Chapter 7

CONCLUSION

This research emanated from a concern with the ‘homogenised’ and ‘stereotyped’ representation of Muslims in Hindi cinema. In the process, I have attempted to respond to two different approaches: the first, which is concerned to address the film as a site of ideological construction, and the second, which engages the overlapping relationship among cultural text, politics and the economics. To pursue these two approaches, I have discussed the concepts like religion, secularism, nationalism, culture, identity, citizenship, gender and minorities which are often contested and debated. Moreover, these concepts are the integral elements of popular culture as well as our society.

It was important to undertake the present study of the representation of Muslims in Hindi cinema, as there is not much academic work done in terms of documenting Muslim cinematic film text and the creators of those texts. Islam, the religion which the Muslims profess, is the most contested religion worldwide in the recent past. At this point when I am writing the conclusion chapter of my thesis, we have witnessed multiple terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) claimed the responsibility for the attack. Moreover, the terrorist attack in Pathankot Air Force Station, for which the responsibility has been claimed by Pakistan-based the Jaish-e-Mohammed, an Islamist militant group. On the other hand, in the last decades, we have noticed the triumphal march of militant nationalism in India. As a result, the secular ideology of nationhood has been threatened. Among much other communal strife during last few months, we have witnessed a family being attacked and the head of the family beaten to death in Dadri, Uttar Pradesh on 28 September 2015. As we have discussed, the communal violence and Hindutva mobilisation started taking shape since the late eighties, the demolition of Babri Masjid in December 1992 and the carnage of Muslims in Gujarat, 2002 are the worst communal strife of the post-independence Indian history. Due to the crisis in secularism and aggressive communalism, there were social, political and cultural crisis in the recent past in...
India. Indian cinema being a mass art form has always responded to the different historical moments of the past and present.

The instant research is located in these critical moments. However, many events occurred from time to time have formed the basis of the representation of Muslims in Hindi films. Though the cinematic representation of Muslims has not been consistent through the history of Hindi films and responded to the multiple crisis of Indian history, it forms a site of collective imagination. In the post-independence period, India experienced partition and many communal riots across the country. Those historical traumas like partition, experiences of permanent exile, sufferings due to communal violence, and the new found identity crisis was represented in Hindi cinema of the time. Hindi cinema portrayed a composite culture through inter-community relations. A plural imagining of a collective identity was created. Cinema took the task of healing the horrific memories of the time. Thus, they celebrated the syncretic narratives and the films on Muslims highlighted positive aspects such culture and language. They were represented mostly as good rulers and dedicated lovers. The films on Muslims have gone through various changes and currently they are being represented in negative light like terrorists and gangsters. The study set out to read the representational change of Muslim until present day. Apart from that, I have tried to understand the perceptions of the creators and consumers regarding those films. Keeping in view the context and rationale of the study, its objectives were set as follows:

1. To study the films based on Muslims through different genre.
2. To understand the film texts of select Hindi films focusing on Muslims, made after the demolition of Babri Masjid.
3. To understand the representation of the Muslims, and the stereotypes associated with them.
4. To understand audience response to the subject line of the select films.
5. To understand how audience makes sense of the Muslim characters.
6. To locate the perceptions of the film critics regarding the select films.
7. To understand the political economy of the select films from filmmakers’ and film critics’ point of view.
I have adopted Edward Said’s theoretical lens of Orientalist discourse to look at the representation of Muslims in Bollywood. In his book *Covering Islam* (1981), Said employed the Orientalist discourse to analyse how Islam and Muslims in the Middle East are represented in Western media and how the American media continue to distort the images of the Middle East (see also Said 1997). More specifically, he focuses on the American media’s prejudice and ill-informed coverage of the Iranian revolution, more specifically the United States television news coverage during the revolution and hostage crisis in Iran. As with the case of Orientalist discourse, Said identified a similar pattern for distinguishing “those” non-Europeans from “us” Europeans that, in turn, enabled the hegemony of European culture. This Otherization is marked by certain cultural symbols of materiality, which are sometimes inappropriate or even irrelevant. These symbols, such as clothing, food habits, and etiquette, are attached to the community to create a stereotypical and mystifying image of Muslims much like western media did to the people of the Middle East. Said further writes: ‘most of this is unacceptable generalisation of the most irresponsible sort, and could never be used for any other religious, cultural, or demographic group on earth’ (1981: xvi).

Using this theoretical framework of Orientalist discourse, Jack Shaheen in his book *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (2001) opines that the lack of representation of a “regular guy”, coupled with the negative portrayal of Muslims reinforces already exiting stereotypes about Arab Muslims in Hollywood films. He documents and discusses 1,000 Hollywood films and points out that the vast majority of those films ‘portray Arab by distorting at every turn what most Arab men, women, and children are really like’ (Shaheen 2009: 7). He argues that the films represent Muslims as the cultural Other. Seen through Hollywood’s distorted lens, Arabs are represented as different and threatening. By depicting limousines, harem maidens, oil wells, and camels, the films portray Arabs with black beards and dark sunglasses. According to Shaheen, the repetition of the same images on screen can foster the stereotype of the evil Arab. He analyses the changing representational scheme of Muslims by locating the explicit tie between films and politics. Films of early twentieth century represent Arabs as an unruly, feuding lot but the films of end of the century take the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a starting point for a new wave of the vilification of Arab people. Thus, Hollywood films of this time, link the ‘Islamic faith with the male supremacy, holy
war, and acts of terror, depicting Arab Muslims as hostile alien intruders, and as lecherous, oily sheiks intent on using nuclear weapons’ (ibid.: 15). Thus, Shaheen’s theoretical framework helped me to formulate my perspective on Hindi films as I theorized on the representations of Muslims.

The methodology of the study was guided by the qualitative approach that aims to understand the perceptions of the select audience, film critics, and filmmakers on the stated subject through in-depth interviews and also analyses of films as cultural texts. I adopted textual analysis method to study film texts and deconstructed the codes and signs of the film texts and examined the film texts, which represented Muslims. Textual analysis helped me to understand the implicit social meanings, the values of characters, allusions to social and political events, and similar phenomena in the films which represented Muslims (Berger 1982). Moreover, film analysis helped me to understand significant cultural, social, and political changes in representation of Muslims in different genres — the Muslim Historical, the Muslim Social, the Muslim Political and Contemporary films. In all, four films, which I have analysed indepth, deconstructed the aftermath of Babri demolition and India’s position on terrorism, specifically after the attack of ‘9/11’.

The study attempted to understand the shift in the representation of Muslims during the last six-and-half decades through reading film texts and multiple points of view, which includes factors such as images of Muslims, the mechanism and political economy of film industry. Following qualitative paradigm, the method of data collection involved informal conversations and in-depth unstructured interview guided by the research objectives. The inductive nature of qualitative research helped me to develop concepts, insights and understanding from the patterns that emerged through the data. The data in the form of narratives were analysed into themes and thematic analysis was made with the help of ATLAS. ti (qualitative data analysis software). The codes were first derived from the data; later these codes were used to form sub-themes; and themes emerged from these sub-themes. The analysis captured the perceptions of the participants about the mechanics of the film industry, film texts and arrived at themes and concepts, which seemed to correlate with their perceptions. In what follows, I summarise the main findings of the study and delineate the conclusion. The four themes that emerged are:
1) Social History of Hindi Cinema
2) Change chronologically (Muslim Historical films, Muslim Social films, post-Babri films, contemporary Muslim films)
3) Influence of history and politics in Hindi cinema
4) Film industry mechanism and political economy

SOCIAL HISTORY OF HINDI CINEMA

Indian cinema has a history of more than one hundred years and Muslims have always been an integral part of Hindi cinema. They had/have played an important role in creating film texts and they were/are also represented in those contemporary cultural texts. In Chapter 2, I have traced the social history of Hindi film industry, with special reference to the representation of Muslims and their role in evolving Hindi film industry. We have noticed that Muslims had/have made enormous contribution to filmmaking from the early history until today. Though they consist only thirteen per cent of the total country’s population, a good number of them are involved in the Hindi film industry.

Because of their involvement in filmmaking, they were able to influence film-production in terms of culture, language, costume, and music. Urdu became the major communicative language in the early period of the film industry. Moreover, those Urdu writers formed Progressive Writer’s Movement and that helped film directors and producers to make realistic films, other than mythological and historical films, which were the trend of the time. Moreover, the left-wing political view of the movement backed the ideology of social justice and equality in pre-independent era.

Apart from language, Sufi music and Urdu poetry in the form of qawwali and gazal respectively influenced the music of Bollywood films. There are numerous singers and lyricists who popularised these two types of music in Hindi cinema. Even today, many famous lyricists, script-writers and singers are Muslims. Their engagement and contribution is noteworthy in Bollywood, but their religious identity became a problem for them in the immediate aftermath of independence. Because of the creation of Pakistan as a new and independent country for Muslims,
many Muslim actors migrated to Pakistan. The acceptability of Muslim actors in India was a serious concern after partition due to riots and communal violence and that had adverse effect on common human psyche. Thus Muslim actors started adopting non-Muslim names.

I have located the representation of Muslims along with their involvement in filmmaking. While examining the representational change in different genre, I have observed how Muslim culture, or Islamicate culture, gradually faded away as an element from the film industry.

**CHRONOLOGICAL CHANGE IN THE MUSLIM REPRESENTATION**

Apart from locating the involvement of the Muslims in filmmaking, I have examined the representation of Muslims in the Hindi films. Depending on the representational pattern, I have analysed different Muslim genres — The Muslim Historical, The Muslim Social, and The Muslim Political. Apart from categorising the representation through different genres, I have also studied the films which have represented them in an unconventional way. I have termed them as ‘The Muslim Contemporary Films’. I have divided the chapters on the basis of Muslim film genre and films which are based on Muslims.

**Muslim Historical Genre**

Chapter 3, the first substantive chapter, discusses the Muslim Historical genre. The films of this genre dealt with the Islamicate culture. The Islamicate culture basically endorsed north Indian cultural elements like language, dress and music. Mughal rulers, who were considered as popular, secular and good governors, became the primary inspiration of this genre. Those films imagined love stories of Mughal courts. The scriptwriter of the most widely celebrated film, *Jodha Akbar* shared his own experience of how he fictionalised the romance between Akbar and Jodha while writing the script of the film. Arabic-Perso-Turkish cultural elements had enormous influence in terms of language, dress, music and architecture. At
that time, Urdu was a popularly spoken language in north India and central India, as filmmakers tried to reach to the maximum people, so the communicative language of the films was Urdu. *Qawwali* and *gazal*, the musical form mostly associated with Islamicate culture, were used widely in the Muslim historical films. Costumes, which are generally, attached to Muslims like *kurta-pyjamas*, *salwar-khameez*, skull cap and *burqa* etc. were used extensively. The Muslim Historical genre also facilitated secular ethos because films of this genre represent *Ganga – Jamuna Tehzeeb* or shared culture. Because of the shared culture, there is a homogenised representation of religious and ethnic groups. Thus, the ‘composite culture’ is criticised by participants in the study because it generalises other cultures.

**The Muslim Social Genre**

Chapter 4, dealing with the Muslim Social genre, critiqued the pattern of Muslim representation in terms of culture, social and economic status through film texts. The films of this genre illustrate aristocrats and majestic life of U.P. *nawabs*. The films basically focussed on the grandeur architecture, and opulent interiors of aristocratic households, on the one hand, Muslim decadent aristocratic life of the north Indian region of Awadh, on the other. There are certain markers of this genre such as Lucknow, grand architecture, magnificent tomb or minarets, love story, and courtesans. As Muslim Social films are the combination of all these aspects, this genre reduced Muslims indentity to single identity. ‘Indian public culture continues to position the Muslim as Other, making it clear how Muslim can be a citizen of modern India’ (Dwyer 2006: 122). Women acquire an important position and pivotal role in the Muslim Social genre. The genre articulates the conflict between modern (reform, education, progress) and tradition (honour, dignity, and devotion).

These Muslim Social films were criticised by film critics and filmmakers. According to them, though the films uphold Muslim culture, the representations were exaggerated and, therefore, Muslims have become the victim of stereotyped image. Along with Hindus, Muslim Filmmakers made those stereotyped representations as well.
In the thesis, I have not discussed the courtesan as an independent genre and I have attached the genre as a sub-section in the Muslim Social genre. The courtesan genre can be categorized as Hindu and Muslim; contemporary and historical courtesan films. The films — *Umrao Jaan and Pakeezah* — of this genre mainly represent the Lucknowi culture. Courtesans were trained in ‘music, Persian and Urdu poetry, Arabic grammar, and to dance the mujra’ (Dwyer 2006: 117). Courtesan characters became a classic example of female objectification in this genre. They became objects of ‘male gaze’ and male desire. Muslim courtesan films first represent Muslim women as independent identity. Patriarchal values and ethics such as purity and self-sacrifice are reinforced many times in almost all the films. The woman redefined seduction as a fine art. The courtesans’ association with ghazal, Urdu poetry, and living as prostitute, all these aspects marginalised and positioned them outside the modern female citizen. It is necessary to establish a counter-hegemonic feminist as well as Islamic discourse to locate the realities within women’s world with much sensibility, which is perhaps absent till date.

**The Muslim Political Genre**


i) The concepts of position of ‘Nationalism and Communalism’ and their role as an essential part in popular Hindi cinema recently.

ii) ‘Hindu-ized Nation: National Family and Neo-nationalism’ highlighted how certain films emphasised Hindu culture and a monolithic image of the nation. I argue that, if there is a need to represent Hindu culture and
tradition as a national culture, it is obvious that Others are represented as either less or differently. *Pardesh* (directed by Subhas Ghai 1997) and *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham* (directed by Karan Johar 2001) illustrate the stories of Indian culture and tradition. They have also promoted patriarchal values. Thus, women have become the symbol of the nation. As a result, the films such as *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* (2015) and *Jodha Akbar* (2008) were accused of promoting the ideology of *‘love jihad’*.


iv) ‘Pakistan as Enemy’ illustrated a number of hugely successful films of the war genre (depicting wars between India and Pakistan) released between 2000 and 2005 in India. Pakistan is considered the biggest enemy of the nation particularly since the last two decades. The most devastating was the Kargil war in 1999. Between 1997 and 2006, Bollywood produced numerous war films including *Border* (directed by J.P. Dutta, 1997), *Sarfarosh* (directed by John Matthew Matthan, 1999), *Maa Tujhe Salam* (directed by Tinnu Verma, 2002), *Pukar* (directed by Rajkumar Santoshi, 2000), *Gadar* (directed by Anil Sharma, 2001), and *LOC* (directed by J.P Dutta, 2003). While Pakistan is an eternal enemy of India, during this period and thereafter, Pakistan and Muslims became synonymous and both became a threat to the nation as exemplified in films like *Gadar* (2001) and *Border* (1997). Further, the
symbolic relation between Pakistan, Muslims and Kashmir engenders a rhetoric of otherization.

The Muslim Contemporary Films

Films produced after 2000s departed from the earlier stereotypical depiction of Muslims in mainstream films as “villains” or “aliens” to one in which Muslims were increasingly depicted as “good” and “sensible” human beings. I have located the films with unconventional representations of Muslims and also tried to find out the political economy behind producing them. The films represent the central protagonists as Muslims, but they are not marked by their religion or Islamicate ethos. They are represented as modern with mundane aspirations or everyday problems in their lives. But almost all the films emphasise that the protagonists have to prove their allegiance or innocence. In some films, they prove themselves that they are not terrorists and, in some other films, they prove their patriotism. Though representations of Muslims are liberated from associating them with Islamicate culture, terrorists, and underworld dons, the protagonists of the contemporary films like Iqbal (2005), Aamir (2008), Chak De! India (2007), My Name is Khan (2010) prove their innocence in spite of their identity crisis due to their religion. The common theme of these films is that the protagonists have to prove their allegiance or innocence.

All these genres and categorical films were produced mostly in a certain period of time. They are influenced by the socio-political situation of the time. In the next section, I will discuss how socio-political scenario helped to mould the representation of Muslims and created those genres and categorical films.

INFLUENCE OF HISTORY AND POLITICS IN HINDI CINEMA

Throughout, all these genres, Hindi cinema has consistently responded to socio-political events of the history. In the post-independence era, Hindi film industry
has played the task of healing communal tensions of the time through different strategies. We have noticed the filmmakers’ denial of portraying the horror memories of partition; also the presence of a number of films, which celebrated the composite culture, syncretic narratives, Mughal rulers and Muslim aristocrats. Along with secular films — *Padosi* (1941), *Dharamputra* (1961), there are many Muslim historical films, which highlight the composite culture, Islamicate culture through music, dance and language.

The films of the Muslim Historical genre were mostly produced in this time. It has emerged from the analysis that Muslim historical films were the demand of the time more than the initiative of spreading secular ethos by the filmmakers. In the post-partition and post-independence period, there were communal tensions, but there was also secular euphoria in the consciousness of citizens. Following the rhetoric of secularism, these filmmakers highlighted the Islamicate culture in those historical films that were lapped up by the audience. The Muslim Historical genre began losing its charm gradually since the mid-1960s. There are very few Muslim Historical films which are produced in the recent past. The Muslim Social genre was mostly produced during 1960s and 1970s. From the analysis, it has emerged that ‘composite culture’, *tehzeeb*, Mughal emperor in the films supported the Nehruvian secular policy. Participants also think that the Muslim Social and the Muslim Historical genre faded away due to Nehru’s loosing of power during 1960s.

At the end of 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, Hindu right-wing movement began taking shape aggressively. Babri Masjid was demolished on 6 December 1992 and the incident was one of the major turning points in Indian history as it hardened the communal veins across the country. It was followed by many communal riots. Riots in Bombay in 1992 were most prominent. The demolition of the Babri Masjid and the riots that followed became the theme of a memorable film. Pakistan became the enemy in multiple Hindi films during this period. Moreover, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and a section of the Pantagon have left a mark worldwide. Immediately after the attack, many movies were made on terrorism in Hollywood as well as in Bollywood. All these events play an important role to mould the representation of Muslims in Bollywood. Focusing on the films released post-Babri demolition period, this genre sought to
locate the wider relationship between the socio-political context and the representation of Muslims in Indian Hindi cinema.

The idea of secularism is understood widely as ‘equal respect for all the religions’ that provides a legitimate platform for co-existence of different communities with different religions and practices peacefully. Towards the end of the 1980s, and the beginning of the 1990s, the Hindu right-wing movement emerged as a robust presence in India. The films of the time interweave religion and politics. The films of this period discussed or documented in this study participate in the current debate about the crisis of secularism. In these films, Muslims are mostly represented as terrorists (jehadi), extremists, underworld dons, and anti-social elements; and, hence, a threat to the majority culture. Shobha Rajgopal corroborates this when she writes, ‘…Indian mainstream cinema too which has perfected propaganda to an art form. A plethora of Indian films demonstrated these processes through their representation of the Indian families were threatened by menacing Islamic terrorists’ (2011: 241). There are many films such as Roja (1992), Sarfarosh (1999), Mission Kashmir (2000), Black Friday (2004), Fanaa (2006), Mumbai Meri Jaan (2008), Mission Istanbul (2008), A Wednesday (2008), Kurbaan (2009), Sikandar (2009), New York (2009) and The Attacks on 26/11 (2013), which substantiate Rajgopal’s argument.

Though I have discussed in Chapter 5 that the Muslim Political genre put forward the socio-political situation of the time, there were many historical events such as riots, and communal polarisation which are not explored adequately. There are films like Mr and Mrs. Iyer (2002), Parzania (2005), Firaaq (2008) etc., which have addressed communal issues, but they are not the mainstream films. The popular cinema, which has much wider reach across communities, has failed to locate the nuances and intricacies of the politics and state’s standpoints most of the time.

Politics plays an important role in film production. So, we have seen, there are multiple political forces which have often sought ban on some Hindi films. This is despite freedom of speech and expression being an integral part of the modern liberal Indian democracy. Films such as Bombay (1995), Fire (1996), Water (2005), Fanaa (2006), My Name Is Khan (2010), Student of the Year (2012), and Oh My God (2012) have faced the demand for banning their exibition.
There are films such as *Dev* (2004), *Kai Po Che* (2013) and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* (2015) which go against the dominant trend and convey a syncretic message of inter-community relationship in a melodramatic mode of representation. Govind Nihalani’s *Dev* put forth a deep spiritual and moral crisis that has emerged in post-Babri period and a small portion of the film projects the communal riots of Gujarat. Abishek Kapoor’s *Kai Po Che*, set in Ahmedabad, narrates the story of three friends and their love for sports. The later part of the film poses the concern of how innocents are affected by religious politics and communal hatred, which results in their eventual demise. *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* (directed by Kabir Khan) tells the narrative of a man, Pawan Kumar Chaturvedi/Bajrangi Bhaijaan, with a generous spirit helping a young mute Pakistani girl to get back to her homeland to reunite with her family. The film does not portray Muslims from Pakistan as an enemy. Although, these films tried to point out critical socio-political aspects of the time, in the process of representation, the complexity of the situation has become over simplified. They represent inter-community relations in a flawed manner.

**FILM INDUSTRY MECHANISM AND POLITICAL ECONOMY**

Throughout the history of Hindi cinema we have noticed the overlapping relationship among cultural texts, politics and the economics. Commerce has an important role to play in flourishing film industry from early history until today. Similarly, it was clear from the analysis of filmmakers’ interviews and secondary literature that prominent filmmakers always try to tap the nerve of the nation. They try to endorse the majority consensus. Film critics Rauf Ahmed and Nasreen Kabir, in chapter three, opined that Muslim Historical genre was more saleable than films of other genre at that time. For the same reason, whenever a certain type of films or a genre does not receive mass appeal, filmmakers start making other kinds of films. For the same reason, the film narratives, which are based on Anarkali and Akbar became the biggest hits of the time and multiple films were made on the same theme. Sometimes film production companies closed down because the films
like Jahna Ara, Razia Sultan flopped. Consequently, the trend of making historical films gradually declined. So, commerce has always played an important role to influence cultural text. These overlapping factors are the determinants of film production.

Moreover, I have analysed the films which were released in post-Babri demolition period and it has emerged that the impact of Hindutva nationalism on the negative cinematic representation of Muslims from the early 1990s. Following the rhetoric of ultra-nationalism, these filmmakers made films at a time when the political situation was volatile and thrived on those to make films that were lapped up by the audience. In these films, Muslims are mostly represented as terrorists (jehadi), extremists, underworld dons, and anti-social elements. Thus, the ultimate goal of a filmmaker is to gain profit from the film. To achieve that, filmmakers mostly follow the rhetoric of the nation to reach the common man’s consensus. Throughout the history of Hindi film industry, Muslims are stereotyped either positively or negatively. The creators of those film-texts were/are not always the representative of the majority community, rather there were/are many filmmakers who belonged to the Muslim community. Even, the filmmakers themselves are not necessarily always extremists nor are they driven by the extremist agenda. But because of the prevalent political situation in the country, there was always a demand for films with a narrow majoritarian agenda. Sensing the audience’s demand, filmmakers sought to capitalize on the popular rhetoric of the nation.

**IN BRIEF**

I have started this study with the general objective of understanding how Muslims are represented in Hindi cinema and have aimed to capture the perception of audience, film critics and filmmakers on those representations. Thus, locating the representational schema, I have categorized them in different genres such as the Muslim Historical, the Muslim Social, and the Muslim Political. Also, I have examined the unconventional representation of Muslims in the Contemporary Muslim films. We have noticed that throughout all the genres, the films, which are discussed or documented in this study, represented Muslims as homogenised...
identity. The representation of stereotyped Muslims as kings and *nawabs*, coupled with the negative portrayal of Muslims as terrorists, has reinforced the already existing stereotypes. The most important point that has emerged is Muslims are represented as homogenised and they are stereotyped as ‘Others’. Moreover, popular culture always responded to the country’s political situation. I have located all the films from the early history until today, but I have specifically focused and analysed the films of the post- Babri Masjid demolition period. Along with other media of popular culture, Bollywood has contributed to the hegemonic *Hindutva* discourse through multiple representations of the notion of Hindu nation and Muslim minority as a kind of ‘Manichean rivalry’. The ultra-nationalist and ultra-violent films such as *Gadar*, *Border* and *LOC-Kargil* provided enough fodder to the extremist *Hindutva* ideology in the last two decades. Themes of ‘terroristic films’ in different contexts such as Kashmir infiltration, the scattered terrorist attacks across India and international terrorism post-‘9/11’ suggest that the constant repetition of these stereotypical images in multiple films constitutes Muslims as ‘the enemy within’. The production of a self-conscious and aggressive nationalism in Hindi cinema recalls Benedict Anderson’s seminal formulation of nationalism in his pioneering work *Imagined Communities* (1983).

Thus, the most crucial point that has emerged from this study is that the popular cinema can be just labelled as ‘escapist’, ‘fantasy’ and ‘entertainment medium’, but it acquires a hegemonic and ideological role to play. Though films are always inspired by social reality, they mould and articulate the reality to represent certain perspectives. Since the early history of cinema, it was a primary tool of propaganda in the hands of nation-builders. In the representation of Muslim a dominant discourse is always constructed. According to J. Collins, ‘Popular film is allegedly the dominant or hegemonic ideology writ in celluloid’ (1989: 90). Throughout history, filmmakers tried to project the issues and problems concerning to the Muslims but, ultimately, they stereotyped them by representing them as exotic like kings and *nawabs* and as villains like terrorists, anti-national and underworld dons. They are always portrayed as ‘Others’ in popular culture and represented according to the dominant notions of the society. Indian Hindi cinema establishes certain behaviours and values associated with certain dominant groups as the norm, while marginalising others.
This study can be pursued further to examine the relation among politics, producer, audience, and text and how all the factors are interlinked in a broad socio-political setting. There are many aspects which can be further explored in much detail, for instance, film viewing pattern of different groups, class and national consciousness, interference of political parties in filmmaking and their influence on representation. Above all, it is important to explore further how audience perceptions are moulded by viewing popular cultural texts on Muslims. Moreover, one can more specifically focus on how cultural texts produce stereotypical images of certain ethnic and religious groups.