the Hikayat Pandawa Jaya (The Story of the Pandava Victory), Hikayat Pandawa Lima (The Story of the Five Pandavas) and the Hikayat Seri Rama (The Story of Rama) (Singaravelu, 1983, p. 227). Therefore, Ramayana could be considered the cultural basis that united Southeast Asia or as a shared mythology that was equally adapted and appreciated (Clark and Pietsch, 2014). It is based on this Malay version of Ramayana that most of the Wayang Kulits are played, where Seri Rama (Sri Rama), Laksmana, Siti Dewi (Sita Devi) and Hanuman form the major characters, and each of these characters are recognized by their distinctly colored puppets. Jetschke and Ruland (2009) state that Mahabharata and Ramayana disseminate Hindu-Brahmin political theory,

They convey the message that even the good and virtuous are persistently challenged by villains and evil demons. Warfare, violence, intrigue, insecurity and tragedy are thus depicted as unavoidable facts of life.  
(p.188).

Such political views from Indian epics are still relevant in many Southeast Asian countries and therefore constitute, a shared cultural value (Clark and Pietsch, 2014). As a result, in 1997, the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information, conceptualized a dance project that transgressed from the usual practice of one performance from each member country, to foster a creative collaboration among the legends of those particular countries based on the binding theme of Ramayana (Ibid.).

Considering the adaptation of Ramayana into the Malay language, Sweeney (1972) commented that the epic is adapted into an Islamic work for a Muslim audience whereby, Rama becomes the equivalent of a Muslim god and that which “concerns the breaking of a contract mediated by the prophet Adam between a Muslim king” (Rawana, and the Muslim God” p. 26). Sweeney also states that, even if the characters are Rama, Sita and Rawana, the stories are mostly localized and therefore find no comparison or relation to the original epic or tale. This is the reason why Wayang is called the amalgamation of a Hindu-narrative with Muslim prayers and language (Van der Heide, 2002). Another major Malay folk form, Bangsawan or Malay Opera has its history in the Parsee theatres of India. In the 1870s, one of those Parsee traveling troops from Mumbai reached Penang and performed a few successful shows among the Indian settlers, in particular because the language they used to stage it was Urdu and Hindi (Yousof, 2014). Bujang (1975) notes that the theatre included elaborate staging and sets accompanied by Hindustani songs. A wealthy Malay merchant, Mamak Pushi, adapted this Indian version into Malay, by changing the language to Melayu and incorporating Malay stories, characters and names (Ibid.). Even when Bangsawan developed into its own local folk art, it maintained the quintessential elements of song and dance accompanied by a live orchestra on stage. This emphasis on Wayang and Bangsawan is illustrated here in detail, to express the extensive influence of Indian culture and art, and to segue to the following discussion of film.

### 3.3 Bollywood Influences - From *Laila Majnun* towards the Studio Era

From a broader discussion of the Indian influences on the Malay Peninsula, this chapter now shifts its focus towards the growth of Malaysian film culture and the role that Indian film has played in this development. It covers a period ranging from the 1930s to the beginning of the 1970s, with the studio era roughly denoting a period from the later part of the 1930s to the beginning of the 1970s.

As this discussion moves towards the Malaysian film culture, one of the points that remains ambiguous is the concept of 'Malay film' and whether it denotes film of a multi-lingual Malaysian society or the Malay language films. The films of Malaysia consist largely of Malay language films with a small percentage of Tamil and Chinese films. The history of the Malaysian film industry begins with Malay films which, until recently were local productions in the Malay language and revolved around Malay culture and community. This makes the reception of Malay films limited only to Malay audiences; Chinese and Indians find alternatives that come from Hong Kong and India respectively along with Hollywood.

Stevenson (1974) commented that it is only in the movie theatres that Malaysians witness a congregation of different races and classes. Though this seems to be a bit unlikely, having previously mentioned that audiences were segregated based on language, it is also true that the general film culture of Malaysia is a mixture of different language films and ethnicities. Van der Heide (2002) has identified that there is an overwhelming stimulus and cross-cultural connections between Indian, Hong Kong, American and Malaysian films.

When considering the history of film reception on the Malay Peninsula, films from Britain and Japan reached Malaysia as early as the 1900s as part of their propaganda machine (Tan, 1993). Later, towards the end of the 1920s and early 1930s, Indian, Indonesian and Chinese films reached Malaysia. During the colonial period, cinema, both foreign and local, gained momentum, and this posed a threat to the then popular

entertainment medium, *Bangsawan*. Indian films were of particular interest to Malays because of their similarity with the Malaysian art forms *Bangsawan* and *Wayang*, which were already popular in Malaysia during that period (Mohd Anis Md Nor, 1993, p. 45). Even though American and British films came to Malaysia along with other foreign language films, they couldn't influence the local industry, as these films were more verbal and less emotional. Sulong (1989) asserts that though Chinese films from Shanghai and Hong Kong tried to capture the market, they failed to appeal to the Malaysian audiences because of the filmmakers' lack of familiarity with Malay culture. However, the Indian films shared a similarity to the *Bangsawan* style, which was more familiar to the Malaysian audiences; subsequently, this style was favourable for assimilating into Malay films.

The first Malaysian film *Laila Majnun* (Christy & Rajhans, 1933) was produced and directed by Indians, K. R. S. Chisty and B. S Rajhans. It was an adaptation of the Indian film, *Laila Majnu* (Madan & Madan, 1931). In fact, in the early years of the studios, the Malaysian film industry, from 1937 to 1977, was dominated by Indian directors. Most of the films embraced the features of Hindi (or Indian) films and featured melodrama and song and dance sequences. Even when the Malay filmmakers took on the directorial role, the Indian influences continued with the "melodramatic, episodic and digressive narratives that focused on family genealogy and were always integrated with songs and dances" (Van der Heide, p.136). Even when the Indian films are not subtitled, the Malay audiences enjoyed them. This also caused a decline in interest for *Bangsawan*, as the new medium of film, while having a similar style, provided them with better quality entertainment. *Bangsawan* is a non-scripted theatre performance in which improvisation is the key to its aesthetics. It is a theatre performance centred mainly on the Malay nobility or royalty, having a mix of drama, song and dance. The themes are taken from Indian folklore, myths and epics, as well as Malay local history featuring kings, sultans, heroes and stories from the Middle East. Singing, dancing and acting are the three basic components of its performance. As the story is based on the nobility, the settings are often very splendid and accompanied by good-looking main



heroes and heroines. Music plays a major role in *Bangsawan*, as it is interwoven into performances showing courtship, flirting or love between the main characters. This style accompanied by song and dance movements is the precursor of the Bollywood style.

The emerging Malay productions shut down in 1941 for almost six years when Malaysia came under Japanese occupation. The Japanese colonizers feared that the local productions would pose a threat to their colonial rule. However, there was a consistent flow of Indian films, mostly Hindi, during the occupation, particularly when all other film industries including the indigenous and foreign films were banned from the country. Japanese colonials realized that Indian films with their fantasy and family drama were no threat to their sovereignty (Van der Heide, 2002).

By 1946, local film production was revived after nearly six years of cessation. Most of the films in this period, were considered revivals of the studio era before the Japanese occupation, and were made by Indian directors who retained the Indian style, owing to its popularity. As such, Rajhans was the sole director for Malay Film Productions until the 1950s and during this time he made almost eight films. MFP subsequently recruited other Indian directors, the most popular among them being L. Krishnan, B. N Rao and Phani Majumdar.

*Hujan Panas* (Shaw & Rao, 1953) is briefly discussed here in order to understand more about the style of these films. *Hujan Panas* narrates a typical triangular love story often seen in Bollywood films— a hero and two heroines, one being the apostle of patience and gentleness, and the other, a modern and independent female. Before moving to *Hujan Panas*, a brief discussion about the Bollywood film of that period is essential. Hindi films during the 1940s until the early 1960s has given prominence to relationships (whether it is marital, parental or peer relationship) and all its complexities. This is intervened with the class differences prevailed in the Indian society by providing the dichotomy of poor and rich, which forms the narrative thread of the film. The films gave importance to poetic and philosophical dialogues, often performed by actors with exaggerated gestures and facial expressions. Along with attractive stars, equal importance

is given to the songs, both in lyrics and melody. Though the films are shot in a studio setting, the background mise-en-scènes were very elaborative and suggestive.

At this point, much has been said about Bollywood melodrama and style. Though melodrama is also considered as a genre, as far as the Indian cinema and Bollywood is concerned, it is also a mode of expression and narrative structure (Vasudevan, 2010). Hence, Bollywood melodrama is never totally similar to western melodrama. According to Vasudevan (2010), Bollywood melodrama involve a large number of plot and reversals, “emotional peripeteia and a mode of address scaled up in presentation of body, gesture and speech” (p.403). Though Indian melodrama underwent significant mutation in the due course as in the case of films like *Awaara* (1951) and *Hey Ram* (2000) where movement between two layers of story doesn't follow a logical and consistent narration, the basic elements of performance is emotional extravaganza and scaled up body gestures and dialogue delivery. Singer's (2001) approach where he defines it as based on five broad features like; pathos or overwrought emotions, moral polarization of good and evil represented by the hero and villain, non-classical narrative structure which is a departure from cause-effect narration with suspense sequences, sensationalism of joy and sorrow, and action topped off with spectacular visuals. Apart from these features, Bollywood has selectively adapted many other features such as coincidences and separation-reunion, which can be found in films up until the late 1990s. As Mishra argues, melodramatic features like “sentimentalism, character, logical binarism and tableau” (2002, p.36) are grouped together to include all genres including epics, mythologies and devotionals as an effective mode of expression. Moreover, the use of song and dance sequences to effectively deliver these features to the audience, whether it is joy, sorrow, loss or victory, the emotion is sensationalized with their inclusion as they provide a space for expressing and intensifying the emotion displayed. Irrespective of whether these films are dealing with relationships such as power versus class struggles or mythologies, the narration is woven with excess of sentiments and coincidences. Though Bollywood films changed their themes and

characterization according to the social and political atmosphere, the mode of expression remained the same.

Moving back to the storyline of *Hujan Panas*, the main character Amir is a singer in a restaurant who has feelings for Aminah, also a singer in the same restaurant. Aminah is a selfish and ruthless character obsessed with her own beauty. The other female heroine, Hasnah is the cashier also working in the same place and who carries a secret desire for Amir. She is portrayed as simple, patient and virtuous. Amir and Aminah get married and have a son, but Aminah is having an affair with a rich man Hassan, who persuades her to leave her husband and live with him. This leaves Amir depressed, only to be consoled by Hasnah, who asks him to come back to work to keep his mind off his troubles. Eventually, regretting what she did, Aminah commits suicide. This opens the door for Amir and Hasnah to unite, and the film ends happily. Except for the language and the cast, this Malay film has nothing in particular that makes it different from the Hindi films of that period. The film is narrated with song sequences following the melodramatic mode of Indian films. It is interesting to note that the characters in this film are exclusively Malay thereby giving a Malay identity to it. Without any surprising twists, the story is a rather straightforward family drama with reference only to personal differences and family conflicts. Bollywood films during that period celebrated the love relationships, among which triangular love stories were the vogue of that period. *Hujan Panas* followed the basic melodramatic style of Bollywood with excess emotion, moral polarization, and the sensationalism of grief, love and rejection. The shots are rather long which sentimentalizes the scenes of love, rejection, deception and wretchedness through the dramatic performances by the actors. For instance Fig. 3.1 shows the reaction shots when Aminah rejects his love with a musical composition he made. The shot zooms in to the close up of Amir while he maintains an expression of alarm. Nevertheless, the film has ten songs each of which are placed in the plot in such a manner that a song follows every major point. The film ends with a highly dramatic act of Amir singing for his son on his deathbed, thus adapting the basic features of a Bollywood film. Triangular love stories such as *Bemafa* (Hussain & Anand, 1952), *Aah* (Kapoor & Nawathe, 1953), and

*Andaz* (Kumar, Kapoor & Khan, 1949) were popular in India during that period. These films combined suspense and coincidences that not only served to make the plot complicated, but created a curiosity among the audiences that would keep them glued to their seats. It is difficult to give a short summary of the films mentioned here as each of them has several characters, situations and plot twists, though the basic connection is a story about love, trust and relationships. By 1953, Bollywood gradually began to shift from black and white to colour. Along with the elaborate and detailed sets (*mise-en-scène*), equal importance was given to fast-paced editing and crosscutting shots.



Figure 3. 1 - Reaction shot of P. Ramlee in *Hujan Panas*

Indian filmmakers who used Indian aesthetics and themes to make these films during the studio era, most of them only used Malay characters with an obvious absence of major Indian or Chinese characters. This is because the Indian stories were adapted into the Malay context, creating inconsistencies and controversy. For instance, L. Krishnan's *Selamat Tinggal Kekasihku* (Loke & Krishnan, 1955) was based on a popular Indian tale *Devdas*, which is adapted into almost all language films in India. The original love story of a wealthy hero and a middle class heroine, is altered to an interracial love story between a Malay boy and a Chinese girl. This was met with controversy and hatred when it was shown in Kelantan (Hussein, 1997). Though it is a purely romantic film, the unfamiliarity of the Indian filmmakers with regards to Malay society often led to controversy. There were a few references made by Hamza Hussin, one of L. Krishnan's contemporaries, who considered this to be a result of an outsider's ignorance. He commented that there is a scene in the film where a man holds his friend's dead body,

which is considered as offensive in Islam (Hussin, as quoted in Van der Heide, 2002). Even the scene showing a dog following two of the characters was found to be inappropriate, as the dog featured as a pet is considered as 'haram' (Hussin, 1997). Kahn (2006) asserts that only a few films were made based on an inter-racial relationships during the Studio and Bumiputera era, the most prominent among them being *Selamat Tinggal Kekasihku* and *Gerimis* (Merdeka Film Productions & Ramlee, 1968) by P. Ramlee. The latter was not controversial compared with *Selamat Tinggal Kekasihku*, the reason for which lies in the familiarity of the director with both the filmmaking and the socio-religious issues of Malaysia. *Gerimis* narrates the story of a painter, Kamal (Malay), and a bar dancer, Leela (Hindu), who elope from home when their parents object to their marriage. The controversy is managed here as Leela is shown embracing Islam before they marry. The rest of the film revolves around Kamal's affair with his fellow employee Tinah, and the effect it has on his marital life. The dialogues were in Malay and Tamil, but any controversies were edited, though there were cultural and religious references.

At this juncture, a brief analysis on the filmography of the Malaysian Film legend, P. Ramlee is essential. It could be said that Malaysia has only one star, P. Ramlee, who enjoys an envious place in Malaysian society for his all-round versatility. There was a golden period for the Malay film industry under the legendary actor P. Ramlee in the 1950s. His films were largely influenced by Indian films with numerous song and dance sequences, all of which were composed and performed by him. He was not only an actor, but also a musician and Bangsawan performer as well. He was considered an all-rounder in his time or what today would be termed a "triple threat" as he composed the songs, performed them and served as the director on these films. He was inspired by a range of music including Indian, western and Latin American. His film life spans the Studio era through to the beginning of the independent era. Starting his career as the hero of the film, *Bakti* (Malay Film Productions Ltd & Krishnan, 1950) by L. Krishnan, within a few years, he evolved to become a legendary filmmaker in Malaysia. Though it was mentioned that he was influenced by Indian films, he took Malay films from Indian themes to more Malay-based stories (Harding and Sarji, 2002; Barnard, 2006).

Nevertheless, his films range from romance, history, fantasies and kampong life, all of which are based on the Malay culture and context. Kahn (2006) states that Ramlee had his own perception about Malay nationality, and was never a mouthpiece of foreign influences. Considering the commercial viability of his films, he made them primarily about Malay kampongs (villages), as they formed the majority of his audience. His characterizations were also of interest as tries to conceptualize characters from the society itself, where there is a pious Malay who plays the villain against certain media constructed stereotypes (Kahn, 2006). In fact, he deviated from his predecessor and was considered to be influenced by a hybrid culture. By retaining the style and aesthetics of Indian films with their song and dance sequences, he conceptualized stories from the Malay context and scenarios. Van der Heide (2002) states that Ramlee's affection for Indian style is quite likely as the films he acted in during the beginning of his career were mostly directed by Indian filmmakers. Moreover, he changed his name from Teuku Zakaria bin Teuku Nyak Puteh, a typical Malay long name, to Ramlee by following the Indian way of shorting names.

Two of these films are reviewed here in a brief analysis – *Penarek Becha* (Shaw & Ramlee, 1955) which is referred to as 'Penarik Beca' in many sources. However, according to the film credits from the original reel, it is written as 'Penarek Becha' and therefore this chapter will use the original title. The second film is entitled *Antara Dua Darjat* (Shaw & Ramlee, 1960). As previously stated, his films often carried the dichotomy of rich and poor. The two films mentioned here equally portray Malaysia's socio-economic situation by keeping the lens focused on the everyday life of Malaysian citizens and are narrated in a melodramatic manner, inspired by his predecessors and his association with Indian filmmakers.

*Penarek Becha* is a story about a poor rickshaw driver, Amran, who falls in love with a rich girl. The whole plot revolves around the discrimination and harassment faced by the poor and the indifferent attitude of the rich. Using melodrama, Ramlee turns his lens toward the realities of a society where social disparity and poverty reign. In fact, the film takes a panoramic view of all sections of society. The dichotomy between rich and

poor is emphasized in the splendiddness of a palatial home compared with a dilapidated hut and the character who struggles to make ends meet with a person who spends his time gambling and chasing girls (Fig. 3. 2). Even the dialogues are elaborate and philosophical. When Amran was paid less than what he deserved by Marzuki, a rich man, he laments about it to a street vendor, “Sometimes people think we are cows. They just pay us what they wish. Why do they do this to us? Aren’t we poor?” Like in Indian films, everything turns out well in the end. In this case it is when Marzuki realizes the nobility of the poor and decides to let his daughter marry Amran.



**Figure 3. 2 – Top two pictures - Palatial house against dilapidated hut  
Bottom two pictures - While the main female character of the film (who is rich) complains about the food, rickshaw puller (Ramlee as the main character) and his mother share the single parcel of food out of poverty.**

*Antara Dua Darjat* (1960) is also a romantic drama woven around class differences, specifically the arrogance and pride of the Royalty. Ghazali is a poor singer and musician who performs for parties and other small functions. Tungu Zaleha, from a

royal family is attracted to him, only to be separated from him by her father who takes pride in his royal ancestry and looks down with contempt on the poor villagers. As seen in *Penarek Becha*, this film also has impressive dialogue that strikes a chord among the audience members who are familiar with the social situations narrated in these film. “You are Tengu, with royal blood. You should not mix with people who are not royalty...” Dialogues like this acknowledge the social stigma and disparity prevalent in Malaysian society. This is of particular significance for Malaysia because during that period those with royal descendants enjoyed many privileges while a large section of society was doomed to poverty. Ramlee was often compared to Indian actors– precisely as a combination of Raj Kapoor and MGR. Both of them are his contemporaries; the former is a Bollywood actor and the latter is from the Tamil film industry. Among them, Raj Kapoor is more similar, both in his performance and style (Fig. 3.3).





**Figure 3.3 - A colash of P Ramlee and Raj Kapoor showing their similar physical looks; Top left – Raj Kapoor, Top right – Ramlee, Bottom left – Ramlee, Bottom right – Raj Kapoor**

Like Ramlee, Raj Kapoor (RK), who was known as ‘The Show Man’ in the Indian film industry, was an all-round actor, producer, director and singer. From the 1940s to the 1970s the Indian film industry was referred to as the RK Era. This was a time when his films became box-office hits one after the other. Though he has portrayed many characters, his image as a showman is built on the type of character he played in films like *Anaara* (Kapoor & Kapoor, 1951) and *Shree 420* (Kapoor & Kapoor, 1955) where audiences are reminded of the tramp image of Charlie Chaplin. In the 1950s, the golden period for both these actors, most of the popular characters displayed quirky gestures and expressions to generate humour and slapstick comedy. While Ramlee could not completely adopt the tramp image in any of the films, he embraced the eccentric gestures and fanciful expressions, which is more obvious in the song sequences like the one in *Hujan Panas* (Fig. 3.4). RK has adopted this tramp style to sarcastically narrate the realities of society, the eccentric portrayals obscuring the harsh realities and the agonies faced by his character.

The popularity of Ramlee films even at this period, as commented by Van der Heide, (2002) is due to his genius with social representations. Though most of his films are romantic tales, he weaves this with stark social realities, which make these films socially relevant and popular. The difference between him and his predecessors or Indian contemporaries was his focus on Malay society. The Indian connections in these films are obvious for the aesthetics and melodramatic narrations. The basic plots are identifiable from Bollywood where the subject is always family and social situations, whereas Ramlee’s films are based on Malaysian society and social realities.

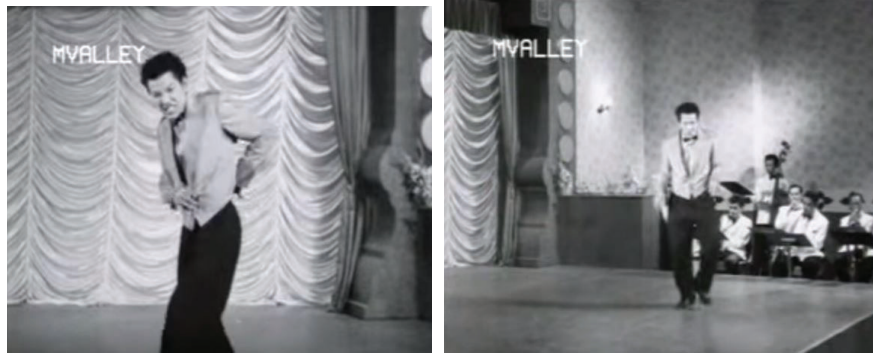


Figure 3.4 - Screenshots of a song from *Hujan Panas* acted by P. Ramlee

Though Malay filmmakers entered the film industry towards the end of the 1950s, they still retained the Indian style, not only considering the positive reception of Indian films, but the audience's fascination and familiarity with the Bangsawan style of colorful sets and musical narration. However, Malay films limited their reel time to a maximum of 2 hours with 5-6 song sequences. Towards the end of the 1960s the popularity of Malay films began to decline (Van der Heide, 2002), but this was not the case with Indian and Chinese films; Indian films continued to entice audiences throughout the ups and downs of the Malay films, the proof of which is the success of films like *Bobby* (Kapoor & Kapoor, 1973) and *Zanjeer* (Mehra & Mehra, 1973) (Ibid., 2002).

### 3.4 Bollywood in the Bumiputera Era

The Bumiputera (the word used to denote the Malays and indigenous people) era denotes a period from the early 1970s, when more Malay filmmakers came to the forefront as part of the National Economic Policy of 1971 that kept the Bumiputera equity to 30% in any business entity. As stated in the previous section, towards the end of 1960s and 1970s there was considerable decline in the popularity of Malay films with the continuous influx of Indonesian and Indian films in the Malay language, featuring colour film and widescreen format. Van der Heide (2002) considers this the result of the stagnant Malay film industry, which was reluctant to change according to the socio-

political milieu even when films moved from the hands of Indian directors to Malay filmmakers. On the other hand, Indian films were shifting from their pattern of Majnum love stories with tragic endings to the more optimistic and romantic films like *Bobby*, and later towards revolutionary social dramas like *Zanjeer* and *Deewar* (Rai & Chopra, 1975). Indian films continued to play without subtitles in Malaysia. From this point it is obvious that, though most viewers never understood the dialogues, the emotions reached the audience through expressive acting, and the impressive song and dance sequences.

It was the National Economic Policy (1971) that put the Malaysian films back on track. To give eminence to the 'Malay' language, as well as the Malay ethnicity, the Government demanded that all non-Malay films should carry Malay subtitles in order to express national unity. Even if the decline of the Studio system started in the late 1960s, the film that really represents this shift from Studio to Bumiputera era is *Keluarga Si Comat* (Borhan & Sattar, 1975) directed by Aziz Sattar (Khan, 1997; Gray, 2010). Gray asserts that *Keluarga Si Comat* (*Comet Family*) along with its many contemporaries in the 1970s and 1980s were reverting back to the early Malaysian films by imitating their themes and styles. This meant that slapstick comedy and romance with little reference to the Malay socio-political situation was in vogue. Khan (1997) commented that the film was just a farce comedy lacking any imagination and having 'incoherent plots' (p. 124). The success of *Keluarga Si Comat*, according to Latif (1989) is not because of its cinematic standards, but its abundance of jokes, and that for the first time ever a local production used wide screen and colour. By saying this, it doesn't necessarily give the impression that Malay audiences prefer films with social reality; but that they expect certain novelties and entertainment provided by foreign film industries. Bollywood films were more colourful, often having attractive heroes and heroines, adapting their themes according to the changing social situation in India. The success of films like *Bobby* (1973) and *Coolie* (Desai, Desai & Raj, 1983) are examples of these shifting themes built on melodrama.

FINAS, the National Film Development Corporation was established in 1981 to assist with film production in Malaysia and to give incentives to Malay made films. Subsequently, Malay films recovered as a result of the financial aid. It only gave financial

assistance to those films that carry 70% Malay dialogue, thereby hampering other (Chinese and Tamil) language films. Even so the Malay films could not entice the audiences as they delivered no novel concepts or themes and lacked creativity.

The 1980s correlate with the flourishing Malay industry, with Latif (2000) noting that in 1981 alone, Malaysia produced 25 films. However Khan (1997) commented that though the quantity of films improved, most of them lacked quality. This is in a way due to the lack of competition experienced by the filmmakers as the funding was provided by FINAS. Public lack of interest with the films was reflected in the decline of movie theatres as well; Khan notes that by 1986, almost 622 theatres had closed down. This also worsened with the introduction of video rentals in the 1970s and brought with it video piracy, thus jeopardizing the box-office revenues of films.

### **3.5 Bollywood in the Post-1990 Era - Malaysian Cinema in Resurgence**

The 1990s are equally significant for the Malaysian and Bollywood film industries. When Malaysia witnessed a new wave of filmmakers who experimented with novel themes, the Bollywood film industry opened up its market to foreign audiences, which in turn brought about changes in the conceptualization of stories, characters and locations. This section explains the relationship between these two industries and the advantages for Bollywood in Malaysia.

Malaysia began to witness a revival towards the end of the 1980s, particularly after the release of the iconic film *Fenomena* (Mahmood & Osman, 1989) by Aziz M. Osman. It also marked the emergence of talented, western educated independent filmmakers who experimented with new themes and subjects. Similarly, the industry witnessed the genesis of a fourth generation of filmmakers who explored the cinematic possibilities in the DVD format followed by the fifth generation at the beginning of the millennium who wanted films to be a “perspective that transcends national, societal, religious, cultural and historical barriers” (Murat, 2009, para. 18). This later generation of

filmmakers is of particular significance in defining the Malaysian film industry as they represent the generation, no matter their ethnicity, who are born and brought up on Malaysian soil and culture. Their perception and perspectives take a wider variance from those of earlier filmmakers who were influenced and inspired by Indian born filmmakers and their filmmaking styles. In Murat's (who is a renowned Malaysian filmmaker) words, "it contains the heart, dreams, imagination and intellectual sensuality of modern-day Malaysians" (2009, para. 20).

According to Khoo (2006), this period was never favourable for the filmmakers, as foreign films attracted a larger audience and were in higher demand. To add to it, video piracy was at its peak and the cineplexes were taking the place of small movie theatres with their expensive ticket prices (Ibid, 94). Nevertheless, Khoo (2006) asserts that the films of this period sought to explore the relationship (if any) between Islam, Adat and modernity.

There was a strong attempt with these 1990s filmmakers to establish connections with Malay traditional roots and to define an Islamic identity that is localized in the Malay hybrid context. (Khoo, 2006, p. 109)

Such a sensitive and critical attitude always leads to religious controversy and censorship, and that was not different for these films. These new filmmakers abstained from the golden era formula of Indian films; on the contrary, they chose to focus on the Kampong culture giving a hint of realism while also representing female sexuality. Though artistically, the films set the bar high for the general audiences, this was a deviation from the familiar narrative style. Many of the films contained serious messages of inter-racial relationships and multi-ethnicity. As Khoo (2006) mentioned, they failed to make a mark at the box-office due to the entertainment-savvy film audience, who expected only simple and familiar genres. Such aesthetics are created by the filmmakers who tried to set the film within the boundaries of government regulations and escape the clutches of censorship, while at the same time make the films commercially viable. These films offer a stark difference to the Ramlee films as his films were socially relevant, and

the social reality exposed in Ramlee's films was made obvious with detailed and emotional dialogue and song sequences that don't require any in-depth deliberation or thought in order to understand their message. When Khoo mentioned that audiences are "trained to desire nothing more than entertainment and fantasy rather than critical cinema' (p. 123), she was pointing to a larger film culture in Malaysia that set the standards of appreciation which suggests not only the types of foreign films that reached Malaysia but the situations that made film making in Malaysia challenging and discouraging due to funding and censorship issues.

These critical films were met with disappointing box-office results though they did attract international acclaim. At the same time, those that stayed with the familiar Bollywood style, also continued to be successful, as with the films of Yusof Haslam and Aziz Osman who produced comedy and teen dramas like *XX Ray* (Rahman & Osman, 1993) and *Sembilu* (Haslam & Haslam, 1994), respectively.

Censorship laws were a hindrance for filmmakers who held back from portraying controversial issues or ethical dilemmas on screen. The Malaysian government followed the guidelines of the British censorship law which made it clear that films will be banned or censored if they deliver any sentiments against government policies, or glorify a particular ethnicity or race by demeaning the others, excessive violence or portrayal of any behaviour that is unacceptable to Malaysian society (Adnan, 1991, p.65).

The Malay audience's demand for spectacle and entertainment, along with the strict censorship laws of Malaysia, made the country fertile for the import of films from India. Thus Bollywood was the popular genre for the Malay audience.

In one of the reviews on the previously mentioned film *Sembilu II* (Haslam & Haslam, 1995), the reviewer called it a 'Bombay-style fantasy melodrama' (Translated from the Malay version – Hamzah, 1995). The reviews comment that it follows the successful formula of a 'commercial film'; meaning it has a colourful and picturesque displays of romance and sentiment with the aid of song sequences. *Sembilu* (1994) and *Sembilu II* (1995) revolve around a triangular love story with twists and turns, heightened

sentimental scenes, fights and relationship conflicts. More fantastical would be the 1995 movie, *XX Ray 2*, which narrates the story of a couple who are transported back in time to the period of Hang Tuah and Hang Jebet in the Malaccan Sultanate, and then try to rewrite the history of these two characters in combat.

While going through the films released during this period, two general types can be identified. In the first, female subjectivity is constructed around the changing cultural, social and moral world that often carries the dichotomy of good and evil, traditional and modern. The second, are purely romantic films that narrate teen love in a triangular story and in a stylish and cosmopolitan setting, mixing in comedy or in other words an extravagant comedy in which action is more salient than characterization. Most of the films in the first category were artistically brilliant and well acclaimed, but were commercial failures. For instance, films like *Maria Mariana* (Haslam & Hslam, 1996), *Fenomena* (1989), *Selubung* (Omar & Baba, 1992), *Perempuan, Isteri &...* (Pansha & Shaari, 1993) focused on the female protagonist at the centre of the plot, where femininity is questioned and negotiated by a patriarchal society. This is similar to what Gledhill (1988) commented on femininity in melodrama that they present women as victims or tragic figures. A process of 'cultural negotiation' must come into play when defining the role of these female protagonists in melodramas. The female characters in these films negotiate their subjectivity as a result of a few predominant factors like modernity and patriarchal dominance. As far as Malay films are concerned, a complete dominance of feminine subjectivity is almost completely absent. Though they portray independent and modern women, these characters are chained to the tradition and religious values of 'normal' or 'authentic' femininity. On the other hand films like *Sembilu* (1994), *Sembilu II* (1995), *XX Ray* (1993) are set in modern urban settings, narrating teen love. This is supplemented by the Bollywood films, which portray traditional subjects in a modern and contemporary milieu, therefore satisfying the urge of Malaysian audience. As femininity was mentioned, it is imperative to look into the gender constructions of Bollywood films. Bollywood films never complicate gender representation, but construct and deliver traits of masculinity and femininity of which the particular period demands. When it comes to

Bollywood films in a post 1990 period, they enlarged their canvas to include a world outside its national boundary, both in theme and production. There were a few obvious changes in the conceptualization of Bollywood films after the 1990s. When films began to reach foreign audiences, filmmakers introduced diasporic themes and characters along with foreign locations. Even when they appreciate modernity and represent diasporic sentiments, these films draw a boundary of morality and tradition rooted in Indian culture thereby delivering a hybrid culture on screen that is equally appreciated at home and abroad. Hence, female and male heroes are stylish and foreign educated, yet carrying traditional concepts of being a 'good' mother/father and husband/wife setting a clear definition of being moral.

The salient features of Bollywood and the Malaysian film context which revived interest in the Bollywood films of the 1990s are explored in the following section in detail.

### **3. 6 Bollywood in 1990s and thereafter: A case study on *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998)**

The most popular Bollywood film released in Malaysia would be *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (Johar & Johar, 1998). Though released in 1998, the excitement for *KKHH* still continues today, 15 years after its release. The film, considered a classic in Malaysia, is broadcasted on public television channels consistently. In 2012, to quote a recent incident, the film was shown twice in 2012 on two separate channels. A report in *Utusan Malaysia* states that the broadcast in 2012 on TV3 generated 3 million viewers according to TRP ratings (Ibrahim, 2012). There was a huge expectation and positive reviews from the press on the film even before its public release in 1998.

To initiate a discussion, a news report says that Bollywood films had lost their glory by the 1980s. It states that,



The glory of the country's Hindi film ended in the early 80's until *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* premiered three years ago... ("Kabhi Kushi Kabhie Gham popular", 2002).

The perception of the reviewer in the aforementioned report is quite contradictory to Van der Heide (2002) who mentioned that Bollywood films continued to be attractive in Malaysia because of their action and revenge themes (as in *Deewar* (1975) and *Coolie* (1983)). The aforementioned news excerpt signifies a comparative decline in its popularity during the 1980s. Bollywood is an industry that is highly responsive to the changing Indian social and political scene. By the late 1970s, Bollywood films were showing themes of unemployment, famine, political atrocities and injustices against the main characters; these themes slowly changed to those of revenge, action and social drama, which was the vogue of that period. Amitabh Bachchan's image of the 'angry young man' was formed during this period, he represented the dynamic young generation who responded and reacted to the above atrocities. While it is true that this revitalized the industry (Van der Heide, 2002), in the Malaysian context, according to the report, it diminished the popularity of Bollywood films. This correlates with the flourishing Malay industry of the 1980s with Latif (2000) noting that in 1981 alone, Malaysia produced 25 films.

In the 1990s, romance and action thrillers continued to flourish in Bollywood, but revenge, bloodshed and fighting crept into the love stories preferred by Malaysians. It was *Dihvale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge (DDLJ)* (Chopra & Chopra, 1995) that marked a new era for Bollywood films when it explored diasporic sentiments and nostalgia. In fact, films were increasingly displaying a westernised and modern world, the changes of which could be seen from *mise-en-scene* to the costumes of the characters while trying to maintain the customary themes of love, tradition and family. Films like *DDLJ*, *Dil To Pagal Hai* (Chopra & Chopra, 1997), *Pardes* (Ghai & Ghai, 1997) and *Yes Boss* (Jain, Jain & Mirza, 1997) incorporated foreign locations into their narration not only as background but also where the story unfolds. In Malaysia as well, Bollywood started reviving its interest

among audiences, with newspapers having definite columns and discourses on Bollywood. By 1998, Bollywood began to reach Malaysia with live musical dance shows featuring popular actors. Along with the films, these shows were recapturing the fascination for Bollywood with SRK evolving as a favourite and recurrent performer. To add to the dialogue on the context of the reception of *KKHH*, one major factor must be considered. Malaysia was hit with a major economic crisis in 1997, which led to the deterioration of film production. It was previously mentioned in this chapter that the 1990s saw the resurgence of the Malaysian film industry in both artistic and commercial films. However, these films faced a setback with the financial crisis and funding stopped. Up until 2000, Malaysia produced only an average of four films a year with only a slight increase to seven or eight until 2003. This economic situation proved advantageous for the release of *KKHH* in Malaysia in 1998.

Apart from a favourable context, the film in itself had certain qualities that acted as its primary condition for a popular reception. *KKHH* followed a familiar plot of the triangular love story, but with some impressive scenery and plot twists. As opposed to *DDLJ*, *KKHH* narrates an Indian and urban romantic story set within a make-believe Indian backdrop. The film was mostly shot in Mauritius and Scotland which were disguised as an Indian landscape. To summarize the story - Rahul (SRK) and Anjali (Kajol) are best friends at St. Xavier's College. Anjali is a tomboyish character who doesn't portray any feminine features and takes pride in that. The story takes a turn when the Oxford-educated Tina (Rani Mukharjee), joins the college for the rest of the semester. When Rahul and Tina share their love for each other, Anjali realizes that she has certain feelings for Rahul beyond friendship, which prompts her to leave college in order to put some distance between them. Eight years pass, and after giving birth to their daughter, Tina dies leaving behind a few letters for her daughter, named Anjali. Through the letters the daughter, Rahul's mother and Tina's father realize that Anjali (Kajol) loved him and they endeavour to unite them. Cutting across to Anjali (Kajol), she now carries a different persona (having long hair and wearing a sari), completely contrary to her tomboyish former self. She is now engaged to Aman (Salman Khan), but he doubts her

love for him. The rest of the story, through many twists and turns ends when Rahul and Anjali are united the day of her wedding to Aman. The review of the film in *New Strait Times* begins with the prediction that the film will be a success.

Even without publicity, this movie should do well. You have Shahrukh Khan, Kajol, Rani Mukherji and the good-looking Salman Khan, for the price of one ticket (Vijayan, 1998)

Its star-studded cast is one of the reasons for its popularity. The absence of a glamorous star system in Malay films was made up for with this Bollywood film. SRK and Kajol were already a popular star couple since the release of *DDLJ* in 1995 and “the chemistry between them is responsible for *KKHH*’s success” (Vijayan, 1998). *KKHH* provided a package of glamorous actors that added to the popular reception of the film. (Star fetishism is discussed in detail in Chapter 4).

Apart from this ‘star presence’, there were other major features, which have been identified by the reviewer – a “tear-jerker love story and foreign locales and songs” (ibid.). This love story suggests an earlier discussion on the definition or characteristics of Bollywood melodrama based on overt sentimentalism. As opposed to the films of the 1970s and early 1980s, *KKHH* belongs to the post 1990s films that revolves around the sentiments within the family. Society in these films is limited to the landscape, which has no direct reference or implication to the plot of the film. This in fact provides freedom for the filmmakers to incorporate the most impressive backgrounds; in this particular case study, the background is Scotland along with some stunning locations in India. Family is represented by elements such as sacrifice, loss, despair and agony portrayed in a dramatic way. In this way *KKHH* is a brilliant combination of stunning locations with sensationalized sentiments. The first scene displays this cinematic approach with a long shot beside a clean and peaceful lake in India Rahul is all alone and seen to be suppressing his tears before a funeral pyre (Fig. 3.5).



**Figure 3.5 - Rahul at the Funeral Pyre of Tina (Screenshot from the film *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*)**

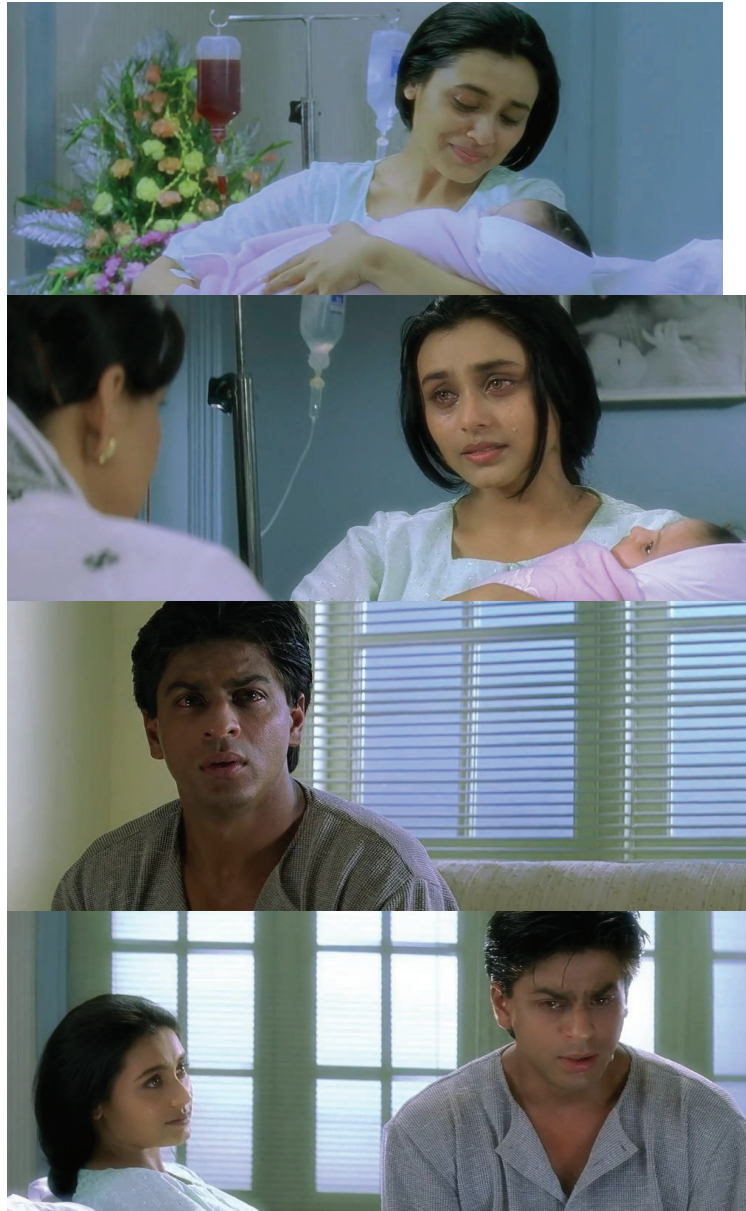
Though it is unusual, at least in the Indian tradition, for a funeral pyre to be seen unattended by people, this emphasizes the emotional message that Rahul is left alone following the death of his wife. The viewer comes to know about the misery through the thoughts of Rahul which then take them to the hospital where the doctor tells Rahul that Tina cannot be saved. Knowing that there are only a few days left, Tina hands over eight letters for her daughter, one for each of her first eight birthdays. Though Tina is on her deathbed, the gravity of the situation is portrayed by the characters in their facial expressions (Fig. 3.6). There is no scarcity of emotional sequences in this film; to quote one scene— Anjali's departing scene in the Railway station when she realizes that Rahul is in love with Tina, is almost 4 minutes long within which it shows the complete intensity of loss and despair that each of the characters is feeling in the film. Through close-ups and perfect two and three-shots, the scene narrates Rahul searching for Anjali on the train, learning that she is leaving college, and trying to convince her to stay, though all in vain (Fig. 3.7). At the end of the film, Rahul and Anjali unite after a dramatic and highly emotional scene prior to the wedding ceremony of Anjali and Aman. This ultimately leads to the 'feel-good', moment mentioned in many of the Bollywood reviews. Running through all the tears and plot twists, *KKHH* evokes such a positive feeling at the end of such an emotional drama. The actual Indian scenes have been purposefully disguised with foreign locations in order to eliminate the simplest possible flaw in the background

and direct the attention to the ways in which the characters develop in a serene atmosphere devoid of outside forces. This leaves little opportunity to consider the place where the story unfolds as being typically 'Indian', but a more westernized and global India, that anyone could relate to. This is in stark contrast to the 1970s Bollywood films that are rooted in social violence, bloodshed and revenge themes and often require reference to Indian society. Societal influence and atrocities lead the plot as well as the characters, and the major characters are replicas of social figures that fight for justice. In films like *DDLJ* and *KKHH*, this link to society is completely devoid, and the film characters are confined to a cocoon of splendour where the characters are concerned only with love and family relationships.

After almost 14 years, in 2012, and amidst the novel themes and narratives of Bollywood, Malaysians still find pleasure in watching these films. Ibrahim (2012) in his review on the film in 2012 considers that the basic appeal of *KKHH* is that "it is not a serious film". 'Serious' here denotes those themes that narrate the complexities of life or social issues that demand deliberation and introspection. The reviewer himself suggests such an interpretation when he remarks that the film has a "simple formula" with an "unpredictable" story (*ibid.*). The review also considers *KKHH* as the "real manifestation" of what a Bollywood film is. The feature that makes this film real follows,

...there must be some drama. There must be a hero, heroine and antagonist, home should be as large as a warehouse with a wide staircase and hall space...there must be a great song and video clip against a place of exceptional beauty... (Translated from Malay, *ibid.*)

Therefore the 'non-serious' theme can be identified in those films, which provide a fanciful experience, and thereby an escapist pleasure as in the case of the "large home" and song and dance sequence in an exceptionally gorgeous backdrop that tones down the 'seriousness' of the plot. According to news reports on Bollywood, it is the pure fantasy as opposed to the "realism of western films" that appeals to the "discerning crowd" (Vijayan, 2012).



3.6 - Screenshots of the first few scenes from *KKHH*

Having said that, it must be made clear here that the realism mentioned could not be related to the films of P. Ramlee, which were thought of as being rooted in social realities. Ramlee films, though depicting class differences and social problems, are romanticized where the feelings and emotions are more of a priority than the reality. This is achieved by using the same Bollywood formula of melodrama, sensational dialogues

and song sequences. While reviewing the film *Players* (Vaswani, Burmawala, Abbas-Mustan & Abbas-Mustan, 2012), a heist film, the reviewer reaches the conclusion that the film is not a typical Bollywood one, but pure action, and this makes it difficult to recoup its high budget.

...the movie is all about action and the characters show very little emotion.

We don't really feel for any of them (Vijayan, 2012).

Emotion is all that makes the film appealing with audiences, and it is the 'feelings for the characters' that makes it popular among Malaysian audiences. The familiar plot of family, love and romance, causes the audience to sympathize with the characters, which is then reinforced through dramatic elements like song and dance sequences.





Figure 3. 7 - Anjali leaving behind Rahul and Tina (Screenshots from the film *KKHH*)

Apart from this, one of the other words mentioned here is the “discerning” crowd. The demarcation between films for the discerning and all others is also visible in many reviews precisely for those films that distance themselves from the familiar romantic plot to a more unique and unusual narration. For instance, in the review of the film *Talash* (Sidhwani, Khan, Akhtar & Kagti, 2013), the reviewer states that as the film doesn't carry any “dance duo or the usual stuff found” in Bollywood, it appeals more to the “discerning crowd” (“Different kind of dish”, 2012). In a similar way, Rusli (2012), a Malaysian columnist and filmmaker, while discussing Bollywood films released in 2012, states that generally, “Indian films have a pretty bad name among the more *discerning* film fans in Malaysia” (2012). It should be mentioned here that Rusli is one of those film reviewers who encourages offbeat independent films and is an ardent supporter of them. In the same article, he positions himself by saying that,

...the mere mention of me going to see an Indian film (especially if it's a Hindi movie) will usually be greeted with yelps of disbelief from friends who already know me for the movie geek that I am...

The disapproval of a Bollywood or Hindi movie as he mentions is simply because it is just a “musical” (Ibid.). He belongs to the group, of discerning film goers who want ‘reality’. On the contrary, he praises the parallel films or off-beat Hindi films like *Delhi Belly* (Khan, Rao, Furgele & Deo, 2011) and *Peepli Live* (Khan, Rao & Rizvi, 2010), the former a black comedy and the latter a satire on the farmer suicide and media



sensationalism in India. Unlike the typical posh and extravagant sets, both of these films are set against a backdrop of shanty towns, slums and villages in order to convey the reality of the respective themes. In one of the other reviews, Nambiaar (2012) also praises *Barfi* (Screwvala, Kapur, Basu & Basu, 2012)) for its “refreshing and shocking love for the aesthetics of silent film slapstick comedy” (2012). He continues, “...though lacking in dialogue, the film is mostly told through sign language, physical gestures and glances”. Similarly, Nambiaar (2013) identifies the film as “Bollywood at its best” with “love stories, not thrillers *a la* Hollywood”, though he adds that it is “not a typical Bollywood masala” (Nambiaar, 2012). The problem with these films is mainly the style of narrative style, where the film is narrated through flashbacks and little dialogue. Nambiaar states “this fails to hold our interest for the entire 2½ hours”. The truth behind this ‘not being typical Bollywood’ is identified when the Box office receipts of the film are considered - *Barfi* is at the lower end of the Bollywood Box-Office revenue, preceded by *Ek Tha Tiger* (Chopra & Khan, 2012) and *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* (Chopra & Chopra, 2012), films with the popular stars, Salman Khan and Shah Rukh Khan respectively.

Encapsulating all that is discussed here, it could be said that Bollywood manifests itself as a popular utopian pleasure in Malaysia. As Dyer (1993) states, this utopian pleasure “presents either complex or unpleasant feelings (...jealousy, loss of love, defeat) in way that makes them seem uncomplicated, direct and vivid and not...ambiguous as day-to-day life makes them” (p. 25). Even though Bollywood films continue to experiment with new themes, techniques and narration, this is identified as ‘not typical of Bollywood’ in Malaysia. Moreover, fantasy should always be combined with the presence of popular stars. For instance, in 2012 *Ek Tha Tiger* and *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* topped the Bollywood box office charts in Malaysia, leaving *Barfi* at the bottom. This is significant, because *Barfi* attained international acclaim for its unusual narration and the relationship between the mute and deaf hero and the autistic heroine; whereas the former films starring popular actors Salman Khan and Shah Rukh Khan were of

more interest in Malaysia. In India, *Barfi* grabbed most of the media attention when compared with its contemporaries, but in Malaysia, it did not have a popular reception.

### 3.7 Conclusion

Cultural familiarity is a major factor in the reception of Bollywood among Malay audiences. Straubhaar (2003) considers cultural proximity as the inclination towards “one’s own culture or the most similar possible culture” (p. 85). He considers language as one of the significant determining factors of this proximity theory, but in the reception of Bollywood, however, this factor remains irrelevant. Rather, this proximity is achieved through certain other cultural elements like musical traditions and style, approach to story narration or even genre (for example, melodrama) (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). Like a chain reaction, while early Malay art forms were inspired from Indian theatre and epics, this in turn insured the popular reception of Indian films, which was followed by the recognition of the same style in Malay films. Malay theatre or cultural art forms like Wayang (puppet show) and Bangsawan (Malay Opera) largely use or get inspired from the stories of the Mahabharata and Ramayana, the epics of India that reached Malaysian soil in the historical period through Indian traders. Various written versions like the Hikayat Pandawa Jaya (The Story of the Pandava Victory), Hikayat Pandawa Lima (The Story of the Five Pandavas) and the Hikayat Seri Rama (The Story of Rama) are still popular in Malaysia through Wayang shows.

Bollywood films or Indian films in general are rooted in these epic texts which deliver a cultural frame based on love, sacrifice, tolerance, grief, exile, relationships, family values and the binary of good and bad, where human emotions are given priority with emphasis on the triumph of good. As Confucianism forms the very aspect of cultural proximity in the appreciation and popularity of Korean dramas in Japan and China (Kim, 2009), it is the narrative style, genre and themes of Indian epics that make Bollywood popular with the Malay audience.

The aesthetics and narrative approach (of melodrama) of Bollywood films are familiar to the Malaysian audiences who adapted them into Malay films. While looking at the history of Malaysian film as well as the reception of Bollywood film in Malaysia, it is evident that to a great extent, the Malay audience's familiarity with the style has much to do with the reception of a film rather than the presence of Indian diaspora. This explains why the films can successfully run without subtitles in Malaysia, where the majority of the population doesn't speak or understand Hindi, the language of Bollywood. For Malaysian audiences, it is not the language that speaks, but the display of emotions intertwined with song and dance sequences. The 'undiscerning' audience that this chapter discussed is the result of this cultural familiarity that Malaysian audiences experience with Bollywood films, and which they prefer to see on screen. To a certain extent, this category of audience is the one who gives meaning to the reception of Bollywood as this discernment attaches a series of factors apart from the film itself, such as Bollywood star fetishism, fashion and song and dance. Such a conclusion is admissible as discerning audiences are portrayed as being against 'masala' aspects like song and dance sequences and familiar and archaic melodramatic romantic plots, and who wish to see novel themes and narrative style irrespective of the actors.

Apart from this, the particular cinematic context in Malaysia was also favourable for Bollywood. It would have been a different fate for Bollywood, if Malay films were equally colourful, splendid and technically superior. A lack of funding was one of the more dispiriting factors that hindered the growth of Malay films, the other being censorship issues. Therefore, contexts were favourable for Bollywood to capture the market whether during a pre-1990 period or its revitalizing period prior to the release of *KKHH* in 1998. The bulk of media materials and discourses on Bollywood, found in the Malaysian media, mainly newspaper articles, explain the popularity of the industry here. Though the appealing factors of Bollywood have been briefly mentioned in this chapter, this is explored in further detail in the next chapter by looking at media discourses on Bollywood. Though this chapter gives a hint that a significant majority of the audience is Malay, the next chapter explain this further.

## Chapter 4

# Mapping the Discourses: Bollywood in the Malaysian Media

### 4.1 Introduction

While the previous chapter illustrated the prominent role of Bollywood in Malaysian film culture through a historical analysis, this chapter examines various news and media discourses to explain the nature of its appeal in Malaysia, and the ways in which they situate Bollywood. These discourses include film reviews, news articles, and online social media platforms like Facebook, blogs and other websites. The media provides a space for cultural discourses and awareness, and as discourses form the major source of data in this research, this chapter initiates its use by identifying the main types of news and discourses appearing in the mass media, and will offer a reading of them within the socio-political and religious context of Malaysia. This helps in understanding the socio-cultural meaning given by a nation, in this case, Malaysia, towards a foreign cultural medium, and how they consider and approach the popularity of Bollywood.

Though the data collection has considered all the major media sources such as newspapers, magazines, television, and online platforms such as blogs, websites and Facebook, there are very few Bollywood related programs on public broadcasting television channels, except for a weekly three hour time on the free to air channels like TV1, TV2, TV3 and TV8 (this is dealt with in detail in the next chapter). Zee TV (Channel 108) was the first Hindi channel to be launched in Malaysia in 1996, and was later renamed to Zee Variasi ('Variasi' meaning 'Variety' in Malay) in 2011. The programs range from Bollywood films to serials, talk shows, music and local news. In 2011, two more Bollywood channels were launched through Hypp TV (an affiliate of TM UNIFI, Malaysia) - UTV Movies (Channel 307) UTV Bindass (Channel 305), which was followed by UTV Stars (301) in 2012 (through Hypp TV) and Bollyone (Channel 251) in 2014 through Astro. Even though these are pay channels which are

available on their respective providers based on subscription or as a package, the launch of new Hindi channels shows the increasing need and audience for these films.

Among these sources, newspaper and online material are given prominence here. News is always viewed in a social context and generated from a social context (Tuchman, 1978). This means that a news which is relevant in a social context may not be relevant in another context, and that meaning and relevance of news are developed from the particular social/cultural context. Even though the hegemonic power of the government can influence the news in the media, society's interest definitely plays a significant part, especially with entertainment news. Though the global media consumption is now dominated by the World Wide Web, a local or national medium like newspaper, has its own role in assimilating dominant cultural elements in a society. As far as Malaysia is concerned, news media is controlled by strict censorship laws. Hence the presence or absence of Bollywood discourses and, the types and topics of news reports on Bollywood could possibly reflect the ways in which Malaysia identify Bollywood. Similarly, online platforms such as social networking sites, blogs, website discussion groups and institutional websites, which also serve as an effective resource in understanding the perspectives of ordinary people who are the producers and consumers of these articles. Though Bollywood discourses are found in all these web based platforms, this chapter focuses more on a few Facebook pages that features exclusively on Bollywood and the Bollywood stars.

This chapter begins by focusing on the columnists who writes about Bollywood or those who consistently write on Bollywood in newspapers. The subsequent sections categorize the discourses found in different media into themes that enable a closer look at the reception of Bollywood and the possible social, cultural and political themes they hold when considering Bollywood's reception in Malaysia.

## **4.2 Who Writes on Bollywood?**

This section focuses mainly on regular columns on Bollywood and its columnists. As part of this analysis, two major English-language dailies have been selected, *The Star* and *The News Strait Times*. Apart from that, a Malay national daily,

*Utusan Malaysia* and two online newspapers - *Malaysiakini* and *Free Malaysia Times* - are also considered, thus providing a mix of all major news sources in Malaysia.

Moreover, the frequency of these narratives on Bollywood in major news outlets, shows the position it enjoys in the entertainment and cultural sphere.

In *The Star*, comprehensive features on Bollywood appear in a weekly column, called 'India Diary', by an India based journalist, Coomi Kapoor. Though not a column on film or entertainment, but more of a forum to discuss broader Indian issues, Bollywood still receives ample column space. Unlike the usual news reports that appear in entertainment and film sections of a newspaper, India Diary contains in-depth features on Bollywood, not usually film reviews, but general narratives on the status of this cultural form. The news on Bollywood in Malaysia will usually be on its stars and Bollywood events, and consists less of film criticism and reviews. One significant factor with Coomi Kapoor's column is that she is a non-Malaysian Indian journalist, whose credentials are in political reporting and commentary. She has been one of the more prominent journalists that guided Indian political journalism, and has previously written little on film in the mainstream Indian media. However, the fact that the newspaper has featured a famous journalist like Kapoor as one of its columnists demonstrates a genuine effort to give space to Indian news, taking into account the significant amount of readers from the Indian diaspora. As the audience's need is a priority for any media, Coomi Kapoor, being a political analyst in India, considers Bollywood a subject to be covered. Coomi Kapoor exhibits a lucid style of writing about Bollywood often making it an informative piece with the elements of feature and gossip. The column never dares to analyse the political economy, geo politics, or transnational interventions of Bollywood as an entertainment industry. This is also safer for the newspaper, as Bollywood is an industry familiar not only to the Indian diaspora, but other ethnicities too. Apart from 'India Diary', there is Bollywood gossip visible in the entertainment, metro, lifestyle and business sections of the newspaper, mainly written by Priya Menon, who is a Malaysian Indian, representing the Indian Diaspora. However, one major point to note is that though reviews and gossip columns in general are written mainly by Indians, the local (Malaysian) news on Bollywood such as location news or other

Bollywood related happenings in Malaysia are reported by those irrespective of ethnic background.

In *The New Strait Times*, unlike *The Star*, a weekly column called Masala Mix, covers Bollywood gossip. Compiled by a Malaysian Indian journalist Priya Ram, as the title suggests ('Masala' is used to designate Hindi films mainly for their spicy combination of emotions and sentiments as in from the masala or spices used in Indian food. ), it is a snippet of Hindi film news which includes only star gossip and location news collected from Indian film magazines, television channels and websites. The quotes below reflect the position of this section as a gossip column similar to what in newspaper parlance known as page 3 news, with no in-depth reviews or reflections on the films themselves.

She (Sonakshi) has four more films lined up for release, which means the 25-year-old has had no time to pursue other interests, including a love life. *Bollywoodmantra.com*. (Ram, 2012)

...another item girl to look out for in Bollywood is southern export Daisy Shah. The Kannada model will sway her hips to an upbeat number in *Bloody Ishq*. *ApunKaChoice.com* (Ram, 2012)

Beauty queen-turned-Bollywood actress Lara Dutta delivered a baby girl on Jan 20. *IndiaToday.in*. (Ram, 2012)

Parallel to such a gossip column, the 'Cinema' column of the same newspaper deals with new Bollywood releases and features many personal interviews with those involved in the film making process. While this section is open to all language films, including Hollywood, Thai, Chinese and Tamil films shown in Malaysia, Chinese and Bollywood films are exclusively reviewed by the designated diasporic writers, whereas Hollywood films are reviewed irrespective of any particular ethnic differences. Whereas Hollywood films are reviewed by Lili Lajman, Aref Omar, Loong Wai Ting, Bibi Nurshuhada Ramli, Vijhayen Nambiaar etc, the Bollywood films and Chinese language films are restricted to reviews by Loong Wai Ting and Vijhayen Nambiaar

respectively. Hence, considering the two main columns covering Bollywood films “Masala Mix” and “Cinema”, *The News Strait Times* can be considered as providing a more comprehensive analysis of Bollywood.

*Utusan Malaysia*, the Malay language newspaper often carries news from wire agencies like AFP, Reuters and Bernama on Bollywood news. Though it has a film column by Ali Atan, Bollywood rarely finds a place amongst the major agencies. Paradoxically, the news and gossip on the Bollywood film industry of the late 1990s and early 2000s was only available from this newspaper. These earlier articles written by Manah Rosli often dealt not with films, but the personal life stories of the Bollywood stars. However, after 2002, there is an absence of a regular columnist and an attribution to ‘Agencies’. Bollywood news definitely finds a place in the entertainment section as soft news or star gossip similar to what is found in the ‘Masala Mix’ section of the *New Strait Times*.

Moving on to the web, the main online portals taken for analysis are *Malaysiakini*, *Free Malaysia Today* and *The Malaysian Insider*. As *Malaysiakini*, the most popular online newspaper in Malaysia is a staunch political critic and proponent of hard and in depth news, with little space given to entertainment. *The Malaysian Insider*, on the other hand, has a special forum written by Aidil Rusli, a Malaysian independent film maker and critic. Though not appearing on a regular basis, Rusli tends to give an insightful personal opinion on, and often austere criticism of, Bollywood films. Rusli’s writings contains this evidence of cultural resistance and parochial display of Malay nationalism as seen in the following excerpt,

Indian films have a pretty bad name among the more “discerning” film fans in Malaysia...This is because of how synonymous Indian movies are with the musicals of Bollywood and Hollywood, the mere mention of me going to see an Indian film (especially if it’s a Hindi movie) will usually be greeted with yelps of disbelief from friends who already know me for the movie geek that I am.



*Free Malaysia Today* on the other hand, like *The Star* has a column devoted to Indian issues, called “India Monitor” and includes discussions about films, and is written by an Indian journalist Gautham Bhaskaran who is also a film critic. As Coomi Kapoor does with her column in *The Star*, ‘India Monitor’ occasionally includes discussions of Bollywood films. Moreover, Gautham is also given space in the leisure and feature sections of the newspaper to explore Bollywood further.

In analysing the Bollywood writers of major newspapers, both print and online, certain key elements are visible. Regular columns and serious reviews on films are only dealt with by Malaysian Indians in major English dailies. The film reviews in general give a detailed analysis of a film by offering the key attributes of it that could provide the readers with a general impression about the film. Being an Indian film, the authenticity of such columns falls at the authors; so when Indians write on an Indian film, an innate familiarity and affinity is attached to their personal experience of watching those films and this would give authenticity to the report. Apart from this, it is interesting to see a regular column on petty star gossips exclusively for Bollywood, when many other foreign language films compete in the Malaysian media scene. Hence Bollywood gets a very prominent place among other film industries in the national newspapers.

Film reviews and these regular columns are not the only type of news on Bollywood found in the Malaysian media. A significant amount of Bollywood discourses are either star gossips or straight news which are written irrespective of ethnic boundaries. Here, these discourses are classified into sections based on the different ways that Bollywood is represented in the media.

### **4.3 Star Gossip - the Earlier Attempt to Discuss Bollywood**

Before 2000, there was a visibly overpowering presence of star gossip, precisely on the glamorous beauty queens of Bollywood. The articles more or less exemplify the life and style of Bollywood actresses with titles like ‘Karisma, Kapoor Generation’ (Manah, 1998), ‘Sonali Bendre on Grip with Bollywood’ (‘Sonali Bendre’, 1999), ‘Poonam Shining Star for the Movie’ (‘Bintang Poonam’, 1998) to name a few, a trend which continues to the present with columns like ‘Masala Mix’ in

the *New Strait Times*. The newspaper featuring the most coverage on Bollywood news before 2000 is *Utusan Malaysia*, the Malay language newspaper. It is interesting to note that these personality stories were not published prior to the release of their film or as part of any special film event. Instead the articles focus more on the personal lives, marital details and family rather than offering a critical look at the characters they played. For instance, a profile story on Poonam Dhillon goes like this,

She is often the subject of gossip magazines for her love affair with Kumar Gaurav. But they are just good friends who have acted together [...] Poonam took the decision to retreat from the world of acting after her marriage to Ashok Thakeria in the early 90s [...] She built a house that comes with a design appropriate for filming Bollywood films. (Translated from Malay) (“Poonam bintang”, 1998)

This particular piece from *Utusan Malaysia* is a regular column on entertainment, mainly film entertainment that takes the shape of the writer answering questions received by fans. Hence, the article starts with a question “I am interested in Hindi films, particularly films of the 70s and 80s. One of the popular actors of the time was Poonam Dhillon. What can you tell me about her?” In fact, in *Utusan Malaysia*, it is in this form of star story or feature that Bollywood mostly gets mentioned apart from straight news. In 2001, the religious leaders, the Muftis, came out with stark criticism against Bollywood, a unanimous perspective developed after a conference (this will be dealt with in detail in the coming section). A subsequent decline in gossip columns was noticeable in *Utusan Malaysia*, an UMNO owned newspaper. Such a decline in gossip or personality profiles can be taken as a cautious step by the newspaper to calm the criticism of the government. The coming of Bollywood production units to Malaysia for location shooting and other stage performances brought about more discourses connecting Bollywood with Malaysia.

However, personality stories and other gossip columns have not completely vanished; the proof of which is the ‘Masala Mix’ in *The New Strait Times*. But the individual star profiles visible in the late 1990s have transformed into snippets of gossip and film updates. The prevailing interest of fans in the Bollywood film world

is evident from its online presence, especially on social networking sites. The only Facebook community created in Malaysia on Bollywood is called 'Bollywood Malaysia' (Fig. 4.1) which focuses mainly on star news and updates rather than film reviews.



Figure 4.1 – Facebook page on Bollywood

#### 4.4 Bollywood as a Threat

In the previous section, it was mentioned that after 2001 there were a series of discussions on the negative impact of Bollywood and the possible threat it may pose to the Malaysian society, religion and culture. Though it only represents a short period, as far as the linear pattern of changing discourses on Bollywood in Malaysia is concerned, the impact that such a movement created is worth exploring in this investigation of the reception of Bollywood cinema.

The initial reports on the negative impact of Bollywood can be traced back to 2000 in *Utusan Malaysia* which refers to the cultural and religious leaders' request to review the open sky policy of the government that allows foreign channels to air in Malaysia. The article quoted them as placing particular emphasis on the role of Astro, a foreign channel carrier. This is of particular concern as it is through Astro, Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS) and Pay TV Service, that the Indian channels reach the Malaysian mediascape. The article quoted Datuk Dr. Hassan Ahmad, former Chief Director of Dewan Bahasadan Pustaka (DBP), and Chairperson of Gerakan

Mansuhkan PPSMI (GMP) (both advocates of Malay as the official language and medium of learning in education), commenting on this issue:

In the 21st century if the people of this country are not careful they will be re-colonized by the colonial mind... It is not just Hollywood movies that display negative elements, but even the Bollywood and Chinese films (translated news from, “Examine the open skies”, 2000).

Subsequently, starting from 2001, after the conference of the Muftis on February 14, a series of news items began to appear in all the major newspapers regarding the comments made by religious leaders about the negative impact of Bollywood films on the culture and religion of Malaysia. These comments are based on showing the exposed female body, inter-religious marriages and open worship of deities and idols. *The Star* reported that the spokesperson of the conference, Seri Harussani Zakaria, said that the ‘unhealthy values’ displayed in Bollywood films can influence the younger generation and so these films should be shown only once a week. Moreover, it also quoted him claiming that these films contain Hindu beliefs which are contrary to Islam in a Muslim nation (“Reduce airtime for”, 2001). Apparently, similar news items appeared in all major newspapers on the same day. The comments that religious leaders made in 2000 about the open sky policy became clear after the religious conference in 2001.

The following days witnessed the publication of several related news items and comments reviewing and highlighting the Mufti’s comments. These ranged from conflicting comments and opinion from government officials to the decision made by the Censor Board in telecasting Bollywood films through television. The articles create an impression that the government and Ministry of Information are not completely supporting the abolition of Bollywood on Malaysian channels,

Films aired over television in the country are fit for public consumption as they have been vetted by the National Censorship Board. Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi

said television programs and films were also guided by the rating system, which ensures proper viewing for all ages. (“Films aired over”, 2001)

The Information Ministry will not stop the screening of Bollywood films on television. However, Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob said he wanted the Film Censorship Board ‘to play a more active role’ in censoring negative elements from these films. (“No ban on Bollywood”, 2001)

This doesn’t mean that the government turned a blind eye towards the Mufti’s request and comments. *The Star* quoted Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohammad’s decision to conduct a study to determine the relationship between Bollywood films and the crime rate among youth. The report added him saying that such a study will decide whether these films need to be completely banned or partially censored (“Study on Bollywood”, 2001). In the meantime, strict guidelines had been drafted by the Ministry of Information to ensure that television channels adhere to the religious and moral sentiments of the society, particularly in the screening of Bollywood films and video clips of song and dance sequences (Al-Attas and Jaafar, 2001). Though the progress or the result of the study have not been mentioned, newspapers reported a week later that TV3 (a private television station) was cutting down their time slots for Bollywood films in the national interest. The guidelines adopted in 2001 are still in practice, with all the free air television channels giving only a 2-3 hour slot a week for a Bollywood film.

In the wake of the International Indian Film Festival (IIFA) in Malaysia, *Malaysiakini* published an article on the globalization of Bollywood, focusing on its Malaysian connections. Contrary to the earlier comments made by government authorities regarding the influence of Bollywood films in Malaysia, this report quotes the Minister of Tourism Abdul Kadir Sheik Fadzir, stating his views on the popularity of Bollywood films in Malaysia,

Hindi movies give people a world of fantasy. When we watch these for three hours or so, they make us forget what problems we have...the theme of most Indian movies relates to family values. Asians by nature are emotional people. Because of that Indian films have had a tremendous following in Malaysia for a very long time. (Seneviratne, 2002)

A few days before Abd Rahman Koya, Editor of PAS (Parti Islam Semalaysia, the pan Islamic opposition party, which has ruled the state of Kelantan for over two decades) through the same news medium, quite disparagingly criticized Bollywood films and the Malaysian ministry's hidden agenda behind its support of PAS. The Mufti's comments in 2001 expressed a grave outlook on Bollywood as well.

Like cigarette smoking, Bollywood's seduction is penetrating, and cannot be resisted even by the pious despite the obvious degenerative effects it brings ustaz and ustazah (religious teachers), the fully tudung-ed lady and the goatee-bearded religious school graduate with that Islamist smile, all were seduced. (Koya, 2002)

PAS is an Islamic religious party whose main aim is to see Malaysia guided by Islamic legal theory based on the Quran and Shariah Law, which goes against the ruling party's 'Islam Hadhari' (Civilizational Islam), the model of development of Malaysia adopted by Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in 2005. Being a conservative party, PAS has always been opposed to any entertainment media that acts as a demoralizing force. They have also lashed out against UMNO, the ruling party, for collaborating with non-Islamic political parties in their coalition. Quoting Bollywood as holding deep differences with Malay identity and culture, the author, Abd Rahman Koya, Editor of PAS holds the opinion that the ruling parties' interest in these films is mainly for the Malay Malaysian votes among whom the films are popular. Malay fascination with Bollywood is also evident from the publications before 2000 on Bollywood stars, particularly in *Utusan Malaysia*, The UMNO (ruling

party) owned Malay newspaper. The article highlights the political agenda behind propagating Bollywood films by pointing to the presence of political leaders and religious scholars at the IFFA awards in the gambling capital of Malaysia, Genting Highlands.

The religious threat that Bollywood films pose is a matter to be pondered on even if the films are basically for entertainment. Though multi-culturalism can be seen among the artists (with mainstream actors like Shahrukh Khan, Salman Khan and Aamir Khan being Muslim), Bollywood films are largely based on Hindu themes and lifestyle. The religious threat that the Muftis anticipate is possibly from this character of Bollywood, rather than the certain anti-social practices and characteristics mentioned earlier by Koya (2002), as Hollywood films, which are more popular in Malaysia, display even more censorable material.

Though Bollywood was never obscured from Malaysian society, at intervals, Bollywood continued to be banned on religious grounds. As such, many Bollywood and other Indian films have been banned in Malaysia at least for a limited period or released after edits and deletion of scenes. This is evident in films such as; *Bombay* (Sriram & Mani Ratnam, 1995), *Fiza* (Guha & Mohammed, 2000), *My Name is Khan* ((Johar, Khan & Johar, 2010) and *Viswaroopam* (Chandrasahsan, Haasan & Hasaan, 2013). Van der Heide (2002) comments that the British left their legacy not on the film making in Malaysia, but upon the ways in which it can be constrained. The legacy left by the British has been followed by the Malaysian authorities who want to control all forms of entertainment media according to their aspirations and policies (Fuziah Kartini & Raja Ahmad Alauddin, 2003). While explaining film censorship in Malaysia on the grounds of religion and culture, Wan Amizah et al (2009) elaborate on how *Rumah Itu Duniaku* (Cathay-Keris Film Productions & Amin, 1964), was banned for a scene showing the children of a deceased man weeping and wailing next to their father's body. A very ordinary act of the family weeping and wailing over their loved one's death has been considered unreligious on the grounds that in Islamic law the act of wailing over a dead body is prohibited as it is deemed to torment the deceased person. Hence, in a country where religion has control over all laws and regulations, the existence of Bollywood films is an on going discussion.

#### 4.5 Bollywood and Religious Insecurity

In categorizing the negative implications of Bollywood in Malaysia, it is important to look at two main points of concern in the media - religious and social impact. Out of this, religious concern is the most obvious criticism against Bollywood in Malaysia. Being a multi-ethnic country, even after promoting the *1Malaysia* slogan (showing unity), Malaysia still dictates Muslim authority over all other religions as it is the one practiced by the majority. However, there is always an underlying insecurity behind their religious supremacy under the growing power of Chinese and Indians among whom the majority are Christians and Hindus respectively. Christians can practice their religion with limited freedom. There have been restrictions on translating the Bible into Malay, and the Ministry releasing the Bibles or Akitab with the words 'Akitab Berita Baik ini untuk kegunaan penganut agama Kristian sahaja' (The Good News Bible is for the use of Christians only) stamped on the front. ("Questions over", 2011). Moreover, even in the construction of churches, the Malaysian government has made certain restrictions; the churches should look like a factory or ordinary business centre rather than a conventional church.

The Hindu community also equally experience this unfavourable advancement from the Islamic governance of Malaysia. In 2006, many temples across Malaysia were demolished (Kabilan, 2006), and this "unofficial policy of Hindu temple cleansing" (commented by The Hindu Rights Action Force in 2006; as quoted in "Hindu group protests", 2006) continues today.

As explained earlier, the criticisms of Bollywood came from the Mufti leaders who believed that these films carrying Hindu ideologies would harm the Islamic society. Koya, one of the prominent leader of PAS comments that, "It [Bollywood] occupies a special place in almost every Malay home, the urban and the rural citizens, despite the deep differences in the Malaysian identity and culture" (2002). Moreover, films that carried any controversial Islamic theme, have always been banned and criticized in Malaysia, despite how well known and popular the artists are in those films. A recent example would be the backlash against Shah Rukh's *My Name is Khan*, in which he plays a Muslim with Asperger's syndrome, married to a Hindu woman.



Even though films screened in Malaysia undergo strict and regular censorship, it was during the screening of this film on TV3 during Hari Raya (Eid al-Fitr) that controversies arose. The Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM) formed a protest against screening the film on television as the film would confuse Muslims with a message of 'Liberal Islam and religious pluralism' ("Abim selar", 2012). These claims are based on the theme of the film that a Muslim man is marrying a Hindu and giving offerings to non-Muslims, which is against the teachings of the Quran. In a multi-religious nation like Malaysia, a film like *My Name is Khan* can be taken as a framework for the *1Malaysia* concept of the ruling coalition. However, it has been taken in a negative way, solely based on the fact that it was from a Hindu nation.

Moving on to the social impact, the major criticism in later years reflected the influence that Bollywood films have on Malay women. In 2010, *The Star* reported that Welfare, Community Development and Women Affairs Committee chairman, Ashaari Idris, urged the female community to resist their admiration of Bollywood actors. *The Star* report begins like this,

One-night stands between foreign workers who look like famous Bollywood actors and local women here, is on the rise. There are cases of local girls having rendezvous with foreigners whom they had just met, because they looked like Hindi heroes, said State Welfare, Community Development and Women Affairs Committee Chairman, Ashaari Idris yesterday. ("Women told to resist", 2010)

The issue raised by the Women's Affairs Committee can be read as a reaction against many online forums that began to question the admiration of Malay women for Bollywood, and the increasing influence of Bollywood cultural products in Malaysia. One of the blogs which claims to voice the interests and thoughts of Malay women uploaded an opinion piece on the "ugly truth behind Hindi or Bollywood movies". By uploading the video *'Bollywood's Bad Boyz'*, an unauthorized video from YouTube, the article seems to instigate religious sentiments on Malay women who, the article itself admits, are ardent Bollywood fans.

The video that I was talking about claimed that there is an ugly side of the Hindi or Bollywood movies that many are unaware of. Pardon me. I could not really confirm this but the video maker claimed that some Hindi or Bollywood movies gave appalling portrayals and pictures of Islam and Muslims...What about you Malaysian Malay women, some of you have hundreds of Hindi or Bollywood film collections at your homes, so tell me...is it true? ("The ugly truth behind", 2007)

This could also be a strategy to make Bollywood a scapegoat for the negative influence it has on the more vulnerable sections of society. As with women, Malay youth is also a matter of concern when considering Bollywood in Malaysia. The initial remark made by religious leaders in 2001 to review the open sky policy was based on its possible impact on the youth:

The government should be more serious in addressing this problem because the victims of the policy are the younger generation that will lead this country in the future...the form of colonization can be made in various ways, including through screening programs and could influence young people's thoughts and soul (Datuk Dr. Hassan Ahmad, former Chief Director of Dewan Bahasadan Pustaka (DBP), as quoted in "Examine the open skies policy", 2000).

However, even after all this criticism against Bollywood, it was never eliminated from the Malaysian mediascape and society. Immediately after the year of the Muftis' declaration, Malaysia hosted the International Indian Film Academy Awards in 2002, which was celebrated by the same media that carried news on the negative impact of the film industry. When in 2006 Malaysia was about to host the Global Indian Film Awards in Malaysia, the then Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, declared, as quoted in the newspapers that, "Bollywood films are giving

Malaysia a high profile in India and elsewhere and hence profit for Malaysia through tourism” (*Utusan Malaysia*, 8 June 2006). This can be considered as one of the reasons for the influx of Bollywood films in Malaysia even though they are still considered a threat. Through these reports in blogs and newspapers, it is very much evident that though Bollywood is known and well received in Malaysia, there has been a hidden sense of anxiety, at least among some sections of Malaysian society regarding its grave effects on culture and religion. Despite all these concerns, Bollywood still finds an audience and reception in Malaysia. To consider this further, we must turn to its role in Malaysia’s branding strategy.

#### 4.6 Bollywood for Branding

While exploring Bollywood discourses in the popular press and online, after 2000, the most frequent discourses are on the Bollywood film shoots in Malaysia. As a self-promotion, these discourses place Malaysia as a hot spot for film shooting. It is delivered with such an excitement that it shows their pride in choosing Malaysia as one of Bollywood’s film locations. One of the news reports expresses this sentiment,

Bollywood films are in a race to choose this country as their filming location especially for song sequences. The latest, film *Yeh Raaste Hain Pyar Ke* starring Ajay Devgan, Madhuri Dixit and Preity Zinta has also choosen some spots in Kuala Lumpur [...] Early next month another Hindi film, *Ajanabi* starring Karisma Kapoor, Akshay Kumar and Sunny Deol will reach this country for shooting. (Translated news from Malay, “Bollywood semakin”, 2000).

Though celebrating the arrival of Bollywood, these news items are of particular significance to Malaysia, as it holds the possibilities of branding Malaysia not only as a popular film destination, but as a tourist spot. It is very interesting to note that like a review to a film, these location news are written with much detail and background informations. *Utusan Malaysia*, the mouth piece of the ruling coalition BN (Barisan Nasional) and its coalition member UMNO (United Malays National

Organization) publishes news on Bollywood's association with Malaysia quite extensively. In 2000, *Utusan Malaysia* published a news item entitled "Producers interested in Malaysian beauty" (translated from Malay), which seems to be the first of that type of article that looks at the association of Bollywood with Malaysian locations. One of its articles from 2000 looks at the convergence of Bollywood and Malaysia by analysing when and where Bollywood films have been shot. Another article published in the same year goes like this,

Their activities are not only a local audience who love Bollywood movies but attract foreign tourists, including delegates from East Asia who happened to visit the Lang Square. ("Pelakon popular Bollywood", 2000)

Bollywood's shooting of films in Malaysia started in 2000 with the film *Aaghaaz* (Ramanaidu & Ishwar, 2000) and *One 2 Ka 4* (Ahmed & Nair) later the same year ("Bollywood semakin", 2000). After 2000, from the star gossip, newspapers shifted their focus towards linking Bollywood with Malaysia, as more and more films and stage shows began to choose Malaysia as their destination. From early 2000 up until today, the popular press has been very keen to discuss Bollywood films shot in Malaysia and has urged the Malaysian government to invite Bollywood filmmakers to Malaysia in order to boost tourism. The news in *The Edge*, a financial newspaper illuminates this,

The idea behind getting Indian filmmakers to shoot films in Malaysia is also aimed at attracting Indian tourism traffic. Films shot at a particular destination with popular movie stars, invariably, lead to a surge in tourist traffic. This was evident in the case of Malaysia, which noticed a sharp rise in inbound Indian tourist traffic after the release of the Shahrukh Khan film *Don* which was extensively shot in Malaysia. ("Pinewood Iskandar", 2013)

These media reports give a general impression of the identity of Bollywood as a source of promotion for Malaysian tourism. Even the government backed newspaper, *Utusan Malaysia*, as explained earlier, reflects the curiosity and enthusiasm of Malaysia for being a hot spot for Bollywood film shoots. Apart from branding Malaysia, tying Bollywood with Malaysia has financial gains for the country in three ways - Box office receipts, location shooting incentives and tourism.

There have been a series of steps taken by Malaysian officials to make this happen. Film Hosting Sdn Bhd was established in 2003 to assist and provide services for foreign productions in Malaysia. They are also responsible for speeding up the process of permits provided by the Central Agency for the Application for Filming and Performance by Foreign Artists (PUSPAL) to shoot in Malaysia. Even Tourism Malaysia launched a campaign based on Bollywood (Fig. 4.2) which shows Malaysia as a destination to fulfil one's dreams. In a Bollywood style song sequence, the campaign covers the major attractions of Malaysia. Making Malaysia a dream destination, the campaign starts with an imaginary Bollywood couple in Malaysia laughing over an article in a magazine reporting their break-up. Filmed to the music of a romantic Bollywood song, in scenes from Kuala Lumpur, to Lankawi, Taipin Lake Gardens and Bako National Park, the intensity of their relationship is juxtaposed against the backdrop of the scenic beauty of Malaysia. At the end, the couple is in the airport, which shows them as an aged couple. The scene is supposed to represent their visit after so many years, but with the same love in their hearts that they had as a younger couple. Here Malaysia stands as their dream destination for celebrating their love and marital bliss even after many years. The campaign is of the high quality usually given to feature films and is shot in dream-like locations, making the country not only a place for travellers to visit, but showing the potential of Malaysia as a location for film making by providing interesting landscapes and lush scenery.

With an effort not to limit Malaysia as being just a location for film making, the Iskandar Malaysia development region in the state of Johor built a full-fledged studio in association with Pinewood International Studios of England. As part of the promotional activity for this, Pinewood attended the FICCI Global Convention in Mumbai with *Bernama news* (2013), the major news network (which is syndicated in all

other newspapers) noting that they staged road shows to attract Bollywood filmmakers. As a complement to the deal, FINAS (National Film Development Cooperation Malaysia) has come up with an ambitious and attractive offer of 30% incentives for foreign productions that qualify for the minimum spending criteria of \$1.6 million with the intention of attracting foreign filmmakers to use Malaysia as a post-production location as well. This series of official steps to promote Malaysia coincides with the reception of Bollywood that has the potential to showcase the Malaysian location to not only Indians, but a global world with a globalized Bollywood.



Figure 4.2 - Screenshots from the Tourism Malaysia Campaign

However, unlike the British Tourism Authority (BTA), who have successfully introduced a Bollywood map to guide tourists to the places where Bollywood films have been shot (Wynne Jones, 2007), Malaysian official tourism websites and centres have not yet come up with any Bollywood maps, possibly because along with promoting the location spots, it would also give ample coverage to Bollywood films. Therefore, while looking for Bollywood destinations on Malaysian websites, both official and unofficial, one hardly ever finds clear details of where and which films have been shot in Malaysia, though it would be the most practical way to promote these locations.

Regardless of the date of publication, news items on Bollywood filming in Malaysia always carry the declaration and support from the Malaysian government or other responsible official authorities. The news reports from two newspapers show the delight and anxiety of the Malaysian government on the arrival of a Bollywood production unit to shoot in two different States.

Ahmad (Chief Minister of Terengganu) said the state government is excited that the Bollywood producer has selected Terengganu to shoot its movie, as this could have a positive impact for the state since there is a host of Hindi movie buffs all over the globe [...] our aspiration is to have Bollywood on our soil. (Murali, 2010)

Bollywood is coming to Sarawak and the state government is thrilled to bits [...] Sarawak Assistant Minister for Infrastructure Development and Communications Lee Kim Shin said the state government welcomed the venture and hoped the film would attract the attention of Indian tourists. (“Bollywood goes to Sarawak”, 2006)

News on Bollywood location shoots so far have covered and connected nearly all the states in Malaysia;

Sarawak has it all, Bollywood says (“Sarawak has it all”, 2012)

Bollywood reality show in Taman Negara (“Bollywood reality show”, 2009)

Bollywood bigwigs will be in Terengganu to film movie (Murali, 2010)

Bollywood popular actress in Langkawi (“Pelakon popular Bollywood”, 2000)

Malaysian authorities’ boost for tourism was evident when the Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan was knighted with the ‘Datuk’ title in 2008. According to all the news reports, it was an ambitious step taken by government officials in Malacca to attract tourists as well as more Bollywood location work in Malaysia. Though the identity and the privilege enjoyed by Shah Rukh Khan will be analysed in one of the succeeding chapters, it could be cited here, that in 2011, the Malacca prison was opened for the shooting of his film, *Don 2* (Khan, Akhtar, Sidhwani & Akhtar, 2011). Though the Indian newspapers covered this as a major story, Malaysian newspapers tried to bury it. The benefit or the result of such an association is discussed through newspapers and other online forums. *People Daily Online* in 2006 quoted the then Deputy Prime Minister, Najib bin Tun Abdul Razak’s (now the Prime Minister) opinion that Indian films have made Malaysian scenes and landmarks famous and have attracted Indian visitors to Malaysia. The Ministry of Tourism (Malaysia) International Marketing Director Zulkifly Md said that, “Malaysia is aiming to attract 780,000 Indians to visit the country in the 2013-2014 fiscal years.” (“Malaysia eyes 780,000 tourists”, 2013).

As we saw in the earlier section, PAS criticized the ruling coalition Barisan National’s political affiliation with Bollywood in Malaysia. This cannot be discredited as a simple part of the opposition’s rivalry against the ruling party. The most popular genre of earlier Malay film was ‘pontianak’ or horror films. However, these were banned in the 1980s as propagating anti-Islamic ideologies. Tun Dr. Mahathir was the main proponent of such a move, and it was after he stepped down as Prime Minister in 2003, that these Pontianak films re-emerged in Malaysia. It was also during Mahathir’s rule that Bollywood reached Malaysia as entertainment shows in the late 1990s Bollywood during that time was largely Hinduism-based and Indian based stories bonded deeply with Indian tradition and culture. Mahathir’s association with



Shah Rukh Khan (which is dealt in detail in Chapter 6) also speaks about the religious link between Malaysia and Bollywood, and how he has been used to promote tourism.

The political agenda behind the reception of Bollywood is evident from when the Global Indian Film Awards (2006) were held in Malaysia. These were sponsored by Malaysian Tourism with the patronage of Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, wife of the then Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister. The event had many related events, one of which was a football match between Bollywood actors and Malaysian ministers including the Prime Minister, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. The government, who instituted policies to limit Bollywood films in 2001, were thus seen to be rubbing elbows with members of the Bollywood film community.

An unofficial website on Malaysian tourism has posted an article, which originally appeared in an Indian open database on Bollywood tourism, and in which it is mentioned that the Malaysian government has spent almost \$2.7 million to host the Global Indian Film Awards, 2006, to promote the sales of Malaysian locations for filming ("Bollywood Tourism", 2009). Though the article cannot be substantiated, it can be correlated to the news that came out in an Indian newspaper about the event. According to the report in the *Times of India*, Malaysia won out by beating six other countries who participated in the bidding and the memorandum was signed in the presence of Rosmah Mansor, wife of then Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister and Malaysian Minister of Tourism Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor ("Malaysia to host", 2006). The article also quoted both of them as commenting that this was a step to promote their country on the global tourism map.

...with a global reach of over 2.6 billion television viewers, the event would put Malaysia on the map as one of the world's most favoured entertainment destinations in the world. We need to find new and creative ways of marketing Malaysia so as to raise our profile as a major tourist destination...one of the ways to do this is to bring in celebrities from all over the world to experience Malaysia, be it for work or for leisure. (Mansor, R 2006)

A news report in *Times of India* (an Indian newspaper) clearly points towards the fact that winning a bid requires a considerable financial transaction. The Malaysian media didn't cover this bid story, but kept it as a privilege that Bollywood chose Malaysia. Moreover, representatives from Pinewood Iskandar Malaysia Studios visited Mumbai on March 2013. Their aim was to promote the new studio complex of Malaysia, but also to attract Indian as well as other international tourists. *The Edge* claims that-

Films shot at a particular destination with popular movie stars, invariably, lead to a surge in tourist traffic from the public. This was evident in the case of Malaysia who noticed a sharp rise in inbound Indian tourist traffic after the release of the Shahrukh Khan film *Don* which was shot extensively in Malaysia. ("Pinewood Iskandar", 2013)

Meanwhile the same news article reported that Sarawak officials invited a number of Indian filmmakers to the first ASEAN International Film Festival and Awards Ceremony (AIFFA) in Kuching (the state capital of Sarawak), which was held on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March. Backed by the Sarawak Tourism Ministry, this event was launched with the hope of getting filmmakers to choose Malaysia as their location for filming, this event proved successful as, by the end of the festival, four contracts for shooting in Malaysia had been signed, one of which was a Bollywood production ("Bollywood producers", 2013).

Except for a few films like the *Don: The Chase Begins Again* and its sequel, *Don 2: The King is Back* and *Yaadein*, Malaysian locations have been used only for the song and dance sequences which have no relevance to the real plot of the film. However, such scenes are used to spark interest among tourists who are not familiar with the locations. For those who are already familiar with the spots they will visit them with a memory of the film.

#### **4.7 Bollywood Performances**

A significant amount of discussions on Bollywood in the Malaysian media is on the cultural intermediaries of Bollywood like Bollywood dance

shows, award nights, film premiers and Bollywood dance schools. Bollywood entertainment shows are the prime promotional activity of the Bollywood film industry, and this is represented in various forms as Bollywood award nights, Bollywood dance nights, film premiers etc. From the news reports it is evident that as early as 1997 Malaysia became the venue for many Bollywood dance and music shows. This period has also seen the evolution of Shah Rukh Khan as a consistent performer in Malaysia through his shows like *Shabruksh-Karisma Live in Concert*, the *Awesome Foursome Concert*, the *Wanted in Live Concert* in 2000 and a charity concert to raise funds for His Excellency The Governor of Penang's Trust Fund the same year.

The first ever celebrated Bollywood show in Malaysian history is the Third International Indian Film Academy Awards which were held in 2002 in Genting Highlands. Almost all the major newspapers carried the story for two days as it was the first time the foreign film industry had chosen Malaysia for its prestigious award night. The show was hosted with the attendance of several ruling politicians and the Honourable Minister of Tourism (Malaysia), Dato Paduka, delivering the welcome speech. An excerpt from Dato Paduka's speech goes like this -

There is a very important reason why India is special to us [...] it has historical and cultural ties going back 1000 years with Malaysia [...] Malaysia's 45 years of independence has not been a bed of red roses. We have had our very dark days...but during this time, there is one country that stood by us through thick and thin and though at times against their own interests, thank you India. (Transcribed from the official video of IIFA, 2002).

This particular event had significance to the meaning of Bollywood as it was only a year before this event that the Muftis came forward with harsh criticisms of Bollywood for their threat to Islam. As the event was co-sponsored by Tourism Malaysia, the political proponents of Bollywood hint that the ruling

political party's gradual move was towards making Bollywood its branding tool. An award night like the IFFA Awards, which is considered India's Oscars, is a rare opportunity for Malaysia to showcase their film facility to the rest of the world. Moreover, being listed after London and Sun City, South Africa, for holding the prestigious IIFA, Malaysia's Genting Highlands holds the possibility of highlighting Malaysia on an international level. This political favouritism for Bollywood is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 6.

As recently mentioned, Malaysia has hosted many Bollywood dance shows, and there has been an overwhelming response on the part of audiences for these shows. The first most celebrated Bollywood dance event in Malaysia was *The Merchants of Bollywood* in 2009 (Fig. 4.3). Though the event featured none of the Bollywood stars except for the famous choreographer of Bollywood, Vaibhavi Merchant on whose personal and professional life the show was based, it was publicized in major Malaysian newspapers quite extensively. Featuring photographs, and news, *Utusan Malaysia* covered this event with backstage interviews as well as fashion features. (Faizal, 2009, p. 1-3(Mega)). The following year the Bollywood dance event returned to Malaysia and was televised on the Indian television channel, Zee Television through Astro Network in Malaysia. The event carried song and dance performances by Zee television artists familiar only for those who follow Zee programs. It is evident that this event was largely for the Indian diaspora. However, a news item in *The Star*, the following day by a non-Malaysian Indian journalist quite elaborately describes the event and mentions each artist in attendance.



Figure 4.3 – Poster of ‘Merchants of Bollywood’

The highlight of the show as well as the audience's favourites were Jai and Shakti, whose grace, style and coordination of movements not only impressed the crowd but also left them wanting more... Indian soap opera's leading couple Archana and Manav took the audience by surprise with their energetic dance routine. (Aziz, 2010). The poster of the event throws light on the fact that the main sponsor Tourism Malaysia wishes to connect this event to the branding of Malaysia through Bollywood.

In 2012, Zee Television organized yet another Dance Night, *Zee Bollywood Nite*, led by the Bollywood fashion queen Malaika Arora Khan. *The News Strait Times* quoted this as a 'return of Zee Bollywood Night with a bang' ('Homage to Bollywood', 2012). It is quite surprising to note that while Bollywood films are at times being criticised for their seductive qualities, they are at the same time being lauded for their glamorous girls in 'sexy and revealing clothes' (Majid, 2012). It is interesting to note that the news reports in *The Star* and *New Strait Times* are written mainly by Malay writers. This gives the Bollywood event a popular entertainment tag in Malaysia, where the text is not only enjoyed by the Indian diaspora, but a larger section of the non-diasporic population. It also shows the reader's interest towards the glitz and glamour of these Bollywood shows. No wonder that Malaysia has numerous Bollywood dance schools and academies that specialize in Bollywood dance along with other dance forms from India (Fig. 4.4). A general search on the internet of Bollywood in Malaysia will lead to many results for Bollywood dance schools, dance shows and casual facts and information on Bollywood dance. Saroj Khan, Bollywood's senior choreographer also set up a dance academy in partnership with the Malaysian company Pen 'N' Camera Sdn Bhd in 2010 (*The Star*, 9 august 2010).

In the award nights and in the general discussion of the dance shows, there is a significant Malay presence in the news reports, though they are completely lacking when considering their presence in dance schools. All of these dance schools are founded by Malaysian Indians and the performances of these dance schools and their websites gives the impression that it is exclusively an Indian domain. On the other hand, the inclusiveness of these dance schools

is visible from their tagline or preview of their dance school, as they try to relate Bollywood dance to exercise and fitness, in order to erase any cultural specialities (Fig. 4.4).

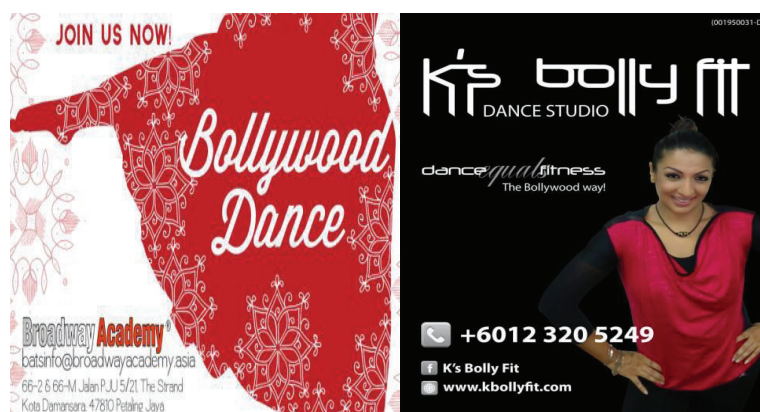


Figure 4.4 – Brochures of Bollywood dance schools in Malaysia

However, the online discussion forums and blogs that carry Bollywood discourses are often led by the Malay community. Bollywood dinners have been a major topic of online discussions, giving elaborate plans and ways to prepare for the 'Indian themed dinner party with lots of Bollywood song and dance' ("Dinner Party Theme", 2012). Moreover a casual search on YouTube will give a list of amateur videos posted by individuals showing Malay as well as Indians dancing to the tune of Bollywood songs, either at some dinner party wedding or other celebration. This shows that they enjoy Bollywood dance and songs in their own manner and at their private Bollywood themed dinner parties and gatherings. The impact of Bollywood song and dance among Malaysians and the fondness irrespective of language or class is evident in a viral clip that shows the Malaysian Prime Minister's wife, Rosmah Binti Mansor, with a group, dancing to the tune of famous Bollywood numbers. This site carries a minimum of 100 comments and about 50,000 views. These performances often give emphasis to the costumes which are colourful and glittering, accompanied by slow-paced steps and elaborate expressions, a reminder of Malay traditional dances such as Asli and Joget.

Though the popularity of Bollywood dance across the world has been the subject of major academic research (Eg. Gopal and Moorti, 2008; Kao and Rozario, 2008) most of these studies define this as the diasporic cultural assimilation and creation of an imagined space (Appadurai, 1990), thereby creating a communal commonality. To some extent this is true in Malaysia as most of the dance schools and fitness clubs are run by Indians. This is how song and dance transforms into a cultural commodity in various ways as it crosses borders. Gopal and Moorti called this ‘vernacular modernities’ (2008, p. 43), where these song and dance performances and images articulate according to the concerns of the local reception sites. Here the dance is not imbibed as such by this community, but it is ‘malaynised’ to fit their performance within the boundary created by their own traditional art forms such as Asli, Inang and Joget.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

The analysis adopts a linear arrangement of specific themes taken from Bollywood discourses, starting with celebrity gossip and arriving at the Bollywood cultural intermediaries like dance shows and award nights. Bollywood has come far in Malaysia, crossing different paths of publicity, propaganda and branding, to newer levels of revenue generation through mutual cooperation. Identifying and analysing Bollywood conversations in newspapers and online forums serves two purposes. While it provides a clear idea on what has been discussed on Bollywood in Malaysia, it also reveals the missing link in these discourses as it compares to global reception. This is of particular significance as it exposes the specific aesthetics behind the reception of Bollywood in Malaysia, which go beyond a diasporic appeal. The large amount of Bollywood discourses found in Malaysian media made it possible for this thesis to categorize the news into several thematic categories. Though these are complementary and conflicting discourses on the various aspects of Bollywood, the range of these discourses in the Malaysian media is enough to make Malaysia a distinctive reception site for Bollywood.

While this chapter categorized and analysed Bollywood discourses, magazines have been conspicuously left out. The reason for this is that the initial search for Bollywood discourses started with Tamil film magazines like *Silver Screen* and *Cinefashion*, but these magazines are entirely written in the Tamil language and only cover news on the Tamil film industry, and are highly polarized catering to a Tamilians in Malaysia. The focus was then shifted to the other language magazines, but it was found that there are no local film magazines in either the Chinese or Malay language. This again shifted the focus to lifestyle magazines in Malaysia. As far as the Chinese language magazines are concerned, they are a mixture of Chinese and western fashion and lifestyle featuring Chinese models. On the other hand, there are many Malay language lifestyle magazines like *Wanita*, *Rapi*, *Dara* and *Nur* that sporadically refer to Bollywood films mainly for fashion or party suggestions. From taking a comprehensive look at these, the conclusion is reached that the Malay community has an affinity towards Bollywood that is missing among the Chinese community.

There is a significant decline in the presence of Bollywood related fashion trends that used to be found in Malay magazines in the past few years. This can be seen as related to a conservative Malay nation attempting to ground its roots in the Islamic way of life and living. This is also visible in the release of new Malay women's magazines like *Hijabista* (on hijab/headscarf fashions) and *Muslimah*, a teenage magazine that talks about the Muslim way of dressing in a cosmopolitan society. The arch criticisms by the Muftis and the religious groups fail as more and more foreign-educated Malaysian youth and the economically empowered middle class strive and emerge in the Malaysian mainstream social life. The ideas of freedom to entertain, and conduct business in the post globalised era are widely spreading among the Malaysian population in spite of the religious beliefs imposed upon the Malay nationalism. Moreover, newspaper data shows the shifting attitudes towards Bollywood and the politics behind the reception of Bollywood in Malaysia. Undoubtedly the mass media analysis clearly reveals that as a nation aiming towards growth and well-being, the government of Malaysia is very keen to utilize the economic and the global markets behind



the growing Bollywood popularity to their advantage. The Malaysian government is clearly eager to tap into Bollywood in order to develop infrastructure in film, tourism, aviation, hospitality and retail markets. While analysing the mass media responses of two decades for this research study, it is obvious to the Malaysian government that it is futile to ban a billion dollar entertainment industry or a cultural product in the age of digitalization, satellite streaming, and the internet.

Though the reviews and the regular columns hint at the dominance of the Indian diaspora, the other news sources shows the multi-ethnic presence in the reception of Bollywood, mainly the Malay community, not only based on the authors but to whom these discourses are addressed (in the case of discourses on Bollywood as a threat). However, the presence of the Chinese community is least felt in these discussions, whether it is about film or other cultural products such as Bollywood dance or entertainment shows. The film reviews are written mainly by Malaysian Indian writers thereby giving an impression of an authority and authenticity over Indian films. However this could be viewed from a different perspective when considering the discourses on Bollywood as a threat. If Indians review a Bollywood film, it creates the impression that it is addressed to the diaspora, which in turn makes it look as if the text is appealing only to the diaspora. The declining amount of stories on stars and gossip in Malay newspapers and magazines also shows a kind of unofficial departure from showing an outright appraisal for Bollywood in public. This could be also seen in the way this community enjoys Bollywood dance, which was mentioned previously. A similar case is with the screening of Bollywood films on television; while in public channels its telecast time is reduced to three hours, there is an increasing number of exclusive Bollywood channels in the Malaysian television scene, making the scenario contradictory.

This confusion is enhanced by the conflicting ideologies relating to Bollywood in the discourses. At one juncture, newspapers gave preference to Bollywood profile stories and the personal lives of the stars, while once Bollywood began to discover Malaysia for location shoots, the newspapers shifted their focus to Bollywood's association with Malaysia for production. The

growing popularity of these films was evident in the proclamation of the Muftis to ban Bollywood films in Malaysia because of the impact they have on Malaysian culture and religion. However this again takes the analysis to another level of consideration as the Muftis' comments strike more at their concern for religion, as Bollywood films come from a Hindu majority country, and often showcase Hindu rituals and customs. However, when the Mufti's proclamation created controversy in Malaysia, the government came up with some initial regulations, and the action for banning Bollywood films never materialized. Though the time slots dedicated for Bollywood films have been considerably reduced to 3 hours a week on public channels. Bollywood films continue to reach Malaysian cinemas regularly. Paradoxically, only a year after this controversy, Malaysia enviously became the host of the International Indian Film Festival. Malaysia quickly became the venue for many more events which were welcomed by the Malaysian political authority, and most of these shows have been co-sponsored or supported by Tourism Malaysia. In the wake of the Global Indian Film Awards, the then Prime Minister, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's comment that Bollywood boosted the tourism of Malaysia through its films, highlights the previously mentioned assertion. If Bollywood was really a threat, why isn't everything related to Bollywood banned or restricted? Moreover, when Malaysia developed its first full-fledged film studio, the authorities went to Mumbai (the Bollywood city) to publicize and invite the Indian film people to consider Malaysia not only for production, but their post-production activities as well. These two main conflicting ideologies or representations of threat and branding will be analysed in the succeeding chapters.

## Chapter 5

# **Perils of Bollywood: Islam, Morality and Bollywood in Malaysia**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter I looked into the sites of Bollywood discourses and the factors based on which Bollywood is discussed in the Malaysian media. While evaluating the different sets of Bollywood discourses then, I briefly mentioned the concept of threat associated with Bollywood in Malaysia. This will be explored in more detail here, as it is a major dimension in the reception of Bollywood in Malaysia. Religious leaders have come out with staunch criticism against Bollywood for its negative impact on Malaysian society. Moreover, many films have been banned in Malaysia based on religious sentiments. Hence, this chapter looks into the negative aspects of Bollywood in Malaysia, taking into consideration the Islamic leaders' attitude towards Bollywood and the Malaysian governments system that bans many films (including Bollywood) on the grounds of religious sentiments and morality. This necessitates further research to look into the particular religious, political and historical context in Malaysia.

Before moving on to Bollywood, the chapter discusses the religious and political situation in Malaysia, and the relationship between Islam and popular culture. Hence, the first two sections deal with politics, Islam and popular culture in Malaysia followed by a brief discussion on the initial criticism against Bollywood such as the religious leaders' attitude towards Bollywood in 2001. This is followed by a general discussion on the popular Bollywood films and their specific features that have made these films popular and at the same time a threat to their society. This also looks at the relationship between political decision and Islamic ideologies that resulted in the prohibition of many of the social and cultural performances in Malaysia. Detailed case studies on banned films

follow this section. Finally, a small section looks into how the criticism against Bollywood has taken a political face when the two major political groups in Malaysia used the same matter to confront each other.

## **5.2 Politics and Islam in Malaysia**

Though Malaysia is a multi-racial country, it is predominantly a Muslim nation with Islam as its official religion. Article 3 of the Constitution of Malaysia establishes Islam as the Religion of the Federation. As such increasing power is given to the religious institutions along with pro-Islamic decisions. Article 160 of the constitution defines 'Malays' as Muslims and states that they must surrender their title of ethnicity if he/she is a non-Muslim. Hence, a deliberate differentiation and categorizing of citizens is evident in Malaysia based on ethnicity, often causing extreme outbursts on many occasions when it comes to the minority status of Chinese Christians, Buddhists and Indian Hindus. This section seeks to analyse the attitude of politicians and religious leaders towards the different religions in Malaysia, and how this gets echoed in the political decisions not only on diplomatic issues but also in religious and cultural matters. As a Muslim state, the status of the minority ethnic groups like Chinese and Indians is also a matter of concern which is indirectly essential in analysing the status of Bollywood films in Malaysia as far as this research is concerned. Such an analysis arises as Bollywood is essentially a cultural product from India, a Hindu nation.

In exploring the religious identity of Malaysia, Indians play a crucial role. Indian traders introduced the religion of Islam to what is now Malaysian in the 12<sup>th</sup> century in Kedah, which until then was a Hindu empire. The spread of Islam in Malaysia was not a planned Islamic missionary activity, but a gradual influx of Islamic influence from Indian traders who reached the Malaccan straits and Kedah, the major port areas. The descendent of the first king of Langkasuka (now Kedah) Merong Mahawangsa, Phra Ong Mahawangsa became the first King to convert to Islam changing his name to Sultan Mudzafar Shah I (Winstedt, 1933). It was the island and coastal regions that were heavily influenced by Islam as it was traders (for whom the connection is more with the coastal

regions rather than the mainland) who brought this initial wave of Islamization; Indian traders were mainly from Gujarat and Bengal (coastal regions of India) who were early converts to Islam. Similarly, Melaka also evolved as an Islamic Sultanate with signs of Hinduism still evident there. While the initial conversion was the result of the affluent sections of society, including the rulers and kings, it soon began to influence the common people (Winstedt, 1933).

An Islamic awakening is as early as the pre-independence period through the activities of political groups and Islamic youth movements. During the colonial period though, people were never restricted in practising their religion on a personal and individual level, and the Sultan was never allowed to make political decisions based on Islamic beliefs. It was only after independence in 1957 that the Shariah supporters could finally see their aspirations turn to reality. A deliberate Islamic revival or Dakwah movement began in the 1970's particularly with the political activities of Islamic Youth movements. There was a drastic restructuring of Malaysian society with the establishment of the Islamic Universities, Islamic Bank, the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization and Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (IKIM) reflecting the institutionalization of the Dakwah movement. Islamization was also visible in social life, with women increasingly following the Islamic dress code and rules of etiquette for modest dress, covering the whole body except the face, wrist and feet and limitation in the free intermingling between the opposite sex, along with the use of Islamic greetings such as 'Assalamu alaikum' (Rahman & Nurullah, 2012).

As far as the religious decisions and political rulings are concerned, several names remain popular and prominent - UMNO, PAS and ABIM. Several political and religious groups had initiated Islamization in Malaysia even before independence, the major one among them being the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) and Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), both started with the aim of establishing an Islamic State or a society guided by the principles of Islam as a way of life. ABIM consisted primarily of university students and young professionals, thereby making it an educational association. Though

they claim to be moderate, their basic demand of making Malaysia an Islamic state is based on Shari'ah law and therefore makes this claim ambiguous.

The UMNO (United Malays National Organization) was formed in 1946 as a result of a series of Malay congresses held when Britain was still colonizing Malaysia. Though UMNO claimed to be the pro-Malay party, under colonial rule they were not in a position to take a rigid stand on religion as the colonizers wanted them to take a secular one (Liow, 2009). This vested them with the image of being a moderate or a secular political party. The ruling coalition, post-independence was *Alliance* (succeeded by *Barisan Nasional* in 1973) consisting of UMNO, MCA (Malaysian Chinese Association), and MIC (Malaysian Indian Congress), hence, a union of all major ethnic groups. Meanwhile, PAS emerged as a strong opposition along with ABIM (but ABIM did not emerge as a political party, but remained as a youth association).

The background of Malaysian political parties is touched on briefly here to suggest that whether it is ruling or opposition parties, they share a similar basic ideology of Islamic Malaysia. This perception is important considering the ban on films and other entertainment forms, because in most cases, the decisions are made with no objection from the opposition group, though in some instances, the opposition has raised their voice against popular culture.

UMNO is considered a nationalist, moderate and conservative Islamist Party based on Mahathir's 'Asian Values'. In 2004, the then Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi introduced a list of values or approaches called 'Islam Hadhari' for a 'progressive' and 'forward-looking' Muslim population (As quoted in Badawi, 2006, p.1). The Principles of Islam Hadhari include faith and piety in Allah, free and independent people, cultural and moral integrity etc. Hence, the religious beliefs of Malays is held high through this, though it never states that Malaysia is an Islamic nation. This moderate approach has evoked criticism from society with some claiming that it misled the people because of its title consisting of 'Islam' and some consider Hadhari as a watered-down version of the Quran teachings (Sani, 2010). Though UMNO and PAS belong to two separate political coalitions, their ideology seems to overlap in their

pursuit for an Islamic state and Islamic policies. Dijk (2009) states that while PAS has an obvious image of an Islamic Political Party, UMNO is presented as a secular party. However, when it comes to their policies, they overlap in many ways in their run to make Malaysia an Islamic state, thereby providing a minority status to the other ethnicities. ABIM as well as PAS repackaged their ideology from a “party of Allah” to “progress of Islam” in order to give an accommodating and moderate face to their Islamic beliefs (Hussein, 2002). Although they claim that they are moderate in their approach, they were strongly arguing for an Islamic nation. Anwar Ibrahim, the current leader of the opposition coalition (Pakatan Rakyat) was the founder and leader of ABIM. He joined UMNO after leaving ABIM in 1982, which came as a surprise to both PAS and ABIM (Liow, 2009). However, ABIM took this move as a step towards Islam and a way to pressure UMNO to take pro-Islamic action. It was Anwar who changed the national language from Bahasa Malaysia to Bahasa Melayu along with many other pro-Malay initiatives and with the complete support of Mahathir. Until 1997 when the relationship between them began to deteriorate, Barisan Nasional had made many pro-Islam moves considering ABIM’s demand, except for the constitution and legal establishment of Malaysia as an Islamic State. However, they did make many pro-Islamic decision and policies in Kelantan and Terengganu including the enforcement on wearing a tudung (head scarf), separating men and women in supermarkets, public transport and even restricting unisex shops (Dijk, 2009). PAS even passed the Kelantan Syariah Criminal Enactment Bill in 1993 (the postulates of which are derived from Islamic legal views) and Syarian Criminal Enactment Bill (based on Hudud) in Terengganu in 2002. However, the Federal Government gave a negative vote and ultimately the Bills never turned into an Act.

A political bipolarization started with the arrest of Anwar Ibrahim in 1998 and in the subsequent years witnessed the formation of a strong opposition coalition, Pakatan Rakyat with Anwar as its leader. Islam Hadhari was devised by UMNO as an answer or alternative to ABIM and PAS’s demand of an Islamic State in their run for the 2004 General election. Though PAS is an Islamic Party since its formation, and the coalition that it belongs to is headed by Anwar Ibrahim, the “brain child” of Islamization of

Malaysia, their agenda is to make Malaysia an Islamic state with little reference to other religions or their practices. However, PAS never took an adverse stance against the non-Malay races (paradoxically claiming for an Islamic State based on Shari'ah law), but BN unleashed many direct attacks on non-Malays and their religious freedom. The difference of ideologies between these political entities is obvious here. When the rift between Anwar and UMNO began to widen, the opposition coalition Pakatan Rakyat became more accommodative (with their outward support for non-Malays and their freedom), while on the other side UMNO (with its coalition BN) became more conservative and parochial.

As Weiss (2004) points out, Malaysia has been earlier viewed as a moderate Muslim State, but the Islamisation race between PAS and UMNO led to a series of Islamic policies to be introduced, thereby worsening the ideological polarization and segmentation. The political ideologies of the ruling and opposition parties are continuously altered where each of them position their stand propagating Islamic ideology. UMNO Prime Minister, Mohamad bin Mahathir, who is credited with modernizing the Malaysian economy, took office in 1981, his primary goal was to defeat the radical PAS (Miller, 2004). For that he embraced Islamic themes and policies, and even was successful in taking Anwar Ibrahim into confidence and made his Deputy Prime minister, who indeed the brain behind Islamization in Malaysia. As such while UMNO blurred its secular identity to get public recognition and acceptance, PAS called for the implementation of Shariah laws in to outfight secular UMNO (Weiss, 2004). Malaysia witnessed the height of this political scuffle based on Islam when on September 2001, Malaysia's Ministry of Information released a pamphlet "Malaysia Adalah Sebuah Negara Islam" (Malaysia is an Islamic state) to thwart PAS's claim for an Islamic State. Dubbed as the "929 declaration" this release claimed that Malaysia's stand as a Muslim nation can no longer be denied or disapproved insisting that they meets all the requirements of an Islamic state - 'governance, including military defense, is primarily in the hands of Muslims, the laws of an Islamic ruler and Islamic jurisprudence are enforced, and the ulama recognize Malaysia as an Islamic state' (Malaysiakini, As quoted in Weiss, 2004). The message they were trying to deliver was that there is no point in



supporting PAS and its radical vision anymore. In response PAS lashed against Mahathir saying that UMNO is attempting to make Malaysia an ‘instant Islamic State like instant noodles’ (Ibid.).

Racial discrimination has been a daily issue in recent times, the seeds of which have been sown as early as the 1960’s culminating at that time with the violent communal riot known as May 13th Incident. It was a series of sectarian violence between Chinese and Malay marking a death toll to almost 600, most of the victims being Chinese (“Race war”, 1969). Remaining as a black page in the history of Malaysia, the riot made the Malaysian government reconsider racial unity, thereby formulating *Rukun Negara* or National Principles or Philosophy which would bridge the economic gap between Malays and other ethnic groups in Malaysia. As a result the New Economic Policy was formulated in 1971 which gave priority to the Malay ethnicity as well as secularism. However Malaysia was never a peaceful haven, and racial tensions between different ethnic groups had risen up from time to time. In 1998, a violent clash flared up between Malays and Hindus in Penang regarding a Hindu temple being built there. The incident incited Malay Muslims to attack Hindus in front of the Kampung Rawa mosque which led to a series of conflicts and casualties (“Malaysia: Update on”, 1999). This in fact led the government to reconsider all the illegally built Hindu temples in and around Penang which soon spread to other parts of the nation. The incident caused many repercussions, and in 2001, a violent conflict arose in the Klang Valley, on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur which lasted for several days. Though the reason for the conflict has never been exposed, it claimed five lives in three days, with many more injured and arrested (Pringle, 2001). Fuller (2001) quotes one witness’s experience that “the Police stood by and watched as Mr. Muniratnam was beaten by four young men armed with sticks and motorcycle helmets”.

Many of the witness accounts point out the inability of the police force to control the violence. Taking into consideration the racial intolerance, the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) came forward with an inter-faith dialogue between the different religious groups to promote better understanding and tolerance among

them (“Suhakam to mediate”, 2002). Consequently, in 2005, the government proposed an Inter-Faith Commission and independent statutory board that could deal with religious and racial issues. However, the proposal was shelved owing to increasing criticism from religious leaders and the public, with a PAS member of Parliament, Dzulkefly Ahmad, calling the move a way to equalize Islam with other religions that “threatens the position of Islam as a supreme religion” (Ahmad, 2010, Para. 4).

In 2006-2007 many temples were destroyed stating that they were unlicensed or built illegally which led to the formation of HINDRAF (Hindu Rights Action Force) a coalition of 30 non-governmental Hindu unions to protest against the temple demolition and the underlying racial discrimination. They conducted a National Rally in 2007 that resulted in the arrest of many protestors and the detention of five Indians under the Internal Security Act (Fernandez, 2007). The demolition of temples still continues amidst protests in various regions of Malaysia.

Racial unrest was not only restricted to Hindus, as many Christian churches were also destroyed by government officials. Only a few select festivals of Christians and Hindus are recognized as Public holidays in Malaysia. However, Good Friday is not recognized as a National Holiday in Malaysia. The recent ‘Allah’ controversy shed light on UMNO’s indifference and apprehension towards the religious practice of other ethnicities, along with their move towards Islamic fundamentalism. The controversy broke out in 2007, when the Catholic Newspaper *The Herald* was prohibited from using the word ‘Allah’ in their papers. Though the ban was only for *The Herald*, the Selangor Islamic religious Department (JAIS) raided the Bible Society of Malaysia and confiscated 321 Malay language Bibles, AlKitab (in Bahasa Malayu) and Bup Kudus (in Iban language) that carried the word “Allah” claiming that according to the court order, only Muslims may use the word. The ruling, in favour of the church, came in 2009, which resulted in a series of attacks and vandalism on temples and churches that took the case once again to the federal court. This issue brings forth another aspect of the religious judgments in Malaysia- the role of various religious departments who act as ‘parallel police’. In many cases, these religious bodies have more decisive power, making them

more an authoritative rather than a parliamentary body. Most prominent among these religious councils are the Selangor State Islamic Religious Council (MAIS), the National Fatwa Council and the Malaysian Federal Territory Islamic Affairs Department. Yoga is also banned in Malaysia among the Malay population as per the Fatwa released by the National Fatwa Council with their Chairman making the comment that “yoga’s ultimate aim is to be one with a god of a different religion” (As quoted in Joshi, 2008). It’s very obvious that this ‘different religion’ is Hinduism.

Because of this opposition parties and leaders began to criticize the anti-Christian and anti-Hindu stand taken by the government. Anwar Ibrahim shared his concern that local government and religious leader and boards have been given too much freedom in political decision making (As quoted in Kent, 2006). His comments hold validity as most of the Islamic decisions and anti-Hindu/anti-Christian comments have been formulated and promulgated by the Religious councils, as in the case of banning Yoga. In 2014, the Selangor Islamic Affairs Department, along with police officials, disrupted a Hindu wedding at a temple claiming that the bride is a Muslim as her father had converted to Islam years before. In a similar incident, a Chinese funeral was interrupted by the Penang Islamic Religious Group, they claimed that the deceased was a Muslim.

Such an analysis of the political context in Malaysia is undertaken only to show that political decisions are made while viewing them through an Islamic prism. In a multi-ethnic nation like Malaysia, the involvement of religious organizations in the bureaucratic decision-making process, has widened the gap between different ethnic groups. This is echoed in the Allah controversy where the issue ultimately divided the general public on a religious basis, and which saw some highly emotional scenes like some obstinate Muslims rendering prayer outside the court when the verdict was about to pronounce on the use of the word ‘Allah’ by Christians. This is contemplated in every sector of social life with media and popular culture being scrutinized and constrained in the name of Islamic sentiments. It is further explored in detail in the following section.

### 5.3 Islam and Popular Culture - Film as a Moral Medium

The Islamic organizations' interventions and the government's support for them is not only restricted to social and religious practices, but with popular culture and media as well. As already explained, religious organizations are acting as the sole "moral enforcers" and at times they have revealed that their decisions are above government policies. Morality is defined as per Islamic sentiments, and this is reflected in the ban of many forms of entertainment media and popular culture.



Figure 5.1 - Madonna Performing at the Grammy Awards, 2006

To start with, censoring music concerts is routine in Malaysia considering the religious and moral sentiments of the Malaysian audience. When the Grammy Awards 2006 was telecasted (as a pre-recorded telecast), the performance of Madonna was censored and edited out when it was re-broadcast on TV8. According to the

spokesperson for the station, her performance and outfit were “not suitable for the 9:30 prime-time audience” (As quoted in “American Music Performance”, 2006). As per the video clip on YouTube, Madonna seems to appear in a purple leotard performing with her band with the usual gestures and seductive steps (Fig. 5.1). In the same year, in Malaysia, the organizers for The Pussycats Dolls’ , Absolute Entertainment, was fined RM 10,000 by Subang Jaya Municipal Council for allowing them to perform “sexually suggestive routines on stage” (“Malaysia Fines Pussycat”, 2006).

Such a response from the government is not surprising, as in many cases, they had issued a notice to the singers to dress according to the Malaysian religious sensibility. For instance, Mariah Carey was warned before her performance in 2004, “that her costumes should not offend people”. Even though the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party and its youth wing took a strong stance against the performance, the government allowed the concert to happen if it adheres to ‘government regulations’. These ‘regulations’ could be more clearly understood when considering a statement released by The Ministry of Culture and Arts in 2003 when Linkin Park was allowed to perform according to what they called the strict “Codes of artist performance ethics”. The statement said,

Male artists must cover their bodies from the chest to knee level...The artist must not display rough, raunchy actions that conflict with pure values, such as leaping around, screaming or throwing something from the stage to the audience...prohibits clothing or accessories that is obscene, linked to drugs or related to negative elements (As quoted in “Linkin Park”, 2003)

In 2006, The National Fatwa Council declared Black Metal banned in Malaysia as it is un-Islamic and against Shari’ah principles.

It has been established that Black Metal practices are way against the Syariat and every effort must be taken to stop its spread. (Fatwa Council Chairman Prof Datuk Shukor Husin, as quoted in Ahmad, Z, A; 2006)

One of the more recent examples of the censorship routine was the nick-of-time cancellation of Erykah Badu's concert in Malaysia. The decision for terminating the show came after *The Star* published an article on Badu about her upcoming concert, showing a photograph of her many tattoos, one of which among them had the word 'Allah' in Arabic (Fig. 5.2). This stirred wide criticism among the religious councils until the Ministry of Information issued the cancellation of the concert. Badu explained that the tattoo was not a permanent one and was part of some photo shoot in which she was inspired by the character 'The Painted Lady' from the film *The Holy Mountain*, a surrealist film famous for religious references. However, the news conference and official explanation didn't make a difference as it was something that is directly related to Islamic sentiments (the word 'Allah' is still controversial in Malaysia, and using it as a tattoo on a bare female body is more offensive when the tattoo itself is considered un-Islamic). The senior editors of *The Star* were asked to provide official written explanation to the Ministry of Information about publishing the un-Islamic photograph, the defiance of which could cost them their jobs ("The Star Hauled", 2012).

It is to be noted that western musical shows are popular in Malaysia, and all these shows which were allowed to take place within the regulations too have been enjoyed by the public. However, the restrictions never seemed to be the result of any mass protest, but in fact, as explained earlier, from the decision of religious councils who consider these as un-Islamic. Hence, the relationship between any media and the religion (Islam) is crucial in Malaysia, with the religious councils having equal or more power than the government.



Figure 5.2 – The Star article on Erykah Badu

The gravity of the censorship, based on Islamic sentiments, is visible when the Malaysian edition of the *The New York Times* blacked out the faces of pigs in a photograph accompanying a news story on the demand of pigs in the United States (Fig. 5.3). KHL Printing company which prints the Malaysian edition of *The New York Times* stated that it is common for them to censor sensitive photographs like this since “Malaysia is a Muslim-majority country and there are certain 'understood' rules and regulations” (KHL Spokesperson; as quoted in “Two photos of pigs”, 2012).

As far as censorship laws on films or visual media are concerned, Malaysia had not made many changes to the legacy left by the British (Fuziah Kartini & Raja Ahmad Alauddin, 2003). However, the laws were made more austere based on moral and religious issues; not only are films and television programs checked by the Censor Board, but so is every form of visual mass media materials. The Censorship Act of 1958 has been repealed by ACT 620 (Film Censorship Act 2002) and has provided more discretion for the government to control and restrict films according to Part V, Article 26, 27 and 28, which states that the Federal Government and Minister, using its absolute discretion, can prohibit the exhibition, circulation or distribution of a film.



Piglets at Meli Farm in Amenia, N.Y. Its husband-and-wife owners sell pork through a butcher shop in New York City offering antibiotic- and hormone-free, grass-fed meat.

## Demand grows for pigs

SHUSHAN, N.Y.

Consumers are showing increasing interest in how animals are treated

BY STEPHANIE STROM

Turn down the road to Flying Pigs Farm here, and two or three of Michael Yezzi's pigs are probably standing in the middle of it.

"They're the welcoming committee," Mr. Yezzi explained recently.

These particular pigs, three Gloucestershire Old Spots that could easily find work in Hollywood, had exploited a fault in the electrically wired fence and gone exploring. "I'm sure

you've heard that pigs are said Mr. Yezzi, a lawyer to his farm in near Saratoga.

For the last four or five decades, raising pigs in a field was rare as finding a hen's to Yezzi is one of an increasing number of farmers raising pigs on the tracts to the barns and confining used in large scale industry.

He sells from 900 to 1,000 a year from his own herd of other farmers in the area could name his price because so strong. "Though I'm in a state of panic about what too much or not enough to people want," he said.

Neither the United States of Agriculture nor the National Ductors Council has the data or



Figure 5.3 - Blackened faces of pigs in the Malaysian edition of *International New York Times*

Most of these restrictions are based on Islamic sentiments and 'morality' or something which would be deemed as un-Islamic. While explaining film censorship in Malaysia on the grounds of religion and culture, Amizah et al (2009) elaborate on how *Rumah Itu Duniaku* (Loke & Amin, 1964), was banned, but was eventually approved to screen after an official explanation regarding two main scenes, one showing the children of a deceased man weeping and wailing next to their father's body. A very usual act of a family wailing over their dear one's demise has been considered unreligious on the grounds that in Islamic law, the act of wailing over a dead body is prohibited as it is deemed to torment the deceased person. The other scene was when one of the



characters uses the word 'sial', meaning 'jinx', which is considered as 'makrooh' or 'offensive' in Islam.

As far as the Film censorship guidelines are concerned, four main criteria have been considered in framing the guidelines for screening and approving films in Malaysia – Security and Public Order, Religion, Socio-cultural elements, and Moral etiquettes (Garis Panduan Penapisan Filem, 2010), providing detailed guidelines in each of these categories. Though most of the guidelines seem to overlap in their detailed bulleted explanations, there is a thorough discussion on the factor of religion within which a separate subhead is kept for films portraying Islamic issues (2.2.2, p.8, Garis Panduan Penapisan Filem, 2010). It says that “for a film that touches on the religion of Islam, it needs to be addressed and examined in depth, so as they generate no controversy or scepticism among the community” (Ibid.). According to these guidelines, the fate of a film is at risk if it mocks and belittles the sanctity of Islam, conflicts with the faith, laws and teachings of Islam, contradicts the opinion of religious scholars, shows the verses of the Quran in a demeaning way, or if it questions the fatwa issued by the National Council for Religious Affairs, and the Fatwa State. Though these are only a few of the points from that particular section on religion, it is to be noted that the religious scholars and Fatwa councils have been given power to decide even the future of the film.

Not only does this apply to the foreign films, Malaysian films as well have always been the target of censorship and sensitivity amidst the multi-ethnic demographic settings there. This was seen in the controversy surrounding Yasmin Ahmad's films, *Sepet* (Kassim, Shukri & Ahmad, 2004) and *Gubra* (Shukri, Abdulla & Ahmad, 2006) (*Sepet*'s sequel) which were internationally recognized, but controversial in Malaysia. *Sepet* (and *Gubra* as well) tells the story of the romantic relationship between a Chinese boy and a Malay girl, and won the Best Film Award at the 2005 Malaysian Film Festival. It stirred up controversy across the Malaysian community with television channels conducting serious discussions about it. One of those discussions appeared in TV1, initiated by the Ministry of Information and captured enormous attention as the panel included Malaysian filmmakers, journalists and film producers. One of them, Azmi Raja Sulaiman,

a film producer expressed his concerns that certain Malay characters in the film are inappropriate for the community and spreads the wrong messages as in the case of a character called Bilal who gives Quran classes to the son of a prostitute (a Malay lady) in *Gubra*. Azmi opposed the scene in which Bilal is shown cooking in the kitchen, by pointing out that if he has a pious wife, she would not have allowed him to cook. Another panellist Akmal Abdulla (Editor, Harita Barian) also shares similar opinions about the character Bilal who is shown in the film as being compassionate and sympathetic to sex workers in the neighbourhood. He says, "I should have called the religious authorities to catch them. What kind of Bilal allows these activities to continue in his neighbourhood?" (As quoted from "Sepet and Gubra Draw Controversy", 2006). Both of these panellists shared the similar opinion that the film is a 'pencemar budaya' meaning 'culture polluter'. Here, more than the cultural protectors and the preservationists of Malay identity, it is at the initiation of the Ministry to conduct a discussion that captures the attention here. The film was never banned from release, because a large section of the society considered this film as typically Malaysian as it has a mix of ethnically different characters. There is an entire mixture of ethnic identities - a Malay woman who has a relationship with a Chinese man and characters who converse in Bahasa Melayu. Even the first scene of *Sepet* sets a multi-racial flavour when Jason, the main character, narrates the Chinese translation of a poem by Indian writer Rabindranath Tagore, and the Chinese mother, dressed in Malay Baju, responds in Bahasa Malayu, thereby referencing all three major ethnicities in Malaysia. Even though the film tries to deliver a Malaysian picture, as evident from the discussion on television, the films as well as the filmmaker, Yasmin Ahmad, became controversial particularly for showing Malay characters in compromising situations - the Malay prostitutes, Bilal who sympathize with these prostitutes and Arif who has extra-marital affairs.

This shows how race and religion are major factors in the reception of films in Malaysia. The Majority of films banned in Malaysia are banned for religious reasons. Going back to 1994, the Oscar wining *Schindler's List* (Spielberg, Molen & Lustig, 1993) was banned in Malaysia for 'Jewish propaganda'. In justifying the ban, then Prime Minister Mahathir stated, "I'm not anti-Semitic. I'm anti-Zionist expansion, and the

conquest of Arab territories by Zionists” (As quoted in “Why Malaysia banned”, 1994)

In 2005, an animated film *Babe* (Miller & Noonan, 2005) was banned not only because it including a piglet as a main character, but the title, Babe (which is the name of the piglet in the film) is similar to the Malay word for pig, ‘Babi’. In 2004, Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ* (Davey, Gibson, McEveety & Gibson, 2004) was initially banned, but opened to a restricted release whereby only Christians were allowed to watch it in the cinemas (“Malaysian censors say”, 2004). The reason for the ban is interesting. The Censor Board says that as against what is shown in the film, the Quran considers Jesus as one of the prophets who was not crucified but taken by God to heaven without killing (Goodenough, 2004). Hence, this was considered by the Malaysian government to be unacceptable for the Malay community. Even though the censorship guidelines state that films or any other form of mass material are not allowed to portray prophets, it is surprising to note that Malay audiences are so prudently concerned about a Christian god. In a similar way, *Noah* (Franklin, Aronofsky, Parent & Aronofsky, 2014) is banned in Malaysia because it shows one of the 25 Prophets of God, Nabi Nuh (In Biblical terms, Noah). The film was reviewed within the presence of the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (Jakim) who blatantly gave a negative nod to the release of the film. Film Censorship Board Chairman, Abdul Halim Abdul Hamid says, “It is un-Islamic for anyone to act out any character of a prophet. Of course this is prohibited, it is prohibited in Islam” (As quoted in Kamal, 2014).

The ban of biblical films based on Islamic beliefs in a multi-racial country like Malaysia hold much confusion. For the Christians in Malaysia, these films laud their religion and prophets, hence they appreciate its reception, but banning on the basis of Islam holds no water, as the characters are never portrayed as Islamic in the films. Therefore, it is not because of the insult to Islam, but it is the anxiety on how these biblical films may influence, or rather inspire, the large Malay Muslim population in Malaysia where they are banned. In a country where religion reigns over laws and regulations, the existence of Bollywood films is a matter to be pondered, and this is analysed in the following section.

## 5.4 Denunciation of Bollywood - The Conference of Muftis in 2001

Bollywood films were becoming popular with the release of *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (Johar, 1998), and Malaysia was increasingly becoming the hot spot of Bollywood dance and music shows, with at least one every year. Though a series of upheavals against Bollywood was visible in 2001 from the religious leaders, the seeds of such upheavals began even before that. PAS (Pan Islamic Malaysian Party) was always against popular culture and foreign cultural intake. In 2000, PAS distributed a memorandum to the government and opposition MPs to ban two concerts; one by the Vengaboys and one from Bollywood - *Millennium Bollywood 2000 Concert* - on the grounds that they would “promote unsuitable behaviour in Malaysia” (“PAS: Scrap Indian”, 2000). They claimed that they were in violation of what the government preaches. Two main arguments were that they are “against Islamic teachings” and that they depict “women in sexy attire”. Such a memorandum was not specific for these two shows, but to ensure that in the future such “uncivilized” concerts won’t reach Malaysia. Though they created much uproar, both of these shows were allowed to be staged. In the case of the Bollywood show, it was performed in the presence of Ministers including the Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir. Only a few months after the event, Malaysia hosted yet another Bollywood show, *Wanted: Live in Concert, 2000*.

It was amidst this uninterrupted flow of Bollywood films and concerts in Malaysia that in 2001, the Malaysian Council of Islamic Jurists (Muftis) came out with their pronouncement against Bollywood. In the Conference of Muftis (2001), they drafted a detailed memorandum against Bollywood, appealing to the Government to reduce the air-time of Bollywood films on national television. Up until that point, Bollywood films would air consistently almost every day on national television networks. According to Datuk Seri Harussani Zakaria, the Conference spokesperson and Perak Mufti, “the main concern is for the youth upon which these Bollywood films can influence negative and immoral values” (As quoted in “Reduce airtime for”, 2001). The immoral values that the Muftis mentioned included “loitering, indulging in illicit sex and drug abuse” (Ibid.), which again leads to the basic characteristic of Bollywood films.

Bollywood films mostly deal with family relationships and love life in which there is a clear-cut difference between the moral good and evil characters, and where good will always triumph over evil in the end. Hence, such an acquisition seems to be frivolous. One of the issues briefly mentioned was the presence of Hindu customs in these films, which might influence the Muslim community. The choice of television over theatre screening was because of the anxiety towards the Muslim community in villages that depend on television for their entertainment. As per the Mufti's comments, Bollywood films showing Hindu customs in a colourful and entertaining way could easily influence the villagers. Such a predicament forms a major concern in this thesis, as it is one of the first instances where the Bollywood industry faces hostility on the basis of morality. Though the concerns of Muftis have been widely covered in the media and have triggered wide social discussion, government response was initially very cold, with the then Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi commenting that any decision on screening and banning Bollywood rests with the Censor Board. To justify their decision they commented that the Censor Board has stringent guidelines and rating systems, and hence any criticism on telecasting Bollywood over television raised by Muftis "did not hold water" (Ahmad Badawi, as quoted in "Films aired over", 2001). The then Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad stated that any such decision should be implemented only after a detailed study into Bollywood's influence on youth and crime rate ("Study on Bollywood Movies and Crime Rate", 2001). However, the Muftis stuck to their need of restricting Bollywood and even voiced the opinion that those television stations that don't consider banning or restricting Bollywood or other foreign films showing indecent behaviour should be shut down. Although the government was initially reluctant to take any action favouring the Muftis, Mahathir ordered a detailed study on the reception of Bollywood. However, the progress and result of any such study is never discussed or revealed. As opposed to what they originally said, the Ministry of Information drafted strict guidelines to improve the quality of programming, particularly the screening of Bollywood films. As such, from April 2001 onwards, Bollywood films were given only a single slot a week on all national TV channels. This is a considerable drop in the screening of Bollywood films which were

formerly aired at least once a day. Even when guidelines had been drafted, UMNO members were not in a position to completely agree with the equation of Malay villagers and Bollywood films. Azah Aziz, generally quoted as the 'gentle advocate of Malay Identity' (Raslan, 2012), considered this as unusual. She asserts that "The Malay community watches Bollywood films for beautiful music and popular actors and even if they are taken aback by what is depicted in the films, these films are always about good triumphing over evil therefore cleansing any adverse effects on the audience" (Al-Attas & Jaafar, 2001).

After all the debates and discussions though, certain guidelines were instituted, and Bollywood never faced any difficulties in filming or conducting stage shows in Malaysia. Instead, they were fully supported by Government and Ministry officials. Within a year of this controversy, Malaysia became the host for the prestigious Indian International Film Awards (IIFA), which was staged in the presence and appreciation of political leaders and Ministers. Therefore, moving back to the Muftis' predicaments, it becomes essential to analyse how these films become inappropriate for the Malay audience as far as the religious leaders are concerned.

## **5.5 Threat and Popularity - Paradoxical Features of Bollywood in Malaysia**

Censorship laws cause filmmakers to hold back from portraying controversial, or at the least any ethical dilemmas on screen. The Malaysian government followed the guidelines of British censorship laws which made it clear that a film will be banned or censored if it delivers sentiments against the government's policies, glorifies a particular ethnicity or race by demeaning the other, excessive violence, and portrays any behaviour which is unacceptable to Malaysian society (Mohd Hamdan bin Haji Adnan, 1991, p.65). It's therefore a difficult task on the part of filmmakers to make films that adhere to these censorship guidelines. The Malay audience's demand for spectacle and entertainment, along with the draconian censorship laws of Malaysia, made the land fertile for more films from India.

This section evaluates the factors that define the popularity of Bollywood films in Malaysia as perceived in the film reviews and gossip columns. As explained above, the initial attack against Bollywood began in the late 1990s. This period is also significant for Bollywood in Malaysia because a new generation of young talents evolved with a new set of films such as *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge* (Chopra & Chopra, 1995) and *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*. As a result, gossip columns or personality feature stories were rampant in newspapers, particularly in the Malay newspapers. These stories often signified the audience's fetishism towards the Bollywood stars. This shows that one of the reasons for the success of Bollywood films in Malaysia is the glamorous and beautiful Bollywood actors and actresses, as well as the spectacle which is largely absent in the Malay film industry. Van der Heide (2002) states that such fetishism is 'haram' (sinful). According to the Islamic ideology this makes it impossible to relate to the Malay films. A major part of the stories are concerned with personal life, relationship status and style quotients. For instance, a story appeared in 1998 on the Bollywood actress Sonali Bendre. She is defined as someone who is "able to capture the imagination of men with her seductive style" ("Sonali Bendre", 1999). The article continues to explore the film as well as the personal life of the actress, often commenting on her style by saying such things as "she is not only beautiful but sexy" or "features a beautiful appearance and attractive body shape". The article takes on the style of a glossy magazine when it casually begins to talk about her relationships and comments on her statement "she never had a boyfriend" (Ibid.). As a result, a higher rate of stories focus on the female actor's femininity rather than her talent. The memorandum by PAS in 2000 against the Millennium Bollywood Show on the grounds of "depicting women in sexy attire" (which is discussed in the previous section) becomes relevant when considering the stories on female stars in Bollywood.

However the Muftis' main concern was the telecast of Bollywood films on television. Their major concern could be the attribute of a Bollywood film in itself. This can only be analysed by considering what factors the reviewers of popular films in Malaysia consider as the success of a film.

Bollywood films began to make a box-office comeback particularly with the release of *KKHH*. What defines this comeback is mainly the shift from the revenge films, incorporating violence, towards family dramas, giving prominence to exotic locations and colourful shots. One of the common factors that the review of popular Bollywood films consider is; whether the film is an emotional family drama, narrated in a straight forward manner, and if it has a transition from evil to good or agony to ecstasy at the end. For instance, take the film *Chalte Chalte* (Chawla, Khan & Mirza, 2003), the first Bollywood film that was widely released in eight cinemas around Kuala Lumpur and expecting huge revenue returns. A news report says,

Aziz Mirza's direction again bring together star couples of *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* and *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* into the realm of a touching fantasy. It narrates the true essence of love before and after the marriage of Raj and Priya.(Ibrahim, 2003).

The success factor of Bollywood in Malaysia is its family melodrama (as discussed in chapter 3), but when it tries to detract from this theme, it does make a difference in its reception. Apart from this, prominence is given to ‘morality’ and ‘tradition’ in film reviews. There is a sincere effort to distinguish moral and immoral or acceptable and unacceptable films. Though despite having a star-studded cast, the film, *Kabhi Ahida Na Kehna* (Johar & Johar, 2006) is not reviewed in any of the major newspapers considered for this research, though it is mentioned in other instances such as, reports on film awards and on stars like SRK, Rani Mukerji or Amitabh Bachchan. Such a star-studded film helped keep it from being completely obliterated from the media scene in Malaysia. The film deals with the subject of extra-marital affairs and is entirely set in New York.

The most relevant case study to explain the popular features of Bollywood is *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*. This is considered the film that regained the lost glory of Bollywood (“*Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham Popular*”, 2003). A re-telecast of the film in 2012 on TV3 generated 3 million viewers according to TRP reading (Ibrahim, 2012) that could explain



the popularity of the film among the Malaysian audiences. *KKHH* narrates an Indian and urban romantic story set within a make-believe Indian backdrop. The film is shot mainly in Mauritius and Scotland and disguised as an Indian landscape. The review of the film in *New Strait Times* starts with the prediction that the film will be a success.

Even without publicity, this movie should do well. You have Shahrukh Khan, Kajol, Rani Mukherji and the good-looking Salman Khan, for the price of one ticket. (Vijayan, 1998)

Its rich star-studded cast is considered prominently here for its popularity. Apart from this ‘star presence’, there are other major factors that have been identified by the reviewer – “tear-jerker love story, some foreign locales and songs” (ibid.). After almost 14 years, in 2012 as well, amidst the novel themes and narratives in Bollywood, Malaysians still find the similar pleasure in watching this film. Ibrahim (2012) argues that the basic appealing factor of *KKHH* is that it is not a serious film. This “lack of seriousness” or simplicity is achieved by its “simple formula” with an “unpredictable” story (ibid.). The review also considers *KKHH* as the “real manifestation” of what a Bollywood film is. The features that make this film “a real manifestation” are the following:

...bit of drama...hero heroine-antagonist, home should be as large as a warehouse with a wide staircase and hall space...there must be a great song and video clip against a place of exceptional beauty...(ibid.)

The concentration is more on the ‘fantasy’ or ‘escapist’ pleasure of Bollywood as in the case of the “grand home” and song and dance sequence featuring an exceptionally gorgeous backdrop that in turn tones down the ‘seriousness’ of the plot. The expectation from Bollywood is pure fantasy and frivolity as opposed to “the realism in western films” which appeals to a “discerning crowd” (Vijayan, 2013). As previously stated, ‘morality’ and ‘tradition’ have been carefully adhered to in this film. The

characters are profiled, keeping them within the moral framework of family values and reverence. However, though there is no reference to any ‘Indian’ factor in any of the reviews, the film is predominantly based on Hindu tradition with obvious religious references, as in the scenes where the foreign educated Tina chants a Hindu Bhajan and several other instances of Hindu prayers (Fig. 5.4). The popular stars like Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan (being Muslim), having huge fan bases in Malaysia, are seen as enacting Hindu characters in this film.



**Figure 5.4 - Hindu customs/traditions in *KKHH***

As fantasy and “tear-jerker” stories could not be considered as a threat to any tradition contemplating all of the popular features of Bollywood, it is made clear here that religious elements are a major factor for considering it as a threat. At this point, a feature story from 2002 by Abd Rahman Koya, Editor of PAS (one of the first political parties to come forward with a memorandum against Bollywood stage shows), confirms the claim made above that star fetishism and religious references are the main threat to Islamic traditions in Malaysia. Backing up the Mufti’s denunciation, he says,

...ustaz and ustazah (religious teachers), the fully tudung-ed lady and the goaty-beared religious school graduate with that Islamist smile, all were

seduced...Thus, when not long ago a mufti put the blame on Bollywood movies for the moral crisis facing Malay Malaysians, it created such a hue and cry...(Koya, 2002)

The entertainment and economic aspects are taken away from the reception of the fantasy films, and instead they are given a religious propagandistic image where they are vested with an image of a cultural invader on Islamic Malaysia. He calls the description of Bollywood, a song and dance extravaganza, as a 'Bollywood lie' as he finds many other factors that make this industry particularly significant.

...the traditional enchanting Indian actresses in her decent Indian silk has given way to fleshy spectacles...Hindi film directors these days are more responsive to contemporary fashion...the skirt and colorful blouse are now replaced with brassieres and tights...The big breasted girl exposing her cleavage is replaced by a slimmer navel- and buttock- revealing super model wearing colorful contact lenses. (Ibid.)

Along with seducing the religious or pious Malay audience, indecent clothing styles and immoral thoughts are considered a threat to the Malaysian society. However it is still a matter of concern as to whether these are taken by the government or the Censor Board with the same solemnity as the Mufti's. The attitude of Government and Censor Board is analysed in the next section through considering the Bollywood films that are banned in Malaysia.

## **5.6 Bollywood Films Banned in Malaysia**

Bollywood films are popular for celebrating family, relationships and tradition. The tradition and culture that these films portray are based mainly on Hinduism. Though Bollywood in the post 2000 era has already shifted its focus beyond the morals of life

and tradition to the introduction of crime thrillers and heist films where the action becomes more prominent than the character and their identity. Characters mostly carry Hindu or Christian names. Moreover, when Muslim characters play a prominent role, in these films, they are portrayed as terrorists or victims of Islamophobia, as a result of the 9/11 attacks (This is evident in films such as *Kurbaan* [2009], *New York* [2009], *Viswaroopam* [2013] and *My Name is Khan* [2010]). As far as the banning of films is concerned, in many cases, these bans on Bollywood films are never publicly announced through the media and thus don't end up in controversy. Moreover, unreleased films are not reviewed, leaving little opportunity to analyse the reason for its ban from a Malaysian perspective.

The five films that have been taken as case studies are - *Bombay* (Sriram & Mani Ratnam, 1995), *Sarfarosh* (Matthan & Matthan, 1999), *Fiza* (Guha & Mohammed, 2000), *Oh My God* (Kumar, Rawal, Yardi & Shukla, 2012), and *Race 2* (Taurani & Abbas-Mustan, 2013) along with minor references to other similar films. This list include films banned for religious content, films that escaped the ban in Malaysia though having explicit sexual content. The purpose of this Case Study is to understand why these films have been banned in Malaysia and helps in recognizing (if any) the parameters in giving green signal to the theater release of Bollywood films in Malaysia. Rather than providing a strict screen (or textual) analysis, these case studies focuses on analyzing the context of its release, and the locating the themes that embargo the release of films here. As Janet Staiger (1993) points out, a reading of a text should be understood as an event situated within history, society and culture. Hence the focus is on the period in which the text is created and the broader context in the country or place where it is released and received, and the identify the discourses surrounding the ban or release of a film that gives meaning to the reception of Bollywood films here..

### **5. 6. 1 *Bombay* (1995)**

In 1992, a large group of Hindu Karsevaks demolished the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh, India to reclaim the land which Hindus believe as Ram Janmabhoomi, the birth place of Lord Rama. This saw a series of riots and attack, the

repercussions of which were also felt in Mumbai (Bombay) which soon became the focal point of religious conflict between Hindus led by Siva Sena and Muslims backed up by the Mumbai underworld. After the Babri Masjid riot in 1992-93, Bollywood saw a promising theme in the Muslim/Hindu relationship, mixing religion with nationalism and patriotism. The partition sentiments and the repugnance between the two communities after forming two religiously separate countries, is contemplated in these films not only at the backdrop of the Kargil Conflict or Babri Masjid riot, but in the present period where the Pakistani Muslims or Muslims in India are featured as retaliating for their misery. They believe this pain to be the result of Indian political decisions and Islamophobia prevailing in the Indian society. *Bombay*, released in 1995, was the first of these films and hence is the most controversial yet popular film in India based on religious harmony. It narrates the story of a Hindu journalist and his Muslim wife who have eloped from their village to start a life together in Bombay where he is working. Set against the backdrop of the Babri Masjid demonstration in 1992 and its subsequent communal riots, the films go through the adversities faced by the couple and their children as a result of the violent communal riots. The film was initially released in Tamil with a dubbed version of Hindi released in the same month.

In India, the release of the film stirred controversies and unrest from both Shiv Sena (the right wing Hindu fundamentalist group) and Muslim communities. In Mumbai, the release of the film was deferred considering the unrest and strong opposition from Shiv Sena. However, in Bombay, the concern for Shiv Sena was rather surprising. Bal Thackeray (the former chief of Shiv Sena) said that the film is showing the Hindu journalist, portrayed by Tinnu Anand, repenting at the end of the film for the casualties and destruction he made. This was not true, according to his own words,

This is wrong...I never repented. Why should I repent? We didn't start the violence...We had no choice but to retaliate. So how can you show me repenting? (As quoted in Gopalan, p. 27)

While this was Shiv Sena's criticism, the Indian Union Muslim League, declared that the film shows their community as 'arrogant and hostile' (As quoted in Fernandez, 1995). Out of about 700 killed in the riot, most of those casualties were Muslims who made up only a minority in the city. As such, this film was considered as re-opening old wounds among the Muslim community. In order to appeal to the Censor Board to make the necessary cuts, which would tone down the Islamic sentiments, the release date was postponed. In India, controversies were in fact an advantage for the film even if it had a deferred release. The film was a huge hit at the box-office, and though it was a dubbed version, it was well received in the Hindi region along with another popular release at that time - *Hum Aap Ke Hai Kaun?* (Barjatya & Barjatya, 1994).

The film depicts the violence and the depth of aversion between the two communities in a realistic way through the inter-religious marital life of the couple. Considering the grim and graphic depiction of the riot, the Censorship Board of India had cut almost 50 minutes from its original reel time along with censoring the words; Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Islamic State, as well as dialogue such as 'We are going to demolish the Masjid and construct a temple there' and 'this is Hindustan, not Pakistan'. (Censorship Certificate for Bombay, 1995). The deleted scenes include the demolition of the Mosque and shots being fired upon innocent people in the streets.

In Malaysia there was no uproar over the film because it was completely banned in Tamil and Hindi despite the fact that Malaysia is a multi-ethnic society. As far as the media is concerned, there was no discussion on its merit or on the decision for its ban. Such a ban was quite obvious, as it had already caused uproar in India. Considering the censorship laws and the political context, the release of the film in Malaysia was unlikely. If in India, the Censorship Board had cut out 50 minutes of its reel time, in Malaysia it would have been more than 50 minutes, making the ban a more convenient way to address it.

### **5. 6. 2 *Sarfaroosh* (1999)**

As stated earlier, there are a series of Bollywood films on Hindu/Muslim sentiments that often portray Muslim characters as either the ‘enemy’, ‘terrorist’ or the ‘victim’ of Islamophobia. *Sarfarosh* is one of those films. A Muslim character is portrayed as the anti-hero or violent aggressor.

The film is about the cross-border terrorism between India and Pakistan and was released during the Kargil Conflict in India. The Kargil war was an armed conflict between Indian and Pakistan in 1999 along the Line of Control, the de facto border between Indian and Pakistan. When compared with *Bombay*, *Sarfarosh* didn’t invite much hatred from Muslim communities, though there were a few outrages in the initial days of its release. The story of the film goes like this - Inspector Salim (a Muslim) is appointed as the leader for the Special Action Team by Mumbai Police to investigate a gang bus attack and involvement of terrorist activity. Salim, a virtuous and hardworking police officer is suspected as he is a Muslim and is dismissed from the position of team leader when one of the main suspects escapes from his custody. Instead of him, Ajay, a Hindu Officer is appointed to take over his position and this angers Salim whose pride is wounded as a result of this. However, Salim agrees to assist Ajay in the investigation. One of the other main character in the film is a Ghazal singer Gulfam Hassan, whose public image is that of a man who respects cultural unity (which makes Ajay one of his devout followers), but the truth is that he is an agent of ISI (Inter-Service Intelligence, Pakistan) who trades in arms and recruits individuals to generate attacks throughout India, all under the guise of a Ghazal singer. He is seen stating in the film that the Indian government has given him permission to visit India whenever he wishes and to stay in his ancestral home for as long as he likes. The brutality of this character is conveyed through these scenes. It implies that the Indian government is quite accommodating of Pakistanis or even Muslims, while the Muslims’ only motive is to destroy India. As far as the character of Salim is concerned, even if he is portrayed as an upright Muslim, he is also thought of as a suspect, implying that Muslims are bound to live with religious persecution. Like *Bombay* (1995), the film carries many anti-Islamic dialogues, which are eventually censored, or scenes that are extremely violent and grim. On the other hand, Hindu characters, whether it is Ajay or the implied Indian government, are portrayed as

accommodating, affable and understanding when compared to their Muslim counterparts.

### 5. 6. 3 *Fiza* (2000)

*Fiza*, like *Bombay* tells the story of religious sentiment and communal antagonism prevailing in society after the 1993 Bombay riots. The film is about the life of Fiza, an Indian Muslim girl who becomes separated from her brother during the Mumbai riot of 1993. She and her mother hold on to the belief that he is alive somewhere and will return one day. Fiza sets out in search of her brother only to find that he is involved with an Islamic terror group. As she tries to bring him back home, he is drawn again to the Islamic group led by Murad Khan who considers violence and bloodshed as the only way to retaliate. Meanwhile in the political sphere, two major political leaders (each representing the Hindu and Muslim communities) form an agreement for a coalition. Murad, who instigates Amaan to kill both politicians in order to rekindle more violence, views this act as a threat. However, once Amaan was successful in his endeavour, the Murad's gang members try to kill him. Amaan escapes and tries to run away only to be followed by the police. While it is obvious that he is going to be caught, he asks his sister Fiza who has been following him, to kill him. She does so, but until his final breath he considers his deed as 'Jihad' and shows no remorse. He dies by uttering *Shahada* - lā 'ilāha 'illā-llāh, Muhammadun rasūlu-llāh (there is only one god, Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah). Like *Bombay*, the film features violence, murder and bloodshed whereby the hero Amaan (played by Hritwik Roshan) commits these brutalities, only to be killed by his patriotic sister.

At this point, it is essential to look at another film, *Fanaa* (Chopra & Kohli, 2006) a film with a similar theme, which was allowed to screen in cinemas, both in India and Malaysia, without any censorship. However, when compared with the films mentioned above, *Fanaa* addressed the subject in a light and subtle manner whereby the love relationship between Zooni, a blind Muslim girl and Rehan, a militant, disguised initially as a tour guide and then Indian soldier, is given prominence. The film is devoid of heavy



violence or bloodshed, whereby the revenge or the retribution of the Muslim groups are limited to Rehan's conversation with his militant leader, and the murder of his fellow soldiers by poisoning (not with gunshots). At the end, Zooni kills him knowing that he is working for a terror group, the film glosses over the communal indifference by focusing more on the relationship of a blind girl and tour guide (in the first part of the film), and their reunion after few years apart. *Fanaa* had all the qualities of a Bollywood film – interesting locations, colourful costumes and entertaining song and dance sequences which to a great extent play down the anti-Muslim sentiments or inter-religious conflicts and comments.

#### **5. 6. 4 *OMG - Oh My God* (2012)**

*OMG* is a religious satire that pokes fun at Hindu idol worships and their blind devotion to the human gods or saints/gurus. Moreover, the film shows the god Krishna incarnated as a human helping the main character, Kanji, an atheist who owns a Hindu idol shop. Krishna's purpose is to inform the public to move away from the money making endeavour and believe in themselves to find the God.

Kanji is an atheist who considers the idols that he sells in his shop merely as merchandise (in one instance he calls them 'toys'). When an earthquake hits his city, his is the only shop destroyed. When he goes to collect the insurance, his claim is denied on the basis that the earthquake is a natural disaster and as such is an act of God, for which he cannot claim coverage. Kanji, with the help of a lawyer, files a suit against God by sending a summons to all the priests and humans who are claiming themselves mediators between mankind and the almighty. Throughout the trials, Kanji is supported by Krishna Yadav, who introduces himself as a Real Estate agent (but is really lord Krishna). In the final court hearing, Kanji narrates several quotes from the holy books including the Quran and the Bible, to substantiate his claim that God has created the world and only he is responsible for destroying it, and therefore he should be compensated. The court verdict rules in favour of Kanji. This causes the public to consider Kanji as a god incarnate. As a result the human gods or Hindu priests exploit the people into building

statues of Kanji and raise funds for further religious purposes. Krishna advises Kanji to stop this absurdity, and Kanji becomes successful in leading the people away from the dubious acts of worshipping human gods and statues, and in the end he realizes that Krishna who helped him is the real God.

Though a comical satire, the film shuns the idol worship of Hinduism by showing that the gods themselves are against materialistic worship. While the previously mentioned films are banned for their Islamic references, *OMG* is banned for hurting Hindu sentiments. As the references in the film share the beliefs of Islam, Islam opposes idol worship, the film could be a positive reference to the faith of Islam, but ultimately the very act of destroying the statues or calling the idols ‘toys’, along with the character of Kanji being successful in his endeavours to prove that idol worship is ludicrous, gives forth a message of revolt against a religion, whether it is Hinduism, Christianity or Islam. As an Islamic nation, piety is the basis of the Malaysian constitution and governance, and therefore anything ungodly or blasphemous cannot be applauded. According to the censorship laws in Malaysia, any film portraying the gods or criticism of any religion will be banned. Censorship laws aside, the film turns out to be a reflection of what was going on with the Hindus in Malaysia. It was previously mentioned that Hindu temples were and still are being demolished. This has caused a rift among the Hindus and the Malay governance, leaving an obvious divide in communal harmony between the two.

### **5. 6. 5 *Race 2* (2013)**

The film was released on January 2013 (that exceeds a month from the period considered for this research), but has been considered as a case study as the discussions on this film started few months before its release. *Race 2* is a sequel to the 2008 film *Race* (Taurani & Abbas-Mustan, 2008) having a similar theme of burglary and crime whereby it is difficult to identify the demarcation between the hero and the villain as both of these characters are involved in crime. As such *Race* (and *Race 2*) along with films like *Dhoom* (Chopra & Gadhvi, 2004) and its two other sequels, rewrite the duality of hero and antihero by glorifying the act of a hi-tech billion-dollar robbery. “With *Race* and *Race 2*,

the narration of the story is impossible as the plot has unexpected twists and turns, making it complex, leaving the possibility only to suggest a one-liner, i.e. a heist film with “hot-babes, roulette, raging cars, gizmos and gags” (Mukherjee, 2013). As described, *Race* and its sequel *Race 2* are considered amongst the most stylish and fashionable films in Bollywood.

The film stirred controversy in India for its explicit sexual content and vulgarity. In Britain and the US, the film was given a PG certification, but in India it received a U/A rating (12 years and over are allowed with parental guidance). This ensued controversy in India with the Delhi High Court expressing displeasure over the nude and vulgar content in the film.

Surprisingly, the film was banned in Malaysia for showing ‘the underworld of Turkey’ (Lee, 2014). If underworld crime is considered a reason to ban this, many other Bollywood films have already dealt with the same theme. Prominent among them would be *Don, the Chase Begins* (Sidhwani & Akhtar, 2006) and its sequel *Don 2* (Khan, Sidhwani & Akhtar, 2011). *Don*, which was mainly set in Malaysia, but given a positive nod as it portrays a picturesque view of almost all major landmarks in the country, and was one of the highest grossing films in Malaysia. The Malaysian film, *KL Gangster* (Haslam & Yusof, 2011), also based on the criminal underworld was allowed release. What Turkey has to do with the decision to ban a film is astounding – is it purely on religious terms? Turkey is a Muslim majority country though the constitution never defines Islam as its official state religion. However, the film didn’t showcase any Muslim characters or any Islamic references, hence nullifying the claims that it was banned based on religion.

If vulgarity and nudity is considered a major issue in its ban, it was never spelled out by the Malaysian Censor Board, and films like *Race* and *Raaz 3* (Bhatt & Bhatt, 2012) with similar or sometimes more explicit scenes having been allowed to screen in Malaysia with sufficient cuts only. This leads the discussion back to the issue of religion. By banning this film, it is made clear that the Censor Board is intolerant towards any depiction, not only of their prophets, but the atrocities in any of the Islamic states.



Figure - 5.5 Race 2 poster (1)



Figure - 5.6 Race 2 poster (2)

One of the major criticisms regarding the film in India was that it depicted Islamic verses in their posters. Though the film was not banned in Pakistan, which has a high viewership rate for Bollywood films, there was a large social networking campaign against the film. According to Sunni cleric, Jamiat Ulama-i, the film posters showed the underworld characters who are seductively dressed, back-dropped against the verses from the Quran and with the images of mosques (“Race 2: Muslim groups”, 2012). According to the union’s General Secretary, Maulana Mahmood Madani,

It appears that certain anti-social elements have taken it upon themselves to disturb communal harmony and peace by inciting religious passion...it is the duty of the authorities to curb such publications as a preventive measure... (Ibid.)

Figure 5.5 shows the main characters in the film against the ceiling of a mosque having Quran Ayah (verse). In another poster, it shows a mosque in the background (Fig. 5.6). However, even after Muslim organizations campaigned against the film, it didn't have any setbacks at the box-office. *Race 2* is one of the 100 Crore Club films collecting \$27 million worldwide in box office receipts (100 Crore Club is an unofficial designation

given by media and the marketing field to those films that make a net profit of 100 Crore).

These little controversies came up a few days after the film was released. Therefore, the Malaysian Censor Board's decision was never based on the religious aspect of the film. Public outrage is a matter to be considered for the ban of this film. The release of *Race 2* coincided with the release of another controversial Tamil film *Viswaroopam* (Chandrasahana, Haasan & Hasaan, 2012) which was initially banned by the Censor Board in Malaysia, but after wide protests from the Tamil community, it was allowed to screen with minor cuts and deletions. *Viswaroopam* is based on Al-Qaeda terrorists and their network spreading to the US. When compared with *Viswaroopam*, *Race2* has no direct religious references.

When *Viswaroopam* was subsequently banned by the Censor Board, the public, along with prominent social figures began to question their decision as it is one of the highest budget Tamil films and stars the popular Tamil actor Kamal Hassan. Veteran Malaysian poet, A. Samad Said, wrote a poem expressing his disappointment with the Censor Board's decision to ban *Viswaroopam* and give a green light to *Race 2*,

'Vishwaroopam' di dakwa hina komuniti Islam di Madras;

'Race 2' pula dedah jenayah niagawan yang paling atas.

Satu tidak sempat kutonton; yang ditonton sangatlah gerun.

Terhimbias wajah masyarakat— nafsu gelojoh paling dahsyat!

(Translated as – “*Viswaroopam* is disapproved of by the Muslim communities in Madras, *Race 2* glorifies violence (but is allowed to screen). Very discouraged to see this; it's now a greedy lusty community” (As quoted in Pragalath, 2013)

This proves that *Race 2* was scheduled to be released in Malaysia, but was banned after a strong outcry from society, only to play down the criticism against the ban on *Viswaroopam*. A trivial claim of ‘Turkish underworld’ seems to be a quickly cultivated ban,

as any of the other serious factors such as vulgarity or nudity could not be pronounced at this point.

## 5.7 From Threat to Political Skirmishes

The comments made by PAS member, Koya, and the Mufti's criticism against Bollywood came when Bollywood was at its pinnacle of popularity with the release of the films *KKHHH*, *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham* (Johar & Johar, 2001). In 2007, when Shah Rukh Khan was awarded the Datuk title, the controversy again unfolded, this time on the value of a Bollywood star. The release of the film *My Name is Khan* (Johar, Khan & Johar, 2010) brought about questions of Shah Rukh Khan's religious identity when he portrays Muslim characters, this topic is explored in detail in the next chapter. When *My Name is Khan* (2010) reached Malaysian theatres it proved to be more successful than *Don 2* (2011) and was partially shot in Malaysia. According to Box Office information, *Don 2* grossed \$19,40,201 and *My Name is Khan* brought in \$25,41,102 from the Malaysian Box Office. This was further proof that the actor is more successful portraying a Muslim when he uses the Khan surname. It was praised as a film that raised the dignity of Muslims around the world. Shah Rukh Khan dons the role of a Muslim man having Aspergers Syndrome and who eventually marries a Hindu girl. After the 9/11 attacks Khan began to feel the heat of discrimination and suspicion from the public as well as the police for his surname 'Khan'. The story however delivers a positive message through Rizwan's (SRK) words - 'My name is Khan, but I'm not a terrorist'. However, the inclusion of *My Name is Khan* in this particular category is to emphasize how a successful film at the box office can trigger serious controversy when it was telecast on television, as a result of the political fray. The controversy began when in 2012, this film was scheduled to screen on TV3 during the Hari Raya period. TV3 was the first television channel at the time to voluntarily announce the government's plan to minimize

---

<sup>1</sup> Figure retrieved from Boxoffice MOJO - <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?page=intl&id=don2.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Figure retrieved from Box Office MOJO - <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?page=intl&id=mynameiskhan.htm>

the Bollywood films on television when an issue broke out regarding Mufti's comments against Bollywood. The choice of this film for telecasting during the sacred days of Hari Raya is the result of the successful box-office receipts and positive comments from around the world for raising the dignity of Islam. The criticism was ripped opened by ABIM (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia) stating that the film is unfit to be broadcast on television, especially during the holy period of Hari Raya. The main criticism against the film was that it is propagating religious pluralism and liberal Islam, specifically in the scenes of a Muslim marrying a Hindu woman, and giving alms to non-Muslims (Lim, 2012). Though the criticism was mainly directed at the film, the suggested scenes point to the actor himself, as his own life is similar to the particular scenes. SRK, being a Muslim, is married to a Hindu, and at home he practises both customs. The characters he played are mainly Hindu character, and this along with his personal life has always bestowed him with an image of a liberal Muslim.

More important is the political context that led to these criticisms as the controversy came in the wake of the 13th Malaysian general election and its preliminary discussions. It was a response to the controversy made by Pertubuhan Pribumi Perkasa Malaysia or Perkasa, a non-governmental Malay organization under the patronage of Dr. Tun Mahathir, a former Malaysian Prime minister and against the Malaysian singer Jaclyn Victor for singing a Christian song in the Malay language. Perkasa members claim that the song that was uploaded to YouTube, claims to have lyrics that insult Islam and her largely Malay followers. Such a move by Perkasa can be considered a tactic to generate religious sentiments among the Malay community.

ABIM's controversy came a week after the boycott called for by Perkasa. As said in the initial part of the thesis, ABIM was an organization co-founded by Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim (The opposition leader) in 1972 for the return to the basic and true teachings of Islam and the Quran. After 1998, when Anwar was arrested for sodomy, ABIM maintained its support for Anwar, though they are not a political party. By 2012, Pakatan Rakyat, began to get strong support from the Chinese and Christian community. When Perkasa lashed out against a singer for delivering a Christian song in Malay, the

opposition made *My Name is Khan* a weapon against Government and Ministry of Information by suggesting that the film is un-Islamic. The choice of this film was in fact a perfect one because Shah Rukh Khan had already been known as a friend to Mahathir and an endorser of the ruling government culminating in conferring on him the Datuk title. Along with that, if the film is concerned with Islamic subject matter, the scope for criticism is higher, making it the best option for political retaliation. The claim that the film promotes pluralism is all too frivolous in the case of Malaysia, a multi-ethnic country. In the case of ABIM, they were the main force behind forming Islamic institutions, and ultimately an Islamic State. It was Anwar who made the Islamic move possible when he joined UMNO in 1982. However, when he distanced himself from UMNO, his staunch Malay sentiments were replaced by a plural society where he and his coalition created an image of an accommodating and plural political entity. When UMNO was following anti-Christian and anti-Hindu ideologies, it was Pakatan Rakyat who lashed out against them by delivering strong sentiments for the non-Malays. However, when ABIM criticized a film for promoting 'plurality', the same Pakatan Rakyat was not seen contradicting or opposing ABIM's opinion. Hence, the concept of threat here is constructed purely for political retaliation by relating to the Mufti's concern about portraying Hindu culture.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

Malaysia is a nation that has strict censorship guidelines for all visual materials giving prior concern to Islamic depictions in these materials. The popularity of Bollywood among Malaysian audiences never helps it from escaping the clutches of these censorship laws. However, it is mainly based on religion that a few Bollywood films have been banned from theatrical release. Though femininity and sexual content have been a major issue in Malaysian films this often restricts the freedom of Malaysian directors and places them in controversy. With Bollywood, religion is the only serious issue that has been highlighted. This doesn't mean that Bollywood never received criticism for showing revealing costumes or vulgarity – PAS's memorandum against



conducting the *Millennium Bollywood 2000 Concert* is an example. However the Censor Board's intervention is seen only for those films that have religious content in them. If sexuality and vulgarity are strictly censored, then many of the recent Bollywood films would surely have been banned by the Censor Board. As a result, this doesn't happen, and Bollywood enjoys a fairly good box-office reception, and pleases audiences when they travel to Malaysia for stage shows.

Bollywood films have faced resistance from different sectors of society for different reasons, whether from the Muftis, the ruling government or the opposition. Though the government doesn't completely ban the theatrical releases of Bollywood films, as in Bangladesh where Bollywood is denied theatre release (but is popular among television audiences through Indian TV channels and DVDs), in Malaysia, the Government does make restrictions according to the Mufti's directives and ban Bollywood films. In 2011, during the Raya period, TV1 broadcast a telefilm entitled, *Shabrukh Khan Malaysia*, the story of a teenage boy obsessed with Bollywood films and its stars, particularly Shah Rukh Khan. Conceptualized as a Bollywood film with song and dance sequences (Fig. 5.7), the film gives a moral, that explicit star fetishism is a hindrance to a responsible life. The main character, Rizal Shah, a college student, is an ardent fan of SRK, and imitates his style and look. This eventually causes him to neglect his studies as well as his family, only to regret it in the end and realize that there should be a limit to star fetishism. However, the film is double edged. On the one hand, by portraying the risks of star fetishism, and on the other hand by producing the film in a Bollywood style with song and dance sequences, and colourful and exotic sets, it suggests that the style is much appreciated by the public.



Figure 5.7 - Screenshot from the telefilm, *Shahrukh Khan Malaysia*

This leads to a key question - amidst these criticisms of Bollywood, why is the industry appreciated and supported by the government? There are several instances to illustrate it – for instance Shah Rukh Kahn is conferred with the Datuk title, the first foreigner to receive this prestigious award. This title was announced a year after his hit film *Don, the Chase Begins* was released. The film is about an underworld don based in Malaysia – it is to be noted that *Race 2* was banned for showing the underworld of Turkey, however, *Don* was not restricted even though it portrays Malaysia as a safe haven for criminals. Also, Bollywood stage shows are performed in the presence of Ministers and government dignitaries, as well as members of the political party UMNO, which has taken an anti-Indian and anti-Christian stance towards Bollywood. This chapter leads to the next topic of the thesis, Bollywood as a Branding Tool. This is explored in detail in the following chapter.

## Chapter 6

# **‘Datuk’ Shah Rukh Khan: Identity, Stardom and Branding**

### **6.1 Introduction**

As stated in the introduction of this thesis, one of the main motivating factors for choosing the topic of Bollywood is the presence of Shah Rukh Khan in media discourses and the extraordinary privileges that he enjoys in the political arena of Malaysia. Even though Bollywood boasts a large number of talented and handsome actors, the success and popularity of Khan is unsurpassed by any of them in India or abroad. The stardom of Shah Rukh Khan (SRK) is now a global academic discourse, which even led to the organization of a three-day conference in Vienna on ‘Shah Rukh Khan and Global Bollywood’<sup>1</sup>. While the global popularity of Khan is unquestionably established by his films, which are successful worldwide, the academic interest in his stardom is reflected in the growing number of articles and chapters on him apart from the two major biographical works – *King of Bollywood; Shah Rukh Khan and the Seductive World of Indian Cinema* (Chopra, 2007) and *Still Reading Khan* (Shiekh, 2006). In Malaysia, the fascination for this star reached a new dimension where his global appeal was used to promote tourism and he ultimately ended up having the title of “Dakuk” conferred upon him in 2008. Moreover, to date, SRK holds a strong media presence in Malaysia, and forms a major part of Bollywood discourses through traditional and online media. Hence, the main aim of this chapter is to analyse the stardom of SRK in Malaysia. It also proposes to analyse the role Khan has played in the reception of Bollywood in Malaysia. One of the other major concerns of this chapter is to understand the political and religious context of his appeal and how his stardom surpassed film boundaries to reach this level of brand ambassadorship.

---

<sup>1</sup>*Shahrukh Khan and Global Bollywood* (2010, 30 September). International Film Conference, Vienna. Retrieved from <http://www.univie.ac.at/srk2010/>

While star studies have concentrated mostly on the western-oriented (or Hollywood) case studies, the increasing flow of films (from east to west) mainly from India (Bollywood) and Hong Kong has made some scholars in recent years look to the global popularity and identity of Asian stars. Bollywood scholars have tried to analyse the star appeal of Bollywood actors in a national and global scenario. This chapter will identify the persona and stardom of SRK, which add to the explanation of his appeal in Malaysia. One of the main concerns in analysing a transnational star is the comparative process involved in it, i.e. the journey of a star's national identity to a transnational sphere. Though the major part of the analysis is on the political significance of SRK in Malaysia, there is a need to look at his identity (or persona) and the context that led him to these political privileges.

The chapter begins with discussing the persona of SRK in India- SRK envisioned by the Indian media and society as a pan-Indian and the modern face of India. This is followed by a discussion on the Malaysian SRK, which comprises the rest of the chapter, giving prior consideration to how he has evolved as a Malaysian brand.

## **6.2 SRK as a Quintessential/Pan-Indian Figure**

My wife fasted for three days so that *My Name Is Khan* would be released without a hitch. I also fed 11 pundits at a local Shiv temple, for the peace and happiness of SRK's family [...] and to show my respect for SRK, I have constructed a small temple in his name in my home town... (Choudhary, 2010)

Outlandish, fan activity in India takes an extreme level, especially in the case of stars like Shah Rukh Khan who has a liberal image. SRK is the face of a glittering new India, where he is known as 'King Khan'. In the streets of India, his posters are sold alongside those of religious deities. For Indians as well as the massive followers of the popular Hindi cinema, Shah Rukh, known as King Khan in India, is more famous than Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt put together (Chopra 2007).

As far as Bollywood is concerned, which is to a greater extent a hereditary and nepotistic entity (where sons and daughters of film fraternities dominate the industry), the stardom of Shah Rukh Khan is quite unusual since his father was a lawyer and mother, a magistrate, both having no film background whatsoever. Starting with small screen serials such as *Fauji* (New Film Addicts pvt ltd & Kapoor, 1988) and *Circus* (Mirza & Shah, 1989), he rose to the status of an actor with *Deewana* (Dhanoa & Kanwar, 1992) (Gahlot 2007). Celebrating his 21st year in Indian cinema, he continues as the heartthrob of millions around the world, when most of his contemporaries in the industry having hereditary favouritism are struggling for recognition. Chopra (2007) writes in her biography on SRK that, even before the release of his first film in 1991, magazines were full of stories. In 1994, in *Movie Magazine*, SRK shared space with Amitabh Bachchan on the cover page under the title 'Heir Apparent?'

While evaluating him as a pan-Indian figure, various factors or themes arise that define his Indian heritage in a global as well as national arena. These themes are categorized as— SRK as a Social Representation of India, SRK as Global Indian, SRK as an Icon of Fluid Sexuality and SRK as a Liberal Muslim.

### **6.2.1 SRK as a Social Representation of India**

Indian film stars, much like the films themselves, act as a sociological apparatus, always carrying and creating social meanings. In the history of Indian films, particularly Bollywood, male actors experienced more exposure, screen presence, and greater command over their scripts, as most of the films were male-oriented (Karanjia, 1989). This made the actors the economic driver and marketing magnets, upon whom the future of films relied. This continues into the present day where male actors demand high remuneration as compared with their female counterparts, demanding more screen presence as well. Globally Bollywood films are widely recognized more for the star actors (Raj Kapoor, Amitabh Bachchan and SRK) than the films themselves. Hence the actors tend to embody certain social responsibilities, often making them the role models of law and nationality (Dudrah, 2006; Viridi, 2003). This was the case with Bachchan, whose onscreen/off-screen personality has been routinely analysed by scholars, all with the same conclusion- he embodies the

role of an “angry young man” fighting for justice (Creekmur, 2005; Mazumdar, 2000; Mishra, 2002). Such role-play is initiated by or at least addressed by Ciecko (2001) quoting Bachchan as the introduction of a new type of Indian star. Ciecko’s definition emerged from the concept that actors began to embody a social spirit to fight for justice, rather than playing a romantic leading man. The two decades from the 1970s to the late 1980s were considered the ‘angry years’ where heroes on screen embodied social activism, thereby cleaning up social injustices (Kazmi, 1997). Since the actors also embodied a social commitment within their characters, it is through them that the tyranny and the socio-economic atmosphere of crisis and political instability in India was portrayed. Films tend to carry the emotions of these societal upheavals, with the heroes acting as the agents of peace. Because they are deeply rooted in the socio-political context of India, the films were largely limited to the emotional experience of Indians alone. For instance, Bachchan was raised to the status of ‘angry young man’ through the films *Deewar* (Chopra and Rai, 1975) and *Zanjeer* (Mehra & Mehra, 1973), taking on the roles of a leading underworld criminal and police officer respectively, both characters sharing the experience of traumatic childhoods. Both of these films centre on the crime bosses that ravaged Indian society during a period when all major authoritative systems were under their control. These films show the economic crisis suffered by the common man, as a result of the corruption. As a swift turnaround from his predecessors like Rajesh Khanna, whose heroism was limited to the romanticism, morality and emotional family dramas with little physical conflict, Bachchan kicked-off an image whereby the hero embodies the power and social commitment to fight against society evils, not only as a police officer, but also as an ordinary man. In *Zanjeer*, he portrays a police officer who cleanses society of underworld crime and in *Deewar*, his role is reversed as he plays a criminal who blames society for his situation. His character in *Deewar* chooses a life of crime as a result of society’s attitude towards him for being the son of a man who is charged with betraying his co-workers in the trade union. Because these factors make it difficult for him to find a legitimate job, he chooses the “get rich quick” scheme of criminal activity. In the end he tries to turn his life around by killing the crime boss, only to become the victim of a police bullet. These two films made Bachchan the icon of an angry society.

The angry years continued for almost two decades, until the film *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (Chopra & Chopra, 1995) (DDLJ) was released. This was the period when the Indian government introduced the economic policy LPG (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization) which was aimed at stimulating economic growth and investments. The policy opened the doors for foreign investors to enter the Indian marketplace in all industrial sectors, including the film industry. Moreover, films began to go global in collaboration with foreign distributor and, along with this, people ventured to India in search of work and leisure. Coinciding with the new Indian society of the mid 1990's, a new genre of films arrived, starting with *DDLJ*, and symbolizing romance, melodrama and music entwined with themes of oppression, thus portraying the Indians in a favourable global light (Kazmi, 1997). Starring SRK, the film depicts the journey of a non-resident Indian man following his lover back to India in order to secure the permission of her stubborn father to allow them to marry. Though SRK was already a renowned actor, *DDLJ* was a major boost to his stardom and he became the glittering face of India. *DDLJ* was the highest grossing film in India along with the longest showing time, lasting 900 weeks from its release date (Mehta, 2013). This in turn boosted the careers of both leading actors SRK and Kajol, who continued to be the most successful and appealing on-screen couple. This film serves as a bridge for SRK between the “angry years” and the globalised era of India, towards an era of romance and tolerance, where *DDLJ* conceptualized the ‘trendy and traditional’ theme of modern Bollywood films. After *DDLJ*, SRK’s characters in other films began to embrace transnationalism, where they either belong to the Indian oppressed population or they adapt to a transnational culture. As SRK continued to make stories with themes of the downtrodden, he began to be quoted as the global Indian figure.

In Bollywood, the star’s characters are used to build his screen persona in other films, with the desirable roles being those of “national icons of beauty, desire and utopian beings” (Dwyer, 2000, p. 119). In a national scenario, SRK’s characters are written to parallel the social and economic scene in India. His characters represent a post-liberalized India with strong middle-class aspirations. Singh (2010) considers two major points that helped to construct his star image, the middle class aspirations and the new post-independent model of nationalism that is far removed

from traumas and centred more on economic stability and political strength- as in the film *DDLJ* where he is an NRI, representing the Indian diaspora who is economically stable. From a simple Indian citizen, he has emerged as a cosmopolitan and ambitious Indian man (Cayla, J, 2008). This is opposed to the 'angry young men', characters he previously played. With his bi-lingual tongue (easily switching between Hindi and English) and his utterly 'cool' (as his locket reads in *KKHH*) and laid back attitude, he crossed the boundaries to the status of a global superstar.

This representation as a new-middle class Indian has ignited his journey to the status of a global Indian while wearing the film cloak of the oppressed man. This will be further illustrated in the following section.

### 6.2.2 SRK as a Global Indian

*Apna Hai Ya Begaana Hai Who Sach Hai Ya Koi Afsaana Hai Who* (“Is he one of mine or an outsider or a stranger”)

Background of the song - When Simran is singing out her concepts of a life partner, the camera zooms into the parallel scene of Raj (SRK) out-shining some Caucasian guys and scoring an impeccable try signifying his victory...

This illustrates the entry of SRK in the film *DDLJ* which also alludes his identity as a global figure off-screen. This is of particular concern as the concept of ‘transnationalism’ arises only when looking at it from a western perspective. Hollywood stars though being defined by their nationality has a global appeal through the films which itself has a global reception. It remains a challenge for Asian stars to be known as ‘transnational’ or ‘international’ except by being part of a Hollywood production, though Asian films, including Bollywood is going global now. For SRK, his films were the real thrust to his global stardom as most of the characters were either belonging to Indian diaspora or a wealthy Indian settled abroad. .

The question of his identity hinges on the words of the song (given above) as to whether he belongs to his nation or has any national identity. The film not only represented a new image for SRK, but one for the Bollywood film industry as they



came out of social seclusion and adopted a more global outlook. In his career graph, though there were ups and downs, SRK's stardom kindled with the definition of him as a global Indian, the title accorded to him by the characters he represented starting with *DDLJ*.

For the Bollywood films in the late 1990s through to the early 2000's, there was a conflict between the traditional and the modern, which formed the core of most of the Bollywood films. SRK became an important part of these films. His characters ranged from a late teenager, a family guy, entrepreneur and even scientist, he moved easily and convincingly from one character to another and this is what made him an "everyman" with the Indian population. As SRK's global stardom is a complex intersection of his characters in film, it becomes necessary to look at certain stereotypical roles that made him a very familiar NRI (Non-resident Indian) face or 'a face of glittering India' (Chopra, 2007; in the preface of the book, *King of Bollywood*). One of the obvious factors of his global appeal is the way he deftly portrays these characters, owing a lot to his acting skills. From an erstwhile negative portrayal of NRI or western educated characters in Bollywood films like *Poorab Aur Paschim* (Kumar & Kumar, 1970), *DDLJ* and its 'return of the nation' concept set the tune for a global movie which holds nationality, nostalgia, patriotism, love and family at its core (Mehta and Pandharipande 2010). In *Poorab Aur Paschim*, while the hero, portrayed by Indian actor Manoj Kumar, signifies moral superiority, the heroine who represents the many NRIs in England is portrayed as immoral (she smokes and drinks), materialistic, sexually perverted and ignorant of Indian culture. It is the hero who make them identify the 'morality' of life by making the heroine visit India and identify with the culture and tradition there. *DDLJ* and the subsequent diasporic films are an obvious contrast to films like *Poorab Aur Paschim*. The stories involve foreign locations and the characters are themselves diaspora or, if desi, they 'move around with ease between India and the West' (Desai 2007). Moreover, it began to introduce and popularize various cultural holidays and traditions including Valentine's Day and Karwa Chowt opening up a market for 'new cultural merchandise' (Ibid.p.5). *DDLJ*, the film that made SRK a romantic hero, set the record in 2009 for being the first movie to continuously play for 14 years, in a local theatre, Maratha Mandir, in Mumbai (Times of India 2009). This film repeats the usual conservative agenda of family, courtship and marriage, but states that these

values can be easily upheld anywhere irrespective of where you are residing. The character Rahul, portrayed by SRK, and Simran, both NRIs, believe that marriage is a union of family and only if the family agrees, will a marriage be meaningful. When the characters have the opportunity to elope and live as they wish, they decide not to break the family bonds, but wait for their blessings. In this film, SRK remain as an unproblematic and exemplar representation of a NRI where his character Raj easily moves between a thoughtless and carefree teenager in London to a conscientious lover in India who wish to 'gain his lover, rather than to snatch her' (excerpt of a dialogue by Raj in the film). As opposed to films of 70s that consider western born/educated characters as either non-patriotic or materialistic, character of Raj serves here as an icon who values Indian tradition, speaks Hindi (and even Punjabi) and acquainted with Indian customs.

Initially SRK did not want to make the movie, as, his choice was to abstain from the cliché romantic leading man stereotype, but to play more offbeat characters such as his portrayal of a psychopathic lover in *Darr* (Chopra & Chopra, 1993) and *Anjaam* (Johki and Rawail, 1994), and the revenge-obsessed son in *Baazigar* (Jain and Abbas- Mustan, 1993) etc. However, by this film, the face of SRK was an emblematic example of a love-stuck NRI imprinted in the minds of the audiences. In a similar thread of love, marriage and family, *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (Johar and Johar, 2001) tells the story of a western educated young man who against the wish of his parents marries a middle class 'desi'<sup>2</sup> girl and settles in London, but abides to Indian culture, values and norms. The film shows how a patriotic Indian can successfully continue his devotion for his country while living in a foreign land. Similarly, *Kal Ho Naa Ho* (Johar and Advani), a 2003 film set in New York, portrays SRK as a man dying of heart disease, who wishes to spend his few remaining days among his friends and urges people to live in the present as 'Tomorrow might never come' (the title of the film and also a song from the it).

Though based on an NRI character, *Swades: We, the People* (Gowariker, Screwvala & Gowariker, 2004) confers a different look for SRK, who previously played romantic characters tied to family values and sentiments. In *Swades*, SRK plays the part of a NASA Project Manager, who after spending 12 years in the US, returns

---

<sup>2</sup> Hindi word for 'indigenous'

to India in search of his grandmother. A two-week trip becomes a life-changing journey and in his pursuit, he realizes the devastating social realities of village life - poverty, caste discrimination, child marriage, illiteracy and a strong stubbornness towards change. However, he becomes successful in establishing a hydroelectric power plant in the village which solves the problem of an irregular power supply and helps the villagers become self-sufficient. In this film, SRK's NRI character takes on a significant change, when he sheds his high-profile NASA career as scientist to become a social worker in a remote village in India.

In all these films, SRK represents not just a diasporic character, but the one who balance the cultures, and keep a strong passion and devotion for nation. The pattern of playing diasporic characters shows his acceptance as the archetypal icon of a diasporic Indian population and a global. Amidst these genre of diaporic films, SRK is the familiar face of Indian cinema with his continuous presence around the world in dance shows, and award ceremonies, he is an all-round entertainer. As early as 1997, when these stage shows were at their genesis, SRK increased his exposure by travelling around the world with the Bollywood dance shows. This takes the chapter into analysing his talent and acting skills.

### **6.2.3 SRK as an Icon of Fluid Sexuality – A New Cosmopolitan Male in the Making**

As Kabir (2001) states, the essential characteristics of Khan and his contemporaries, is that they are “funny, irreverent, young and dance exceptionally well” (p.37). According to him these masculine figures are all at once pure, a cross between, global and local, and it is the male stars that ‘call the shots’, as Gehlot (1995) points out, in the popular mainstream Bollywood films. SRK falls under all of these definitions – he is funny, irreverent, dances well and in all his films, he is the one calling all the shots.

When contemplating the physical attributes of SRK, unquestionably, he falls short of his co-stars like Hrithik Roshan, who embodies an envious physique, along with great dancing skills, or John Abraham and Arjun Rampal, handsome men, both having a background in modelling. He admits this in many of his interviews.

I am not saying my nose is ugly, I am just saying it's not as good as Akshay's (Kumar)...I was not the best-looking guy when I entered the industry... and I certainly can't start believing I was always the Greek god. (Sharukh Khan in an interview, from Outlook October 2007)

As the iconic Marlboro man who defined masculinity in the decades preceding the 1990s, SRK turned himself into the Indian version when he was photographed by the media holding a cigarette, which he believed defined his personality (Fig. 6.1). As in the documentary *The Inner/Outer World of Sharukh* (2005), he is always seen carrying a cigarette, which is also quite unnatural as usually Bollywood celebrities want to portray positive traits in public appearances, even if they are contrary to the actor themselves.

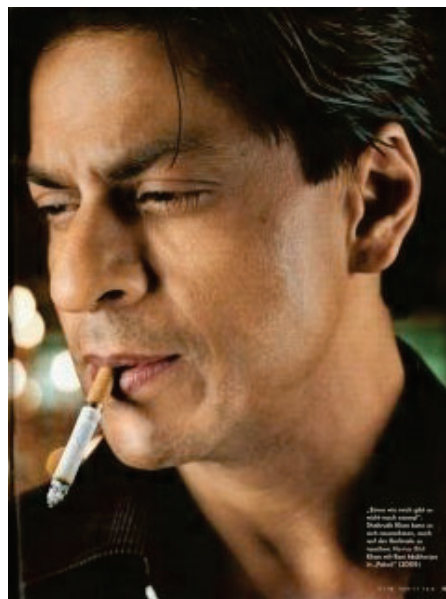


Figure 6.1 - A promotional material featuring SRK with cigarette

He is not just an actor, but also the “complete package” as he performs several roles, as a producer, a lip-synching romantic hero, a fashion object and the face that sells all these cultural products. (Ceicko, 2001, p.121). Here the hero is a brand, who advertisers want to associate their products whether through his films or advertisements. This is evident in the way in which SRK, in his film *Kuch Kuch Hota*

*Hai* (Johar & Johar, 1998), is the main character, all at once portraying a trendy teenager, one who often visits the temple, a father and an entrepreneur, moving across several stages of life but still consistent in persona and image. As opposed to the lead female character, Anjali, who was initially more boyish in her attire and character, but seems to identify the need for a more conventional feminine image towards the middle of the film. SRK's character, Rahul is never questioned as he maintains his conventional character throughout the film. In his next hit, *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (Johar & Johar, 2001), he is a teenager initially, who marries against the wishes of his father, but lives a very respectful and prosperous life with his family in London, only to reunite with his father at the end of the film. His character differs from the other male personalities previously mentioned such as, Arjun Rampal, Salman Khan or even Amitabh Bachchan. Rather than portraying a righteous citizen from a working class family such as the Bachchan films previously mentioned such as *Zanjeer* or *Deewar*, those male icons become ambitious, modern or as part of the diaspora as in the case of SRK in *DDLJ*, *KKHH*, and *KKKG*, where the hero represents the aspirations of the rising middle-class society in India. This image of the ambitious and financially successful hero was embraced by Indians abroad and was synonymous with the image of a rising India.

In most of the films he maintains the image of a middle-class consumer. Fashion promoted by a character, especially a famous actor, becomes a brand identity like the 'Tiger Eyes by SRK' brand of perfumes. Marketing SRK can be further illustrated with the hype and popularity of neck-ties and t-shirts after the release of *KKHH* in 1998. In *DDLJ* and *KKHH*, SRK kick started endorsements through films as he wore the famous American brand, Tommy Hilfiger. This successfully introduced the international brand Tommy Hilfiger to the Indian market, which was quite surprising as many foreign brands find India to be an unfavourable market due to import restrictions and the fact that they manufacture their own textile brands (Bellman, 2010). This is acknowledged by the CEO of the Indian brand Shailesh Chaturvedi who says,

When Shah Rukh Khan endorsed Tommy Hilfiger in *Kuch Kuch Hota*

*Hai* and *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, it immediately got noticed.

(Dewan, 2010)

Tommy Hilfiger was just the beginning for SRK. He soon became the favourite star for whom advertisers clamoured to attach their brands. Advertisements and endorsements represent the popularity of the actors and are vital in recognizing their celebrity (Cashmore 2006). This identification of celebrity with a product, as Nayar (2009) points out, imprints the personality of the stars to the product, shifting it from the designated area, which he terms 'celebrification' (p. 82).

As stated earlier, for actors, high visibility is what makes them a celebrity. For instance SRK endorses as many as 39 brands both national and global and generates spending of around Rs. 3.15 Crore (\$31.5 million) monthly from featured television ads 2007 (As quoted in Gahlot, 2007). SRK was the leading celebrity for endorsements in 2008 and 2011 with TAM reporting that 6% of ads on television featured him (Krishnamurthy 2011, Puri, 2007). His endorsements range from soap, shampoos, watches, suits, soft drinks and cellphones. Four of the most prestigious of his endorsements were for the luxury brands Omega, Tag Heuer, Belmonte Suits and D'décor, in which in the latter he appeared with his wife, Gauri.

A close look at the tagline of Omega and Tag Heuer in their official website exemplifies this image association. It is quite unusual that two competing watch brands would feature the same actor in their advertisements. The Omega and Tag Heuer companies explain why, as the Omega website states,

Shah Rukh Khan is perhaps the brightest star within the Indian entertainment industry today... Thanks to his versatility, confidence, talent and impressive screen presence, Shah Rukh Kahn has starred in all kinds of roles...throughout its 150 year history OMEGA has established an unrivalled reputation for precision, endurance and leading-edge technology and has received the most coveted awards for aesthetics and design.

Tag Heuer gives their explanation on the Tag Heuer website,

Shah Rukh Khan is an extraordinary individual who embodies TAG Heuer's unique set of core values: innovation, prestige, performance, precision, and above all passion.

Their fans adore celebrities and advertisers use these stars to capitalize on those feelings and to influence them towards their brand (Katyal 2004). It was through his commercial endorsements that SRK became better known. Even if audiences were unfamiliar with his films, they couldn't help but notice his many print ads, television commercials, billboards and posters. Many of these locally telecast commercials, such as one for the Indian brand Emami, reached British viewers outside of India via YouTube (BBC News, 2007).

McCracken (1989) offers a slightly more concrete definition for those deemed popular enough to be a celebrity endorser:

...any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement. (p. 9)

McCracken may have envisaged such an individual to come before the product, perhaps as a standard against which the popularity and recognition of a particular brand could be measured. However, one could argue that a reverse of that is true: that the brands a celebrity endorses are a measure of how popular he or she is. This is most certainly the case in Asia, where a celebrity's popularity is regularly measured by the number of endorsement deals that they or their management team is able to procure for them. In many cases, this can be considered to be a test of endurance: a celebrity's ability to remain relevant and popular also requires him/her to be highly visible. More to the point, it is a context that allows for the shifting of identification, a changing of branding for people who can now be considered as a target market, rather than remaining exclusively as a target audience.

However SRK's endorsements take the discussion up a level with his endorsement of products that his fellow actors hesitate to be associated with. SRK has endorsed products like face cream and soap the latter of which has stirred up controversies in Indian society.

In 2005, SRK became the model for the Lux International Beauty Soap (of Unilever Global), breaking the decades long tradition of using a female celebrity to endorse the product. In the Commercial celebrating 75 years of Lux, SRK was shown sitting in a bathing tub covered in white rose petals, addressing the screen while he is running the soap over his hands and shoulders in a feminine gesture, sharing the television screen with leading Bollywood actresses like Hema Malini, Kareena Kapoor, Juhi Chawla and Sridevi, the beauty icons of Bollywood. Though the ad ends in a humorous gesture, where SRK comments, "On this auspicious occasion, LUX needed a superstar, and I told them, *Here am I...*" the actresses push him into the tub. Here SRK represents the comedic side of his personality, as opposed to the more suave macho side he shows in the Tag Heuer or Omega commercials.

Later in 2013, Emami re-launched men's face cream with SRK as the model and ambassador of the product. This was the first time that a face cream for men captured the Indian market because facial creams were always associated with female cosmetics. Taking the cue from all other female facial cream advertisements to build confidence and show success, the advertisement features SRK declaring that his leap from an actor to star is not only because of his hard work, but his quest for more respect, more money, and more fans and this is made possible by the cream that keeps him young looking and got him to where he is now. Where the ad really took SRK into controversy was with social activists protesting to have it removed as it promotes Indian society's admiration of fair-skin (Ray, 2013). However, similar to the LUX ad, Emami also portrays a softer and subtle side of masculinity into which SRK fits perfectly well as he is already known as a non-macho, boyish type of character.

This takes his gender identity to a more critical juncture where his feminine side is revealed two decades into his acting career. Back to his films, and apart from his boyish and comic characters, SRK is known for his delivery of emotional and sentimental scenes. This is alluded in a review for one of SRK's films, *Main Hoon Na* (Khan, Khan & Khan, 2004), which says- "with SRK around, mawkishness couldn't be far behind." SRK is known for his extremely sentimental scenes, starting with DDLJ. He has taken qualities commonly associated with female roles in Bollywood films - to weep onscreen, and he does it well. Moreover, he is the first male 'item dancer' in Bollywood. Item dancing, a novel element in Bollywood, is a dance



sequence often performed by seductively dressed girls (more recently mainstream actresses), and has no relevant connection to the film, but acts as promotional material for the film. For the first time, SRK appeared in an item number in the film *Om Shanti Om* (Khan, Khan & Khan, 2007), which was actually written for the pop star Shakira, but later given to SRK. The director of the film comments, “It’s the last song I am doing. So I told Shah Rukh, sorry darling, now you are Shakira, off with your clothes” (Sen, 2007). As said, one could see SRK demonstrating his extraordinary dance skill, dressed only from the waist down. This created a mixture of masculinity and femininity for this number.

SRK also made sure in his public appearances that he is featured, as a “ladies man”, whether it is with his co-stars or his fans. In one of the interviews, the King of Romance (this is how the Indian media usually calls SRK), advises his young fans on the secret of his success,

Never disrespect a woman in words, action or spirit. You should always take care of small things like opening the door for a lady and never sit before she sits. ("*SRK gives out*", 2013)

On many occasions he made it obvious that he is a feminist supporter who openly admitted on many occasions that he has a feminine side. In the promotion of his film *Chennai Express* (Khan, Morani & Shetty, 2013) he asserts that he is a bit effeminate,

Look, I even sit like a girl... I am a fantastic lover at 47 and not a virgin... ("*I Am a Little*", 2013)

However despite these revelations, SRK also justifies this effeminacy in order to make his character look respectable. In his words,

A real man is one who can touch his femininity. I find my masculinity in the fact that I can touch my feminine side. ("*I Am Never Aggressive*", 2013)

While saying this, it need to be mentioned here that SRK never show any inhibition in openly accepting that he is bisexual. However he has his own definition of being homosexual. In one of the interviews, he said

I really find it strange that people reduce the relations to just sex, I am not linked with all of them but Karan Johar, and I love him, but that doesn't mean that I have hot and sweaty sex with him. ("In conversation with", 2010)

His friendship with Johar is often a hot discussion the film section of media as Johar is already caught in the rumour for its sexuality and identity as a gay. SRK's friendship and association with him always serves as supporting these speculations on his sexuality. His appearance in the advertisement for Lux not only reflected a feminine or non-masculine image, but also extended a convincing appeal to the gay viewers. As Henniker (2010) asserts certain characters and its interpretations also serves as a set of codes that trigger these discussions. In *Kal Ho Na Ho* two main male characters, Aman (SRK) and Rohit (Saif Ali Khan) is caught in funny compromising situations which confuses and scares their servant Kantaben. This image is replicated or rather amplified during the 2003 Filmfare Awards when SRK and Saif appeared as hosts for the show in a rather blithe and jocular way by draping towels and having face packs.

More than a duality between an actor and character (Allen, 2009), he is an example of 'every man', and an astute businessman who understands the rules of the game and ways to play it. In this sense he easily represents and satisfies the diverse audiences of India and abroad.

#### 6.2.4 SRK as A Liberal Muslim

For Indians, SRK is a perfect example of a religiously liberal personality, though a devout family man with 22 years of marriage to his Hindu wife Gauri Chibber. In the documentary *The Inner/Outer World of Shah Rukh Khan* (2005), he says that in his home, the Quran is placed near to the Hindu deities, and his kids follow both religions and festivals.

A few days after the terrorist attacks in the financial and film capital of India, Mumbai, SRK was spotted by journalists in London where he was attending BAFTA's Bollywood weekend. When asked about his religious beliefs, SRK commented,

I'm not religious in terms of reading namaz [prayers] five times a day, but I am Islamic...I believe in the tenets of Islam and I believe that it's a good religion and a good discipline (Saner, 2006).

Hence, SRK always makes sure that his religious identity is obvious, but specifically as a liberal Muslim. Most of the characters he has played in films are Hindus with only a couple of films such as, *My Name is Khan* (Johar, Khan & Johar, 2010) and *Chak De! India* (Chopra & Amin, 2007) that have Muslim characters.

However, as a Muslim in a predominantly Hindu country, he has been the subject of criticism for unintentional comments that he has made. Going beyond the silver screen, such tensions, however minor they may appear to be, can never be taken as insignificant. In the case of his ownership of the Kolkata cricket team in the Indian Premier League, his support for hiring Pakistani players came up against scorching criticism with the leader of Vishwa Hindu Parishad, a religious social group commenting,

By favouring the inclusion of Pakistani cricketers, Shah Rukh has proved that he is a Muslim first and foremost and that he will continue to support Pakistan at the cost of our own national interest (As quoted in *Raina*, 2010)

This was in reference to the to the belief of Hindu fundamental political groups in India like Shiv Sena and Vishwa Hindu Parishad, that Pakistan is a Muslim-

majority country from where terrorists come to India (“VHP Calls For Boycott”, 2010). The groups even called for a boycott of his then newly released film, *My Name is Khan*, in which he plays a Muslim character named Khan. A few days before its release in Mumbai, Shiv Sena activists disguised as audience members vandalized the theatres, creating a terror in Mumbai. It was under tight security measures that the film was screened in Mumbai after its initial release. Even after the continuous explanation and justification of his stand, SRK was labelled as ‘traitor’ (“Sena Calls SRK a 'traitor'”, 2010).

When the founder and the patriarch of Shiv Sena, Bal Thackeray passed away, SRK stayed away from his funeral, though most other celebrities in Mumbai attended. However, in order to alleviate any further attacks upon him, SRK lamented on twitter, regarding Thackeray’s death and his mistake of not having a talk with him during the wake of the cricket issue,

We avoid building bridges out of personal issues & then it gets too late. I should have gone & met BalaSahib. Will miss our chats R.I.P.  
sir...(@imsrk, 2012)

SRK’s emotional turmoil as a Muslim during this post 9/11 era, is reflected in one of his autobiographical writings ‘Being a Khan’. He wrote,

Whenever there is an act of violence in the name of Islam, I am called upon to air my views on it and dispel the notion that by virtue of being a Muslim, I condone such senseless brutality...I sometimes become the inadvertent object of political leaders who choose to make me a symbol of all that they think is wrong and unpatriotic about Muslims in India. There have been occasions when I have been accused of bearing allegiance to our neighbouring nation rather than my own country - this even though I am an Indian whose father fought for the freedom of India.

However, this was not the end of the religious struggle for SRK. He was made out to be a weapon of politics between India and Pakistan. Days after the publication of his

writings, Hafiz Saeed, the founder of Laksher-e-Toiba, the terrorist group that plotted several attacks in India, commented that “SRK should be brought to Pakistan where he will be respected more as he is not safe in India” (*“Shah Rukh Khan can move”*, 2013). This was commented on by the Pakistan Interior Minister Rehman Malik, who said that SRK should be provided security by the Indian government as his life is under threat. This was slammed and criticized by the politicians in India with Union Home Secretary RK Singh commenting, “We are capable of looking at the security of our own citizens. Let him (Rehman Malik) worry about his own.” (*“Shah Rukh Khan security”*, 2013)

Out of all his films, most of them have the main character as a Hindu; this easily made him a cross-religious figure. However, this ironically puts the star, in the line of fire whenever he makes a religious comment or sentiment. This in turn, leads to disappointment as there is a disparity between who the star is and what he is expected to do.

The most recent movie to stir criticism as well as acknowledgement for his character, Rizwan Khan, *My Name is Khan*, tends to portray his own life experience of being a Muslim after 9/11. When he went to New York for the promotion of the movie, security officials at the Airport pulled him aside for a secondary inspection and further interrogation since his nomenclature contains ‘Khan’ (Hu 2009). This unfortunate incident involving a renowned actor generated fury from around the world, but also helped to add to his popularity as well as that of the film.

### **6.3 Beyond the Nation - A Transnational Approach**

Until this point, this chapter has traced certain features and themes based on SRK’s journey to find a place in Indian society and media. Taking a cue from these themes, the second part of the chapter analyses the persona of SRK in Malaysia, taking into consideration the relevant contextual factors in Malaysia. Thus the study pursues a transnational analysis of a star where SRK is taken out of his national arena and studied in a Malaysian context.

The appeal of a star in a transnational setting has been exemplified in recent years from the discourses of national cinema and its stars. Those who reviewed transnational stardom have often examined it from a national point of view and often

question whether a star can transcend their national boundaries through their films. This is the central concern of the analysis of international stars such as Jackie Chan (Gallagher, 1997), Will Smith (Palmer, 2011) and Japanese actor Kaneshiro Takeshi (Tsai, 2005) to name a few. These studies consider the screen presence and film context of international stars that have made their presence in films other than those from their home country. For instance, while evaluating Maggie Cheung's persona, Hudson (2006) was looking into the film text itself, where she is portraying herself, a Chinese actress, acting in a French film dealing with the state of French film industry during 1990s. In another example, the international stardom of Jackie Chan is explored by comparing and contrasting his persona with the western idea of masculinity and heroism (Gallagher, 1997). Gallagher argues that with the humorous and witty heroic acts Chan created a new type of masculinity not unfamiliar to American audiences, yet globally enjoyable. Javier Bardem is also analysed in a similar framework in terms of Spanish as well as American persona by taking into account the media discourses on him, as a comparative study in identifying his international stardom (Labayen and Ortega, 2013). According to Labayen and Ortega (2010), Javier Bardem's international appeal was possible mainly because of his status as a 'good actor' or a consistent performer that minimizes the stereotyping of the actor within a racial and national boundary. Moreover being part of European art films and receiving artistic recognition through various awards, he was able to transcend his on-screen identity and appeal to a wider audience. Hence, in most of these studies a factor of 'Hollywoodization' could be identified for defining the transnationalism.

Bollywood stars also make for a good case study when considering the fact that the majority of the stars refrain from moving to Hollywood, yet most of them are getting familiar internationally as being part of a globalising industry. Having said that, there isn't much information on this particular aspect of transnationalism or film. Henniker (2010) analysed the persona of SRK as a camp figure, an image created by his films and through media reports both in India and among the transplanted Indian population. As such, the article finds SRK's global appeal rests in the ease with which he unites conflicting values and anxieties, those of homosexuality and heterosexuality at the same time. Mitra (2010) identified the global recognition of the Bollywood actress, Shilpa Shetty as a result of the racial controversy generated in the British reality show, *Big Brother*, which made her name synonymous with racial

bullying both in India and abroad. The role of victim enhanced her chances of winning, which she did, and in turn gave her a wider global appeal. Her stardom rests upon her identity as 'Indian' in a transnational medium and that makes her appeal significant.

In this study, the appeal of SRK is situated within Malaysia, where he doesn't have any instance of collaborating with the Malaysian film industry, but identified as only a Bollywood actor. Here his appeal is not situated within the limitation of a foreigner, but the contextual factors of his reception in Malaysia, are given prior consideration as to his transnational appeal. The study now analyses how politicians in Malaysia have used his appeal in order to promote their nation.

#### **6.4 Shah Rukh Khan and His Persona in Malaysia**

She spent almost RM 10,000 in the last two months just to track down her idol and to have a photograph taken with him. "I paid about RM 8,000 last month to get a VIP seat at Marina Bay when he was in Singapore on Jan 14 for an award show." To pay for that trip, she worked part-time for a month and saved her birthday money... Her latest pursuit of the celebrity saw her renting a car and booking into a hotel here on Monday after she found out that he was filming *Don 2* in Malacca. (Carvalho, 2011).

Like a preview from a Bollywood film, this report narrates the story of SRK's fans in Malaysia who travel significant distances in and around Malaysia just to get a glimpse of their idol. Such stories of hard-core fans are endless in a star's life. Here, SRK's fandom in Malaysia is a matter of great significance, not only because it opens a new case study of transnational stardom, but also because of the articulation of this fandom as early as late 1990's and his continuous presence in Malaysia thereafter.

As opposed to the previously discussed transnational studies, the stardom of SRK in Malaysia is unique as he is defined as an "international star" in Malaysia, not

for being part of any Malaysian films, but for his dance and music shows. Taking his identity as an Indian actor, his persona and performance is situated through various contexts in Malaysia.

According to scholars like Van der Heide (2002) and Khoo (2006), Bollywood films were popular in Malaysia even before 1991, but none of the Bollywood actors have ever experienced such prominence in Malaysia. Hence, the stardom of SRK could largely be related to the global flow of Bollywood, as well as the star himself. Even before the launch of the first Hindi language channel in Malaysia, Zee Variasi, in 2006, Bollywood as well as its stars were equally familiar for Malaysians. The major concern here is why does there arise the need for an international star like SRK in Malaysia? Why is he so popular with Malaysians? Does he signify any cultural similarity? How has his persona been utilized for political means? When answering these questions of why and how SRK is received, an evaluation of fan texts together with media discourses on SRK is necessary. Moving away from the body of stars which represent certain national ideological issues, SRK's image in Malaysia should be read contextually, starting with his film image and his first ever performances and his visit to Malaysia to receive his knighthood.

#### **6.4.1 SRK and Major Sites of his Stardom in Malaysia**

As Dyer (1986) suggests, the appeal of a star is also a juxtaposition and intersection of different film and extraneous film materials that form the basis of his stardom. It is important to note that SRK's films, while already successful in Malaysia, attached a certain expectation for his stage performances. The classic location for discourses on stardom in India and elsewhere, such as magazines and newspapers (Mazumdar, 2012), is replaced by other popular forms of media such as, the internet, stage shows, award nights, and film premiers, which now act as the tools for building stardom. Moreover, apart from these, Facebook has also evolved as a major medium in Malaysia where staunch groups of SRK fans are visible. This section attempts to analyse the persona of SRK from each of these mediums.



## Films

As early as 1998, one of the articles that came out in the wake of his first concerts in Malaysia positions him as the “most-sought-after actor of Bollywood” (*New Strait Times*, 1998). For SRK, his films play a crucial role in his stardom in Malaysia. As previously discussed in this chapter, the characters that he played were always taken out of the national setting and placed in an international context, with the usual mix of sentiments, romance, exotic locations and songs and dance sequences. However, his physical appearance was never a point of reference for his likability. Take for instance the review of one of his popular film *KKHH* (1998) in Malaysia. The reviewer begins his analysis with this prophecy for the film,

Even without publicity, this movie should do well. You have Shahrukh Khan, Kajol, Rani Mukherji and the *good-looking* Salman Khan (emphasis mine), for the price of one ticket! Throw in a tearjerker love story, some foreign locales and songs. What more could you ask? (Vijayan, 1998)

Here, even though SRK is in the lead role, a qualifier like *good-looking* is attributed to Salman. If his physique was not what defines his stardom in Malaysia, then the only explanation would be his acting skills. Taking the aforementioned review, as the reviewer continues with his analysis, SRK's skill is only pointed at one place- "Look out for the scene where they (SRK and Kajol) meet after a long absence; great acting" (Vijayan, 1998). Even before the release of *KKHH*, reviews tended to give importance to his films, but the attributes were more on his comical persona or his definition as a ‘wonder boy’, who has the capability to amuse and entertain (Vijayan, 1997).

After *DDLJ*, *KKHH* could be considered as the decisive film that took his career to international status where people, particularly in Malaysia were beginning to realize the potential of a star in making and the ‘actor’ in him. More detailed analysis could be seen in 2012, twelve years after its release when it was telecast on TV3. The channel claimed that they had a viewership of about 3 million people (Ibrahim, 2012). Ibrahim also upholds the claim that it was this film that introduced SRK to Malaysia. This could be a reference to the fact that it is this character that Malaysians identified

the actor with. This image is further amplified by his first public performance in Malaysia a few days after the release of the film, which according to the media was the success of the star. For the second time, when it appeared on TV screens, the same year on TV2, *Utusan Malaysia* reported that information about the film was disseminated by viral messages through Twitter and Facebook informing people of the time of its broadcast and commenting on the films (2012). When looking at *KKHH*, the character Rahul (SRK) goes through several stages of his life starting with a teenage college boy to a lover, a husband and finally the audience meets him as a father. SRK's character in this film and in most of the films after *KKHH*, is a combination of a genuine masculine figure, where he is, contemporary, patriarchal, strong, courageous, handsome and capable of exercising self-control and chastity, to the heartthrob and pop singer. One advantage SRK has, when compared to his Malay contemporaries, is how this masculinity is viewed in a global framework. By this I mean that though the film is told within the national and cultural boundaries, it also fits into a global framework of foreign locations and western educated characters. Moreover, the fact that the story is a simple love triangle with song and dance sequences and little reference to the social situation of India, helped it to become an instant global hit.

The films that repetitively find television slots and which the audiences request to be telecast - like *DDLJ*, *Yes Boss* (Jain, Jain & Mirza, 1997) and *Pardes* (Ghai & Ghai, 1997) - have a similar image of SRK where he is the 'bubbly' (Vijayan, 1997 while reviewing his film *Yes Boss*, 1997), 'charming and amusing lover boy' (Vijayan, 2003, while reviewing SRK's film *Chalte Chalte*, 2003).

One of the vital arguments that Khoo (2006) gives in her analysis of masculine figures in Malay films is that even though 'macho' masculinity was prominent in Malay films in 1990s, influenced by Hollywood actors like Arnold Schwarzenegger and Bruce Willis, this macho-ness is always attributed to the antagonist and the villains in these films. Hence, an ideal hero is seen as possessing less physical strength, but more grace and morality. This is in fact an advantage for SRK, who is popular not for his tough and macho appearance, but for his romantic and emotional acting. While reviewing his film, *Chalte Chalte* (Chawla, Khan & Mirza, 2003) Vijayan (1997) comments,

His admirers say that they prefer him acting in love stories and running around the trees with heroines rather than playing action roles. They point out to the success of *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*, *Dil to Pagal Hai* and *Devdas*. That is the Shahrukh they want; the charming and amusing lover-boy.

Indeed, the films in which SRK played the antagonist were not well received in Malaysia when compared to his other films. While reviewing the film, *Duplicate* (Johar & Bhatt, 1998), Vijayan (1998) writes,

Fans continued to support him as the hero in *Pardes* and *Dil to Pagal Hai*... I prefer him (also) as the charming and self-assured hero in *Pardes* and *Yes Boss* rather than as a buffoon and a crook.

It is correct to say that SRK accurately combined his stage and film shows in his quest for stardom. Such an image as an amusing, effervescent and charming hero emerges in his stage performances where there is no possibility of re-takes. These public performances are crucial as far as his appeal is concerned as it provides a direct interplay between him and his audience.

### **Stage Shows and Award Nights**

Rojek (2001) argues that no celebrity today acquires public recognition without the assistance of cultural intermediaries, which play a crucial role in managing the celebrity's presence in the eyes of the public. Cultural intermediaries range from film posters to more overt film promotion, interviews and stage shows. When compared with his contemporaries, a boost to SRK's stardom was undeniably his decision to be a part of live shows. Live performances by cinema personalities started in around the 1990s when Bollywood films began global distribution (Mazumdar, 2012). SRK was particularly important to this development. For instance, in 2004, he organized performance tours in 27 cities under the title *Temptations*, presented by his own production company Red Chilies Entertainment (Mazumdar, 2012). SRK himself has stated that since India doesn't have a rock star, these shows bring the stars rock star status (*The Inner/Outer World of Shahrukh Khan*, 2005)

In his work on the life of Khan, Mushtaq has written– “Shah Rukh is a superstar because of his great connectivity” (2009, p. 8). ‘Connectivity’ could be more elaborately defined as the way in which a star reaches his fans or audience, evoking an emotional attachment towards them. This is achieved not only through films, but through a range of other agencies like advertisements, interviews, stage shows and even the social media like Twitter and Facebook. Khan became a celebrity, or an international icon not merely because of his films and film characters, but also because of his overwhelming visibility through advertisements, endorsements, stage shows, interviews and other public events. This connection is achieved in Malaysia both through his films and his continuous presence in Bollywood concerts and film shoots in Malaysia.

These stage shows are a major point of stardom as far as the Bollywood industry is concerned, unlike other major countries who have rock bands or music shows that tour the world, the Indian version of such shows takes the form of Bollywood stage shows. With many well-known faces in the industry, they enthrall the audiences with a mix of song and dance and other cultural programs. As far as Malaysia is concerned, their music bands and pop shows are quite tame compared with the pomp and glamour of a Bollywood stage extravaganza.

In Malaysia, Bollywood stage shows have been a boost to the stardom of SRK. Bollywood stage shows first reached Malaysia in 1997 attracting the mass followers of these films. Among these shows, SRK is the most regularly featured performer in Malaysia, appearing in concerts since 1998 with the *Shabrukab-Karisma Live in Concert*, the *Awesome Foursome Concert* in 1999, the *Charity Concert* to raise funds for His Excellency The Governor of Penang's Trust Fund in 2000, and the *Wanted In live Concert* in 2000 as well. This was a period when his image was transforming from actor to a performer giving him the label of star in Malaysia.

As in the films, where he is synonymous with the image of ‘amusing and charming boy’, the attribution of entertainer is achieved through these stage shows. Waheed (1998) remarked on SRK’s first dance performance in Malaysia, *Shabrukab-Karisma Live in Concert*, like this – “He proved that he has what it takes to be an all-round entertainer, including high-energy dancing”. As discussed in the third and fourth chapter, Bollywood dance and shows are popular in Malaysia. This entrusts Bollywood actors with great responsibility to deliver entertainment to the audiences.

Waheed continues “Khan appeared by jumping out from a big screen placed on the center of the stage...Khan... was greeted with screams by more than 10,000 people”. However it isn’t only the dance that endears him to audiences, It is also SRK’s interaction with the audience. SRK’s success as a star rests in the quality of effort he puts into to his performances; for instance, during *Shabruk-Karisma Live in Concert*, he surprised the crowd with his little knowledge on Malay and his memorized Malay dialogues.

In a surprise move, he started speaking in rather fluent Malay, with a Hindi accent. He said he wanted fans who could not understand Hindi to know what he was saying. This endeared him even more to the crowd (Waheed, 1998)

A year before, when Salman Khan performed in Malaysia, such an elaborate analysis of his performance was not available, mainly because of his failure to capture the imagination of the public. The demystification, or the bridging of the distance between a fan and a star, is accomplished partly through the star’s own participation in communicating with his following. SRK was successful in this respect. SRK is an entertainer or crowd puller for his audiences. For a fund-raising program in 2009, at the request of the audience, SRK danced with his co-star Rani Mukherji though it was not scripted in the show. (Fig. 6.2).



Figure 6.2 - National Athlete Fund Launching, Malaysia

Vijayan (1998) argues that *Shabrukub- Karisma Live in Concert* was a challenge for SRK as he was for the first time facing the Bollywood audience in Malaysia and this could decide whether or not he really was an all-round entertainer. SRK managed to bring forth the same charm to his stage shows, not only entertaining the audience with his dance numbers, but also by taking the opportunity to call the audience members on stage to perform well. SRK is always 'relaxed' (as quoted by Vijayan, 1998) which adds to the genuineness of his performance.

As MacDonald (1988) has comments on performing artists, it is not the quality of the performance, but the probability and the expectations that the audiences hold over the performer, which is a deciding factor in making the artist or star simply a performer. Those who have a good track record of performance, have a greater chance of success. This is true with SRK who created the stable image of a 'charming lover boy', the expectation of which is attached to all films that are released in Malaysia. This is the main reason why a departure from this role is intolerable. As his film *KKHH* and his subsequent performances were successful, it attaches an expectation for his following performances. Here there is a consistent combination of his cinematic characters and his stage persona, both of which are charming and amusing.

During his following visit in 1999 to Malaysia, he tried to further his image among his Malaysian fans by commenting that he wished to make films there, not only because of the scenic beauty, but the lovable people ("Shah Rukh wants to shoot", 2000). Taking this courtesy to an extreme level, SRK even shared his desire to live in Malaysia,

If I get an opportunity, I am interested in living in Malaysia. If possible, I want to buy a home and piece of land in Malaysia. If you (reporters) have an idea regarding this, you can tell me... ("Shah Rukh Khan mahu menetap", 2000)

He also made a point of connecting with his fans by calling them over to the stage and interacting and dancing with them. The popularity of these stage shows and the excitement of the audience are evident from a letter to the editor from an SRK fan to TV3 (the private entertainment television) to rave about SRK's '*Awesome*

*Foursome*’ Concert and the telecast clips of his performance (“Permintaan untuk menunjukkan”, 1999).

Film and stage shows were mutually rewarding intermediaries for SRK, as each of them positively and reciprocally impacted the other for his appeal in Malaysia. The success of SRK as a performer is reflected in the reception of his film, *Baadshah*, in 1999, released prior to his second stage show in Malaysia. Cathay Cineplex ordered extra 15 copies from the Malaysian distributor Five Star Film since the Cineplex authorities were expecting a huge hit after *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* in 1998 (“Shah Rukh Khan pada”, 1999). His public image as an entertainer’ goes along with his screen image of being ‘cheerful’, which creates a consistent image for SRK without any aberrations.

SRK’s continuous performances and presence in Malaysia made him a familiar face and the audience always expects something spectacular like rappelling down from a helicopter for the *Awesome Foursome* concert, or jumping out from behind a screen in *Shabruk-Karisma Live in Concert*. Such an image of SRK is a globally recognized one. He is one of the most popular stage performers who always gives his best to entertain his fans. In his own words, “I just want to make people happy. I feel extremely satisfied and feel wanted...When I hear them say ‘WOW’, this is what I want to do... move people. I just want to keep on working, and dancing and making people happy” (As quoted in Francis, 2013). Naturally, the media flock to his events and films, giving him equal or sometimes more importance than Malaysia’s own film actors.

Contemplating his on-screen and off-screen persona in Malaysia through his films and stage shows, it can be concluded that both of these personas complement each other in creating his image as an ‘amusing wonder boy’.

## **Facebook**

Web 2.0 has given scholars many practical opportunities and ways to gather data and other research materials. One of the main advantages is the way social networking sites have managed to help researchers in their endeavours and opened a new digital ethnographic model. In Malaysia Facebook stands as a major site where

fans can be identified, and where real fans of SRK gather. Facebook is one of the best platforms for enabling large numbers of like-minded people to share and transmit thoughts and updates on their favourite star, and so, in Malaysia, there are two main fan pages on him – SRK *Shabrukh Malaysia Fan Club* and *Shah Rukh Khan Malaysia Fan Page* which give regular updates on his activities, his photographs, reviews of his films etc (Fig.6.3). As a complete guide to a celebrity, Facebook collects news on SRK from different media outlets, and discusses his various undertakings, including his endorsements and contributions to the Indian Premier League. One of the features that demonstrates the admiration fans have for SRK and his films is that schedules, reminders and notifications are made as to when his films are aired and on what channels. Particularly *Shah Rukh Khan Malaysia Fan Page*, which gives a detailed description in Bahasa Melayu for all its postings.



Figure 6.3 – Facebook fan page on SRK

SRK's celebrity status follows in Malaysia as a continuation of a historical connection with the Hindi film industry there. SRK fans in Malaysia now have the



opportunity to purchase original DVDs, film posters, news, and gossip about the star from various resources available in magazines, newspapers and websites. However unlike other celebrity forums, discussions and criticism of the star rarely find space on the Facebook page. When the Indian fan pages on him limit their postings to mere photographs, Malaysian fans take an active involvement in updating and informing the public on every step of their star's life.

Though it generates or delivers no clue as to the overall impression of his personality through films or other images, the postings on Facebook create an aura of an all-rounder. Hence, this adds to the image that he created through his films and stage shows in Malaysia.

#### **6.4.2 Masculinity and Malay Film of 1990s - Situating SRK**

The previous section deals with SRK's stardom and the image that he has created in the Malaysian society. While evaluating his films, certain arguments concerning his masculinity were raised; this is thoroughly dealt with in this section by looking at the 1990s Malay films and the different categories of masculine images that they deliver. This helps in recognising the image of SRK and his popularity in the Malaysian context.

The film milieu of Malaysia during the 1990s is worth noting in identifying the popularity of Bollywood and a male star such as SRK. It is considered a period of reclaiming the Muslim culture of Malaysian society in films (Khoo, 2006). Modernism was reflected in the Malaysian films of the 1990s through the characterization of the dominant female and multi-racialism. These new-wave filmmakers adopted a brilliant combination of tradition as well as modern urban Malaysian society, mixing it with the traditional rituals in a magical treatment and with the Bollywood mix of song and dance. Though many of the films contained serious messages of inter-racial relationships and multi-ethnicity, as Khoo mentioned, they failed to make a mark at the box-office due to the entertainment-savvy film audiences, who expect familiar genres of films. This is why the most popular film genres in Malaysia in the 1990s were romantic comedies with very little presence of violence (Bukhory, Amelia and Chung, 1995). The success of Bollywood films in Malaysia explains this attitude of film audiences. Particularly in 1990s, Bollywood

films were getting more glamorous and global with their exotic and exquisite locations along with glamorous and colourful songs and dances built around romantic plots.

Moreover, films were known little for their actors, but for the filmmakers. For instance, in every book on Malaysian film, each period of film history is described by prominent filmmakers of that period like U-Wei Haji Saari, Shuhaimi Baba, Mahadi J. Murat and Teck Tan and few of their notable films like *Kaki Bakar* (Shaari, Arshad & Shaari, 1990), *Perempuan, Isteri dan* (Berjaya Film Productions & Shaari, 1990), *Amok* (Rahman & Salleh, 1995) and *Selubung* (Omar & Baba, 1992) (Muthalib, 2012). The actors of those films are little known and barely referred to in these discussions, which in turn limits the discussion of Malaysian film history to the filmmakers, their themes and their competence. However, when deliberately looking for performers in Malaysian films in the 1990s by looking at major films separately, it could be noted that recurrent performers or actors are very scarce during that period, and moreover, there was an absence of a star that could define that period by his unswerving presence or hits. This leaves a gap for the consistent heroes of glamorous Bollywood to make their mark. This takes the discussion to the concept of masculinity in Malay films.

The 1990s was a period of female resurrection in major cultural industries like film, music and television, which was a result of the popular female-oriented films. As Khoo (2006) claims, the burden and anxieties of modern society always reflect on women as we analyse the Malaysian films of the 1990s. They are the victims and at the same time the underlying power and strength. They are the central figures when it comes to discussing modernity in gender, popular culture or politics. However, the representation of femininity is also problematic in the Malaysian film industry as it is far from the western version of feminism where women have equal rights and the same opportunities as a man. In Malay films this modernity in gender representation, particularly the definition of feminism, are a reclamation of the pre-dakwah period in Malaysia when people followed 'Malay' custom rather than Islam. This has affected the representation of Malay masculinity in films as well. Taking a cue from Khoo (2006), Malay films usually portray four types of masculinity- authentic masculinity, heartthrob, macho and Pop singer. Though these divisions

can merge, the authentic masculinity as represented in Malay films is a mixture of the colonial notion of masculinity defined as “modern, contemporary and patriarchal...who are strong, courageous, handsome and capable of exercising self-control and chastity” (Mosse, As quoted by Khoo, p. 163). Moreover, these representations authenticate Malay males in films as having a dark complexion, moustache and not being strikingly handsome, but as carrying on being proficient in certain props or weapons like Badik, Keris or martial arts like Silat. Apart from such physical features, these authentic males have a ‘big-brother’ attitude to protect the family and hence form the central family figure. These authentic males were quite useful during the 1990s in the female-oriented or feminist films as they played cleansing agents or the ones who direct these modern women back to the traditional Malay values.

Unlike authentic masculinity, ‘hard bodies’ were considered as less heroic and therefore as secondary to the muscular leading man, usually propagated by Hollywood films. Hence, the fascination for such macho men was minimal when compared to other categories, and therefore violence was less a part of the films of the 1990s. The other popular categories identified by Khoo are heartthrob and pop singer, which usually coincide with each other. As seen in contemporary teenage romance films, these male characters are always clean-shaven, modern and embrace the prevailing fashion trends.

If these categories are taken for granted, SRK’s identity as an authentic male character may not be equated with the dark-skinned, trained warrior. But the underlying fact that the definition of this authenticity is the capability to safeguard the family, respect society and uphold traditional values. The mentioning of ‘Silat’ as opposed to mere combating capabilities signifies aggression rather than heroism. This symbolizes the value that this masculinity is giving to his tradition. This also gives a positive reflection to his chivalry as an act to protect his family and tradition. If the authentic male can be described in this way, then SRK would be the prominent figure of the 1990s when a combined reading of all the four categories is considered. He is, all at once an authentic male, heartthrob and pop singer. SRK is a romantic hero, and from *DDLJ* onwards, though being a teenager and heartthrob, he always upheld his tradition of family values. In the second half of *DDLJ*, SRK remains the

epitome of Indian values when he makes the effort to marry his fiancée only with the blessing of both families, making him an 'authentic masculine figure'. In all his films he is a complex combination of all the three types of masculinity - authentic, heartthrob, pop singer. Though he may not be a 'pop' singer, as far as Bollywood films are concerned, there is no need for that label as all Bollywood films come with song and dance sequences and actors like SRK lip-syncing to the songs. Thus he could be called a 'modern authentic male figure', a combination of the major masculine traits identified by Khoo (2006). This new masculinity, though upholding of traditional cultural values, embraces the changes in the modern society. SRK reached Malaysia with its diasporic themed films and foreign locations and its highly modernized yet traditional character during the 1990s. The advantage of SRK with the authentic Malay masculine character as represented by Eman Manan is that though being defined as Indian he is placed in global sphere of modern culture, making him transnational.

The absence of 'macho-ness' also adds to this authenticity. The criticisms faced by Salman Khan and the negative reviews he attracted for his performance in Malaysia in 1997 reveal this. In a way it could be said that the unappreciated 'macho-ness' of Salman Khan made the subsequent SRK stage show a big hit. Salman Khan, who performed for his Malaysian audiences at the Putra World Centre, was defined as 'worse than Hollywood' (Alias, 1997). Here the comparison of 'Hollywood' arises since it is an industry that often promotes overt sexuality on screen and barely clothed actors and is considered demeaning in the Malay culture. While discussing hard-body masculinity Khoo identified how hard-bodies in Malay films are far different than Hollywood muscle men like Arnold Schwarzenegger. Such an analysis is drawn from the performance of Salman Khan who 'took off his shirt while performing a dance number' (Alias, 1997) and the audience found it offensive. This 'big letdown' (Waheed, 1997) was further worsened by the Bollywood stars, including Salman Khan's reluctance to meet the press at the scheduled Press Conference before the show. According to Alias (1997) in *Berita Harian*:

Bagi peminat, mudah-mudahan bintang filem Hindi bukan sahaja

kacak atau cantik, atau mulia... Melalui filem itu, walaupun memikat

mereka begitu sopan ... Budak baru India Bollywood nampaknya lebih teruk daripada Hollywood (*Expectantly, Hindi movie stars are not just handsome or beautiful, or noble...through films, they are also considered polite...But the new Indian boy of Bollywood seems worse than Hollywood*) (1997).

As said in the news article, Bollywood artists are considered to be 'polite'. This could be due to the fact that the hero is often portrayed as upholding values and exhibiting virtues. This even raised concerns about the Indian shows in Malaysia with *New Strait Times* commenting that it is high time to reconsider shows by artists from India if the organizers are not able to keep their word (Waheed, 1997). When in 1999, Salman again visited Malaysia for the music release of his film *Hello Brother* (Khan, Walia & Khan, 1999), the media didn't spare their comments on his previous performance. It was a year after Salman's performance in 1997 that SRK came to Malaysia with his *Awesome Foursome Concert*. This made for a comparison between the two Bollywood stars; one representing 'authentic masculinity' and the other the less appreciated 'hard-body'. Waheed (1998) titled his article as 'The Great Shah Rukh Delivers'. It says,

Khan had a lot to prove at the Shah Alam Indoor Stadium... the test was performing in front of a live audience... (Waheed, 1998)

Such anticipation evidently stems from the previous experience of a live performance from Salman Khan. However SRK proved that "he has what it takes to be an all-round entertainer, including high-energy dancing" (Ibid.).

### **6.4.3 SRK and His Performance**

Taking masculinity and the favourite romantic comedy genre into analysis, it is indisputable that Malay audiences find Bollywood appealing where there is a genuine mix of traditional values, romance and its intermediaries, like song and dance sequences. While SRK is analysed as a modern authentic masculinity, this takes the discussion to an analysis of his performance.

Naremore, J (1988) states that while watching a film, the audience deconstructs the body of the person on screen because the visual experience also involves the pleasure of looking at his body movements, performance style and off-screen personality along with the character that he is portraying. SRK's screen presence is quite unique when compared to his contemporaries and predecessors, for his quick movements, stammering dialogue delivery and unique reactions on camera. For instance, Bachchan was remembered for his dramatic, emotional and breath-taking dialogues that captured thunderous applause from the theatres. With Bachchan's image one is always remind of his revolutionary face in films like *Zanjeer* or *Deewar* (Fig. 6.4), SRK is the dreamy romantic man, whereby in every frame he looks good and delivers the modish and boyish guise of a teenager carrying a guitar, singing and gesturing in some desolate and exotic terrains (Fig. 6.5). Even in the most emotional scenes, his outbursts are always constrained, which makes his face shake with emotion, as his features remain perfect (Fig. 6.6). This could be marked as Denison (2010) said, a 'highly charged emotional acting style' (p 188). His characters mostly follow a regular pattern of a good-looking guy in a family or love drama. Hence, his characters are all at once predictable and common.



Figure 6.4 - Bachchan, the 'angry man' of Bollywood

As an actor, SRK has never been a point of reference for film critics as a good actor. SRK was known for his energy and entertainment quality. Whether it is

his stage performance, film premier or regular interview, he always makes sure that those around him are entertained or at least that they are at ease. This makes the relationship between him and the audience, smooth enough to erase all possible flaws in his acting. This is the major reason that when it comes to the review of SRK's films, his acting talent is mostly ignored. The way he made his mark in these films, was mostly through his ability to entertain,

Flaunting his new look, six pack abs, clad in jeans and an open necked white shirt, the boyish looking Khan appeared to be in a light mood, joking with the media who were firing questions at him about his forthcoming Diwali release *Om Shanti Om*. (Sanger, 2007)

Celebrities always fear how much they depend on the media for their fame and popularity. SRK also leaves no stone unturned when it comes to his appeal through the news media. Rather than being a silent, well behaved and down-to earth character, SRK always displays this boyish charm, as the article above illustrates.



Figure 6.5 – Idiolects of SRK

He uses this same strategy when dealing with the media. Rather than an abrupt reply to questions, SRK answers them humorously and coyly. In the same interview as part of his promotion of the film *Om Shanti Om*, when a journalist asks about the ways he was promoting this film, he whimsically replied,

I am planning to write the name of my film on the journalists' forehead. That way, you would publicize my film wherever you go, even if it's at someone else's event. (Sanger, 2007)

Though everyone cheered at his response, it left the room wondering whether the journalist would praise or critique his film. He knows that if he could please the journalists, he will receive favourable media coverage and create a positive image as well. This favourable treatment by the media makes up for the fact that he is rarely praised for his acting skills. Therefore, the focus on SRK, from an Indian perspective is that of an entertainer and his over sentimentality in films, with little reference to his acting talent. Taking the cue from Drake (2006), the inferential meaning of a star performance is always tied with a set of idiolects of the star, which the audience takes with them when they watch the performance. Even though, as Naremore (1988) posits, all narrative films are representational in nature, where the actor becomes the character, there is a certain degree of ambiguity in it.



Figure 6.6 – Idiolects of SRK

As Drake (2006) explains, the audience decodes certain signs and styles from the star (making it presentational), which in turn reminds the audience of the pleasure of the previous performance. For SRK, this works perfectly well. SRK's presence in films is taken by the audience as 'entertaining' with romance and overt sentimentalism performed with his stammering dialogue delivery in an emotional scene, his outward capability of weeping on cue and his child-like pranks. For instance, in one of the reviews of his film *Main Hoon Na* (Khan, Khan, Jain & Khan, 2004), the reviewer comments, "With SRK around, mawkishness couldn't be far behind" ("*Main Hoon Na*", 2004). Hence, SRK is labelled a melodramatic actor, where



the stress is not on his acting, but his stereotypical performance and character. Moreover, being part of diaspora-themed films as early as 1995, and his continuous presence around the world for dance shows, award nights and film premiers, he is often seen as a global Indian, which in turn addresses his star image. Though SRK's roles are rich, his performances are more presentational where his real self always comes into play when performing the character. From DDLJ onwards, the characters he has chosen to play are quirky, humorous, witty and romantic, and displays huge amount of energy which is just replicated in his stage performances equally. This is an intriguing factor for SRK as audiences have certain expectations of how he should be. This could be further explained with some of the films that failed at the box-office. For instance, the film *Asoka* (Khan, Chawla & Sivan, 2001) was a historical film produced by SRK himself. It failed despite the directorial excellence of Santhosh Sivan and the rich casting of SRK with Kareena Kapoor. Quoting the film as a flop, BBC Indian correspondent, Sinha (2001), sees SRK as being the central reason for the film's failure.

The problem though, is Shahrukh's inability to go beyond his real life hero persona and become the character he is playing. (Sinha, 2011)

In a similar thread, another national newspaper, *The Hindu*, criticizes SRK's presence in the film as trivial,

Shahrukh's *Asoka* is all bluster and mannerism, with no depth.

Except for the nose bleeds and the mud baths, he is the same

Shahrukh of every other movie that he has acted in. (Dasgupta, 2001)

Here as Drake proposed, his star image and idiolect often conflict with his characters when he tries to move away from his stereotypical characterizations. Here authenticity and believability takes a back seat when SRK's stereotypical style becomes ostensive. This indeed works for the star in making his stereotypical characters and films successful. Even when analysing the reviews on *Don: The Chase Begins Again* (Sidhwani, Akhtar & Akhtar, 2006) in which his character embodies anti-heroism, it's nothing but his 'energy' and 'activism' that shadows all his other skills.

... (This film) is dramatic, dripping with the quintessential SRK hyperactivity... He jumps out like a Jack in the box and sets the screen on fire with his rambunctious energy... (Kazmi, 2006)

Similar reviews are found for an entirely different film like *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998) – “Khan with his powerhouse of energy and Kajol with her natural exuberance are quintessential yuppies” (Chowdhury, 1998).

While it's apparent that the Indian media never consider SRK an 'exceptional actor', his skills for setting the screen on fire with his energy is an advantage for him when it comes to his stardom. Bollywood's global success relies on its masala elements – an entertaining mix of song, dance and romance. Moreover, apart from films, Bollywood stage shows and award nights are the major intermediaries that take the Indian film industry outside their country. What one really expects from these shows is simply entertainment. This has in fact made SRK a popular choice to perform in these shows. His quick and funny rhetoric, his media management and his stage presence make him the most-wanted stage performer. This makes him the “people's actor” (“My Life is Not”, 2011), who is always ready to shake a leg with the audience wherever he is.

SRK has his own personal style. In one interview during the beginning of his film career, a journalist casually asked him what exactly makes him a star when all he has is just five expressions. For a remark that would annoy most stars, even when asked in the sincerest way, SRK was quick to reply that “It's just that the rest have only four” (Brijanth and Chopra, 1998). His witty responses are in themselves entertainment. Even though a star's job is to pretend to be 'ordinary or extraordinary' characters with SRK, his eloquence to hook an audience is what makes him different from his contemporaries.

Even when there were comparisons made between SRK and Amitabh Bachchan, mostly when *Don: The Chase Begins Again* was released in 2006 which is a remake of Amitabh's *Don* (Irani & Barot, 1978). SRK never made it a point to imitate Amitabh's performance or copy his style, but maintained his own interpretation for whatever character he portrays. When SRK replaced Amitabh for the famous show *Kaun Banega Crorepati*, the Indian adaptation of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*, there was

a huge concern as to whether he could effectively fill the shoes of an icon like Amitabh. But SRK was determined in his reply,

With all humility, I will do it my way. Please allow me a chance to be me. Respect me for that [...] I will bring in my personality to the show [...] but maintain the beauty of Amitabh.

It was a tremendous makeover for the show when SRK took over the hosting. He tried to be the SRK that people identified with and by doing that kept up his familiar gestures and humorous retorts (Fig. 6.7). With Bachchan as host, the atmosphere was serious. However it was a different show when SRK hosted as there were plenty of laughs and applause from the audience.



Figure 6.7 - SRK and Amitabh Bhachchan as host of the show, Kaun Banega Crorepati Season 3 and Season 4 respectively

#### 6.4.4 SRK as Brand Ambassador - Religious Identity and Political Affiliation

Even after the Muftis' intervention in 2001 to limit the number of Bollywood films released (which is explained in detail in the third chapter), Malaysia has continued to welcome Bollywood films and has opened its door for other aspects of culture related to Bollywood, such as award ceremonies and dance nights. Following the first star show which was led by Salman Khan since 1998, all the SRK shows were performed in the presence of political leaders; prominent among them would be former Prime Minister Dr. Tun Mahathir (Prime Minister, 1981 – 2003) and the Datuk Najib Tun Razak, Prime Minister (2009 – to the present; before 2009 he was

the Deputy Prime Minister). In 1998, when SRK reached Malaysia, the then Prime Minister, Mahathir, had no opportunity to meet with him.

This political affiliation for Bollywood led to a controversy in 2008 that further led to the revelation from the government that Bollywood could be used for promoting Malaysian tourism. In 2008, SRK was awarded the 'Darjah Mulia Seri Melaka' by the Government of Malacca, which conferred upon him the Title of 'Datuk', akin to the British Knighthood. The decision to present him with the award met with much criticism across the country with local artists and members of the public noting that the award should have been given to a local actor or artist. Wide criticism and protest came from society, mainly from the Film Artists' Association Seniman, which lashed out against the government's negligence towards local artists' contributions to the culture industry. However, Malaysian and Malaccan state authorities have defended their decision, commenting that it earned them more publicity and tourists than sponsored advertising on any international TV channel. Hence, the official explanation for knighting SRK was his capability for indirectly promoting Malacca through his films, particularly *One 2 Ka 4* (Nair and Ahmed, 2001) which was shot there (John 2008; Carvalho, 2008). The Malacca Chief Minister himself stated that giving Khan the title: 'will certainly help promote both Malaysia and Malacca' and will 'be the "bridge" for more movies to be shot in this historic city' (Malacca Chief Minister, as quoted in John, 2008). However, this explanation didn't ease the concerns of the film fraternities and certain sections of society. Veteran Malay actress Azean Irdawaty commented that SRK films are also shot in France and the United Kingdom, but neither of these nations has given him a title ("Divided over Datukship", 2008). But the government adhered to their justification for promoting Malacca through Bollywood and Khan, as a global Bollywood icon, in the same way Phuket Island has become "an international tourist destination because of a James Bond movie" (Chief Minister of Malacca Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam, as quoted in Carvalho, 2008).

Though the government went ahead with their decision, it became important for them to calm the criticisms. Subsequently, they declared that they are not planning to bear the expenses of his travel and stay when he comes to receive the award. To justify his claim, Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam, the Chief Minister of

Malacca, pronounced that this is a strategy through which, without spending a single penny, Malaysia will be promoted around the globe by the Bollywood star. The UMNO owned newspaper even justified their deed with their popular cartoon series ‘Senyum Kambing’ (Fig. 6.8). As part of their editorial piece, this cartoon series always stands as the mouthpiece of UMNO. Set in a conversational mode between two men, it's a single frame cartoon with minimal use of words in providing the opinion. In the particular piece that came out the day following the announcement of SRK’s Datukship, one of the characters mentions that SRK is bestowed with ‘Datuk’ in a rather skeptical manner. This suspicion is portrayed in the character, with him holding his chin in an open smile. The other person replies that ‘perhaps, he is more deserving than others’. Though the reason for this is not mentioned, the cartoon justifies the government’s decision by making SRK the ‘most deserving’.



Figure 6.8 - Pocket Cartoon - *Utusan Malaysia* (1998, October 10)

Even though the government declared that the actor would be responsible for all his own travel expenses, there were some hidden costs that were paid for by the government. As SRK was unable to attend the award ceremony, a special investiture ceremony was organized to deliver the award. Moreover, Shahrukh was the first Datuk recipient from Malacca to don the official state 'Samping' (a skirt-type

cloth worn around the waist by men) during a special ceremony. *The Star* quoted the price of the songket as RM 3000 with an additional amount being spent on the special Baju Melayu, worn like the Malaysian Legendary film actor P. Ramlee. Here SRK is equated with Ramlee who is not only similar in religion, but is often compared to Indian talents like Raj Kapoor and Muhammad Rafi.

The major postulate arising from this affiliation for SRK is Malaysia's deliberate attempt to promote their tourism around the world with a popular global medium such as Bollywood and its most popular star like SRK whose religion also plays a very crucial role in this choice.

#### **6.4.5 SRK and Religious Advantage**

One of the main ideologies dominant in SRK's case is how his religious identity works as a determining factor in the political arena of Malaysia. Conferring on him a prestigious title and making him a brand ambassador should be analysed within the framework of how he is a 'Muslim Bollywood' actor, given a notable place in the political sphere. This is significant, as India never honoured SRK with a Civilian honour such as the Padma Bhooshan, the third highest civilian award after Bharat Ratna and Padma Vibhushan and conferred on those who have made a distinguished contribution in their field of work; an award similar to Malaysia's Darjah Mulia Seri Melaka. The major question that arises here is how he has emerged as a strong representation of the Muslim community even though he comes from a secular country like India.

The post 9/11 atmosphere in the world was sceptical and paranoid about Islamic identity and personality. The celebrated public figures in the Islamic world were often the representative religious leaders from the Mullahs or Muftis or from the Surah council of the respective nations or the autocratic dictators from the monarchies of the Middle East or the Arab nations. In 1995 the Asian financial crisis placed the Malaysian government in a position to make tourism a favourable sector of the economy. Though the Datukship is justified as a gesture to promote Malaysian tourism, religion plays a very crucial and decisive role when considering Islamic tourism of Malaysia. Apart from the general tourist campaigns, Malaysia being an Islamic nation, was gradually trying to brand its nation as 'Halal Tourist destination'

for those who wish to abide by Islamic laws during their entire stay in Malaysia (Islamic Tourism Centre Malaysia website, 2012).

Malaysia is a prominent member of the *Organization of Islamic Cooperation* (formerly known as *Organization of Islamic Conference*) that is considered as the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations. The main agenda of this organization is to safeguard the interests of Islam and the people of these Islamic nations and to promote peace and prosperity in the world. One of the major issues that upset the organization and a major part of the Muslim world after the 9/11 attacks was the image of Islam throughout the world. Hence, in 2008, countries including Malaysia supported and propagated the idea of tourism to combat “Islamophobia and rectifying the distorted image of Islam in non-Islamic countries” (OIC (“Frame Work For Development”), 2008, p. 2). It was at this crucial and critical juncture that the middle class Muslim or Islamic society was in search of an icon or a star from its own religion, one with a middle class identity that could be projected as the clean and common true representation of an Islamic world. In an Islamic nation like Malaysia, SRK is a true representative, as a star entertainer who carries an Islamic identity in name and in upbringing. As an all-round identifiable performer, already hallmarked by his stage and screen presence beyond the multicultural and multi-religious boundaries of India and abroad, SRK is well received and accepted without question on Malaysian soil.

Henderson (2010) pointed out that while other South Asian countries show little interest for such a move, Malaysia was in fact moving forward in this novel concept of tourism. Hence, Malaysia hosted the first World Islamic Tourism Conference & Expo in 2008 that was aimed at discussing the prospects and possibilities of Islamic tourism around the globe (*Tourism Malaysia website*, 2008). Held from October 8 – 11, this event coincided with that year’s Datuk award ceremony that was supposed to be made special with the presence of SRK. However, due to a conflict with his schedule, SRK did not show up. The choice of SRK for recipient of the title was officially explained as Malaysia’s urge for Islamic tourism, and SRK had the advantage of being a popular brand as well as a liberal Islamic icon.

As McCracken (1989) argues, an endorser’s effectiveness depends upon the meanings associated with the endorser, which are in turn transferred to the product

or service. If Malaysia or Malaysian tourism was a product that needed to be promoted, SRK's identity, both religious and filmic, is acknowledged with that product. This identification of celebrity with the product, as Nayar (2009) posits, imprints the personality of the star to the product, shifting it from the designated area, which he terms 'celebrification' (p. 82). Because SRK is a liberal Muslim, it is easy for him to represent not only the Islamic nation, but also the multi-ethnic population in Malaysia.

During the conferring of the Brand Laureate award, Mahathir presented SRK with a digital Quran, which explains how they consider his identity above his global appeal as a celebrity. Moreover, International stars such as, Jackie Chan and Sean Connery have shot their films, *Police Story 3: Super Cop* (Chan, Tang and Tong, 1992) and *Entrapment* (Connery, Hertzberg & Amiel, 1999) respectively in Malaysia, but SRK and his film *One 2 Ka 4* became a reason for choosing SRK to receive the award. In 2000, during the Prophet Muhammad's birthday, the Malaysian market was flooded with post cards and greeting cards showing the faces of SRK and Salman Khan. However, Salman Khan has failed to maintain that public recognition following his first performance in Malaysia. Being a Muslim, for SRK, Malaysia is yet another homeland, where an intimate connection can be made with the audience through his religion. In all his press conferences and his comments on stage in Malaysia, SRK enhances this connection by constantly using phrases like 'Insha Allah', which closes the gap between him and his Malaysian audiences, and creates a cross-cultural appeal unachievable by other stars. The construction of SRK as a quintessential pan-Indian hero transforms him into a special kind of celebrity (Cayla, 2008) who transcends the geographical and religious borders of admiration. Building upon Bollywood's popularity in Malaysia, SRK could be one of the best options for branding Malaysia. This not only maintains his fan base in Malaysia, but also encourages his Indian fans to visit Malaysia as well.

### **SRK and Mahathir**

The relationship between SRK and the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr Mahathir bin Mohammad is a matter to be reviewed in detail when



discussing religion and tourism. With SRK's first visit to Malaysia he has maintained a close association with the then Prime Minister, Mahathir. In 2000, when SRK returned to shoot his film, *One 2 Ka 4*, which was his first film to choose Malaysia as a film location, a press conference was called to detail the new association of Bollywood with Malaysia. This was also a chance for the media to interact with the Indian actors SRK and Juhi Chawla, who were already familiar faces for Malaysian audiences through their films and concerts (*Awesome Foursome* in 1999). The conference was presided over by then Prime Minister, Mahathir. SRK was quoted saying that, 'Malaysia can emerge as a super power under the leadership of Dr Mahathir' (Utusan Malaysia, 2000, July 25), and expressed his happiness in meeting him for the second time. During the *Awesome Foursome* show, SRK made his fans move to his dance steps, commenting that the audience 'can' dance correlating to Tun Mahathir's Slogan, 'Malaysia Boleh' (Malaysia Can), and praised the development of Malaysia and the audience, in causing him to consider filming in Malaysia. This is of particular concern at that period, as the Malaysian general election was held in November, and SRK's comments seem to be an act of political campaigning.

In 2012, when the controversy surrounding his Datukship was gradually calming down, SRK was conferred with Malaysia's prestigious Brand Laureate Award. This was presented in conjunction with Mahathir's 87<sup>th</sup> birthday for which he was welcomed as an honorary guest. However, such an award was not well covered in the media, though Indian newspapers and television channels gave it a mention. There were no previous announcements regarding the award, which seemed to be a decision by the government, as it would take away from Prime Minister Mahathir's birthday celebrations. The connection of such an award with patronage of government officials may be an effort by the Brand laureate committee to avoid criticisms as happened in 2008 with the Datuk title. Major Malaysian newspapers covered the event in detail with no indication of an award ceremony. However, it was reported that SRK visited here in his private jet not for payment but to honor his friend and mentor, Mahathir. SRK was presented with a digital Quran, a symbolic award that not only celebrates friendship, but their religious affinity as well.

The presence of SRK at the event clarifies the close friendship between the star and the Father of Modernization, Mahathir. SRK commented that he is always impressed by the philosophy of Mahathir and has tried to adapt his philosophies and ‘out of the box’ decisions in his own life and considers him a mentor and inspiration (*mStar*, 2012). Here the identity of Mahathir and SRK becomes significant, as the former is the father of modernization and the latter, a star who emerged in the modernizing period of the 1990s. Mahathir was so called (The Father of Modernization) for his notable economic and political endeavours in making the nation prosperous and economically stable. He proposed the Vision 2020 in 1990 as a 30-year plan to make Malaysia a developed country by 2020. On a similar track, SRK not only emerged as a popular actor during that period but also was part of the films from a period when the industry was globally and economically stable and prosperous. Moreover as SRK never had the advantage of nepotism, as many in the film industry do, he shared a similar background with Mahathir, whose father was a school principal. As SRK is mentioned as a global Indian, Mahathir is known as the icon of moderate Islam with *The New York Times* calling him one of the “moderate Muslims who can present themselves as counterpoints to the avalanche of bad news and bad public relations” (Beckman, 2002). This definition or identity is worth looking at as SRK is also positioned as a similar figure in liberal Islam.

The similar traits of these personalities made a sympathetic connection between the two, with SRK commenting that Mahathir is not only his mentor but also a special friend. SRK made this remark on the occasion of Mahathir’s birthday – “I came to know him over the past 15 to 20 years. Since then life has become more meaningful because he is like a mentor and inspiration for me” (*mStar*, 2012). This friendship of over a decade started with SRK’s first performance in Malaysia in 1998. Hence, it was a gradually building relationship for Mahathir and SRK. This is evident from the press conference SRK made with Mahathir during the Charity Fund raising program in Penang in 2000. Then, his speech sounded less like he was speaking as a friend but more as a politician when he says, “Malaysia can emerge as a great power under the leadership of Dr. Mahathir” (As quoted in Jam, 2000). Therefore, the choice of SRK was more political in keeping with the policies of Mahathir, who envisioned Malaysia to be represented by a liberal Muslim.

#### **6.4.6 Malaysian Tourism: Promotion and Branding**

There was a lot of discussion regarding tourism in Malaysia in the previous chapter, though it hasn't been fully explained how tourism emerged as a major profit making machine for a nation previously known for its vast petroleum, rubber and tin resources. Today, tourism is the second major source of foreign exchange for Malaysia (Dwyer and Wickens, 2013). The push for tourism that presented SRK with a Datukship can be analysed and justified by looking at the history of this nation when it comes to branding.

Under the premiership of Dr. Mahathir in the early 1990's, Malaysia was gaining economic stability. The most important step taken by the Mahathir government was to make Malaysia a self-sufficient industrialized nation with less dependence on foreign exports for revenue. However, with the Asian financial crisis of South Asia in 1997, the Malaysian ringgit (dollar) plummeted radically. This was one the worst financial crises to hit Asia, particularly South Asia. When the IMF's decision to cut government spending and increase interest rates didn't result in a positive output, Mahathir defied the decision and created his own plan of economic action. Soon spending had recovered appreciably, and the other South Asian countries were scrambling to catch up (Barry, 2010). As the government's economic policies are out of scope for this chapter, the discussion will focus on initiatives taken by the Malaysian Tourism Promotional Council in the wake of this crisis.

The Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB) was formed under the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism in 1992 with its focus on promoting Malaysia nationally and internationally. Popularly known as 'Tourism Malaysia', the board actively unleashed several marketing programs. In 1999, they launched the international campaign, 'Malaysia, Truly Asia', to brand the country across the globe. The launch of the 1999 campaign was at the verge of the economic crisis, when Malaysia was trying its best to attract tourist dollars and put the country on the tourist map (Roll 2006). The campaign promised to provide an 'Asian' mixture of different ethnicities (Malay, Chinese, and India) with a wide variety of culture, tradition and cuisine.

The period following and preceding the campaign was a deliberate endeavour by the government to promote Malaysia at any cost. Sports were also a major selling point for their promotional activities as it is the most popular global entertainment next to or equal to film. In 2005, Tourism Malaysia became one of the official premier sponsors of Chelsea Football Club. In the following year, realizing the greater popularity of Manchester United, they terminated the contract with Chelsea and signed a £2 million contract with Manchester United to promote 'Visit Malaysia 2007' wherever the club travelled. According to Malaysian tourism minister YB Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Mansor,

Manchester United has more fans in our part of the world than Chelsea and we feel this sponsorship deal offers us the best chance to promote Malaysia worldwide. ("Tourism Malaysia Dumps", 2006)

Following the success of these undertakings, in 2009, they signed a sponsorship deal with the Carlton Football Club of the Australian Football League. Moreover, in order to attract tourists from New Zealand many initiatives were taken in 2010 like eco-tourism, activities for urban professionals and a clean and safe environment ("Tourism Malaysia Develops", 2011). In 2011, Malaysia started an International Office of Tourism Malaysia in Auckland for the easy travel of tourists to Malaysia.

As such, Malaysian endeavours into such sponsorships was a very strategic move, taking into consideration the potential tourists and the nations from where these tourists come. Bollywood also emerged as a major part of their tourism promotion long before the sports sponsorships. The initial undertaking of this was visible in 2000. Holding on to the large fan base of SRK in Malaysia, the Malaysian Government organized a Bollywood Fiesta with an SRK look-alike in the Terminal One Shopping Centre in Seremban. SRK by then was a regular performer in Malaysia. Though he was only a look-alike, the newspaper reports quoted that the audience was frantic and ready to dance and cheer with the make-believe 'star' (Lehan, 2000). According to the event manager this was a kickoff event to introduce the country as

a potential location for the Bollywood film industry (Ibid.), and was co-sponsored by Warner Music. Subsequently, after two months, SRK reached Malaysia to shoot his film *One 2 Ka 4*. This doesn't mean SRK took into consideration the promotional gimmicks and decided to choose Malaysia, but efforts were already ongoing in Malaysia to attract the Bollywood industry, which was known for its big budget films.

Hence, by 2000, a new level of association or connection emerged between Malaysia and SRK. His film *One 2 Ka 4* was one of the first films to choose Malaysia for its exotic song and dance sequences. Such an incentive for attracting Bollywood industry serves two main purposes – the films promote Malaysia's scenic beauty around the globe inciting people to visit and secondly through location shoots, they can profit from the location fees.

After *One 2 Ka 4*, many films chose Malaysia for shooting song sequences like *Yeh Raaste Hain Pyar Ke* (Shivdasani, Sadarangani & Shivdasani, 2001), *Aaghaaz* (Ramanaidu & Ishwar, 2000) and *Ajnabee* (Galani & Abbas-Mustan, 2001). This was paralleled by the Bollywood stage shows and concerts as well as fund raising concerts under the sponsorship of the Malaysian government or Tourism Malaysia. In 2002, the International Indian Film Awards were held at Genting Highlands with the patronage of Tourism Malaysia and the presence of Malaysian Ministers. In 2006, Malaysia won the bid for hosting Global Indian Film Awards (GIFA) beating out six other countries. The comment made by Rosmah Mansor, wife of the Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister are notable at this point,

With a global reach of over 2.6 billion television viewers, the event would put Malaysia on the map as one of the world's most favored entertainment destinations in the world (*“Malaysia to Host”*, 2006)

This proved the agenda behind every Bollywood concert held in Malaysia. It's significant to note that they even considered the television viewers of Bollywood films as well as the shows. This is of major consideration as stage shows are more popular through television broadcasts rather than live coverage, due to the high-ticket price and minimal convenience. As Indian channels now reach around the globe where there is the presence of Indian expatriates, it is an excellent choice to consider that television viewers are also crucial in putting Malaysia on the map, with

the main focus of reaching India. The Indian market is lucrative, as India is the second largest source of incoming tourists to Malaysia (Tourism Malaysia Chairman Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen, As quoted in “Malaysian Tourism targets”, 2013).

The Datukship of SRK could be read as a continuation of these activities. Even though many films were shot in Malaysia, as previously mentioned, the presence of Malaysia’s scenic beauty was limited to few shots or just a song and dance sequence. It was the films *One 2 Ka 4* and *Don: The Chase Begins Again* (2006) that evidently emphasized the scenic beauty of Malaysia, and with his Knighthood sealed, the responsibility of SRK to promote Malaysia. As such, expectation was high for SRK to continue with future projects in Malaysia. A year later Khan was awarded the Datukship and the government declared their plan to hold a concert featuring SRK as they were given assurance by the star himself that he was coming to Malaysia for the filming of *Happy New Year* in 2009. However, this remained only as a declaration with neither the concert happening nor the filming. However, SRK’s subsequent visit, after being awarded the Datuk title in 2009 was for Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak’s birthday celebration as his special guest. This could be further explained in SRK’s own words,

The Prime Minister and his wife Datinshri Rosamah were very kind to me when I shot *Don* here. As a friend, I was invited to spend an evening with them...It made me feel special and it also provided me an opportunity to carry on a relationship with a country that is culturally close to ours. (*Times of India*, 2009, July 27)

Malaysian authorities had to wait four years to get SRK back to Malaysia for a film shoot. This time he came with the sequel of *Don: The Chase Begins Again - Don 2: The King is Back* (2011). After filming *Don 2*, the following year, SRK was conferred with yet another award, Malaysia’s prestigious Brand Laureate Brand Personality Award in 2012, as if they were waiting for him to make a film in Malaysia in order to honour him once again.

These government undertakings seemed to be bringing results. In 2012, the inflow of Indian tourists increased to a record rate of 11.6 million (“*Malaysia Record*”,

2012), and by 2015, Malaysia estimated a 20.7% increase in their number (“Indian tourist arrival”, 2015). To boost the ‘Visit Malaysia Year 2014’, Malaysia launched a Bollywood music album, *Jai Ho*, featuring popular yesteryear Bollywood songs re-shot with Malaysian scenic background and landmarks and sung by the popular Bollywood singer Kumar Sanu and Malaysian singer Princess Toh Puan Noor Suzanna Abdullah. Apart from this, a series of almost 50 promotional programs have been designed exclusively to attract Indian tourists, the details of which have been provided to tour operators who can then highlight these events while making tour plans (Chatterjee, 2014).

At this point the chapter turns to an analysis of the film, *One 2 Ka 4* (2001) and *Don: The Chase Begins Again* (2006), to explore further the importance of those films in marketing Malaysia.

## 6.5 Case Study

### 6.5.1 *One 2 Ka 4* (2001)

*One 2 Ka 4*, from now on referred to as *OTKF*, was a crime thriller or a cop story revolving around two police inspectors and starring Jackie Shroff and SRK. The inspector, Jackie is shot dead during a drug raid leaving the other (SRK) to hunt down the killer and his underworld drug partners. The film enjoyed moderate box-office success in India. Though data on the Malaysian box-office is not available, the film found its place in the news, as it was one of the first films to choose Malaysia as its location.

What differentiates this film from *Don* in terms of using Malaysia is that it doesn't identify the location as Malaysia, but the latter film does. In *OTKF*, Malaysia is used only for three of its romantic songs. Typical of a Bollywood song sequence, the Malaysian location is only part of a dreamland in the romantic world of the hero and heroine Roy has referred to as a "fantastic interlude disrupting the progress of the cinematic narrative" (2011, 36). Having no relation to the plot or story of the film, the scene cuts to the Malaysian location for providing exotic background for the actors to sing and dance around.

However, *OTKF* is an excellent film for marketing Malaysia, as far as the songs are considered. Each of the three songs chose different landscapes throughout Malaysia. The song "*Haye dil ke?*" chose the city and major landmark buildings that include the Suria KLCC Twin Tower and KL Tower (Fig. 6.9) as well as surrounding areas. It's only when the Twin Tower is shown that the identity of the location comes into play. Even though the song starts with a Malaysian background (Fig. 6.10), those who are not familiar with Malaysia may not recognize the location since there are no specific identifying references to Malaysia.



Figure 6.9 - Song featuring Suria Twin Tower and KL Tower (One 2 Ka 4)



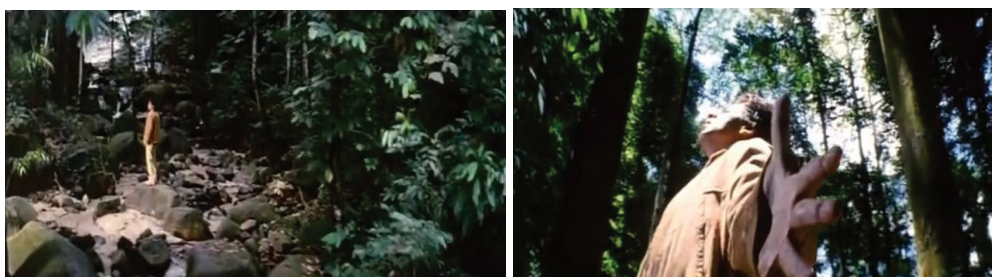


**Figure 6.10 – Song featuring Malaysia**

The second song “Khamoshiyan” was done with the backdrop of the rolling hills of Batu Caves (fig. 6.11) and in the green woods of the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (fig. 6.12). As compared to the other films that chose the scenic beauty of the lush landscapes of Switzerland and Scotland, this song provided a scenic freshness. The song "Sona Nahin" chose the exotic milieu of Malacca beach to portray the profound love of the on-screen couple (fig. 6.13). According to the Malaccan government, this has popularized Malacca for which SRK was knighted by the government (Carvalho and Hamdan, 2008).



**Figure 6.11 - Song featuring the hills of Batu caves**



**Figure 6.12 - Song featuring Forest Research Institute Malaysia**



Figure 6.13 - Song featuring Malacca beach

Though it only forms the locale of a few songs, the film does stand as promotional material showcasing the different terrains or landscapes of Malaysia. More than global publicity, the film attracted local tourists from within the country who were unaware of its scenic beauty. This is justified by the newspaper reports in Malaysia during the shooting and after the release of the film, which detailed each of these locations. One of those news reports even identified the words written on a rock in the song “Khamoshiyan” – ‘Rakan Muda’ - which for non-Malaysians may not be clear. To quote *Utusan Malaysia*,

Demikian juga perkataan Rakan Muda yang ditulis tangan di atas batu di sekitar Batu caves turut mempromosikan bahasa Melayu ke luar negara menerusi filem asing itu yang kini turut ditayangkan di negara ini

(Similarly, the word 'Rakan Muda' written on a stone in the Batu Caves is also promoting the Malay language abroad through this foreign language film that is also becoming popular in the country)

("One Two Ka Four", 2001) (Fig. 6.14)



Figure - 6.14 Rock with 'Rakan Muda' written on it

Though the argument seems to be trivial, it shows the excitement of their nation being promoted by a foreign language film. The importance that the Malaysian authority gave to this film also refers to their choice of marketing Malaysia as a dream location. Or, in other words, an attempt to provide an experience no less than a fantastic dream. Such a conclusion can be drawn by looking into the Bollywood inspired promotional advertisement of Tourism Malaysia (discussed in detail in chapter 3) that emphasized their objective through the tagline – “Every Dream Needs a Destination – Malaysia Truly Asia”.

### 6. 5. 2 *Don: The Chase Begins Again* (2006)

While many films including *OTKF* had chosen Malaysia long before *Don*, it was *Don* that wove Malaysia into its plot. In this film, Malaysia not only stands for its picturesque landscape, but also becomes the location where most of the story unfolds. Hence, unlike *OTKF*, the film signposted Malaysia by narrating the story as happening there. The major landmark, the Twin Towers (which forms the milieu of one of the significant scenes in the film) but also the everyday life and security systems including the Malaysian road network, streets and kampongs have relevance in the film.

Even after *Don*'s extensive exposure of Malaysian landscape through half of its film, the credit for choosing SRK to receive a Datukship was only given to *OTKF*. In all the official responses to the Datukship of SRK, it was *OTKF* that remained as

the reference point for popularizing Malaysia through film. This was never negligent on the part of the authorities, but a deliberate omission.

*Don* narrates the story of an underworld drug dealer Don. The Indian police seek the help of their Malaysian counterpart as they believe Don to be based in Kuala Lumpur. Hence, the film is an attempt to glorify the villain, enacted by SRK. Malaysia, stands as a nation that supports these dealings or as having an incompetent system, unsuccessful in curbing the large mafia network operating there. From the exquisite beaches of Langkawi to the pride of Malaysia – the Twin Towers, each of these locations bears the burden of negative publicity.

The audience gets the first glimpse of SRK in the film at the backdrop of the enchanting Langkawi beach where he is seen playing golf (Fig. 6.15). This is interrupted by the entry of his gang members whom he informs that someone is passing information about their illicit dealings to the Police. Abruptly, he then swings his club and hits the ball, only to smash the head of one of his gang members who is supposedly a traitor (Fig. 6.16). The serenity of the beach is reduced to the deep red of blood. After a few scenes, the camera zooms to the clean and modern road network of Malaysia (Fig. 6.17) where an ambulance with a Malaysian police escort is seen driving towards Police headquarters only to be attacked by the gang members, with a woman in the lead. Adding to the drama, the ambulance carrying the hero is picked up by a crane in the middle of the road (Fig. 6.18), and the police remain defenceless.



Figure 6. 15 – Screenshot from *Don: The Chase Begins Again* featuring Langkawi Beach

Moving on to the iconic Twin Towers scene in the film, it must be acknowledged that no other films, whether Hollywood or Bollywood, have captured the grandeur of this tower bridge with long and extra-long shots, as was done in *Don*. The scene was considered to be daring and dangerous and was not actually shot by SRK, but with his co-star Arjun Rampal. Arjun as Jasjeet is seen escaping with his son from the drug dealers who are positioned in one of the top floors of the tower. He walks above the bridge linking the two towers, finally reaching the other side to escape (Fig. 6.19). The scene created the impression that the move was tough and dangerous, and leaves the audience wondering how the criminals could have taken over the top floors of the tower.



Figure 6.16 – Screenshot from *Don: The Chase Begins Again*



Figure 6.17 – Screenshot from *Don: The Chase Begins Again* featuring Malaysian highways

The climax scene shot at the Langkawi cable car and at the Sky Bridge is also interesting (Fig. 6.20). When Don and his nemesis end up in physical combat, the Malaysian Police are seen flying in a helicopter above the Sky Bridge to get the crime boss (Fig. 6.21). However, it is quite funny to see that the Police wait for the hero, Don to incapacitate the crime boss before they venture in (Fig. 6.22).



Figure 6.18 - Screenshot from *Don: The Chase Begins Again*

Therefore, in many instances either the Malaysian police or the system have been shown to be incapable, and this follows a trope in Bollywood masala films where the police always/usually arrive late, due to their incompetencies. The Malaysian authorities are silent in mentioning this film when Knighting SRK. Though the location has been captured in a classy way without losing the exquisiteness and charm of each of these landmarks, situating it with the drug dealings and criminal activity creates a negative impression for the nation as a whole.



Figure 6.19 - 'Escape scene' of Don shot at KLCC Twin Towers

*Don* was released two years before his Knighthood. Hence, the primary case for the Malaysian authorities could be that film holds more recent memory among the audience than a 2001 film. However, if *Don* is mentioned as a promotional piece,

it then takes the very nation into question regarding all the film's negative representations. It is evident that *Don* was a boost to Malaysian tourism and authorities acknowledged this by opening up the Malaccan Prison for the crew to shoot *Don 2*.



Figure 6.20 - Climax scene of Don in the Sky Bridge, Langkawi





Figure 6.21 - Screenshot from Don featuring Malaysian Police Helicopter at the rear



Figure 6.22 – Screenshot from Don – Malaysian Police at the rear

## 6.6 Conclusion

In the earlier chapters it has already been shown that the Bollywood films hold a significant fan base in Malaysia surpassing ethnic barriers. However, this chapter traces out a different ideology offered by the Malaysian context in defining the popularity of Bollywood here. The political use of Bollywood for branding

Malaysia and promoting tourism is a novel way, which is less explored, previously in any transnational reception of a film.

It is discussed in the earlier chapter that Bollywood stage shows have been popular in Malaysia and most of these shows are sponsored by Tourism Malaysia or under the patronage of the Malaysian government. This chapter identifies the political support of Bollywood for promoting tourism and making it prominent on the tourist map of the world. Apart from sports sponsorships, Bollywood is one of Malaysia's major sources of promotional activity. A major part of this chapter deals with the persona of SRK and the political favouritism enjoyed by him in Malaysia. In this quest for stardom only a few Indian stars have been successful globally, and one among it is the Bollywood star, Shah Rukh Khan. The stardom of SRK in Malaysia is very intricate and unique as it is more of a mutually benefiting business entrepreneurship built on his identity and popularity. If for SRK it is a way to make a permanent base of fandom and honour in a foreign country, for Malaysia, he is a brand to promote Malaysia across the world, as SRK is already stamped as an international brand himself.

Choosing SRK as the recipient of the highest honour of Malaysia opened an opportunity to examine the reason behind this choice. I have argued that the reasons are a combination of his charismatic persona, global popularity and his liberal Islamic identity. Here the choice seems to be perfect as on the one hand his liberal Islamism can represent Malaysia in a positive light and on the other hand, his identity as an Indian takes the vast Indian expatriates and citizens into confidence in choosing Malaysia as a tourist destination. Proving the branding strategy of Malaysia successful, there was a considerable hike in tourism every year with 501,828 tourists in 2011 and 514,926 in 2012. ("Malaysia eyes", 2013).

The choice of Bollywood by the Malaysian Government as opposed to Tamil films is also a matter to be pondered. While the discussion on Bollywood and promotional activities take momentum, it leads to an uncertainty as to why the Tamil films lack this charisma with Malaysian authorities. More than Bollywood, it would be Tamil films that have chosen Malaysia as their location considering the Tamil population here. The explanation of this is located at the very difference in reception of both of these industries. Tamil film, which is known as Kollywood in India (and

like Bollywood, the word is gradually getting popular elsewhere) is one of the regional film industries whose reception is limited only to Tamil Nadu and its neighbouring States like Kerala and Karnataka in India. Though, like Bollywood, Tamil films are now trying to get a global outlook and release, this is only a recent development and is limited only to very few high budget films. Before this, Tamil films used to release without subtitles outside India where there is more concentration of Tamil diaspora. As such, in Malaysia as well, Tamil films found a significant amount of Tamil audience as they form the majority of Indian diaspora here. However, outside this community, the popularity of these films are rather meagre, as are their stars. In the Malaysian national newspapers, only on rare occasions are the Tamil film industry mentioned and when compared to Bollywood, the news coverage on Tamil films is very rare. The absence of subtitles is one of the factors that limits their reception among non-Tamilians in Malaysia. This provides it with a regionalised image, as opposed to the national or global image that Bollywood delivers. Hence, even though a lot of Tamil films are shot in Malaysia, it is rather unnoticed by rest of the society as its reception is very much limited to the Tamil community. This is in stark contrast to Bollywood which is watched by an audience irrespective of any ethnic or language specifications, both in and outside India. Even though the promotional activities of Bollywood started in 2000, Malaysia needed a global medium that could cross language and cultural barriers to promote tourism. However, Malaysia has been very prudent in choosing the industry and films that could officially prove to be their promotional medium. While, *Don* is one of the films that prominently placed Malaysia on the tourism map with Indian media explicitly narrating the background and location of the film, Malaysia had cautiously avoided mentioning this film when they conferred the Datukship on SRK. SRK with his global and liberal image, serves as a bridge for Malaysia to promote their tourism using Bollywood films.

## Chapter 7

# Conclusion

### 7.1 Research Findings

This study is part of an ongoing discussion on Bollywood and its transnational flow, and, in this particular study, Malaysia demonstrates an increasing mainstreaming in the reception of Bollywood. By looking at representations of Bollywood in discourses and the broader Malaysian context, it becomes apparent that Bollywood has a conflicting yet balanced image as being a threat and an endorser, both of which are related to its popularity. Its popularity among people, dissatisfaction among religious leaders, and its value to the ruling government shows Bollywood enjoying a mainstream reception. Here mainstreaming not only means a larger audience, but also signifies the crossover of an entertainment medium to become part of the dominant state of affairs, which is beyond the realm of entertainment. To a great extent it is the Malaysian socio-political context that makes this reception unique. Van der Heide's work *Malaysian Cinema, Asian Film: Border Crossings and National Cultures*, served as an important primary source to look beyond the national cinema and to consider the context of the popularity of other film cultures in Malaysia. However, for Van der Heide, as foreign film industries have been influencing and shaping Malaysian cinema, these films form a part of a larger Malaysian film culture. Moreover, for him the influence of Indian cinema is limited and restricted to the cinematic discourses, i.e., the particular features of film and the crossover audiences in Malaysia. But in this this thesis, I conclude that Bollywood is not only a part of Malaysian film culture, but forms a larger part of Malaysian socio-politics, thus showing a mainstreaming of Bollywood films in the Malaysian context which I term here as 'Malaysianisation'. The significance of this Malaysianisation lies in how these conflicting representations of Bollywood emulate the prevailing socio-political scene in Malaysia.

The findings of this thesis is discussed here in two parts – Malaysianisation of Bollywood and the implications of this for the theoretical assumptions about transnational film and Bollywood.

### 7.1.1 ‘Malaysianisation’ of Bollywood

I have mentioned previously that the reception of Bollywood is not restricted to the diaspora, but that it has a mainstream and wider audience, influencing not only film culture, but also the larger Malaysian religious and political scene. To briefly list a few instances –

(a) The association of Mahathir with SRK along with this Datuk title gives the impression that the political sphere in Malaysia is trying to give a Malay image to SRK.. Here Malayness becomes less problematic as SRK represents a liberal Islamic identity where he can easily balance his religious identity as a Muslim (favouring Malay) and his liberal ideas on the same (for his wife being a Hindu, and he himself belonging to a Hindu Nation). There is an active political support for Bollywood - the official conferring of the ‘Datuk’ title on Shah Rukh Khan who was dressed in the . The celebrated public figures in the Islamic world were often the representative religious leaders from the Mullahs or Muftis or from the Surah council of the respective nations or the autocratic dictators from the monarchies of the Middle East or the Arab nations.

(b) There is involvement and participation of non-Indians or people of non-Indian origin in the creation and dissemination of Bollywood discourses, whether it is reviewers or laymen who discuss Bollywood in their personal spheres like Facebook and blogs or the religious leaders who talk about the perils of Bollywood, and the politicians who discuss the advantages of Bollywood.

(c) Discourses on Bollywood surpass the cinematic discourses and spread across Malaysian cultural, political and religious conversations such as Bollywood influence on Islam and Bollywood as a branding medium.

(d) Bollywood (stage and music) shows and award ceremonies are conducted in the presence of the ruling Malaysian ministers. Also, the permission to shoot *Don 2* in the historic Malaccan jail by the Malaysian government signifies the political endorsement and support for Bollywood.

I am now going to expound the characteristics of this Malaysianisation by locating it with the prevailing socio-political realities in Malaysia. In other words, the reception of Bollywood unleashes many similarities with the broader socio-political scene in Malaysia, and therefore the reception of Bollywood mirrors the broader social realities there. Here, I am relating the main aspects of this reception or its Malaysianisation to the three major constituents of society – the general public, the religious sphere and the political realm.

Akin to the fact that Malay Muslims form the significant and majority population in Malaysia who hold the most political power, in the reception of Bollywood also, they remain significant, whether in accepting the films or disdaining them. While this significance for Malays in the social sphere is mainly due to their majority (in the ethnic demography of Malaysia) and the official affirmative actions<sup>1</sup> adopted by the government, in the reception of Bollywood, their significance rises because of their involvement in its reception, despite being a foreign cultural medium. This research has not considered a classified analysis of audience based on race or ethnicity, but through each chapter it becomes obvious that apart from the Indian diaspora, a larger portion of discourses on Bollywood are attached and addressed to the Malay audience, thereby making them significant. It is in the Malay newspapers that the gossip columns and Bollywood personality stories were prevalent and, it is the same Malay fascination for Bollywood that brought out the discourses on Bollywood as a religious threat. It is these factors that make the reception of Bollywood in Malaysia unique and intriguing.

---

<sup>1</sup> Government affirmative actions include New Economic Policy of 1971 adopted after the 1969 racial riots to provide socio-economic restructuring and to achieve national harmony in Malaysia. The affirmation action was aimed at majority ethnic group, Malay, who had lower income rates. This Policy is succeeded by National Development Policy in 1991.

This connection with the Malay audience arises from the absence of a glamorous domestic film industry along with the cultural proximity between Malays and Indians. Malay film itself is largely inspired and influenced by Indian films. Van der Heide (2002) proposed that Malaysian film culture is a mix of different language films from different nations. The choice of Malay films to choose the Bollywood style of melodramatic narration shows their ease at adopting this style, which is similar to their own cultural forms like *Bangsawan* and *Asli*. This is more evident when we look at the iconic Malaysian hero P. Ramlee. Ramlee himself tried to adopt a name that was more Indian than his Malay name, Teuku Zakaria bin Teuku Nyak Puteh. Even though he set his stories in the class and caste differences that prevailed in the Malaysian society, he maintained the melodramatic narration in his films inspired by Indian films.

Though the discourses reveal the presence of the Indian diaspora in the reception of Bollywood, their significance is still unclear or remains insignificant in quantified terms. In the course of this research, the presence of the Indian diaspora and their attitudes are seemingly obscured in these discourses for several reasons. On one side, the attitude of the diaspora is obscured in the conversations that involve the Malay community. On the other side, it is because that they form the minority in Malaysia, and 81% of this minority are Indian Tamils (Lal, 2006). It is for this significant diaspora that Tamil films are released in Malaysia without subtitles. As Clothey (2006) states, the Tamil diaspora, in general, is proud of their heritage, language and culture, and this is also true when looking at the Tamil community in Malaysia. They follow the same rituals and celebrations as in their homeland of Indian (Tamil Nadu). As such, in Malaysia the celebration of *Thaipusam* (a festival celebrated on the full moon day of the Tamil month of 'thai' – January – February) acts as a way in which they affirm their identity as Tamils in a nation where they form the minority (Clothey, 2006). Though for many generations they have been in Malaysia, they still value their mother tongue, Tamil, and try to keep up their identity through attire and ceremonies. This appreciation for their culture can also be seen in the difference of the reception of Tamil and Bollywood films – the former is exclusively watched by the Tamil community, and the latter has a mixed audience (Malay, Chinese, and Indians). Therefore, when talking about the Indian

diaspora who watch Bollywood in Malaysia, it is always a minor part of a minority who watches, which means their attitude to Bollywood is continually obscured in media discourses.

Moving to the religious sphere, Malaysia is a multi-racial country with Islam as the national religion, but the country is not officially an Islamic State. Though the Constitution provides religious freedom by taking into consideration the different races and ethnicities that inhabit Malaysia, it has always faced religious intolerance and insurgencies. The racial riot of 1969 between the Malay and the Chinese community, or the recent attack against Hindu temples and Christian churches roughly reflects this scenario. As Islam is the State religion, Islamic councils and their decisions are given prominence by the political sphere. It is important here to consider the religious status of Malaysian Indians at this point.

Among the Chinese community, Muslims form only a negligible minority of 0.66 percent (mainly by compulsory conversions for inter-religious marriage), while among the Indian community, Muslims form almost 4.13 percent (Population distribution and basic demographic characteristics -Report, 2010). Often these Muslims are easily absorbed into the mainstream Malay community due to their religious affiliation and the increasing amalgamation of culture through marriages between Malay Muslims and Indian Muslims. This absorption and amalgamation is also problematic as there are increasing number of marriages between Hindu Indian and Malay due to the cultural familiarity and similarity. However, if the Hindu Indian does not embrace Islam, the marriage is considered void. Moreover, while non-Muslims are allowed to embrace Islam, the Malays are not allowed to leave Islam, thus giving supremacy to Islam when compared to other religions in Malaysia.

The powers to make such religious decision lies within the Islamic councils of the respective states in Malaysia. It is often upon their discretion that decisions are taken regarding religious issues, and it is they who often make the conversion controversial with their pro-Islamic moves. To quote an incident in 2013, the Selangor State Islamic Religious Department (JAIS) trespassed on a Hindu marriage ceremony in a temple to



question the religious identity of the bride, who was a practising Hindu. JAIS claims that since her father had converted to Islam his religious identity should naturally be handed down to the offspring, thus making her also a Muslim. The case is still pending in the court.

This situation is quite similar to the Muftis' or the Malaysian Council of Islamic Jurists' (MCIJ) denouncement of Bollywood in 2001 for maligning the Malay people and their religious beliefs. Here the religious body has identified a sort of Indianisation of the Malay community because of the Malay audience's fascination for Bollywood films, which come from a Hindu nation and display Hindu culture in abundance. The Muftis' apprehension on the Malay affinity towards Bollywood films was interpreted as the fear of losing religious control over the population. They suspect Bollywood films will indirectly lead the illiterate Malay population towards much more lenient Hindu religious practices and personal freedom. The claims and counter claims were covered in the mainstream Malaysian newspapers for several days, which ultimately resulted in the cut back in the telecast time of Bollywood films on television. Furthermore, Bollywood always passed through a cleansing process of censorship whereby any films having serious Islamic or religious themes and milieu that could possibly generate anti-Islamic sentiments were banned.

The Ministry of Information's decision to reduce the airtime of Bollywood films on satellite television channels takes this discussion to the third major factor of Malaysianisation - how the Bollywood reception reflects the political sphere in Malaysia. Even after the Muftis' interference in the influx of Bollywood films, Bollywood never faced any serious threats or setbacks, only exuberance, thanks to the same Malaysian government who agreed to amend the telecast time of Bollywood films. This air of controversy for a cultural and entertainment product never reduced the audiences or the viewership of Bollywood films in Malaysia. Also, the Malaysian government was not willing to impose a ban on the production, marketing and exhibition of Bollywood films in Malaysia. No new laws or censorship rules were made by the Malaysian government

against Bollywood in spite of the Islamic Muftis' outcry against Bollywood's cultural pollution of Malaysian minds.

The ruling Barisan Nasional and its main constituent party UMNO, claims a nationalist, moderate and secular outlook. Though it was the Barisan Nasional themselves who initiated the Islamic policies after the 1970s under the leadership of Mahathir Mohammed. The post-Mahathir period saw a politically secular face of BN under a progressive ideology or theory of governance called Islam Hadhari or Civilizational Islam which venerates Islamic beliefs, and provides a more egalitarian perspective on governance, human rights, minority rights and economic development based on the teachings of the Quran. However, UMNO and BN are often criticized for their pro-Malay stances, whether through their attacks on Hindu temples or Christian churches or the increasing power that they provide the Islamic councils in Malaysia on decision-making. Yoga is banned in Malaysia among the Malay community and there are restrictions on translating the Bible into the Malay language as well. Hence, secularism is defined as only a tactic to replenish the voting reserves in the Malay centred population areas.

This double-standard by the ruling government is also seen in the appreciation of Bollywood. While they agreed to restrict the television airtime of Bollywood, they were (and still are) giving a warm welcome to Bollywood films and, particularly, its intermediaries like award shows and dance shows, which are often endorsed by the presence of the Malaysian ruling Ministers. However, it was with the Datukship of Shah Rukh Khan that the pro-Islamic appreciation of Bollywood, for political reasons, became evident. The choice of Shah Rukh Khan suggests the way they 'Malaynize' Bollywood by taking into consideration his declared Islamic religious identity. While they project an inclusiveness by selecting a foreign star (from a Hindu nation) for the highest civil honour in Malaysia, inwardly they were trying to supplement their Islamic image with a global Muslim star in order to promote their nation.

In the international political scene, Malaysia is viewed as an "economically successful and politically stable multicultural Islamic nation", which is "religious but

modern and moderate” (Aziz & Shamsul, 2004, p. 353). Even the worldwide tourism marketing campaign of Malaysia is called ‘Malaysia Truly Asia’, which signifies Malaysia as a meeting point for all other Asian cultures. For a country delivering such an image to the world, the choice of Bollywood can be rationalized. As similar to the Malaysian national identity, Bollywood, though an Indian industry, is now a global medium having a hybrid modernity. It is this mix of tradition and modernity that makes it a pliable cultural product balancing the indigenous and universal appeal.

While these has been the cinematic implications on ‘Malaysianisation’, the term carries wider implications and appositeness considering the socio-political circumstances in Malaysia. The term could be contested and contrasted with ‘Islamisation’, a drastic restructuring of Malaysian society giving preference to Islamic laws and institutions by establishing Islamic Universities, Islamic Bank, the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization and Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (IKIM). Islamization in the Malaysian society triggered during 1980s was reflecting the institutionalization of the Dakwah movement by generating a Malay nationalism by connecting it with Islamic identity. This movement was even continuing the affirmative actions taken aftermath the 1969 racial riots giving pre-eminence to Islam in the public life, and a a privileged position in government, education and the bureaucracy. As such, the term Islamisation carries a pro-Malay prospect in its ideology and application. As opposed to this, ‘Malaysianisation holds a more progressive outlook when analysed from a religious/ethnic perspective. Malaysianisation encompasses an idea of national harmony and solidarity as it denies any ethnic/religious specification in its nomenclature. Now I will discuss the attributes of ‘Malaysianisation’. As discussed within the realm of Bollywood reception, this Malaysianisation gives prominence to Malay identity thereby showing a resemblance to the concept of Islamisation. However, as opposed to the latter, Malaysianisation, offers a more liberal outlook leaving space for other ethnic identity to advance their interest. This becomes less problematic as on one side while it prioritizes Malay identity, on the other hand this preference could be explained as derived from its majority status in the society. In fact, though Malaysianisation differs from Islamisation only on a marginal basis, this offers a safe zone phenomenon where a racial conditioning

is absent (atleast) outwardly. Assimilating these ideas, it could be said that Malaysianisation is like putting the old wine of racism into a new wineskin labelled with 'moderate sectarianism'.

This could be read with the ideology of ruling coalition Barisan Nasional. The Coalition consist of UMNO ( United Malays National Organisation), MCA (Malaysian Chinese Association), and MIC (Malaysian Indian Congress), a union of all major ethnic groups with UMNO having the authority. This composition along with the earlier UMNO leaders who led the country by liberal and moderate values, provided UMNO with a secular image. In 2004, the then Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi introduced a list of values or approaches called 'Islam Hadhari' for a 'progressive' and 'forward-looking' Muslim population (As quoted in Badawi, 2006, p.1). The Principles of Islam Hadhari include faith and piety in Allah, free and independent people, cultural and moral integrity etc. Hence, the religious beliefs of Malays is held high through this, though it never states that Malaysia is an Islamic nation. When the rift between Anwar Ibrahim and UMNO began to widen, the opposition coalition Pakatan Rakyat became more accommodative (with their outward support for non-Malays and their freedom), while on the other side UMNO (with its coalition BN) became more conservative and parochial. Malaysia began to witness pro-Malay stands taken by government whether it is in the demolition of Hindu temples or Christian churches, or in the ban of using 'Allah' in the Catholic newspaper, The Herald. This lead them to an identity crisis where they have to deal with their conservative pro-Malay stand against a secular idea of representing all ethnic communities in Malaysia. While knighting SRK, this was seen as the intension. SRK's image as a liberal Muslim was advantageous for the political administration to use him as a recipient of the award, but also enabled to represent a 'Malay-nised' SRK (when he was made to dress in the traditional May outfit).

### **7.1.2 Malaysianisation and Transnational Bollywood Studies**

Transnationalism as a theoretical idea comprises a series of approaches and assumptions about the global flow and marketing of films. Though the transnational

flow of film and other cultural media has a long history, it recently attained much attention from media scholars due to the increase in crossover production and distribution. In general, three broad categories can be realized in the academic exploration of transnational films - the first is the focus on the cross-border movement of film talent in relation to production and distribution (like Meeuf & Raphael, 2013; Hudson, 2006; Tsai, 2005), the second is focused on the diaspora and the conflict of home and host cultures in the meaning of film (like Kaur & Sinha, 2005; Punathambekar, 2010; O'Neill, 2013) and the third category considers this cross-border activity as a result of cultural proximity (Tsai, 2005; Iwabuchi, 2004). While evaluating the literature on transnational film, it becomes evident that a significant amount of these studies are focused on Asian film industries like Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Indian films that cross national borders in production, distribution and reception.

I will now focus mainly on the border crossings of Bollywood as it is the main concern of this section. It is in this second aforementioned category that most of the studies on Bollywood crossover find a place. At this point, it must be said that there are only very few academic works on Bollywood that use the word 'transnational' to explain the border crossings. However, by looking at the works that use this concept or terminology, there is no difference to the ones that look at the reception of Bollywood beyond its national boundary without considering this concept, such as the many works I explored in the literature review, under the section 'Exploring the Diverse Reception'. Just to give an example, Kaur & Sinha (2005) use the term transnational to denote the travels of Bollywood through the different Indian diasporas around the globe. Hence, they have a separate section called "Travel" to explore academic works that look at Bollywood through a diasporic perspective. This is no different from the works that examine Bollywood in different international domains such as Punathambekar's (2005) exploration into the Indian diaspora in United States and how they relate to Bollywood films as part of their day to day life, or Hansen's (2005) study on South Africa's Indian diaspora, in which he claims the popularity of films such as *KKHH* is because they represent a modern India that the diaspora are comfortable in accepting and identifying with.

When taking into consideration the academic work that deals with the reception of Bollywood in specific nations, within the larger category of transnational studies on Bollywood, it must be said that though these studies tried to locate Bollywood beyond its national boundaries, they nevertheless try to limit it within the 'national' identity. By this I mean that these works try to define Bollywood under the notion of 'nation', in this case Indian, by limiting their studies to the Indian diaspora. A shortcoming of this approach is the absence of any information on the broader context of reception, and the meaning that the different geographical region provides for Bollywood beyond its diasporic or national boundary. The advantage of the approach that this thesis has adopted, a contextual study based on discourse analysis, is that it helps to identify factors and assumptions that give meaning to the reception of Bollywood beyond the diaspora.

Apart from how films bring meaning, it is the context that adds meaning to the reception. Staiger (2000) states that films never have a fixed meaning but different meanings for different audiences in different contexts. Malaysia serves as a nation having this 'different' audience for Bollywood because of its basic quality for being multi-ethnic. By adopting a historical analysis, this thesis attempts to bring forth the involvement of the non-Indian diaspora in the reception of Bollywood. On the one side, I analysed the conditions that made Bollywood popular beyond the Indian diaspora, on the other are the discourses which helped identify the major ideologies associated with Bollywood, along with the contexts within which these representations are made and in turn reflect the larger social realities in Malaysia. Therefore, if Bollywood is considered as a threat in Malaysia, it is imperative to look at in what context such an attribution evolved and how it could be related to the larger Malaysian context.

This research deviates from the conventional way of doing a reception study based on audience analysis either qualitative or quantitative. The reception study in this research adopted a discourse based analysis where film discourses in various media have been analysed and situated within a broader sociopolitical and religious context. The news discourses serves here as a significant source and method of data collection as a local or national medium has its own role in assimilating dominant cultural elements in a

society. As far as Malaysia is concerned, news media is controlled by strict censorship laws. Hence the presence or absence of Bollywood discourses and, the types and topics of news reports on Bollywood could possibly reflect the ways in which Malaysia identify Bollywood. As it is not a diasporic study, sampling of audience would have been tricky considering the different ethnic groups in Malaysia. A sample survey would have provided a limited exposure to the larger political and religious context of reception, and would have suggested only mere personal opinion regarding the films. Hence the role of a political administration or a religious institute in the reception of a cultural industry like Bollywood would have remained unexplored if the research would have limited its approach to an audience survey or interview. In this way, this reception study takes it a step further from the diasporic study and looks at the context that gives meaning to a cultural industry. Moreover, it emphasises the fact that in a global world film is plural and fluid, and as far the global flow of Bollywood is concerned, its meaning is not created by or confined to the Indian diaspora, but a larger interplay of context, text and audience.

## **7.2 Self-reflection - 'From Bollywood enthusiast to academic cinophile'**

Being a hardcore Bollywood fan, the decision to take this as my research topic was a rather easy and uncomplicated one. However, being a foreigner and having no previous knowledge of Malaysia, the endeavour soon turned into a challenge. I was quite ambitious at the beginning of my research until I realized that academic work on the reception of Bollywood in Malaysia was quite minimal. This also presented a struggle in trying to narrow down my research, as I wished to offer a comprehensive and foundational study on the topic. I've considered a range of approaches and sub-themes such as audience analysis, diaspora studies and effect studies in the initial stage of my research. The presence of the Indian diaspora was indeed a captivating angle, as the transnational reception of a film and its diaspora are significant. However, while reviewing the literature on Bollywood, precisely on the transnational reception, it became

evident that most of these studies focused on the diaspora, with very little concentration on the audience beyond the Indian diaspora, and the broader context of its reception. As said before, being a Bollywood enthusiast, I tried to frequent cinemas in Malaysia as well watch Bollywood films that sparked my interest. I got the general impression that there are a lot of non-Indian audience members who enjoy Bollywood and sing along to the songs and weep at the emotional scenes. Rather than the on screen cinema, it was this scene about the presence of the non-Indian audience members in the cinema hall that fascinated me. An audience analysis seemed impractical as I find it difficult to converse in Malay and I consider communication in their local language as essential for getting to the real emotions of audiences regarding a cultural industry that they value. I had a strong intention that my research should form a foundation of academic work on this area of Bollywood reception in Malaysia and give a comprehensive presentation of the topic.

It is therefore a result of a deliberate and precise trial and error procedure that I eventually chose the approach of discourse analysis combined with a broader Malaysian contextual analysis. At various stages of this research, there were challenges and roadblocks as this is an uncommon approach in film studies. At the end of this endeavour, I feel that it is because of this approach that a broader view of the reception of Bollywood was possible which could be applied to other transnational reception studies. Moreover, it opens up possibilities for looking deeper into certain areas or issues mentioned in this research for further investigations such as a classified and comparative audience analysis and the ethnographic exploration into diasporic experience in watching Bollywood films. By saying this, I'm not considering it as a limitation to my research, but as a way towards further research in this area. This belief evolved from my realization that a PhD thesis can be ambitious, but should be practical and should lead to new areas of investigation for future research.



### **7.3 Future Directions - 'The land is still barren'**

This research has tried to open up various ways of looking at the reception of film. For instance, if a different approach or method is adopted, this research would have been delivered a different result or conclusion. One such direction would be to consider using audience research to analyse the different ways in which each ethnic group considers Bollywood. Such a comparative study would provide, to some extent, the exact meaning of reception in a country like Malaysia where multiple ethnicities watch and discuss Bollywood.

Following this is a more popular way of analysing transnational Bollywood - a diasporic approach. As far as Malaysia is concerned, this would be very interesting as two language films exist in Malaysia for the Indian-diaspora, Hindi and Tamil, with the latter having an exclusive audience consisting only of Tamilians and those south Indians who understand Tamil. The difference in the reception of these two films itself serves as an interesting intervention. An alternative way could be to look at the Tamil diaspora in Malaysia, and their attitudes towards Tamil films and Bollywood, and how they negotiate the Indianness of these two different industries.

Finally, when considering the influx of Bollywood films, which is also a big commercial entity, a plethora of possible areas remain exciting - one among which could be the revenue model of Bollywood in Malaysia, and the economic advantages that Malaysian market provides Bollywood that make Indian filmmakers choose this nation as a favored shooting destination

### **7.4 Conclusion**

Bollywood is a cultural industry that reflects the socio-political changes in society. It has always displayed this commitment to reflect the particularities of a period whether during the angry years of 1970s, or the 1980s when unemployment and social disorder prevailed in Indian society, to the contemporary Bollywood that reflects a globalised India in every aspect of its life. Such a transitional and transnational film industry will always be of interest to film scholars who find new areas or angles to explore. As context

is given priority in this research, it must be said that, as the context changes, there will be changes in the reception of a cultural industry. This was the basic idea that Klinger (1994) tried to suggest when she analysed the films of Douglas Sirk. She says that Sirk's films generated different meanings like 'subversive, trash, classic, camp and vehicle of gender definition' at different periods of its reception (p. xv). Likewise, Bollywood in Malaysia may provide an entirely different meaning when it is analysed a few years later as changing socio-political situations can influence (favourably or adversely) its reception, exhibition and thus the status and meaning of the films shown here. However, this thesis sets a foundation for further work on this enduring and dynamic industry not only in Malaysia, but also in any of its global sites of reception.

## References

- ABIM Protest Broadcast film "My Name Is Khan" in conjunction with the Feast of Sacrifice (2008, October 28). *Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia* (ABIM Official Website). Retrieved from [www.abim.org.my/v1/index.php/arkib-abim/35-fashion/317-abim-bantah-penyiaran-filem-qmy-name-is-khanqsempena-aidil-adha](http://www.abim.org.my/v1/index.php/arkib-abim/35-fashion/317-abim-bantah-penyiaran-filem-qmy-name-is-khanqsempena-aidil-adha)
- Abim selarsiaran filem kontroversi Hindustan (2012, October 28). *Malaysiakini*. Retrieved from <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/212800>
- Adnan, M. H (1991). Development and Anti-Development Messages in Film, Television and Advertising, *Media Asia*, 18 (2), 63-72. Retrieved from [http://dr.ntu.edu.sg/bitstream/handle/10220/2361/AMIC\\_1991\\_01\\_15.pdf?sequence=1](http://dr.ntu.edu.sg/bitstream/handle/10220/2361/AMIC_1991_01_15.pdf?sequence=1)
- Ahmad, Akbar (1992). Bombay films: The cinema as metaphor for Indian society and politics. *Modern Asian Studies*, 2 (2), 289-320. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/312677>
- Ahmad, D (2010, December 31). The Religious Pluralism Debate: A Critique. Retrieved from <http://drdzul.com/2010/12/31/the-religious-pluralism-debate-a-critique/>
- Ahmad, Z, A (2006, January 24). Black Metal culture banned. *The Star*. <http://www.thestar.com.my/story.aspx/?file=%2f2006%2f1%2f24%2fnation%2f13195718>
- Ahmed, N (Producer) and Nair. S. K (Director) (2001). *One 2 Ka 4* (Motion picture). India: Dreamz Unlimited
- Akmar, S (2001, June 16). Why should wrestling, Bollywood and concerts be such a distraction? *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=9066&tid=44&cid=3>

- Al-Attas and Jaafar, J (2001, February 17). Towards better TV Programming. *New Strait Times*. P.3.
- Ali, H (2012, December 15). SRK: Tun Mahathir Adalah Mentor Saya. Retrieved from [http://www.murai.com.my/article/default.asp?article\\_id=13591&c=1&s=1](http://www.murai.com.my/article/default.asp?article_id=13591&c=1&s=1)
- Alias, M (1997, May 3). Artis Bollywood menyinggung, bukanmenghibur. *BeritaHarian*. Retrieved from [blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=90801&tid=40&cid=3](http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=90801&tid=40&cid=3)
- Allen, R. C. (2009). From Film and History: Theory and Practice. In Braudy, L and Cohen, M (Eds.), *Film Theory and Criticism* (pp. 606-619). New York: Oxford University Press
- Alter, E (2006, August 16). *Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna*. Retrieved from <http://www.filmjournal.com/kabhi-alvida-naa-kehna>
- Altman, R (1981). *Genre, the musical: A reader*. London: Routledge.
- American music performance banned from tv (2006, February 13). *Freemuse* (Online). Retrieved from <http://freemuse.org/archives/625>
- Amizah W, Chang P. K and Aziz, J (2009). Film Censorship in Malaysia: Sanctions of religious, cultural and moral values. *Jurnal Komunikasi, Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 25 (1), 42-49
- Anantharaman, G (2008). *Bollywood Melodies: A History of the Hindi Film Song*. New Delhi: Penguin Books
- Anderson, B (1991). *Imagined Communities*. New York: Verso
- Anderson, J. (1996). *The reality of illusion: An ecological approach to cognitive film theory*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Andrew, D (1995). *Mists of Regret: Culture and sensibility in classic French film*. Princeton: Princeton University Press
- Andrew, D (1996). Film and History. In John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson (eds.), *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies* (pp. 176-89). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Annamalai, E. (2001). *Managing multilingualism in India- Political and linguistic manifestations*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Anwar, F. (2009, July 22). Be Dazzled. *New Strait Times*, pp. 10 (Life&Times Section)
- Appadurai, A. (1990a). Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy. *Public Culture*, 2(2), 1-24. DOI: 10.1215/08992363-2-2-1
- Appadurai, A. (1990b). Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy. *Theory Culture & Society*, 7 (1), 295-310, DOI: 10.1177/026327690007002017
- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis, U.S.A: University of Minnesota Press.
- Arnold, A. (1992). Aspects of Production and Consumption in the Popular Hindi Film Song Industry. *Asian Music*, 24 (1), 122-136. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/834454.pdf>
- Atak, F. H (2012, December 15). Shah Rukh Khan Impressed With Mahathir Philosophy. *mStar*. Retrieved from [mstar.com.my/hiburan/cerita.asp?file=/2012/12/15/mstar\\_hiburan/20121215010734&sec=mstar\\_hiburan](http://mstar.com.my/hiburan/cerita.asp?file=/2012/12/15/mstar_hiburan/20121215010734&sec=mstar_hiburan)
- Athique (2005). *Non-resident cinema: transnational audiences for Indian films*. Doctoral dissertation. University of Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia
- Athique, A (2011). Theorizing the Diasporic Audience: The Case of Indian Films, *Participations: Journal of Audience Research*, 8 (2), 1-23. Retrieved from <http://www.participations.org/Volume%208/Issue%202/1a%20Athique.pdf>
- Athique, A. M (2010). Watching Indian Movies in Australia. *South Asian Popular Culture*, 3(2), 117-133. DOI:10.1080/14746680500234546
- Athique, A.M (2008). The 'crossover' audience: Mediated multiculturalism and the Indian film. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 22(3), 299-311. DOI:10.1080/10304310701713567

- Azia, A and Shamsul, A. B (2004). The religious, the plural, the secular and the modern: a brief critical survey on Islam in Malaysia. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 5(3), 341-356. DOI: 10.1080/1464937042000288651
- Aziz, F. (2010, October 7). Zee stars wow the crowd. *The Star*. Retrieved from thestar.com.my/metro/story.asp?file=/2010/10/7/central/7157242
- Azz, J (2011), *Shabrukh Khan Malaysia (2011) [Malay] SDTV RipMkv-Jie*. Retrieved from <http://jieazzmovie.net/mkvrmb/shahrukh-khan-malaysia-2011-malay-sdtriv-mpkv-jie/>
- Badawi, A. A (2006). *Islam Hadhari: A model approach for development and progress*. Petaling Jaya: MPH Publishing.
- Banaji, S (2006). *Reading 'Bollywood'*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- Bandyopadhyay, R. (2008). Nostalgia, identity and tourism: Bollywood in the Indian diaspora. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 6(2), 79-100. DOI:10.1080/14766820802140463
- Banerjee, I (2002). The Locals Strike Back? : Media globalization and localization in the new Asian television landscape. *International Communication Gazette*, 64(6), 517-535. DOI: 10.1177/17480485020640060101
- Barjatya, A. K; Barjatya, K. K (Producers) and Barjatya, S. R (Director) (1994). *Hum Aap Ke Hai Kuan!* (Motion picture). India: Rajshri Productions
- Barnard, Timothy. P (2006). Film, Literature and Context in Southeast Asia; P. Ramlee, Malay film and History. In Chou, C & Houben. V (eds.) *Southeast Asian Studies: Debates and New Directions* (pp. 162-179). Singapore: Institute of South east Asian Studies
- Basri, F. K. H & Alauddin, R. A. (2003). The search for a Malaysian cinema: between U-Wei Shaari, Shuhaimi, Yusof and LPFM. In Samsudin A. Rahim (ed.). *Isu-isu komunikasi dalam pembangunan*. Bangi: Pusat Pengajian Media dan Komunikasi UKM.

- Benett, P. (2012, February 9). SHOWBIZ: Homage to Bollywood. *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from [www.nst.com.my/life-times/holiday/showbiz-homage-to-bollywood-1.43775](http://www.nst.com.my/life-times/holiday/showbiz-homage-to-bollywood-1.43775)
- Bhabha, H (1994). *The location of culture*. New York: Routledge
- Bhardwaj, P (2008). Foreign shoots spread Bollywood's reach. *Asia Times* (online). Retrieved from [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/HE19Df01.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/HE19Df01.html)
- Bicket, D. (2005). Reconsidering geocultural contraflow: Intercultural information flows through trends in global audiovisual trade. *Global Media Journal (online)*, 4(6). Retrieved from <http://lass.calumet.purdue.edu/cca/gmj/sp05/gmj-sp05-bicket.htm>
- BintangPoonammenyinarakeranfilem (1998, March 3). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from [http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=1998&dt=0303&pub=Utusan\\_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et\\_02.htm](http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=1998&dt=0303&pub=Utusan_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et_02.htm)
- Bollywood award shows to be held at Genting Highland (2002, March 8). *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>
- Bollywood films to produce in Langkawi (2000, April 8). *The Sun*. Retrieved <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>
- Bollywood firm to build cinemas in Malaysia (2008, November 9). *The Star*. Retrieved from <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2008/11/9/nation/2502167&sec=nation>
- Bollywood goes to Sarawak (2006, August 22). *The Star*. Retrieved from [thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2006/8/22/nation/15204208&sec=nation](http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2006/8/22/nation/15204208&sec=nation)
- Bollywood Producer among film players to make moviei sarawak (2013, March 29). *Bernama*. Retrieved from [www.bernama.com/bernama/v7/newsindex.php?id=938204](http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v7/newsindex.php?id=938204)
- Bollywood reality show in Taman Negara accused of animal abuse (2009, July 11). *The*

- Star*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.thestar.com.my/story.aspx?file=%2f2009%2f7%2f11%2fnation%2f20090711175418&sec=nation&FORM=ZZNR7>
- Bollywood semakin bertumpuke Malaysia (2000, October 24). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from  
[http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2000&dt=1024&pub=Utusan\\_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et\\_04.htm](http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2000&dt=1024&pub=Utusan_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et_04.htm)
- Bollywood sex siren Mallika thrilled to be in Malaysia again (2008, November 30). *The Star*. Retrieved from  
[thestar.com.my/news/story.aspx?file=/2008/11/30/nation/2684093&sec=nation](http://www.thestar.com.my/news/story.aspx?file=/2008/11/30/nation/2684093&sec=nation)
- Bollywood star Tabu is in town (2010, August 9). *The Star*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.thestar.com.my/news/story.aspx?sec=nation&file=/2010/8/9/nation/6823227>
- Bollywood tingkat Profil Malaysia di India- Najib (2006, June 8). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>
- Bollywood to make movie in Sarawak (2013, March 29). *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from [www.nst.com.my/latest/bollywood-to-make-movie-in-sarawak-1.244148](http://www.nst.com.my/latest/bollywood-to-make-movie-in-sarawak-1.244148)
- Booth, G (2000). Religion, gossip, narrative conventions and the construction of meaning in Hindi film songs. *Popular Music*, 19(2), 125-145. Retrieved from <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&pdfType=1&fid=61741&jid=PMU&volumeId=19&issueId=02&aid=61740>
- Booth, G. (2008). That Bollywood Sound. In Slobin, M (ed.) *Global Soundtracks: Worlds of film music* (pp. 85-113), Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.
- Booth, G. D. (1995). Traditional content and narrative structure in the Hindi commercial cinema. *Asian Folklore Studies*, 54(1), 169-190. Retrieved from <http://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/publications/afs/pdf/a1070.pdf>
- Booth, G. D. (2008). *Behind the Curtain: Making Music in Mumbai's Film Studios*. Oxford,



U.K.: Oxford University Press

- Bordwell, D (1991). *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press
- Borhan, D. M (Producer) & Sattar, A (Director) (1975). *Keluarga Si Comat* (Motion picture). Malaysia: Sabah Film Productions
- Bose, D (2006). *Brand Bollywood*. New Delhi, London: Sage Publications
- Bose, D. (2006). *Brand Bollywood: A new global entertainment order*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Brown, W (2009). Lost in Transnation. In Cheung, R & Fleming, D. H (eds.) *Cinemas, Identities and Beyond* (pp. 16-32) Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing,
- Brunkhorst, H. (1999). *Adorno and critical theory*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Bujang, R. 1975. *Sejarah Perkembangan Drama Bangsawan Di Tanah Melayu Dan Singapura*. Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka: Kuala Lumpur
- Busch, M. (1999). *Trade Warriors. States, Firms, and Strategic Trade Policy in High-Technology Competition*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press.
- Carvalho, M (2008, December 6). Shah Rukh finally in Malacca to receive his award. *The Star*. Retrieved from [thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2008/12/6/nation/20081206173807&sec=nation](http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2008/12/6/nation/20081206173807&sec=nation)
- Carvalho, M (2008, October 11). Chief Minister explains Shah Rukh Khan's Datukship. *The Star*. Retrieved from <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2008/10/11/nation/20081011181943&sec=nation>
- Carvalho, M (2011, February 16). Fan spends RM 10, 000 in pursuit of idol. *The Star*. Retrieved from [thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?sec=nation&file=%2F2011%2F2%2F16%2Fnation%2F8073024](http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?sec=nation&file=%2F2011%2F2%2F16%2Fnation%2F8073024)

- Cashmore, E (2006), *Celebrity Culture*, London, New York: Routledge,
- Cayla, J (2008). Following the Endorser's Shadow: Shah Rukh Khan and the Creation of the Cosmopolitan Indian Male. *Advertising & Society Review*, 9(2). Retrieved from [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/advertising\\_and\\_society\\_review/summary/v009/9.2.cayla01.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/advertising_and_society_review/summary/v009/9.2.cayla01.html)
- Censorship Certificate, Bombay (1995, March 01). *Central Board of Film Certification*. Taken from Gopalan, L, *Bombay*, London: BFI Modern Classic, p. 85
- Chakravarty, S (1993). *National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema, 1947-1987*. Texas: University of Texas Press
- Chambers, S. (2004). Politics of critical theory. In F. L. Rush (Ed.), *Cambridge companion to critical theory* (pp. 219-247) New York: Cambridge University Press,
- Chan, W; Tang, E; Chan, J (Producers) and Tong, S (Director) (1992). *Police Story 3: Super Cop* (Motion picture). Hong Kong: Golden Way Films Co. Ltd.
- Chandrasahana, S; Haasan, K (Producers) and Hasaan, K (Directors) (2013). *Viswaroopam* (Motion picture). India: Raaj Kamal Films International
- Chandran, S. (2009, July 17). Burst of Bollywood. *The Star*. p. T16
- Chawla, J; Khan, S (Producers) and Mirza, A (Director) (2003). *Chalte Chalte* (Motion picture). India: Dreamz Unlimited
- Chawla, T and Majumdar, S (2006). Brand 'Bollywood': Going Global. Growth Strategies Case Study- IBS Case Development Centre. Retrieved from [http://www.ibscdc.org/Case\\_Studies/Strategy/Growth%20Strategies/GRS0252K.htm](http://www.ibscdc.org/Case_Studies/Strategy/Growth%20Strategies/GRS0252K.htm)
- Chee, K. H (2012, December 21). Oh Lord its Shahrukh! *The Star*. Metro Page .1
- Cheng, N. Y. (2002, March 8). Genting to host Bollywood film awards event. *The Star*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>

- Chooi, C (2013, April 29). In Perak, Pakatan sees victory in increased rural Chinese support. *The Malaysian Insider*. Retrieved from <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/litee/malaysia/article/in-perak-pakatan-sees-victory-in-increased-rural-chinese-support/>
- Chopra A (Producer) and Amin, S (Director) (2007). *Chak De! India* (Motion picture). India: Yash Raj Films
- Chopra, A (2007). *The King of Bollywood; Shah Rukh Khan and the seductive world of Indian Cinema*, New York: Warner Books
- Chopra, A (Producer) and Gadhvi, S (Director) (2004). *Dhoom* (Motion picture). India: Yash Raj Films
- Chopra, A (Producer) and Khan, K (Director) (2009). *New York* (Motion picture). India: Yash Raj Films
- Chopra, A (Producer) and Khan, K (Director) (2012). *Ek Tha Tiger* (Motion picture). India: Yash Raj Films
- Chopra, A (Producer) and Kohli, K (Director) (2006). *Fanaa* (Motion picture). India: Yash Raj Films
- Chopra, A; Chopra, Y (Producers) and Chopra, Y (Director) (2012). *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* (Motion picture). India: Yash Raj Films
- Chopra, Y (Producer) and Chopra, A (Director) (1995). *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (Motion picture). India: Yash Raj Films
- Chopra, Y (Producer) and Chopra, Y (Director) (1993). *Darr* (Motion picture). India: Yash Raj Films
- Chopra, Y; Chopra, A (Producers) and Chopra, Y (1997). *Dil To Pagal Hai* (Motion picture). India: Yash Raj Films
- Choudhary, V (2012. Feb 25, 2010. I'm also Shah Rukh Khan. *Times of India*. Retrieved from

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/hindi/bollywood/news/I-am-also-Shah-Rukh-Khan/articleshow/5614737.cms>

Christy, K R. S (Producer) and Rajhans (Director) (1933). *Laila Majnun* (Motion Picture). Singapore: Motilal Chemicals

Ciecko, A (2001): Superhit hunk heroes for sale: Globalization and Bollywood's gender politics, *Asian Journal of Communication*, 11(2), 121-143.

DOI:10.1080/01292980109364807

Clark, M and Pietsch, J (2014). *Indonesia-Malaysia Relations: Cultural Heritage, Politics and Labour Migration*. Oxon, New York: Routledge

Clifford, J (1994). Diasporas. *Cultural Anthropology*, 9(3), 302-338. Retrieved from <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0886-7356%28199408%299%3A3%3C302%3AD%3E2.0.CO%3B2-O>

Clothey, Fred. W (2006). *Ritualizing on the Boundaries: Continuity and Innovation in the Tamil Diaspora*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press

Connery, S; Hertzberg, M (Producers) and Amiel, J (Director)(1999). *Entrapment* (Motion picture). Unites States: Regency Enterprises

Cook, D. (1996). *The culture industry revisited: Theodor W. Adorno on mass culture*. Lanham, MD: Rowman& Littlefield Publishers.

Creekmur, C (2005). Bombay Boys: Dissolving the Male Child in Popular Hindi Cinema, in Murray Pomerance and Frances Gateward (eds.) *Where the Boys Are: Cinemas of Masculinity and Youth* (pp. 350-376) Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Culler, J (1981). *The Pursuit of Signs*. Oxon: Routledge

Dasgupta, S. 2007. *Amitabh: The making of a superstar*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.

Davey, B; Gibson, M; McEveety (Producers) and Gibson, M (Directors) (2004). *The Passion of the Christ* (Motion picture). United States: Icon Productions, Newmarket Films

- David, M. K and DeAlwis, C (2010). Learning from Movies - 'Slumdog Millionaire' and Language Awareness. *Language in India*, 7, 16-25. Retrieved from <http://www.languageinindia.com/july2010/mayadavidmovieslumdog.pdf>
- Derne, S (2000). *Movies, masculinity and modernity*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.
- Desai, J (2004). *Beyond Bollywood: The Cultural Politics of South Asian Diasporic Film*, London: Routledge
- Desai, K (Producer) and Desai, M & Raj, P (Directors) (1983). *Coolie* (Motion picture). India: Aasia Films Pvt. Ltd
- Desai, L. M (2007, November 25). Bollywood needs to change its act, *The Hindu*. Retrieved from <http://www.hindu.com/mag/2007/11/25/stories/2007112550030100.htm>
- Dhanoa, G; Kapoor, L (Producers) and Kanwar, R (Director) (1992). *Deewana* (Motion picture). India: Mayank Arts
- Different kind of dish (2012, December 07). *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from [www.nst.com.my/life-times/showbiz/cinema-different-kind-of-dish-1.182369](http://www.nst.com.my/life-times/showbiz/cinema-different-kind-of-dish-1.182369)
- Dijk, K. V (2009). Different settings, different definitions and different agenda: Islamic and Secular Political Parties in Indonesia and Malaysia. In Salih, M. A. M (ed.) *Interpreting Islamic Political Parties* (pp. 51-82) New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dinner Party Theme - Bollywood Night (2012, December 26). *GreatStuff Hub Pages*. Retrieved from <http://greatstuff.hubpages.com/hub/Dinner-Party-Theme-Ideas-Bollywood-Night#>
- Dissanayake, W (ed) (1988). *Cinema and Cultural Identity: Reflections on Films from Japan, India and China*. Lanham, MD: University of America
- Dissanayake, W. (2006). Globalization and the experience of culture: The resilience of nationhood. In N. Gentz and S. Kramer (Eds) *Globalization, Cultural Identities, and Media Representations* (pp. 25-44). Albany : University of New York.

- Divided over datukship for Shah Rukh Khan (2008, October 15). *The Sun Daily*. Retrieved from <http://www.thesundaily.my/node/162244>
- Doran, D (2009). *The Investors Guide to Hollywood and Bollywood*. Retrieved from <http://www.capitalideasonline.com/articles/index.php?id=707>
- Dudrah, R (2006). *Sociology goes to the Movies*. London, California, New Delhi: Sage Publications
- Dutta, J. P (Producer & Director) (1997). *Border* (Motion picture). India: J. P Films
- Dwyer, R (2000). *All You Want is Money, All You Need is Love*. London: Continuum.
- Dwyer, R and Patel, D (2002). *Cinema India: the visual culture of Hindi film*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press
- Dyer, R (1998), *Stars*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London: British Film Institute
- Dyer, R (2003). *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, New York: Routledge,
- Dyer, R (2005). Entertainment and Utopia. In Dyer, R (ed.) *Only Entertainment* (pp. 19-35). London and New York: Routledge,
- Eagleton, T (1983). *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing
- Ebrahim, H (2008). From “ghetto” to mainstream: Bollywood in South Africa. *Scrutiny2*, 13(2), 63-76. Retrieved from <http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10539/9802/Scrutiny%20From%20Ghetto%20to%20Mainstream.pdf?sequence=1>
- Edwards, A (2010, April 4). Shah Rukh brings a touch of Bollywood. *The Star*. Retrieved from <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/4/4/nation/5992670&sec=nation> 1/
- Examine the open skies policy - Government urged to make sure that people are not influenced by negative foreign culture (2000, March 3). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from

www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2000&dt=0303&pub=Utusan\_Malaysia  
&sec=Muka\_Hadapan...

- Faizal, S (2009, June 23). Ekstravaganza dunia Bollywood. *Utusan Malaysia*. pp. 2-3  
(‘Mega’ section of newspaper)
- Fernandez, C (1995, April 6). Muslims to protest against Bombay on Opening Day.  
*Asian Age*, p. 5
- Fernandez, C (2007, December 14). Malaysia's Anwar condemns use of security law.  
*Reuters*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/12/14/us-malaysia-anwar-idUSKLR29657920071214> on 7 June 2014
- Films aired over TV fit for viewing (2001, February 16). *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from  
<http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>
- Films aired over TV for public viewing (2001, February 16). *New Straits Times*, p. 4
- Franklin, S; Aronofsky, D; Parent, M (Producers) and Aronofsky, D (Director) (2014).  
*Noah* (Motion picture). United States: Regency Enterprises, Protozoa Pictures
- Friedman, G. (1981). *The political philosophy of the Frankfurt School*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell  
University Press.
- Friedman, J. (1994). *Cultural Identity and Global Process*. London: Sage Publications.
- Gahlot, D (2007). *King Khan*, New Delhi: Roli Books,
- Gaik Cheng, K. (2006). *Reclaiming Adat*. Vancouver: UBC press.
- Galani, V (Producer) and Abbas-Mustan (Director) (2001). *Ajnabee* (Motion picture).  
India: Film Folks, Venus Records & Tapes Pvt Ltd
- Ganti, T (2004). *Bollywood: A guide to Popular Hindi Cinema*. UK, USA, Canada: Routledge
- GE13: 133 for BN and 89 for Opposition (2013, May 6). *The Star*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.thestar.com.my/story.aspx?file=%2f2013%2f5%2f6%2fnation%2f13073604&sec=nation>

- Gehlot, D (1995). The Stars Call the Shots. In Vasudev, A (ed.) *Frames of Mind: Reflections on Indian Cinema* (pp. 229–40) New Delhi: UBS Publishers
- Ghai, S (Producer) and Ghai, S (Director) (1997). *Pardes* (Motion picture). India: Mukta Arts
- Ghosh, A (1989). The Diaspora in Indian Culture. *Public Culture*, 2(1), 73-78. DOI: 10.1215/08992363-2-1-73
- Giddens, A (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. CA: Stanford University Press
- Gledhill, C (1987). *Home is Where the Heart is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*. London: British Film Institute
- Gokulsing, K.M &Dissanayake, W (2004).*Indian Popular Cinema: A Narrative of Cultural Change*. New Delhi: Trentham Books.
- Goodenough, P (2004, July 7). Malaysia Won't Allow Muslims to See Gibson's 'The Passion'. *CNS News* (Online). Retrieved from <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/malaysia-wont-allow-muslims-see-gibsons-passion>
- Gooptu, Sharmistha (2007). Bollywood's Foreign Affairs. *Verve* (online), 15(4). Retrieved from <http://www.verveonline.com/48/life/bollywoodfull.shtml>
- Gopal, S &Moorti, S (ed) (2008). *Global Bollywood: Travels of Hindi Song and Dance*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press
- Gopalan, L (2002).*Cinema of Interruptions: Action Genres in Contemporary Indian Cinema*. London: British Film Institute
- Gopalan, L. (1995). *Bombay*, London: BFI Modern Classic
- Goundry, N. (2013). Pinewood Iskandar Malaysia Studios reaches out to Bollywood filming industry. Retrieved from [www.thelocationguide.com/blog/2013/03/ng-filming-on-location-pinewood-iskandar-malaysia-studios-reaches-out-to-bollywood-filming-industry/](http://www.thelocationguide.com/blog/2013/03/ng-filming-on-location-pinewood-iskandar-malaysia-studios-reaches-out-to-bollywood-filming-industry/)



- Gowariker, A; Screwvala, R (Producers) and Gowariker, A (Director) (2004). *Swades: We, the people* (Motion picture). India: Ashutosh Gowariker Productions
- Gray, Gordan (2010). Shame and the Fourth Wall. In Yeoh, S. G (Ed.) in *Media, Culture and Society in Malaysia* (pp. 117-136) Oxon, New York: Routledge,
- Guha, P (Producer) and Mohammed, K (Director) (2000). *Fiza* (Motion picture). India
- Gulzar, Nihalani, G and Chatterjee, S (2003). *Encyclopedia of Hindi Cinema*. New Delhi: Encyclopedia Britannica Pvt Ltd
- Gursahani, M (n.d). Bollywood tourism in India. Retrieved from <http://ezinearticles.com/?Bollywood-Tourism&id=422136>
- Hakim, N (2012, October 14). Bollywood Night Dinner 2012 [blog post]. Retrieved from <http://cheryshootylife.blogspot.com/2012/10/bollywood-night-dinner-2012.html>
- Hall, S. (1997). The work of representation. In S. Hall (ed.), *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (pp. 1-11), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Hamdan, M. A (2013, June 20). Brandlaureate to continue pushing local standards. *Business Times*. Retrieved from [http://www.btimes.com.my/Current\\_News/BTIMES/articles/20130422002243/Article/](http://www.btimes.com.my/Current_News/BTIMES/articles/20130422002243/Article/)
- Hamza Hussein (1997). *Memoir, Hamzah Hussin: Dari Keris filem ke Studio Merdeka*, Bangi: Penerbitan Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- Hannerz, U. (1992). *Cultural complexity: Studies in the social organization of meaning*. New York: Columbia University Press
- Hansen, T. B (2005). In search of the diasporic self: Bollywood in South Africa. In Kaur, R and Sinha, A (eds.) *Bollyworld: Popular Indian cinema through a transnational lens* (239-260). New Delhi: Sage Publications Ltd
- Harding, James; Sarji, A. H. Ahmad (2002). *P. Ramlee: The Bright Star*. Selangor: Pelanduk Publications

- Harmon, K (2005). Celebrity Culture. *The Hedgehog Review*. 7(1), 98-106. Retrieved from <http://www.iasc-culture.org/THR/archives/Celebrity/7.1LBibliography.pdf>
- Haslam, D. Y (Producer and Director) (1994). *Sembilu* (Motion Picture). Malaysia: Skop Productions
- Haslam, D. Y (Producer and Director) (1995). *Sembilu II* (Motion Picture). Malaysia: Skop Productions
- Haslam, D. Y (Producer and Director) (1998). *Maria Mariana II* (Motion picture). Malaysia: Skop Productions and Grand Brilliance
- Haslam, D. Y (Producer) and Yusof, S (Director) (2011). *KL Gangster* (Motion picture). Malaysia
- Hindu group protests 'temple cleansing' in Malaysia (2006, May 23). *The Financial Express*. Retrieved from [http://www.financialexpress.com/old/latest\\_full\\_story.php?content\\_id=128069](http://www.financialexpress.com/old/latest_full_story.php?content_id=128069)
- Hirji, F (2010). *Dreaming in Canadian: South Asian Youth, Bollywood and Belonging*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Hoad, P (2011, September 6). Can Indian film ever go global? *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/filmblog/2011/sep/06/indian-film-global-reliance-dreamworks>
- Hooker, V. M (2003). *A short history of Malaysia*. New South Wales: Allen & Unwin
- Hoskins, C, McFadyen, S., & Finn, A. (1997). *Global television and film: An introduction to the economics of the business*. Oxford, England: Clarendon
- Hrithik temuipemina ttempatatan (2000, November 9). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from [http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2000&dt=1109&pub=Utusan\\_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et\\_02.htm](http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2000&dt=1109&pub=Utusan_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et_02.htm)
- Hussain, J (Producer) and Anand, M. L (Director) (1952). *Bewafa* (Motion picture). India

- Hussein, S. A (2002). Muslim politics and the discourses of Democracy. In Wah, F.L.K and Khoo, B. T (eds.) *Democracy in Malaysia: Discourses and Practices* (pp. 74-109) Richmond: Curzon Press
- Hussin, H (1994, August 24). Personal communication with Van der Heide. As quoted in Van der Heide. *Malaysian cinema, Asian film: Border crossings and national cultures*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Huzz, (2000, January 1). Shah Rukh Khan dan Salman Khan rayadenganpeminat di Malaysia. *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=127257&tid=43&cid=3>
- I am a fantastic lover at 47 and not a virgin: Shahrukh Khan (2013, June 18). *Daily Bhaskar*. Retrieved from <http://daily.bhaskar.com/news/ENT-i-am-a-fantastic-lover-at-47-and-not-a-virgin-shahrukh-khan-4295327-NOR.html>
- I am never aggressive with a woman: Shah Rukh Khan (2013, December 06). *Hindustan Times*. Retrieved <http://www.hindustantimes.com/bollywood/i-am-never-aggressive-with-a-woman-shah-rukh-khan/article1-1159649.aspx>
- Ibrahim, I, S (2003, June 14). Chalte Chalte temukanlagi SRK, Rani. *Berita Harian*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=60072&tid=46&cid=3>
- Ibrahim, I. S (2003, June 14). Chalte Chalte temukan lagi SRK, Rani. *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from Monash University Newspaper Resource - <http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=60072&tid=46&cid=3>
- Ibrahim, J (2012, May13). Kuch Kuch Hota Hai terus diminati. *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from Monash Online resources - [www.utusan.com.my/utusan/Rencana/20120513/re\\_08/Kuch-Kuch-Hota-Hai-terus-diminati](http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/Rencana/20120513/re_08/Kuch-Kuch-Hota-Hai-terus-diminati)

- Ibrahim, K (2011, May 13). Iqram Dinzyjelmaan SRK. *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=49379&tid=97&cid=3>
- Indian tourist arrivals go up 20.7% (2015, February 11). *The Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.thestar.com.my/News/Nation/2015/02/11/Indian-tourist-arrivals-go-up-207-Attractive-travel-packages-drawing-them-in/>
- Irani, N. A (Producer) and Barot, C (Director) (1978). *Don* (Motion picture). India: Nariman Films
- Isi slot Bollywood dengan program pendidikan (2001, February 21). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>
- Isu agama FilemFizadiharamkan (2000, September 18). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from [http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2000&dt=0918&pub=utusan\\_malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et\\_02.htm](http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2000&dt=0918&pub=utusan_malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et_02.htm)
- Itchy Cat (2012, November 14). Bollywood Videos Joget Rosmah Mansor (Video file). Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kWBnTndWopk>
- Iwabuchi, Koichi (2004). *Feeling Asian Modernities: Transnational Consumption of Japanese TV Dramas*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press
- Iyer, M (2009, July 27). SRK sings kuch kuch hota hai. *Times of India*. Retrieved from [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2009-07-27/news-interviews/28189146\\_1\\_srk-malaysian-tittle-shah-rukh-khan](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2009-07-27/news-interviews/28189146_1_srk-malaysian-tittle-shah-rukh-khan)
- Jaikumar, P. (2003). Bollywood Spectaculars. *World Literature Today*. Retrieved from [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_hb5270/is\\_3-4\\_77/ai\\_n29059774/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb5270/is_3-4_77/ai_n29059774/)
- Jain, G (Producer) and Abbas- Mustan (Director) (1993). *Baazigar* (Motion picture). India: Eros Labs
- Jain, R; Jain, U (Producers) and Mirza, A (Directors) (1997). *Yes Boss* (Motion picture). India: Venus Records & Tapes
- Jaireth, S (2000). To see and be seen: The heteroscopia of Hindi film posters. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 14(2), 201-214. DOI:10.1080/713657701

- Jamil Sulong (1989). 'Bangsawan's Influence in Malay Films,' in Baharudin Latif (ed). *Cintai Filem Malaysia* (pp.56-60) Hulu Kelang, National Film Development Corporation Malaysia, .
- Jangan pandang rendah saranan Majli Mufti – PKPIM (2001, February 20). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>
- Jayaraj, J. (2010, June 18). A Bollywood showcase. *The star*. Retrieved from [thestar.com.my/metro/story.asp?file=/2010/6/18/central/6475396](http://thestar.com.my/metro/story.asp?file=/2010/6/18/central/6475396)
- Jetschke, A. & Rüländ, J. (2009). Decoupling Rhetoric and Practice: The Cultural Limits of ASEAN Cooperation. *The Pacific Review*, 22(2), 179-203.  
DOI:10.1080/09512740902815326
- Johar, H; Johar, K (Producers) and Johar, K (Director) (2006). *Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna* (Motion picture). India: Dharma Productions
- Johar, H; Johar, K (Producers) D'Silva, R (Director) (2009). *Kurbaan* (Motion picture). India: Dharma Productions
- Johar, H; Khan, G (Producers) and Johar, K (Director) (2010). *My Name is Khan* (Motion picture). India: Dharma Productions, Fox Star Studios, Red Chillies Entertainment
- Johar, K; Johar, H (Producers), Johar, K (Director) (1998). *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (Motion picture). India: Dharma Productions
- Johar, Y (Producer) and Bhatt, M (Director) (1998). *Duplicate* (Motion picture). India: Dharma Productions
- Johar, Y (Producer) and Johar, K (Director) (2001). *Kabhi Khusbi Kabhi Gham* (Motion picture). India: Dharma Productions
- Johar, Y; Johar, K (Producers) and Advani, N (Director) (2003). *Kal Ho Naa Ho* (Motion picture). India: Dharma Productions
- Johki, M; Rawail, R (Producers) and Rawail, R (Director) (1994). *Anjaam* (Motion picture).  
*India*

- John, J. G (2008, December 05), 'Malacca wants more films shot there'. *The New Strait Times*. Retrieved from  
[http://www.nst.com.my/Current\\_News/NST/Friday/National/2420495/Article/index\\_html](http://www.nst.com.my/Current_News/NST/Friday/National/2420495/Article/index_html)
- John, J. G (2008, December 12). Shahrukh comes, everybody jumps. *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from  
<http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=139995&tid=79&cid=3>
- John, J. G (2008, December 5). Malacca wants more films shot there. The New Strait Times. Retrieved from  
<http://www.planetsrk.com/community/threads/malacca-wants-more-films-shot-there-new-straits-times-malaysia.14796/>
- John, J. G (2008, October 10). Datukship for Shahrukh. *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from  
<http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=104840&tid=79&cid=3>
- John, J. G (2008, October 12). SRK 'indirectly promoted state'. *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from  
<http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=104941&tid=79&cid=3>
- Jørgensen, M. W and Phillips, L. J (2002). *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. London, California, New Delhi: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Joshi, V (2008, November 24). Muslim clerics issue fatwa against yoga. *The Independent*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/muslim-clerics-issue-fatwa-against-yoga-1032372.html> on December 2 2013
- Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham Popular (2002, January 01). *Utusan Malaysia*.  
[www.utusan.com.my/utusan/hiburan/21876540/01/kabhi-khushi-kabhi-gham-popular](http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/hiburan/21876540/01/kabhi-khushi-kabhi-gham-popular)
- Kabilan, K. (2006). Temple row - a dab of sensibility please. *Malaysiakini*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.malaysiakini.com/opinions/52600>

- Kabir, N. M (2001). *Bollywood: The Indian Cinema Story*. London: Channel 4 Books
- Kabir, N. M (Director) (2005). *The Inner/Outer World of Sharukh* (Documentary- DVD).  
India: Red Chillies Entertainment
- Kahn, Joel. S (2006). *Other Malays: Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in the Modern Malay World*. Singapore: Singapore University Press
- Kakar, S (1981). The ties that bind: family relationships in the mythology of Hindi cinema. *India International Centre Quarterly*, 8(1), 11-21. DOI: 10.1177/016344370202400201
- Kamal, S. M (2014, April 4). Home Ministry bans 'Noah' movie for being 'un-Islamic'. *Malay Mail Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/home-ministry-bans-noah-movie-for-being-un-islamic>
- Kao, K.T. & Do Rozario (2008). Imagined spaces: The implications of song and dance for Bollywood's diasporic communities. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 22 (3), 313-326. DOI: 10.1080/10304310802001755
- Kapoor, R (Producer) and Kapoor, R (Director) (1951). *Amaara* (Motion picture). India: RK Films
- Kapoor, R (Producer) and Kapoor, R (Director) (1955). *Shree 420* (Motion picture). India: RK Films
- Kapoor, R (Producer) and Kapoor, R (Director) (1973). *Bobby* (Motion picture). India: RK Films
- Kapoor, R (Producer) and Nawathe (Director) (1953). *Aab* (Motion picture). India: RK Films
- Kassim, R; Shukri, E (Producers) and Ahmad, Y (Director) (2004). *Sepet* (Motion picture). Malaysia
- Kaur, R (2002). Viewing the West through Bollywood: a celluloid Occident in the making. *Contemporary South Asia*, 1(2), 199–209. Retrieved from

<http://resourcelists.st-andrews.ac.uk/link?url=http%3A%2F%2Fdx.doi.org%2F10.1080%2F0958493022000030168>

- Kaur, R and Sinha, A. J (2005). *Bollyworld: popular Indian cinema through a transnational lens*. Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, London: Sage Publications
- Kavoori, A.P & Punathambekar, A (2008). *Global Bollywood*. New York, London: New York University Press
- Kent, J (2006, May 16). Pressure on multi-faith Malaysia. *BBC News*. Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4965580.stm>
- Khalil lead team to Bollywood on scale and study mission (2001, October 5). *The Sun*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>
- Khan happy to film in Malacca (2011, February 16). *The Star*. Retrieved from [thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?sec=nation&file=/2011/2/16/nation/8073052](http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?sec=nation&file=/2011/2/16/nation/8073052)
- Khan, A; Rao, K (Producers) and Rizvi, A (Director) (2010). *Peepli Live* (Motion picture). India: Aamir Khan Productions
- Khan, A; Rao, K; Furgele, J (Producers) and Deo, A (Director) (2011). *Delhi Belly* (Motion picture). India: Aamir Khan Productions
- Khan, G; Morani, K; Screwvala, R (Producers) and Shetty, R (Director) (2013). *Chennai Express* (Motion picture). India: Red Chillies Entertainment
- Khan, Hatta Azad (1997). *The Malay Cinema*. Bangi, Selangor (Malaysia): UKM Press
- Khan, S. R (2013). Being a Khan. *Outlook Turning Points*. Retrieved from <http://filmudyogse.blogspot.com/2013/01/being-khan-outlook-turning-points-2013.html>
- Khan, S; Akhtar, F; Sidhwani, R (Producers) and Akhtar, F (Director) (2011). *Don 2, The King is Back* (Motion picture). India: Excel Entertainment, Red Chillies Entertainment



- Khan, S; Chawla, J (Producer) and Sivan, S (Director) (2001). *Asoka* (Motion picture).  
India: Dreamz Unlimited
- Khan, S; Khan, G (Producers) and Khan, F (Director) (2004). *Main Hoon Na* (Motion picture). India: Red Chillies Entertainment, Eros Entertainment
- Khan, S; Khan, G (Producers) and Khan, F (Director) (2007). *Om Shanti Om* (Motion picture). India: Red Chillies Entertainment
- Khoo, G. C (2006). *Reclaiming Adat*. Vancouver: UBC Press
- Kim, S (2009). Interpreting transnational cultural practices. *Cultural Studies*, 23(5-6), 736-755. DOI:10.1080/09502380903132348
- Kini TV (2014, June 10). Anwar: Islamic authorities 'arrogant with power' (Video file). Retrieved from <http://www.kinitv.com/video/777508>
- Klinger, B (1989). Digressions at the cinema: Reception and Mass Culture. *Cinema Journal*, 28(4), 3-19. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/1225392?uid=3738672&uid=2&uid=4&sid=21106563509513>
- Klinger, B (1994). *Melodrama and Meaning: History, Culture, and the Films of Douglas Sirk*. Bloomington: Indiana UP.
- Klinger, B (1997). Film history terminable and interminable: recovering the past in reception studies. *Screen*, 38(2), 107-128. DOI: 10.1093/screen/38.2.107
- Koya, A. R. (2002, April 12). Bollywood: enter flesh and coloured contact lenses. *Malaysiakini*. Retrieved from <http://www.malaysiakini.com/opinions/21373>
- Koya, A.R (2002). Bollywood in Malaysia: Not Everyone Loves It. <http://www.littlespeck.com/informed/2002/CInformed-020416.htm>
- Krishnamoorthy, M. (2008, November 15). Reliance of India steps foot on Malaysian shores. *The Star*. Retrieved from [thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2008/11/15/bizweek/2518804&sec=bizweek](http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2008/11/15/bizweek/2518804&sec=bizweek)

- Krishnan, L. (1994, March 8). Personal communication with Van der Heide. As quoted in *Malaysian Cinema, Asian Film; Border Crossings and National Cultures*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press
- Kumar, A; Rawal, P; Yardi, A (Producers) and Shukla, U (Director) (2012). *Ob My God!* (Motion picture). India: Grazing Goat Pictures
- Kumar, D; Kapoor, R; Nargis (Producers) and Khan, M (Director) (1949). *Andaz* (Motion picture). India: Central Studios
- Kumar, M (Producer) and Kumar, M (Director) (1970). *Poorab Aur Paschim* (Motion picture). India: Vishal International Productions
- Kumar, S (2006). Mapping Tollywood: The cultural geography of Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad. *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 23(2), 129-138. DOI: 10.1080/10509200590490628
- Kumar, S (2008), Bollywood and Beyond: The Transnational Economy of Film Production in Ramoji Film City, Hyderabad. In Gopal, S & Moorti, S (Ed.) *Global Bollywood: Travels of Hindi Song and Dance* (pp. 132-152) Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press
- La Pastina, A and Straubhaar, J (2005). Multiple proximities between television genres and audiences. *Gazette*, 67 (3), 271-288. DOI: 10.1177/0016549205052231
- Lal, V (2006). Multiculturalism at Risk: The Indian Minority in Malaysia. *Economic and Political Weekly*. 41(35), 3764-65. Retrieved from <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/Diaspora/IndiansMalaysia.pdf>
- Latif, B (1981). 'Malaysia,' in Peter Cowie (ed). *International Film Guide 1982*. London, Tantivy Press, pp. 199-200.
- Latif, B (2000). 'A Brief History of Malaysian Film,' in David Hanan (ed). *Film in Southeast Asia: Views from the Region*. Seapavaa: Vietnam Film Institute, pp. 120-145

- Latif, Baharudin (1989). The Revival, In Latif, Baharudin (ed.) *Cintai Filem Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Perbadanan Kemajuan Nasional Malaysia, pp. 49-52
- Lee, C (2014, April 2). 15 Big Movies Banned in Malaysia. *Cinema Online*. Retrieved from [http://www.cinema.com.my/news/features.aspx?search=2014.f\\_bigmoviesbanned\\_19114](http://www.cinema.com.my/news/features.aspx?search=2014.f_bigmoviesbanned_19114) on 25 May 2014
- Lee, L.F.L (2008). Hollywood movies in East Asia: examining cultural discount and performance predictability at the box office. *Asian Journal of Communication*. 18(2), 117-136. DOI:10.1080/01292980802021855
- Lehan, S. R (2000, April 12). Seremban rocks to `Shah Rukh'. *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=25107&tid=43&cid=3>
- Leoi, S. L. (2001, February 24). TV3 to cut down on Hindi Movies. *The Star*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>
- Lim, I (2012, October 28). ABIM: Shah Rukh Khan film confusing Muslims, promotes pluralism. *The Malaysian Insider*. Retrieved from <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/shah-ruk-khan-film-confusing-muslims-promotes-pluralism>
- Lim, I (2012, October 28). ABIM: Shah Rukh Khan film confusing Muslims, promotes pluralism. *The Malaysian Insider*. Retrieved from [www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/shah-ruk-khan-film-confusing-muslims-promotes-pluralism](http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/shah-ruk-khan-film-confusing-muslims-promotes-pluralism)
- Lim, I (2012, October 28). Perkasa maintains boycott over Malay-language Christian song. *The Malaysian Insider*. Retrieved from [www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/perkasa-maintains-boycott-over-malay-language-christian-song](http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/perkasa-maintains-boycott-over-malay-language-christian-song)
- Linkin Park Gets OK For Malaysia Gig (2003, September 24). *Billboard* (Online). Retrieved from <http://www.billboard.com/articles/news/68950/linkin-park-gets-ok-for-malaysia-gig> on 3 January 2012

- Liow, J. C (2009). *Piety and Politics: Islamism in Contemporary Malaysia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lipsitz, G (1997). *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism, and the Politics of Place*. London: Verso
- Living off the wall (2012, February 27). *The Star*, p. 17(Star 2 section)
- Lockard, Craig A (1998). *Dance of Life: Popular Music and Politics in Southeast Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Lockard, Craig A. (1991). Reflections of Change: Sociopolitical Commentary and Criticism in Malaysian Popular Music since 1950. *Crossroads*, 6(1), 1-106. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/40860331?uid=3738672&uid=2&uid=4&sid=21106563509513>
- Loke, H. A (Producer) and Amin, M (Director) (1964). *Rumah Itu Duniaku* (Motion picture). Malaysia: Cathay-Keris Film
- Loke, H. A (Producer) and Krishnan, L (Director) (1955). *Selamat Tinggal Kekasihku* (Motion picture). Malaysia: Cathay-Keris Film
- Lorenzen, M & Taeube, F.A (2006). Breakout from Bollywood? Internationalization of Indian Film Industry. *DRUID Working Paper No.07-06*. Retrieved from <http://www3.druid.dk/wp/20070006.pdf>
- Machor, J. L and Goldstein, P (2001). *Reception study; from literary theory to cultural studies*. New York, London: Routledge
- Madan, J. J (Producer) and Madan, J. J (Director) (1931). *Laila Majnu* (Motion picture). India: Madan Theatres
- Mahmood, Z (Producer) and Osman, A. M (Director) (1989). *Fenomena* (Motion picture). Malaysia: Teletrade
- Majid, N. A. (2010). Bollywood comes to town with Aishwarya. *The Star*. Retrieved from [thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/8/1/nation/6776787&sec=nation](http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/8/1/nation/6776787&sec=nation)

- Majid, N. A. (2012, February 2). Malaika to sex up Zee show. *The Star*. Retrieved from [thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/2/2/nation/10657876&sec=nation](http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/2/2/nation/10657876&sec=nation)
- Malay Film Productions Ltd (Producers) and Krishnan, L (Director) (1950). *Bakti* (Motion picture). Malaysia: Malay Film Productions Ltd
- Malaysia eyes 780,000 tourists from India in 2013/2014 (2013, January 9). *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from [www.nst.com.my/latest/malaysia-eyes-780-000-tourists-from-india-in-2013-2014-1.198518](http://www.nst.com.my/latest/malaysia-eyes-780-000-tourists-from-india-in-2013-2014-1.198518)
- Malaysia Fines Pussycat Dolls Promoter Over 'Sexually Suggestive Routines' (2006, August 9). *Starpulse.com*. Retrieved from [http://www.starpulse.com/news/index.php/2006/08/09/malaysia\\_fines\\_pussycat\\_dolls\\_promoter\\_on\\_3\\_January\\_2012](http://www.starpulse.com/news/index.php/2006/08/09/malaysia_fines_pussycat_dolls_promoter_on_3_January_2012)
- Malaysia records 11.6m tourist arrivals from January-June 2012 (2012, August 30). *The Malaysian Insider*. Retrieved from <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/msia-records-11.6m-tourist-arrivals-from-january-june-2012>
- Malaysia Studios attracting Bollywood filmmakers (2013, March 20). *The Malaysian Times*. Retrieved from [www.themalaysiantimes.com.my/malaysia-studios-attracting-bollywood-filmmakers/](http://www.themalaysiantimes.com.my/malaysia-studios-attracting-bollywood-filmmakers/)
- Malaysia to host Global Indian Film Awards (2006). *The Times of India*. Retrieved from [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2006-05-10/rest-of-world/27817708\\_1\\_bollywood-actor-kuala-lumpur-malaysian-deputy-prime-minister](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2006-05-10/rest-of-world/27817708_1_bollywood-actor-kuala-lumpur-malaysian-deputy-prime-minister)
- Malaysia: Update on the situation of Tamil Hindus* (1999, February 1). Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Canada. Retrieved from <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6ab7954.html> on 14 July 2014
- Malaysian censors say Passion is only for Christians (2004, July 30). *The Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2004/jul/30/filmcensorship.news>

- Malaysian state plans to hold Shah Rukh concert (2009, November 11). *Mid Day*. Retrieved from [www.mid-day.com/entertainment/2009/nov/111109-shah-rukh-khan-happy-new-year.htm](http://www.mid-day.com/entertainment/2009/nov/111109-shah-rukh-khan-happy-new-year.htm)
- Malaysian tourism sector benefits from Bollywood (2006, June 8). *People's Daily* (Online). Retrieved from [english.peopledaily.com.cn/200606/08/eng20060608\\_272098.html](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200606/08/eng20060608_272098.html)
- Malaysia's picturesque locales beckon Bollywood (n.d.). *Indo-Asian news service*. Retrieved from [www.bollywood.com/node/765](http://www.bollywood.com/node/765)
- Malhotra, S and Alagh, T (2004). Dreaming the nation: Domestic dramas in Hindi Films Post-1990. *South Asian Popular Culture*, 2(1), 19-37. DOI:10.1080/1474668042000210492
- Manah, R. (1998, August 9) Neetu bersara demi rumah tangga. *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from [http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=1998&dt=0908&pub=Utusan\\_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et\\_02.htm](http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=1998&dt=0908&pub=Utusan_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et_02.htm)
- Manah, R. (1998, December 22). Rajesh Khanna legenda pelakon Hindi. *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from [http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=1998&dt=1222&pub=Utusan\\_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et\\_02.htm](http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=1998&dt=1222&pub=Utusan_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et_02.htm)
- Manah, R. (1998, November 6). Karisma generasi Kapoor. *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from [http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=1998&dt=1106&pub=Utusan\\_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et\\_03.htm](http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=1998&dt=1106&pub=Utusan_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et_03.htm)
- Manuel, P. (1993). *Cassette Culture: Popular Music and Technology in North India*. Chicago, U.S.: University of Chicago Press.
- Manuel, P. (1997). Music, Identity, and Images of India in the Indo-Caribbean Diaspora. *Asian Music*, 29(1), 17-35. Retrieved from

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/834410?origin=JSTOR-pdf>

- Maria, S. S (2012 October, 19). Perkasa wants boycott of Jaclyn Victor. *The Edge*. Retrieved from [www.theedgemaalaysia.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=223421&Itemid=77](http://www.theedgemaalaysia.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=223421&Itemid=77)
- Marsden, M. T and Nachbar, J. G. (1982). *Movies as artefacts: cultural criticism of popular film*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers
- Martin-Jones, D (2006). Kabhi India Kabhie Scotland. *South Asian Popular Culture*, 4(1), 49-60. DOI:10.1080/14746680600555576
- Marx, K. ([1857] 1971) *Grundrisse*, Translated by David McLellan, London: McMillan and Co Ltd.
- Matthan, J. M (Producer) and Matthan, J. M (Director) (1999). *Sarfarosh* (Motion picture). India: Cinematt Pictures
- Mazumdar, R (2007). *Bombay Cinema: An Archive of the City*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press
- Mazumdar, R (2010). The man who was seen too much: Amitabh Bachchan on film posters. *Tasveer Ghar: A digital network of South Asian popular visual culture* (online). Retrieved from <http://tasveergharindia.net/cmsdesk/essay/106/index.html>
- Mazumdar, R (2012): Film stardom after liveness. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*. 26(6), 833-844. DOI:10.1080/10304312.2012.731258
- McCracken, G (1989). Who is the Celebrity Endorser? Cultural Foundations of the Endorsement Process. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16, 310-321. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/2489512?uid=3738672&uid=2&uid=4&sid=21106563509513>
- Mehra, P (Producer) and Mehra, P (Director) (1983). *Zanjeer* (Motion picture). India: Prakash Mehra Productions

- Mehta, A (January 12, 2013). Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge Completes Historic 900 Weeks at Maratha Mandir. *International Business Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.ibtimes.co.in/articles/423454/20130112/dilwale-dulhania-le-jayenge-completes-historic-900.htm>
- Mehta, M (2005). Globalizing Bombay Cinema: Reproducing the Indian State and Family. *Cultural Dynamics*, 17(2), 135-154. DOI: 10.1177/0921374005058583
- Mehta, R. B and Pandharipande, R (2010). *Bollywood and Globalization: Indian Popular Cinema, Nation, and Diaspora*. London, New York: Anthem Press
- Merdeka Film Studio (Producer) and Ramlee, P (Director) (1968). *Gerimis* (Motion picture). Malaysia: Merdeka Film Studio
- Miller, E (2004). The Role of Islam in Malaysian Political Practice. *The Fletcher School Online Journal for issues related to Southwest Asia and Islamic Civilization*. Fall 2004 (4). Retrieved from [file:///C:/Users/rohini/Downloads/4miller\\_role+islam+malaysian+political+practice.pdf](file:///C:/Users/rohini/Downloads/4miller_role+islam+malaysian+political+practice.pdf)
- Miller, T. (2003). *Global Hollywood*. London: British Film Institute.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (2010). *Garis Panduan Penapisan Filem* (Guidelines for Film Screening). Retrieved from Ministry of Home affairs Official Website <http://www.moha.gov.my/index.php/en/maklumat-korporat/maklumat-bahagian/bahagian-parlimen-dan-kabinet/86-maklumat-korporat/maklumat-bahagian/bahagian-kawalan-penapisan-filem-dan-penguatkuasaan/256-garis-panduan-penapisan-filem>
- Minta film lakonan Shah Rukh Khan (1999, January 13). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>
- Mirza, A and Shah, K (Directors) (1989). *Circus* (Television Broadcast). India: DD National
- Mishra, V (2002). *Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire*. New York: Routledge



- Mission Kashmir...bukan filem provokasi (2000, October 28). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from  
[http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2000&dt=1028&pub=Utusan\\_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et\\_02.htm](http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2000&dt=1028&pub=Utusan_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et_02.htm)
- Mohamad, R. (2001, February 22). MB: Bollywood not main issue at Mufti meeting. *The Star*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>
- Mohd AnisMd, N (1993). *Zapin: Folk Dance of the MalayWorld*. Singapore: Oxford University Press
- Moorti, S (2003). Desperately Seeking an Identity: Diasporic Cinema and the Articulation of Transnational kingship. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 6 (3), 355-376. DOI: 10.1177/13678779030063007
- Moran, K.C and Chung, L.C (2008). Global or Local Identity? A theoretical analysis of the role of Viacom on identity formation among children in an international context. *Global Media Journal* (online). 7(12). Retrieved from  
<http://lass.calumet.purdue.edu/cca/gmj/sp08/gmj-sp08-moran-chung.html>
- Morrison, D. E. (1978). Kultur and culture: The case of Theodor W. Adorno and Paul F. Lazarsfeld. *Social Research*, 44(1), 331-355. Retrieved from  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/40970336>
- Mr Arifzahlan (2013, February, 27). Bollywood/Indian Dance- Warwick Malaysia Night 2013 (Video file). Retrieved from  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sv5t9oSkG4g>
- M'sia is India's biggest tourism market in Asean (2011, October 22). *The Star*. Retrieved from  
[thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2011/10/22/nation/20111022132213&sec=nati](http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2011/10/22/nation/20111022132213&sec=nati)
- Mufti Perak setuju tutup stesen TV (2001, February 20). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from  
<http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>

- Muhammad (2005, January 21). P.Ramlee Bridges the Ethnic Divide. *New Straits Times*. Retrieved from <http://my.vlex.com/vid/ramlee-bridges-the-ethnic-divide-78528427>
- Muhammad, Z (2008, October 10). Shahrukh Khan received the tile Datuk. Message posted in <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/smsp7377/QkLPAOsBX5U>
- Mukherjee, M (2012, January 25). Movie Review – Race 2. *The Times of India*. Retrieved from <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/hindi/movie-review/Race-2/movie-review/18164764.cms>
- Muktamad tayangan film Bollywood dikurangkan (2001, February 20). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>
- Murali, R. S. N. (2010, March 2). Bollywood bigwigs will be in Terengganu to film movie. *The Star*. Retrieved from [thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/3/2/nation/20100302094356&sec=nation](http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/3/2/nation/20100302094356&sec=nation)
- Murat, M. J (2009). The Malay and Malaysian films - Where are we? (Blog Post). Retrieved from <http://thoughtsonfilms.com/2009/03/23/the-malay-and-malaysian-films-where-are-we-part-1/>
- Muthalib, H. (2008). The Little Cinema of Malaysia: Out with the Old, In with the new. In Eric Sasono (ed.) *Kandang dan Gelanggang: Sinema Asia Tenggara Kontemporer* (Contemporary Southeast Asian Cinema). Jakarta: Kalam Press
- Nair, S. (2009, July 26). Terrific entertainment. *New Sunday Times*. p. 23
- Nambiaar, V (2012, September 22). Cinema: Sweet on Barfi. *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nst.com.my/cinema-sweet-on-barfi-1.146669>
- Nandy A (2003). Notes towards an agenda for the next generation of film theorists in

- India. *South Asian Popular Culture*, 1(1), 79-84.  
DOI:10.1080/1474668032000077131a
- Nandy, A. (1998). *The secret policy of our desires: Innocence, culpability and Indian popular cinema*. London: Zed Books.
- Narain, A (2007). Indian Movies, Narratives of Dissent and Objectification. *Journal of Creative Communications*, 2 (1-2), 57-77. DOI: 10.1177/097325860700200204
- Nasi goreng tempura (2012, February 18). Malaysian Cultural Night 2012 (Penn State) - Bollywood Dance (Video file). Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YU7dNqSOWgs>
- Nassurudin (2008, October 13). Datuk for Shahrukh. Message posted to <http://au.answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20110102075920AAG6oFf>
- Nayar, P. K (2009). *Seeing Stars*, New Delhi: Sage Publications
- New Film Addicts pvt ltd (Producer) and Kapoor, R. K (Director) (1988). *Fauji* (Television Broadcast). India: DD National.
- No ban on Bollywood films on TV (2001, February 19). *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>
- Noktahhitam (2008, October 11). Datuk Shah Rukh Khan, WTF? Message posted to <http://www.noktahhitam.com/datuk-shah-rukh-khan-wtf.html>
- Noor, F. A. (2000, November 28). YaRahman! YaRaheem! *Malaysiakini*. Retrieved from <http://www.malaysiakini.com/columns/6518>
- Omar, A (Producer) and Baba, S (Director) (1992). *Selubung* (Motion Picture) Malaysia: Identity Entertainers
- Omar, M (2011, December 1). *Malaysia's beloved P. Ramlee*. *Asean-Korea Centre (blog)*. Retrieved from <http://blog.aseankorea.org/archives/1813>

- One Two Ka Four papar lokasi menarik negara ini (2001, April 04). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from Monash University News resource - <http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=231938&tid=44&cid=3>
- O'Neill, Patricia (2013). Imagining global India: Bollywood's transnational appeal. *Continuum*. 27(2), 254-66. DOI:10.1080/10304312.2013.766309
- OoiKeat Gin (2009). *Historical Dictionary of Malaysia*. Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press
- Pansha (Producer) and Shaari, U. H (Director) (1993). *Perempuan, Isteri &...* (Motion Picture). Malaysia: Berjaya Film Production
- PAS: Scrap Indian, Vengaboys concerts (2000, July 20). *The Strait Times*, p. 34.
- Patrick, S (2012, February 5). Hips don't lie as Malaika wows the crowd. *The Star*. Retrieved from [thestar.com.my/metro/story.asp?sec=nation&file=/2012/2/5/nation/10681677](http://thestar.com.my/metro/story.asp?sec=nation&file=/2012/2/5/nation/10681677)
- Pelakon popular Bollywood di Langkawi (2000, December 1). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from [http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2000&dt=1201&pub=Utusan\\_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et\\_02.htm](http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2000&dt=1201&pub=Utusan_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et_02.htm)
- Penerbit tertarik keindahan Malaysia (2000, July 13). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from [http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2000&dt=0713&pub=Utusan\\_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et\\_03.htm](http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2000&dt=0713&pub=Utusan_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et_03.htm)
- Permintaan untuk menunjukkan Konsert Shahrukh Khan (1999, January 18). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from [blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=122256&tid=42&cid=3](http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=122256&tid=42&cid=3)
- Pfleiderer, B (1985). An Empirical study of urban and semi-urban audience reactions to Hindi films, In Pfleiderer, B and Lutze, L (ed.), *The Hindi Film: Agent and Reagent of Cultural Change* (pp. 81-130) New Delhi: Manohar,
- Pillania, R.K (2008). The Globalization of Indian Hindi Movie Industry. *Management*, 3(2), 115-123. Retrieved from

[http://www.fm-kp.si/zalozba/ISSN/1854-4231/3\\_115-123.pdf](http://www.fm-kp.si/zalozba/ISSN/1854-4231/3_115-123.pdf)

Pinewood Iskandar Malaysia studios keen to lure Bollywood filmmakers (2013, March 18). *The Edge*. Retrieved from [www.theedgemaalaysia.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=233281&Itemid=79](http://www.theedgemaalaysia.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=233281&Itemid=79)

Ping, F. Y. (2001, February 16). DPM: Let censorship board decide. *The Star*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>

Popp, R.K (2006). Mass Media and the Linguistic Marketplace: Media, Language, and Distinction. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 30(1), 5-20  
DOI:10.1177/0196859905281888

Population distribution and basic demographic characteristics, Report (2010). *Department of Statistics, Malaysia*. Retrieved from [http://www.statistics.gov.my/portal/download\\_Population/files/census2010/Tabaran\\_Penduduk\\_dan\\_Ciri-ciri\\_Asas\\_Demografi.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.my/portal/download_Population/files/census2010/Tabaran_Penduduk_dan_Ciri-ciri_Asas_Demografi.pdf) on 8 July 2012

Power, C & Mazumdar, S (2000, February 28). America isn't the only country that knows how to spin and export fantasies. *Newsweek International*, p. 52

Pragalath, K (2013, January 26). Viswaroopam saga: National laureate pens a poem. *Free Malaysia Today* (Online). Retrieved from <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2013/01/26/viswaroopam-saga-national-laureate-pens-a-poem/>

Prasad (1999). Cine politics: On the political significance of cinema in south India. *Journal of the Moving Image*, 1, 37–52. Retrieved from <http://cscs.res.in/dataarchive/textfiles/textfile.2009-09-24.1238951072/file>

Prasad, M. (1998). *Ideology of the Hindi film: A historical construction*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

Pricewaterhouse Coopers (2010). *Indian Entertainment and Media (E&M) Outlook*. Retrieved from

[http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/entertainment-media/pdf/PwC\\_India\\_EM\\_Outlook\\_2010.pdf](http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/entertainment-media/pdf/PwC_India_EM_Outlook_2010.pdf)

Pringle, J (2001, March 12). Five killed in Malaysian riots. *The Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.indianmalaysian.com/klanglama.htm#five> on 14 July 2014

Punathambekar, A (1999). We are like this only: Desis and Hindi films in the diaspora. Unpublished Masters Dissertation. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Massachusetts, United States

Punathambekar, A (2005). Bollywood in the Indian American Diaspora. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 8(2), 151-173. DOI: 10.1177/1367877905052415

Punathambekar, A (2010). From Bihar to Manhattan”: Bollywood and the Transnational Indian Family. In Michael Curtin, Hemant Shah (eds.) *Reorienting Global Communication: Indian and Chinese Media beyond Borders* (pp. 41-59) Champaign: University of Illinois.

Puzzled over Bollywood thug (2003, May 23). *The Sun*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>

Questions over released Bible (2011, March 17). *The Star*. Retrieved from <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2011/3/17/nation/8287248&sec=nation>

Race war in Malaysia (1969, May 23). *Time*. Retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20070518061525/http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,900859,00.html>

Race 2: Muslim group protests against the posters (2013, January 30). *Times of India*. Retrieved from <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Race-2-Muslim-group-protests-against-the-posters/articleshow/18247323.cms>

Rahman, R. A (Producer) and Osman, A. M (Director) (1993). *XX Ray* (Motion Picture). Malaysia: Nizarman and Grand Brilliance

- Rahman, R. A (Producer) and Osman, A. M (Director) (1995). *XX Ray II* (Motion Picture). Malaysia: Nizarman and Grand Brilliance
- Rahman, S. A & Nurullah, A. S (2012). Islamic Awakening and its Role in Islamic Solidarity in Malaysia. *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 29(1), 98-125. Retrieved from [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2015074](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2015074)
- Rahman, S. A (Producer) and Salleh, A (Director) (1995). *Amok* (Motion picture). Malaysia: Nizarman Sdn Bhd
- Rai, G (Producer) and Chopra, Y (Director) (1975). *Deewar* (Motion picture). India: Trimurti Films Pvt. Ltd
- Raina, B (2010). Constructing Sharukh Khan. Retrieved from <http://www.zcommunications.org/constructing-shah-ruk-khan-by-badri-raina>
- Raj, V. N (Producer) and Osman, A. M (Director) (1993). *Femina* (Motion Picture). Malaysia: (SV Productions)
- Rajadhyaksha, A (1996). *The Oxford History of World Cinema*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Rajadhyaksha, A. (2003). The 'Bollywoodization' of the Indian cinema: cultural nationalism in a global arena. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 4(1), 25-39. Retrieved from [http://www.cerium.ca/IMG/pdf/The\\_Bollywoodization\\_of\\_the\\_Indian\\_Cinema.pdf](http://www.cerium.ca/IMG/pdf/The_Bollywoodization_of_the_Indian_Cinema.pdf)
- Rajagopalan, S (2011). Shahrukh Khan as media text: celebrity, identity and emotive engagement in a Russian online community, *Celebrity Studies*, 2(3), 263-276. DOI:10.1080/19392397.2011.609333
- Raju, Z. H (2008). Bollywood in Bangladesh. In Kim, Y (Ed.) *Media consumption and everyday life in Asia* (pp.155-166) New York, London: Routledge
- Rakamkan Konsert Bollywood (1999, October 26). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=129466&tid=42&cid=3>

- Ram, P. (2012 January 24). Masala Mix: It's a girl for Lara. *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nst.com.my/latest/masala-mix-it-s-a-girl-for-lara-1.36420>
- Ram, P. (2012, July 18). When Salman eyed Katrina. *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nst.com.my/latest/when-salman-eyed-katrina-1.108932>
- Ram, P. (2012, June 6). Masala Mix: Mirrors vex Emraan, Neha. *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nst.com.my/life-times/style/masala-mix-mirrors-vex-emraan-neha-1.91328>
- Ramachandran, T M. (1985). *Seventy years of Indian cinema: 1913-1983*. Bombay: Cinema India-International.
- Ramanaidu, D (Producer) and Ishwar, Y (Director) (2000). *Aaghaaz* (Motion picture). India: Suresh Productions
- Ramanaidu, D (Producer) and Ishwar, Y (Director) (2000). *Aaghaaz* (Motion picture). India: Suresh Productions
- Rangoonwalla, F. (1975). *75 years of Indian Cinema*. New Delhi: Indian Book Co
- Raslan, K (2012, July 17) .Gentle advocate of Malay identity. *The Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.thestar.com.my/Story/?file=%2F2012%2F7%2F17%2Fcolumnists%2Fceritalah%2F11672266&sec= on 12 January 2013>
- Reduce airtime for Bollywood movies, say Muftis (2001, February 15). *The Star*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>
- Rojek, C (2001), *Celebrity*, London: Reaktion Books
- Roy, A, G (2010). Is everybody saying 'shava shava' to Bollywood bhangra. In Mehta, R. B & Pandharipande, R (ed.) *Bollywood and Globalization* (pp. 35-49). New York: Anthem Press.
- Rusli, A (2012, November 17). New Gangs of India. *The Malaysian Insider*. Retrieved from <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/opinion/aidil-rusli/article/new-gangs-of-india>



- Rusli, A (2012, November 7). New gangs of India. *The Malaysian Insider*. Retrieved from <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/opinion/article/new-gangs-of-india>
- Said, E (1993). *Culture and imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books
- Saner, E (2006, August 04). King of Bollywood. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2006/aug/04/india.world>
- Sani, M. A. M (2010). A comparative analysis of Asian values and Islam Hadhari in Malaysia. *Jurnal Kemanusiaan*. June edition, 11-22. Retrieved from [http://www.management.utm.my/academic-guide/doc\\_view/252-a-comparative-analysis-of-asian-values-and-islam-hadhari-in-malaysia.html](http://www.management.utm.my/academic-guide/doc_view/252-a-comparative-analysis-of-asian-values-and-islam-hadhari-in-malaysia.html)
- Sarawak has it all, Bollywood told (2012, March 16). *The Star*. Retrieved from [thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/3/16/sarawak/10927450&sec=Sarawak](http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/3/16/sarawak/10927450&sec=Sarawak)
- Screwvala, R; Kapur, S. R; Basu, A (Producers) and Basu, A (Director) (2012). *Barfi* (Motion picture). India: Ishana Movies
- Sen, M (2010). It's all about loving your parents: Liberalization, Hindutva and Bollywood's new fathers. In Mehta, R. B & Pandharipande, R (ed.) *Bollywood and Globalization*, (pp. 145-162) New York: Anthem Press
- Sena calls SRK a 'traitor', but not to stop his film (2010, February 6). *The Times of India*. Retrieved from <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Sena-calls-SRK-a-traitor-but-not-to-stop-his-film/articleshow/5541893.cms>
- Seneviratne, K. (2001, April 17). Bollywood aims to seduce the world. *Malaysiakini*. Retrieved from <http://www.malaysiakini.com/opinions/21387>
- Seneviratne, K. (2001, March 25). Culture-Malaysia: Under pressure, gov't counters Bollywood influence. *Inter Press Service*. Retrieved from [www.ipsnews.net/2001/03/culture-malaysia-under-pressure-govt-counters-bollywood-influence/](http://www.ipsnews.net/2001/03/culture-malaysia-under-pressure-govt-counters-bollywood-influence/)

'Sepet' and 'Gubra' draw controversy (2006, April 27). *The Sun Daily* (Online). Retrieved from <http://www.thesundaily.my/node/174160>

Shah Rukh given brand laureate award in Malaysia (2012, December 15). *Business Standard*. Retrieved from [http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/shah-rukh-given-brand-laureate-award-in-malaysia-112121500278\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/shah-rukh-given-brand-laureate-award-in-malaysia-112121500278_1.html)

Shah Rukh Khan (2012). Got honoured at Dr.Mahathirs function & a beautiful digital Koran. Now to India. Way I travel I could be the Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy (twitter Post). Retrieved from <http://tweetwood.com/iamsrk/tweet/279646270937788417>

Shah Rukh Khan can move to Pak if he does not feel safe in India: Hafiz Saeed (2013, January 28). *Daily News Analysis*. Retrieved from <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-shah-rukh-khan-can-move-to-pak-if-he-does-not-feel-safe-in-india-hafiz-saeed-1793488>

Shah Rukh Khan jaditaruhan (1999, August 17). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=168676&tid=42&cid=3>

Shah Rukh Khan kagumi Malaysia (2000, July 29). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=111491&tid=43&cid=3>

Shah Rukh Khan kagumsemangat Malaysia Boleh (1999, October 26). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=129419&tid=42&cid=3>

Shah Rukh Khan security: India reacts angrily, tells Pak's Rehman Malik to save its own Muslims (2013, January 29). *The Indian Express*. Retrieved from <http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/shah-rukh-khan-security-india-reacts-angrily-tells--paks-rehman-malik-to-save-its-own-muslims/1066260/>

Shah Rukh Khan Thrills Fans with Malay Poem (2000, July 25). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from

[http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2000&dt=0725&pub=utusan\\_express&sec=Home\\_News&pg=hn\\_10.htm](http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2000&dt=0725&pub=utusan_express&sec=Home_News&pg=hn_10.htm)

Shah Rukh wants to shoot more movies here (200, October 29). *New Strait Times*.

Retrieved from

<http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=41652&tid=43&cid=3>

Shahrukh is ours! (2008, December 8). *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from

<http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=140346&tid=79&cid=3>

Shahrukh Khan to bear cost of travelling here (2008, October 24). *New Strait Times*.

Retrieved from

<http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=106789&tid=79&cid=3>

Shaw, R (Producer) and Ramlee, P (Director) (1955). *Penarik Beca* (Motion picture).

Malaysia: Malay Film Productions

Shaw, R (Producer) and Ramlee, P (Director) (1960). *Antara Dua Darjat* (Motion

picture). Malaysia: Malay Film Productions

Shaw, R. R (Producer) and Rao, B. N (Director) (1953). *Hujan Panas* (Motion picture).

Malaysia: Malay Film Productions

Shiekh, M (2009). *Shah Rukh Can: The Life and Times of Shah Rukh Khan*. New Delhi: Om

Books International

Shivdasani, D; Sadarangani, P (Producers) and Shivdasani, D (Director) (2001). *Yeh*

*Raaste Hain Pyar Ke* (Motion picture). India: Tips Industries

Shoosmith, B (2002). Our films thier films; some speculations on writing Indian film

history. In Donald, J and Renoy, M (eds) *The Sage Handbook of Film Studies*.

London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp. 74-86

Shoot in Malaysia, Finas tells Indian film makers (2011, October 17). *Borneo Post* (online).

Retrieved from

[www.theborneopost.com/2011/10/17/shoot-in-malaysia-finas-tells-indian-film-makers/](http://www.theborneopost.com/2011/10/17/shoot-in-malaysia-finas-tells-indian-film-makers/)

- Shukri, E; Abdulla, W. S; Salleh, N (Producers) and Ahmad, Y (Director) (2006). *Gubra* (Motion picture). Malaysia
- Shushan, N. Y (2014, January 22). Demand grows for pigs raised outside. *International New York Times*. p. 1
- Sidhwani, R; Akhtar, F (Producers) and Akhtar, F (Director) (2006). *Don 1, The Chase Begins Again* (Motion picture). India: Excel Entertainment
- Sidhwani, R; Khan, A; Akhtar, F (Producers) & Kagti, R (Director) (2012). *Talash* (Motion picture). India: Excel Entertainment, Aamir Khan Productions
- Singaravelu, S. (1983). The Literary Version of the Rama Story in Malay. In K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar (ed), *Asian Variations in Ramayana* (pp. 276-295). New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.
- Singh, A.T & Uberoi, P (1994). Learning to 'Adjust': Conjugal Relations in Indian Popular Fiction. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 1(1), 93-120.  
DOI:10.1177/097152159400100106
- Singh, Y. (2008, November 19). Bollywood in Southeast Asia. The Institute of Peace & Conflict Studies. Retrieved from  
[http://www.ipcs.org/article\\_details.php?articleNo=2734](http://www.ipcs.org/article_details.php?articleNo=2734)
- Sinha, S (2010). Globalization of Indian Cinema. Retrieved from  
<http://www.merineews.com/article/globalisation-of-indian-cinema/15794406.shtml> on 21 April 2011
- Sinha, S (2011, December 2). Shah Rukh Khan in Malaysian jail. *Times of India*. Retrieved from  
[http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-12-02/news-interviews/30463567\\_1\\_prison-inmates-malacca](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-12-02/news-interviews/30463567_1_prison-inmates-malacca)
- Sircar, A (1995). Of Metaphorical Politics: Bombay Films and Indian Society. *Modern Asian Studies*, 29(2), 325-335. Retrieved from  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/312816>

- Siti Nurhaliza to sing at Bollywood film awards (2006, May 10). *The Star*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>
- Sonali Bendre Bollywood dalam genggaman (1999, October 24). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from [http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=1999&dt=1024&pub=Utusan\\_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et\\_01.htm](http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=1999&dt=1024&pub=Utusan_Malaysia&sec=Hiburan&pg=et_01.htm)
- Spielberg, S; Molen, G. R; Lustig, B (Producers) and Spielberg, S (Director) (1993). *Schindler's List* (Motion picture). United States: Amblin Entertainment
- Srinivas, L (2005). Communicating Globalization in Bombay Cinema: Everyday life, imagination and the persistence of the local. *Comparative American Studies*. Vol. 3(3), pp. 319-344. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/10.1177/1477570005055984>
- Srinivas, L (2010). Nonsense as sense-making: Negotiating globalization in Bombay cinema. In Curtin, M and Shah, H (Eds), *Re-orienting global communications* (pp. 17-40), Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press,
- Srinivas, L. (2002). The active audience: Spectatorship, social relations and the experience of cinema in India. *Media, Culture & Society*, 24, 155-173. DOI:10.1177/016344370202400201
- Srinivas, S. V. 2009. *Megastar Chiranjeevi and Telegu cinema after N.T. Rama Rao*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press
- Sriram, S (Producer) & Mani Ratnam (Director) (1995). *Bombay* (Motion picture). India: Aalayam Productions
- SRK gives out tips on romance (2013, December 05). *Deccan Herald*. Retrieved from <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/373071/srk-gives-tips-romance.html>
- Staiger, J (1992). *Interpreting Films: Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema*. New Jersey: Princeton UP.
- Staiger, J (2000). *Perverse Spectators: The Practise of Film Reception*. New York, London: New

York University Press

- Staiger, J (2005). *Media reception studies*. New York, London: New York University Press
- Stevenson, R (1974). Cinemas and Censorship in Colonial Malaya. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 5(2), 209-224. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/20070098?uid=3738672&uid=2&uid=4&sid=21106564150673>
- Straubhaar, J. D. (1991). Beyond media imperialism: Assymetrical interdependence and cultural proximity. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 8, 39–59. Retrieved from <http://www.nabilechchaibi.com/resources/Straubhaar.Beyond%20Media%20Imperialism.pdf>
- Straubhaar, J. D. (2001). Brazil: The role of the state in world television. In N. Morris & S. R. Waisbord (Eds.), *Media and globalization: Why the state matters* (pp. 133–153). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Straubhaar, J. D. (2003). Choosing national TV: Cultural capital, language, and cultural proximity in Brazil. In M. G. Elasmr (Ed.), *The impact of international television: A paradigm shift* (pp. 77–110). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Straubhaar, J. D. (2003). Choosing national TV: Cultural capital, language and cultural proximity in Brazil. In M. G. Elasmr (Ed.), *The impact of international television: a paradigm shift* (pp. 77-110). Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum
- Straubhaar, J. D. (2007). *World television: From global to local*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Stuart, H et al (eds.) (1980). *Culture, Media, Language*. London: Hutchinson
- Study on Bollywood movies and crime rate (2001, February 19). *The Star*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>
- Study on Bollywood movies and crime rate (2001, February 19). *The Star*, p. 7
- Suhakam to mediate interfaith dialogues (2002, April 9). *Malaysiakini*. Retrieved from <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/11051> on 14 July 2014

- Su-Lyn, B (2013, May 7). GE13 an urban, not Chinese swing, say analysts. *The Malaysian Insider*. Retrieved from <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/ge13-an-urban-not-chinese-swing-say-analysts>
- Sweeney, Amin (1972). *The Ramayana and the Malay Shadow-Play*. Kuala Lumpur: The National University of Malaysia Press.
- Tan Sooi Beng (1993). *Bangsawan a social and stylistic history of popular Malay Opera*. Singapore: Oxford University Press
- Taurani, R. S (Producer) and Abbas-Mustan (Director) (2013). *Race 2* (Motion picture). India: Tips Films
- Taurani, R. S; Taurani, K. S (Producers) and Abbas-Mustan (Director) (2008). *Race* (Motion picture). Tips Films
- Tayang Baazigar lakonan Shah Rukh Khan (1999, February 8). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=141181&tid=42&cid=3>
- Teoh, S (2012, March 30). In Friday sermon, JAWI tells Muslims Jews are No. 1 enemy. *The Malaysian Insider*. Retrieved from <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/in-friday-sermon-jawi-tells-muslims-jews-are-no.-1-enemy> on 13 December 2012
- Thakur, G. B (2010). Globalization and the Cultural Imagery. In Mehta, R. B & Pandharipande, R (ed.) *Bollywood and Globalization* (pp. 75-92) New York: Anthem Press
- The Star hauled up over 'Allah' tattoo picture (2012, February 27). *The Malaysian Insider*. <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/the-star-hauled-up-over-allah-tattoo-picture>
- The ugly truth behind Bollywood or Hindi movies? (2007, August 11). Malay Women [Blog Post]. Retrieved from <http://malaywomen.blogspot.com/2007/08/ugly-truth-behind-hindi-or-bollywo>

od.html

- Thussu, D (2008). The Globalization of Bollywood: The Hype and the Hope. In Kavoori, A. P. and Punathambeker, A, (Eds.) *Global Bollywood*. (pp. 97-116), New York: New York University Press
- Tirumala, L (2009). *Bollywood movies and cultural identity construction among second generation Indian Americans*. Thesis submitted at Texas Tech University. Retrieved from [http://thinktech.lib.ttu.edu/ttu-ir/bitstream/handle/2346/18773/Tirumala\\_Lakshmi\\_Thesis.pdf?sequence=1](http://thinktech.lib.ttu.edu/ttu-ir/bitstream/handle/2346/18773/Tirumala_Lakshmi_Thesis.pdf?sequence=1)
- Tourism Malaysia Develops Unique Products To Woo Kiwis (2010, August 20). *Bernama News* (Online). Retrieved from <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/newsindex.php?id=522769>
- Tourism Malaysia dumps Chelsea for Man United (2006, September 14). *Asian Football Business Review*. Retrieved from <http://footballdynamicasia.blogspot.com/2006/09/tourism-malaysia-dumps-chelsea-for-man.html/3>
- Tuchman, G (1978). *Making News*. London: Collier Macmillan Publishers.
- TV3 kuranakan tayangan filem Hindimulai April (2001, February 24). *Utusan Malaysia*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>
- Two photos of pigs in International New York Times blacked out (2014, January 2014). *The Malaysian Insider*. Retrieved from <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/two-photos-of-pigs-in-international-new-york-times-blackened-out> on 23 February 2014
- Tyrrel, H (1998, August). Bollywood in Britain. *Sight and Sound*, Issue 88. Retrieved from <http://www.moviemags.com/main.php?title=SIGHT%20and%20SOUND&etos=1998>
- Uberoi, P (1998). The diaspora comes home: Disciplining desire in DDLJ. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 32 (2), 305-336. DOI: 10.1177/006996679803200208



- Van der Heide, W (2002). *Malaysian Cinema, Asian Film; Border Crossings and National Cultures*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press
- Vasudevan, R. (2000). *Making meaning in Indian Cinema*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press
- Vasudevan, R (2010). *The Melodramatic Public: Film Form and Spectatorship in Indian Cinema*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black
- Vaswani, P; Burmawala, M; Abbas-Mustan (Producers) and Abbas-Mustan (Director) (2012). *Players* (Motion picture). India: Burmawala Partners
- Velayutham, S (2008). *Tamil Cinema: The cultural politics of India's other film industry*, UK: Routledge
- Vijayan, K N (1998, December 28). Enjoyable flicks from Bollywood. *New Straits Times*. Retrieved from Proquest (Monash resources)  
<http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/docview/266415633?accountid=12528>
- Vijayan, K N (2012, January 18). Cinema: It's all about the action. *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from  
[www.nst.com.my/life-times/holiday/cinema-it-s-all-about-the-action-1.33960](http://www.nst.com.my/life-times/holiday/cinema-it-s-all-about-the-action-1.33960)
- Virdi, J (2003). *The Cinematic Imagination: Indian Popular Films as Social History*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press
- Waheed, S (1998, November 3). The great Shah Rukh delivers. *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from  
<http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=146726&tid=41&cid=3>
- Waheed, S (1999, April 26). Bollywood star out to impress her fans. *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from  
<http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=170226&tid=40&cid=3>
- Waheed, S (1999, May 5). Bollywood concert a big letdown. *New Strait Times*. Retrieved from  
[blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=37024&tid=40&cid=3](http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=37024&tid=40&cid=3)

- Waheed, S (1999, October 27). Twinkle twinkle Bollywood stars. *New Strait Times*.  
Retrieved from  
<http://blis.bernama.com/getArticle.do?id=40093&tid=42&cid=3>
- Wai, W. C (2008, October 11). Datukship for Shah Rukh Khan? No joke!. Retrieved  
from  
[chunwai08.blogspot.com/2008/10/datukship-for-shah-rukh-khan-no-joke.html](http://chunwai08.blogspot.com/2008/10/datukship-for-shah-rukh-khan-no-joke.html)
- Wan, A. W. M, Chang, P. K. & Aziz, J. (2009) Film censorship in Malaysia: sanctions of religious, cultural and moral values. *Jurnal Komunikasi*, .25 (1), 42-49. Retrieved from <http://journalarticle.ukm.my/305/1/1.pdf>
- Wanita Melayu gaya hidup semakin ke baratan? (2000, October 28). *Utusan Malaysia*.  
Retrieved from  
[http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2000&dt=1028&pub=Utusan\\_Malaysia&sec=Gaya\\_Hidup&pg=ls\\_05.htm](http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2000&dt=1028&pub=Utusan_Malaysia&sec=Gaya_Hidup&pg=ls_05.htm)
- Wayne, J. (2007, May 27). UK makes movie map for Bollywood buffs. *The Telegraph*.  
Retrieved from  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1552735/UK-makes-movie-map-for-Bollywood-buffs.html>
- Weiss, M. L. (2004). The Changing Shape of Islamic Politics in Malaysia. *Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol. 4(1), pp 139-173
- White, M. (2010, May 24) 'Kites' is 1st Bollywood Film in U.S., Canada Top 10. *Bloomberg Business Week*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2010-05-24/-kites-is-1st-bollywood-film-in-u-s-canada-top-10-update1-.html>
- Why Malaysia banned 'Schindler' (1994, March 24). *The Independent*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/why-malaysia-banned-schindler-1431194.html> on 9 February 2012
- Williams, R. (1961). *The long revolution*. London: Penguin Books.

- Williams, R. (1982). *The Sociology of Culture*, New York: Schocken Books.
- Wills, Andrew (2003). 'Locating Bollywood: Notes on the Hindi blockbuster, 1975 to the present'. In Stringer, J (ed.), *Movie Blockbusters* (pp. 255–68). London: Routledge.
- Winstedt, S. R (1933). *Malaya and its History*. London: Hutchinson's University Library.
- Women told to resist 'Bollywood Romeos' (2010, June 22). *The Star*. Retrieved from [thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/6/22/nation/6516925&sec=nation](http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/6/22/nation/6516925&sec=nation)
- Yeen, O. I. (2009, July 20). An escape to Bollywood. *The Star*.p. M14
- Yousof, Ghulam-Sarwar (2014). *Issues in traditional Malaysian culture*. Singapore: Partridge Publishing
- Zeiman (2002, April 08). Bollywood stars give Hollywood awards nite a miss. *The Star*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>
- Zieman (2002, March 27). Hill resort spruces for a night of glitter. *The Star*. Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com/mainHome.do>