



Depiction of Terrorism in Kashmir through Films

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ABSTRACT: Kashmir has been in a state of continual warfare for decades. It is crucial to comprehend the role that writers and directors play in bringing the world's attention to the largely unreported wars and strife in Kashmir by depicting the anguish, suffering, and misery felt by ordinary inhabitants in the most afflicted portion of the valley. This study analyses the depiction of pain in selected films, such as *The Kashmir Files* (2022) by Vivek Agnihotri and *Mission Kashmir* (2000) by Vidhu Vinod Chopra. It examines the psychological difficulties during the unrest, as well as the influence of foreign countries in disrupting peace. This study concentrates on the atrocity so that the bibliophile can get a glimpse of the plight of the Kashmiris. The study includes an examination of Kashmir's literature, cinema, history, and present-day circumstances. The study helps us understand how dissension grows in society and provides strategies for bolstering peace in a community with many diverse types of individuals.

KEYWORDS: Suffering, Pain, Death, Terrorism, Kashmir, and Film

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I. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the Kashmir valley in the northern Indian Union region of Jammu and Kashmir has been the site of a vicious conflict. Terrorist groups have disrupted the region's peace by vandalizing public property, threatening, and kidnapping innocents, raping women, and brutally murdering civilians. They typically use explosives to cause maximum panic and media attention. The majority of the time, terrorist organizations meticulously plan their assaults in advance. They also recruit victims, place undercover operatives, and generate funds from sympathizers or through organized crime. The core of terrorism describes it as the use of unlawful violence to induce a state of terror, typically intending to achieve political or religious goals. In this way, the phrase most often refers to acts of violence that are done on purpose during times of peace or war against people who are not part of the conflict. Bruce Hoffman in his book *Inside Terrorism* (1998) stated an explanation that "Terrorism is a pejorative term. It is a word with intrinsically negative connotations that is generally applied to one's enemies and opponents, or to those with whom one disagrees and would otherwise prefer to ignore" (Hoffman, p. 32).

Kashmir has inspired literature and film since ancient times, whether about its landscapes and natural beauty or contemporary geopolitics, terrorism, and frictions concerning India and Pakistan. It is crucial to comprehend the role that films and books play in bringing the world's attention to the underreported wars and conflict in Kashmir by describing the trauma, suffering, and distress felt by ordinary citizens in the Valley's affected areas. In the past, Kashmir has been compared to heaven, including its history as a location. It begins with a mythical and historical account of Kashmir from the 12th century, as described in the Rajtarangni. It then

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provides a critical analysis of European travel writers who have written extensively about Kashmir as a "beautiful place," arguing that human suffering has frequently been overlooked in favour of the romanticized and sacred landscape. A historical context will precede the discussion of Kashmir as a political location. One could argue that historical depictions of Kashmir constitute a discourse of "paradise on earth." This, however, is an imperialist construction. According to a Mughal emperor, if there is a paradise on earth, it is Kashmir. The Kashmiris were further alienated by the Treaty of Amritsar (1848), which sold Kashmir to Maharaja Gulab Singh. Kashmir has become a flashpoint between Indian, Pakistani, and aspirant Kashmiri nationalists. As a result, Kashmir's past and present are tumultuous. Although the Kashmir issue has been analyzed from a historical and political standpoint, it has seldom been analyzed from an aesthetic standpoint. Kashmir's image has been contested in many ways, and research that examines how Kashmir is portrayed in books and films could aid in identifying solutions for contemporary Kashmiris. Films and literature are the most powerful forms of entertainment and play a significant role in representing society's beliefs and customs, including the suffering of Kashmiris. Film directors and writers depict perceptions and realities onscreen and in writing, as well as the suffering of Kashmiris and the height of terrorism and torture of Kashmiris before or in 1990. Numerous books and films that reveal the truth about society criticize these topics.

II. REPRESENTATION OF TERRORISM IN CINEMA

Kashmiri issues have emerged as a central concern in a variety of literary and cinematic works; these two fields are becoming the most influential and popular with a global audience. The audience can benefit from reading books and watching films; they can reflect on the narratives, imagine, or analyze the content within a psychological and historical framework, and so on. Due to the vivid imagery and recollection of incidents, Kashmiri literature and cinema leave a lasting impression on their audiences. Then a slew of films and works of literature, such as *The Garden of Solitude*, *Shalimar the Clown*, *Curfewed Night*, *Srinagar Conspiracy*, *Our moon has blood clots: A memoir of lost home in Kashmir*, *The Kashmir Files*, *Jab Tak Hai Jaan*, *Shikara*, and *Mission Kashmir*, depicted the world of the Kashmiri people's horrors and struggles. They illustrated the brutality and cruelty of terrorism and the various depictions of suffering in literature and film.

Kashmir is located in the northern region of India. In the middle of the 19th century, it was the central valley of the Himalayas. This term now includes the Trans-Karakoram Tract and Aksai Chin in China, Jammu and Kashmir in India, Ladakh in Nepal, and Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan in Pakistan. In 1820, Ranjit Singh formalized the annexation of Kashmir. After the Sikhs were defeated in the first Anglo-Sikh conflict in 1846, Kashmir was ceded to Gulab Singh, the king of Jammu, following the Amritsar Agreement. His family wielded power under British influence until 1947. As soon as the dispute over the partition and the 1949 war subsided, India and Pakistan were drawn into the politics of the Cold War. Even though the 1965 Kashmir War was a significant event in the larger Kashmir conflict, India and Pakistani forces were primarily responsible for the fighting. Throughout the late 1980s, escalating incidents and attacks in Kashmir helped transform the uprising into a full-fledged terrorist insurgency in 1990. In March of 1988, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front detonated a bomb in Srinagar, which marked the beginning of a series of deadly attacks. This phase, which primarily spanned the latter half of 1989, was characterized by several executions of known or suspected Indian informants, a pre-insurgency tactic. Muslims and Hindus were both persecuted. During this period, there were more executions, which crippled the government's administrative infrastructure and surveillance and intelligence apparatus. In 1990, repeated large-scale strikes, curfews, insurgent attacks, and indiscriminate counterattacks by security forces marked the height of the conflict in Kashmir. In 1989, the Kashmir Valley witnessed the beginning of the suffering of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. This was the most heinous form of genocide.

Mission Kashmir (Vidhu Vinod Chopra, 2000) addresses the enduring issue of Kashmir. The film depicts the radicalization of the adopted son of a police officer whose family was killed by police fire in the course of a military-militant conflict. Altaf crosses the line of control and trains in Pakistan in preparation for his fight against the Indian army and police in Kashmir. Hilal Kohistani, one of his managers in Pakistan, is vicious, cruel, and feared. The film is not an artistic engagement with the political dimensions of the Kashmir conflict, which generates animosity and prevents parties from pursuing solutions. This film emphasizes the political aspect of India and Pakistan's Kashmir dispute. The film focuses on terrorism in Pakistan and India. The two main characters in *Mission Kashmir* are Altaf, the terrorist, and Anayat Khan, the police officer who killed Altaf's parents and sister during an encounter with militants at Altaf's home. Ir, the son of IG Anayat Khan, passes away, and Neelima adopts Altaf. Altaf has recurring nightmares about the attack that killed his parents and sister. He recognizes the assailant who murdered his family while wearing a mask. While on duty, Altaf discovers the identical mask and weapon in Khan's apartment while on duty and becomes determined to identify the perpetrator. Khan's return from duty is greeted by Altaf's gunfire, which, to Altaf's surprise, does not harm Khan. Altaf leaves Khan's residence to receive weaponry instruction in Pakistan. Among his Pakistani handlers is Afghan war veteran Hilal Kohistani. In the film, Altaf is assigned to *Mission Kashmir* by the dreaded figure

of Hilal. In addition to holy sites like Shankar Acharya and Dargah Hazratbal, Mission Kashmir also targets the Indian Prime Minister. Mission Kashmir failed because IG Khan tried to get Altaf to stop being a radical, and Altaf and IG Khan killed Hilal Kohistani.

The film emphasizes the threat posed by terrorism in Kashmir at the request of extremist terrorists. This film demonstrates how terrorism dehumanizes and radicalizes Kashmiri youth, including Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh youth. The causes of the current situation in Kashmir are minimized and ignored. In an ironic twist, the entire Kashmir conflict is portrayed as a terrorist plot to destroy the "harmony of India" by attacking places of worship and shrines, thereby dismantling the Indian state. The film emphasizes Kashmir's sectarian character while ignoring its political aspect. This film depicts Muslim adolescents as victims of terrorism. The terrorist Hilal Kohistani employs the Muslim boy Altaf as his trump card. The objective of Kohistani is to wipe Kashmir off the map. Kohistani's trump card is Altaf. He severed all ties with his girlfriend and relocated to Kashmir, where he joined a terrorist organization. Under the influence of Hilal and the terrorist group, Altaf prepares to launch a fatal attack and destabilize both the region and the country just before the planned visit of the Indian prime minister to the region. Despite his efforts to obtain permission, Inayat's superiors denied his request to assume responsibility for maintaining Kashmir's security. Then, Inayat discovers that the terrorists' target is not the prime minister of India but rather Hindu and Islamic places of worship. He also finds out that the terrorists plan to fire a missile at each of these holy sites so that the Hindus will blame the Muslims and the Muslims will blame the Hindus. This will result in riots and almost uncontrollable killings. The Kashmir Files also shed light on the issue of uprooting Kashmiris from their homes the terrorist. The plot begins with terrorists knocking on the door of Kashmiri teacher Pushkar Nath (Anupam Kher), observed by the execution of Karan (Pushkar's son) in front of his wife for allegedly being an "Indian spy." Bitta is Pushkar's student and forces his wife to consume grains infused with his blood. This narrative is told from the perspective of Pushkar's grandson Krishna (Darshan Kumar), who is a student in Delhi. His parents died in an accident. University professor Radhika (Pallavi Joshi) is close to Bitta and advocates for Kashmiri separatists. She prepares Krishna for the student government presidency. She advises Krishna to make certain that Kashmiri Pandits are not treated as victims. Krishna was unaware of Kashmir until his grandfather informed him of its existence. As instructed by the grandfather, he brought the ashes to their ancient, now-ruined home in Srinagar. At Brahma's request, his now-retired former colleagues gathered at his home: a top administrator (Mithun Chakravorty), a state police commander (Puneet Issar), a clerk (Atul Shrivastav), and a doctor (Prakash Belawadi). They were nearby when Krishna's family was slaughtered, but they asserted not to tell him and avoided bringing sorrow to their young offspring. However, as the conversation progresses, they are forced to confess everything. The film vividly depicts the ominous atmosphere that pervaded the 1990s. The cry at that time was "Raliv, garlic, chalive". The hospital's medical staff were warned not to treat "kafir" patients. A murdered Kashmiri's body is seen hanging from a tree. The attackers' covert objective by urging the Kashmiri community to flee the valley without their women. A large number of Kashmiris were murdered, and women were raped. Prof. Radhika persuaded Krishna to visit Srinagar to receive "answers to all of his questions." However, her contact is Bitta. His hideout contains photographs of him with the instructor, demonstrating their collaboration. Bitta convinces Krishna that his movement is peaceful and that his parents were murdered by the Indian army. However, news articles about the terrorists' murder of his family were discovered in the envelope.

The Kashmir Files open his eyes to the truth. The speech that Krishna gives in front of the students talks about the grandeur of ancient Kashmir and how its culture has been attacked by invaders and terrorists over time, culminating in the recent genocide that forced the Kashmiris to flee the valley. The film is an excellent example of historical realism and an attempt to shed light on the Kashmir issue. Attacks carried out by terrorists posing as soldiers. It appears that this group of individuals concealed themselves in Kashmir by taking a boat to their hideout, which is indicative of their behaviour. However, the film does not qualify as a melodrama because it contains only the minimum number of required acts of violence. The film is a moving and authentic portrayal of Kashmiri culture and way of life, as well as the challenges affecting it in the recent historical context. The use of songs and lullabies at appropriate moments makes the film extremely moving and genuine. People are interested in Kashmir because, like other conflict-ridden regions, it is plagued by violence.

III. CONCLUSION

The narratives depicting human suffering are analyzed in the selected works. In this context, these investigations' findings raise ethical concerns regarding communal discord in this country. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge and will benefit future generations as it sheds light on a variety of themes in the film, such as suffering, trauma, and communal disharmony. The study of Kashmiris' suffering leads to an understanding of how and why the past incident occurred. The suffering is not a minor occurrence; it also involves the extinction of humanity. To learn from suffering, individuals must realize that it is their responsibility to ensure that everyone responds to the disgust, injustice, and inhumanity in the world, as doing otherwise will destroy society.

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