

MS THESIS

PUBLIC PERCEPTION ON THE REPRESENTATION OF PAKHTUN CULTURE IN LOLLYWOOD MOVIES



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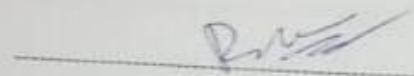
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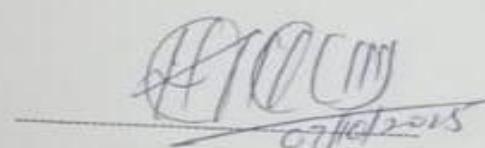
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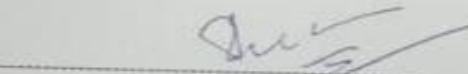
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ABSTRACT

This study looks at how Pakhtun culture is portrayed in Lollywood movies, paying special attention to how these depictions affect public opinion, support or contradict preconceptions, and foster intercultural understanding in Pakistan. The study uses a quantitative survey-based methodology to gather responses from a variety of participants in Islamabad and Mardan, drawing on framing theory. The results show that whereas some films depict Pakhtun as aggressive and uneducated, others try to emphasize good aspects of Pakhtun identity, such as hospitality and resilience. Overdramatizing customs and portraying Pakhtun men and women in flat or stereotyped roles are recurring trends. Social alienation, misunderstandings, and ethnic prejudices among non-Pakhtun audiences can result from these representations, which frequently fall short of capturing the cultural diversity within the Pakhtun population. The study emphasizes that while skewed portrayals run the risk of sustaining prejudices, genuine and nuanced representation might promote respect for one another and cultural unity. The study makes suggestions for authors, filmmakers, and legislators based on these revelations. By aligning creative storytelling with cultural accuracy, the film industry can serve as a medium for both artistic expression and national integration.

Keywords: Pakhtun culture, Lollywood, Cultural representation, Stereotypes in cinema, Pakhtun

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The term cinema originates from the Greek word kinesis, meaning motion. As a unique art form, cinema has evolved by integrating and expanding the scope of other artistic expressions such as poetry, drama, and painting while establishing itself as a powerful medium of communication. Rooted in photography, motion pictures offer a vivid reflection of reality through continuous moving images, profoundly transforming human perception of the world more than any previous art form (Santas, 2002).

Cinema functions through optical illusions such as persistence of vision and the phi phenomenon, which allow a rapid sequence of still images (12-24 frames per second) to appear as continuous motion. This visual effect forms the foundation of cinematography, enabling films to construct and convey powerful cultural narratives and representations (Cook, 2016).

Though just over a century old, cinema has become one of the most powerful mediums of mass communication. It functions not only as entertainment but also as a tool for storytelling, education, propaganda, and opinion formation. Through the combination of moving images and sound, cinema creates an immersive experience that allows viewers to connect deeply with distant or imagined realities. Often described as a mirror that magnifies life, cinema has the power to reflect truth or construct fiction, shaping cultural narratives and influencing public perception (buckland, 2002).

Gazdar (2019) in his book Pakistani Cinema 1947-1997 quotes Socialist Bolshevik Government of the Soviet Union's head, Vladimir Lenin who declared, "Of all art form, cinema is the most is the most important." And it's because cinema at that time cinema was efficaciously used as an appliance at the state level to disseminate political ideology (Gazdar, 1997).

While cinema is deeply connected to the arts, it also functions as a commercial enterprise driven by financial gain. From its early days, motion pictures have been produced and distributed with profit in mind, making cinema a central part of the entertainment industry. This commercial dimension is shaped by industrialists and producers who employ strategic

marketing and distribution techniques to attract audiences and ensure the success of their films. As a result, cinematic content is often influenced by market demands, audience preferences, and profitability, which can impact the way culture and communities are represented on screen (Santas, 2002).

Cinema and media play a crucial role in shaping public perception, opinion, and cultural narratives by influencing societal values, reinforcing identities, and reflecting or challenging social norms. Through storytelling and visual representation, they serve as powerful tools for cultural preservation, awareness, and change (Amedie, 2015).

1.1. Background in terms of Birth of Cinema/Motion Picture

Cinema, or motion pictures, emerged as a result of significant advancements in photography and visual technology, evolving gradually through financial, technological, and social developments. Film historians argue that the invention and progression of cinema would not have been possible without innovations such as the moving camera, sound recording, deep-focus cinematography, colour film stock, projection systems, and eventually, digital cinematography. These technological breakthroughs laid the foundation for the establishment of film industries around the world, contributing to the development of what we now recognize as national cinemas, distinct cinematic traditions shaped by specific cultural, historical, and regulatory contexts. Over time, mechanisms such as censorship and licensing also emerged, further influencing the content and form of films. Together, these developments shaped the meaning, aesthetics, and cultural impact of cinema as both an artistic and industrial medium (Meran, 2016).

Cinema, like other major inventions of the late 19th century, such as the telephone (1876), the photograph (1877), and the automobile (1880s-1890s), emerged as a result of the technological advancements sparked by the Industrial Revolution. This period of rapid innovation laid the groundwork for the invention of cinema in the 1890s, when multiple technological elements converged, including advancements in optics, mechanics, and photography. As a technological device, cinema soon evolved into a powerful medium of communication and entertainment, laying the foundation for what would become one of the most influential global industries in the modern world (Bordwell, 2003). Yuri Tsivian,

professor of Film and Media Studies, aptly describes cinema as “the art of the technical age” in his essay *What Is Cinema? An Agnostic Answer*. This definition highlights how cinema is deeply rooted in technological innovation, emerging as both an artistic expression and a product of the modern industrial era (Tsivian, 2013).

The invention of motion pictures cannot be attributed to a single individual, as the development of cinema was the result of collaborative innovations by multiple inventors across different regions. As (Manley, 2011) notes, each contributor built upon the technological advancements of others, culminating in cinema’s emergence as both a distinct art form and a global industry. Engineers, entrepreneurs, and businessmen from countries such as the United States, Germany, England, and France all played pivotal roles in this process. Therefore, the birth of cinema is better understood as a gradual evolution shaped by collective efforts rather than a single definitive moment or inventor (Kristin Thompson, 2021).

As (Santas, 2002) notes, motion pictures, as an art form, are fundamentally rooted in photography. The term “photograph” itself originates from two Greek words, photos means light and graphs means drawing so its meaning “drawing with light” or, more technically, “the stable exhibition or reproduction of light on a sensitive surface” (Peres, 2007). The invention of photography in the early 19th century laid the foundation for motion pictures, as several pioneering experimenters contributed to its development. Innovators such as William Henry Fox Talbot, Thomas Wedgwood, and Sir John Herschel in England, Nicéphore Niépce and Louis Daguerre in France and George Eastman in the United States all played instrumental roles in advancing photographic technology. Their cumulative contributions eventually paved the way for the emergence of motion pictures as both a technological innovation and a visual storytelling medium (Monahan, 2015).

The journey toward motion pictures began with early experiments in photography. In 1802, Thomas Wedgwood made one of the earliest attempts to capture images by using light-sensitive materials, producing silhouette images of objects. However, these images faded quickly and lacked permanence (Monahan, 2015). Building on this foundation, Joseph Nicéphore Niépce of France began experimenting around 1816 with sensitized paper coated in silver chloride, using a camera obscura to produce negative images. Despite partial success, the images remained unstable. By 1826, Niépce developed a more enduring method called

heliography the word heliography derived from the Greek helios which means sun and graphs means drawing, and captured the first known permanent photograph, View from the Window at Le Gras, using this technique. This image, preserved in the Gernsheim Collection in Austin, Texas, represented a breakthrough, offering a stable photographic process that laid the foundation for photo-engraving. Although the term “photography” was first coined in 1833 by Antoine Hercules Romuald Florence in Brazil, his work remained isolated from European scientific developments (Peres, 2007). These foundational advancements in photography were crucial precursors to the eventual invention of motion pictures.

In 1829, during an address at the Royal Society of London for the Promotion of Natural Knowledge, Sir John Herschel is widely credited with coining the terms photography and photograph, which would later become fundamental to the field of visual media. In addition to his terminological contribution, Herschel significantly advanced photographic processes by introducing hyposulfite of soda (later known as sodium thiosulfate or "hypo") as a chemical fixer. This innovation enabled images to be permanently stabilized on photographic paper, effectively capturing and preserving the reaction of light. Herschel's developments played a crucial role in laying the scientific and technical groundwork for the emergence of motion picture technology in the later 19th century (Monahan, 2015).

In 1833, Joseph Nicéphore Niépce passed away before he could publish his pioneering work on the heliograph process. However, his efforts profoundly influenced fellow French inventor Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre. Building upon Niépce's foundational research, Daguerre initiated his own experiments and, within two years, developed the daguerreotype process. This method significantly improved image stabilization by using a sodium chloride solution, allowing photographs to be fixed within minutes. Depending on light exposure and the viewer's angle, daguerreotype images could appear as both positive and negative. By May 1839, Daguerre successfully captured the first image using this technique, marking a major milestone in the evolution of photographic technology (Peres, 2007).

In England, William Henry Fox Talbot had begun experimenting with silver chloride as early as 1834. However, upon the public announcement of Daguerre's invention at the French Academy of Sciences on 7 January 1839, Talbot was prompted to quickly disclose his own photographic process. On 31 January 1839, he presented his method, termed photogenic

drawing into the Royal Society through his paper “Some Account of the Art of Photogenic Drawing.” This process, which involved stabilizing both negative and positive images using potassium iodide, bromide, or sodium chloride, produced prints in a range of tones depending on exposure and chemical composition. By 1841, Talbot advanced his technique with the invention of the calotype, a process using silver iodide that allowed the creation of multiple prints from a single paper negative. He further refined this into the salted paper print, which was fixed using hypo and saline solutions. Talbot’s contributions were later compiled in his seminal 1844 publication, *The Pencil of Nature*, the first book to be illustrated with photographic prints (Peres, 2007). Ultimately, Talbot’s advancements in image stabilization and his development of negative photographic prints on translucent materials paved the way for the reproducibility of photographic images (Monahan, 2015).

In early times, the photography mechanism was needed a prolonged exposure to shot a single still image, at first hours, then the time deduced to several minutes. In 1851, in the imaging process paper plates were replaced by durable glass plate negatives but due to heavyweight in 1881, the negative glass plate got reinstate by gelatin coated paper. This method decreased the required time of photographic exposure from 15 minutes to 0.001 seconds. This improvement in the field of photography made it feasible to shot any activity immediately and concurrently as it happened in front of a camera. Thus, the consistent endeavours of three men, Eadweard Muybridge, Pierre- Jules Cesar Janssen, and Etienne Jules Marey devoted a lot to the advancement of a series of still photography. It was 1874 when a cylinder-shaped camera was first developed by Pierre- Jules Cesar Janssen. He named his camera a revolver photographique or chronophotographic gun, holding the ability to create automated exposure of light at a short period on separate portions of a rotatory plate (Monahan, 2015).

However, until 1872, the idea of producing an unbroken movement of a live event was not possible. A few years later, a wealthy businessman and an ex-senator of California, Leland Standford employed an Anglo-American photographer, Eadweard Muybridge to demonstrate that at some point all four hoofs of a horse shove off from the ground in a gallop. In 1877, to commence his experiment, Muybridge, in the beginning, equipped twelve cameras together that were operating electrically but later in his motion study he upgraded to twenty-four camera, which he sat up cameras in a row along the racetrack in Sacramento Raceway Park,

California. All the twenty-four cameras in his experiment were connected with a wire over each camera to record the first series of still photographs in a continuous motion (Cook, 2016).

In his experiments with an early image projector known as the “magic lantern”, Eadweard Muybridge successfully demonstrated the projection of sequential photographs depicting a horse in motion. On May 4, 1880, he introduced the zoopraxiscope, a device that enabled the display of still images in continuous motion (Monahan, 2015). Although Muybridge did not advance toward inventing the motion picture as a complete medium, his pioneering work in motion studies, particularly through the use of a multi-camera setup marked a significant contribution to the development of cinematic technology. His experiments notably influenced French physiologist Étienne-Jules Marey, whose interest in capturing rapid animal motion led him to develop one of the earliest motion picture cameras (Bordwell, 2003).

In 1882, a Frenchman, Etienne Jules Marey invented a portable motion picture camera for the first time in history. His camera was capable of taking twelve continuous images around the edge of a rotating glass plate per second, which he called the “chronophotographic gun.” Thus, he captured the first series of still photographs of birds in a flight using his single-camera, as it happened (Cook, 2016). By 1888, Marey developed a box-type camera to use a device of intermittent movement to expose a series of still photographs on a strip of paper film despite a glass plate, having a speed of up to 120 frames per second. But it was a breakthrough in the progress toward cinema when George Eastman devised a still camera in 1888 which he called Kodak, having the ability to make photographs on a roll of sensitized paper, and the following year Eastman's introduction of a crude flexible film base celluloid roll film (Bordwell, 2003).

By the early 1890s, all other advancements in the motion picture had been accomplished, such as a flexible and transparent film base, the use of a mechanism of intermittent movement to halt the film stock, including a shutter in a camera to close off the light, etc. A few years later, many other inventors from different countries came with new advancements especially in cameras and suitable projection devices. In America, Thomas Edison who established his Edison Manufacturing Company, and Louis Jean and Auguste Lumiere set up a family firm in Lyon, France (David Bordwell, Film Art: An Introduction 11th Edition, 2016).

By 1888 in the USA, the victorious inventor of light-bulb and photograph, Thomas Edison along with his assistant William Kennedy Laurie Dickson, took some Eastman Kodak film stock and decided to commence working to design a new type of machines for making and showing photographs in motion (Bordwell, 2003). Thomas Edison in his research laboratory working with his assistant William Dickson developed a camera for recording pictures in motion which they named Kinitograph along with a pinhole project known as Kinetoscope. The first three motion pictures recorded by Dickson with Kinitograph and viewed through a box-like machine, Kinetoscope, were entitled “Monkeyshines” (Manley, 2011). Kinitograph was the first motion picture camera by Edison/Dickson and the movies recorded with this camera were seen individually through a boxlike machine holding a magnifying lens, where a continuous 40- to 50-feet film strip rolled on reels among a shutter and electric lamp, that peepshow device was called Kinetoscope. By 1891, Thomas Alva Edison for his newly invented devices applied for a license and thus, he patented his new invention of the Kinetoscope in 1893 (Cook, 2016).

In January 1893, Edison and Dickson constructed the first motion-picture studio on the grounds of Edison's New Jersey laboratory for the production, which was called the Black Maria (Bordwell, 2003). It was the very first motion-picture studio, having a camera for recording motion pictures, performers and technicians. However, the camera he had installed in his studio was restricted in its movement, as having the only ability to move away or closer to the subject on a trolley track while the only source of light in the studio was the sun. The sunlight would enter by a hole in the roof, and in order to catch the light, the entire studio could be rotated. By 1894, at Black Maria, the first Kinotoscopic record known as “Fred Ott's Sneeze” by Edison and Dickson is the earliest complete brief film sniff on record at the Library of Congress, shot with a first motion picture dubbed as Kinetograph and projected on a screen through a peep-show machine, the Kinetoscope (Monahan, 2015). Most of the films recorded, mainly featured popular vaudeville entertainers, famous sports figures, Annie Oakley's riflery, bodybuilder poses “Sandow the Strongman,” or performances by acrobats and dancers, in brief snippets lasting a 20-seconds or so, a film that the Kinetoscope could hold (Bordwell, 2003).

The first case of censorship in the history of cinema against the film by forbidding one of Edison's films enacted due to the dance footage that portraying a performer who unveils her undergarments while dancing (Manley, 2011).

From 1893 to April 1895, during all this period, Dickson at Black Maria worked as a producer, director, and cameraman for hundreds of short-lengths run films disseminated to the Kinetoscope Parlors around the country by the Edison Company. And the first Kinetoscope Parlor at 1155 Broadway in New York City for commercial movies was opened on April 14, 1894, by a Canadian entrepreneur named Andrew Holland by turning a shoe shop into a Parlor for Kinotoscopic shows (Cook, 2016). The boxing fight between Jim Corbett against Peter Courtney in 1894 became the first Kinetoscopic film that received a marvel boost in selling tickets and making public form lines in front of the Parlors (Manley, 2011).

After a commercial success of Edison's Kinetoscope made it possible to show moving images through a peephole viewer window at the top of the device, but could be viewed and enjoyed individually only by one person at a time (Monahan, 2015). A critical step toward the birth of cinema as a mass medium was the development of a projection system capable of displaying moving images on a large screen for collective viewing. Early attempts to create such projectors faced significant technical challenges, films often tore during projection, images appeared blurry, and the machinery produced excessive noise. During the development of the first motion picture camera, the Kinetograph, William Kennedy Laurie Dickson proposed designing a projection system to complement it. However, Thomas Edison, more invested in the individual viewing model of his Kinetoscope, did not pursue projection technology, prioritizing commercial profit from private viewings instead. Additionally, Edison's failure to patent the Kinetoscope internationally created an opportunity for European inventors to not only improve upon his camera design but also to advance projection technology suited for public exhibitions, laying the groundwork for cinema as a communal experience (Manley, 2011).

In October 1894, when Edison's Kinetoscope premiered in London, the Parlor that displayed the machines did so well that it claimed the Robert W. Paul to duplicate version of the Kinetoscope (Bordwell, 2003). By 1896, Paul manufactured and registered his Theatrograph (renamed Animatograph later), which was a projector based on the Kinetoscope (Cook, 2016). In the same run, many other inventors in the evolution of cinema as an industry and art form aimed for the projectors as the subsequent move to project motion pictures to a mass audience (Manley, 2011).

In projection engineering, there were two fundamental technological requirements; first up, the enlargement of images to be seen by a large group, which is made possible by employing the idea of magic-lantern. The second step in moving a film strip between the projection lamp and the shutter was the constant stop-and-go motion which was finally accomplished by the maltese-cross gear mechanism. By 1895, inventors experimenting with projection technology had observed the most important advancements that concurrently occurred in Western Europe and the United States (Cook, 2016).

It was November 1, 1895, when two Sklandanowsky brothers Emil and Max showed a program of fifteen-minute short films on their invented projector, called bioscope, at a grand vaudeville theatre in Berlin, Germany (Bordwell, 2003). The Bioscope camera/projector system made by Sklandowsky brothers was too cumbersome and not that marketable and competent with what was occurring in France, England, and the U.S (Manley, 2011). By 1894, when Edison demonstrated his Kinetoscope projector in Paris, in the same city of France, Lumiere brothers, Auguste and Louis Lumiere working with their father Antoine's photographic studio based in Lyon, designed initially a far more sophisticated 35mm film camera/projector device, dubbed as Cinematographe, and patented their machine with their name on February 13, 1895 (Bergan, 2021).

As compared to Edison's Kinitograph in weight and content, the relative lightweight of the Lumierers brothers' Cinematographe made it easy to take the camera out of the room and record scenic places or noteworthy events. That became the reason why Lumierers called their films "actualities" or documentary views (Cook, 2016). Using 35mm film with an intermittent mechanism, a hand-cranked little camera the Cinematographe could also serve as a projector, film printer, and the most important decision was that the camera would move at the rate of 16 frame per second instead of 46 fps by Edison (Bordwell, 2003).

On December 28, 1895, by Lumieres the first public exhibition of Cinematographe took place in a rented cellar room in the Grand Cafe on the Boulevard des Capucines in Paris. Where 20-minutes program of ten films was recorded with cinematographe and projected to the audience for the first time on paying a ticket of 1 franc per customer (Cook, 2016). In 1895, Lumieres' historic debut with the most famous film, only a one-minute in length run known as Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory, fascinated the public with its depiction of a

spontaneous event (Monahan, 2015). Among those popular motion pictures recorded and projected in a program by Lumiere using their Cinematographe titles as Baby's Lunch (Le Repas de Bébé), followed by The Sprinkler Sprinkled (L'Arroseur Arrosé), considered as the first comedy film (Cook, 2016). In 1896, Lumieres' Demolition of a Wall (Démolition d'un mur) was the first film with special effects, using a reverse motion to rebuild a wall (Bergan, 2021). However, one of Lumiere Brothers' legendary single-shot footage in 1896, Arrival of Train at La Ciotat Station (L'arrivée d'un train engare de La Ciotat) in which a train in the distance approaching the station, marked the commencement of motion picture or cinema (Manley, 2011).

Lumieres' Cinematographe from the first day of projection their motion pictures theatre earned 35 francs. Yet within a month, the motion picture, overnight, becomes immensely an attractive commercial enterprise by making nearly 7,000 francs a week. And after commercial success, immediately as compared to Skladanowsky brothers' Bioscope and Robert W. Paul's Theatrograph, Lumieres' Cinematographe captured British and spread across continents (Cook, 2016).

In the United States, the first Kinetoscope Parlor was inaugurated in New York City in 1894, offering individual viewing experiences. In the same year, Grey and Otway Latham, along with their father Major Woodville Latham and former Edison employee William Kennedy Laurie Dickson, began developing a motion picture camera and projector. Their efforts culminated in the successful projection of a film to the press using their device known as the Eidoloscope. However, it was the Lumière brothers in France who advanced the technology significantly. Their invention, the Cinématographe, functioned as a camera, printer, and projector in one compact unit, and was far more sophisticated and versatile than both the Kinetoscope and the Eidoloscope (Monahan, 2015).

By the summer of 1895, Thomas Edison became increasingly aware of the commercial success and technical superiority of the Lumière brothers' Cinématographe, along with the growing competition in the American market. Recognizing the potential of projected motion pictures, Edison shifted his focus toward the development of projection technology (Cook, 2016). Around the same time, American inventors Thomas Armat and C. Francis Jenkins co-developed the Phantoscope, a projection device, and successfully demonstrated it at a

commercial exhibition in Atlanta, Georgia, in October 1895. Shortly thereafter, Armat ended his collaboration with Jenkins and continued refining the projector independently (Bordwell, 2003).

When Edison got informed of Armat's machine features, he was so impressed that he left his research project and joined Armat to devise a projection apparatus. But under an agreement, such as its manufacturing and invention would be completely credited to him and Armat for its structure. Edison named the latest projector as Vitascope. On April 23, 1896, in New York City, he addressed its initial public demonstration at the popular Koster and Bial's Music Hall (Cook, 2016). In the premiere, there were six movies projected, five of them originally shot for the Kinetoscope, the sixth film that received attention and caused excitement was Birt Acres' Rough Sea at Drover (Bordwell, 2003).

Edison's promoted and financially successful premiere of Vitascope didn't have the same impact on its viewers as the Lumieres brother's films. However, cinema was born when the projection of moving images to viewers by paying in the Parlor began with the arrival of the first Cinematographe and then Edison's Vitascope projection devices, hence theatres started over the US and Europe. Soon other inventors and filmmakers around the world realized cinema or motion picture as a new mass medium and freed it to become not merely a novel form of art but a valuable enterprise (Manley, 2011).

By 1886 the Lumière brothers sent films along with projectionists around the world with such momentum that within one to two years, in most countries, the public had watched Lumière's well-known single-shot film called, The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station. By 1896, The Cinematographe projections had begun in Italy, the same way as in Russia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Denmark, Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, India, Canada, Argentina, Uruguay, Guatemala, Mexico, Cuba, Chile, Thailand, Japan, and the Philippines (Manila) (Cousins, 2004).

1.2. Origin of Cinema in the Indian Sub-continent

Origin of cinema as a motion picture technology in Indian life and society historically share almost a common boundary with that of the western technology of film production. As a most important aid to the motion picture technology, photography was used for the first time

in 1840 in the colonial India. This was the time right after a few months of its development in the west, as a product of technological, aesthetic, creative, and capital advancements of the Europe. In British India, around the mid-1850s, many Indians then started photo studios in major cities such as Calcutta and Bombay. After a span of twenty to thirty years, innumerable photo studios started functioning throughout sub-continent (Ganti, 2004).

In December 1895, in France, when the Lumière brothers first publically screened their silent short films at Paris Grand Cafe, the next year, they brought their movie projection show to the subcontinent (Gazdar, 2019). On 7th July, 1896, a representative cameraman of Paris based Lumière brothers named Marius-Louise Sestier, projected the first-ever cinematograph show of six short silent films at Watson's Hotel in Bombay and introduced the subcontinent to the motion picture technology. This screening was part of global moment, where audiences in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North and South America witnessed moving pictures within months of its first demonstration in Paris on December 28, 1895 (Ganti, 2004).

And year after the first short film projections at Bombay's Watson Hotel, film screenings regularly began in major cities throughout colonial India, particularly in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras. In Bombay, Clifton & Co. announced daily screening at their Meadows Street Photography Studio in 1987 (Khanna, 2001). In 1887 an anonymous foreign photographer shot the first short films, Coconut Fair and Our Indian Empire. By 1898, two Italians, Colorello and Cornaglia at the Azad Maidan ground in Bombay displayed films in tents. In January 1898, three other imported narrative films known as The Death of Nelson, Noah's Ark and Call on the London were projected (Bordwell, 2003).

In the same year, a professor named P. Anderson, with assistance from his wife, documented Indian life for the first time on celluloid, A Train Arriving at Churchgate Station (1898) and Poona Race (1898) and exhibit them at the Christmas Show in Bombay, using his Andersonocopograph projector. Concurrently, another professor named Stevenson screened a film, A Panorama of Indian Scenes and Procession (1898), as a part of his set of "actualities" and "fakes" at the Star Theatre in Calcutta. Under Stevenson guidance, a thirty-year-old villager, Hiralal Sen, became the first Indian to make a celluloid recording, known as Dancing Scenes from the Flower of Persia (1898), films based on theatre performance. By April 4. 1898,

Hiralal established the Royal Bioscope Company along with his few family members in Calcutta (Roy, 2019).

In 1899, Harishchandra Sakharam Bhatavdekar also known as Save Dada imported a cine-camera from London for a sum of twenty-one guineas. Bhatavdekar, a professional photographer who had operated a photo studio in Bombay since 1880, utilized the motion picture camera to produce what are now recognized as some of the earliest films in India. In the same year, he directed two short films, *The Wrestlers* (1899) and *Man and Monkey* (1899). Due to these pioneering efforts, several film historians regard Bhatavdekar as the first Indian filmmaker. Notably, *The Wrestlers*, which captured a wrestling match at Bombay's Hanging Gardens, is considered the first documentary film produced on Indian soil (Roy, 2019).

In 1900, Major named Warwick built a cinema in the city of Madras where F. B. Thanawala's Grand Kinetoscope release of films such as *Splendid New View of Bombay* and *Taboot Procession* set the genre's financial possibilities. Meanwhile, news footage of the Boer War was showed at Novelty Cinema in Bombay. By 1901, Hiralal's Royal Bioscope Company commenced exhibition of films (extracted from their theatre plays) in their newly established commercial theatres in Calcutta. Concurrently, Bhatavdekar filmed the landing of an Anglo-Indian politician, Sir Mancherjee M. Bhowmaggree, and the return of Mr. R. P. Paranjpye to India from Cambridge University. Later, along with the American Biograph Company, Bhatavdekar filmed *Delhi Durbar* of Lord Curzon in 1903 (Kumar, 2013).

In 1902, Jamshedji Framji Madan begun his bioscope show in a tent at Calcutta's Maidan (fair-grounds). J. F. Madan is known as the first Indian who thought about the commercial possibilities and laid the foundation of film exhibition and distribution on a large scale that dominated the silent era in the entire Indian subcontinent, along with Burmese and Sri Lankan cinema. In 1905, Madan became a film producer when he produced Jyotish Sarkar's film of a protest rally against the separation of India and Pakistan. By 1906, Madan's Elphinstone Bioscope Co. was the dominant producer of films in India. In 1907 Madan built the first cinema hall in Calcutta, which was called Elphinstone Picture Palace, which becomes a chain of more than 85 theatres in India, Burma (now Myanmar), and Sri Lanka by 1927 (Kumar, 2013).

During 1901-1907, many filmmakers in sub-continent produced documentary films and newsreels, especially in Bombay and Calcutta. In 1912, Madan assisted by a British man and produced the first Indian feature film called, Pundalik (1912) (Guru & others, 2015). Based on a play by Ramrao Kirtikar of the life of Hindu saint-poet, 22 minutes long run, Pundalik was the first Indian fiction film, co-directed by Nanabhai Govind Chitre and Ramchandra Gopal Torney, filmed with a Bourne & Shepherd camera and released on May 18, 1912, at Coronation Cinematograph in Bombay (Roy, 2019). However, by some nationalist historians, the reputation of Pundalik as the first indigenous film is disputed because it was made by P. R. Tipnis with British collaboration. Despite, historians grant the honor of India's first indigenous feature film to the Dhundiraj Govind Phalke's (aka Dada Phalke) film Raja Harishchandra (Kumar, 2013).

Dhundiraj Govind Phalke who lived from 1870 to 1944 and who was also called Dada Saheb Phalke, saw the Life of Christ in a Bombay theater, which sparked the interest of D. G. Phalke in film-making, and aimed to have indigenous films of the Indian subcontinent (Ganti, 2004). In the same year, Phalke went to London to familiarize himself with film and to learn the technology of motion pictures from Cecil Hepworth at Walton Studios. By 1912, he returned to India and founded Phalke Films in Bombay and continued to make over forty silent feature films and one sound film, Gangavataran (1937) (Cousins, 2004).

Inspired by Western cinematic narratives and religious traditions, when Phalke arrived in Bombay, he made India's first feature film, Raja Harishchandra (King Harishchandra), and its first debut was in Bombay Coronation Cinematograph Theatre on April, 21, 1913. Phalke is famous as "Indian Cinema's father" and his first film laid the foundation of cinema in the Indian subcontinent that was advertised as the "first Indian manufactured film." Which tells a story of a respected king who lost both his family as well as his kingdom facing harsh trials of sorrows and grief, based on a religious epic poem, Mahabharata. By Raja Harishchandra, Phalke started an everlasting and popular genre in Indian cinema known as "mythological," depicting popular stories based on Hindu gods and goddesses (Ganti, 2004).

1.3. Emergence of Pakistani Cinema or Lollywood

According to (Gazdar, 1997) The Pakistani film industry, commonly known as Lollywood, originated in the 1920s with the first silent films being produced in Lahore. After

the partition of India in 1947, Lahore became the hub of Pakistan's film industry. Lollywood thrived in the 1960s and 1970s, producing popular films that reflected social, cultural, and political issues. However, the industry faced decline in the 1980s due to censorship, political instability, and the rise of television. In recent years, it has seen a resurgence with modernized productions and international recognition.

The Pakistani film industry emerged in the immediate aftermath of the partition of British India in 1947. This historic event disrupted the already established cinematic infrastructure in the subcontinent. Before independence, Lahore was a prominent filmmaking centre under British colonial rule, housing several studios and a vibrant film culture. However, the partition led to the migration of many Hindu and Sikh filmmakers, actors, and technicians to India, causing a sudden vacuum in the artistic and technical manpower required for film production in newly formed Pakistan (Abdul Wajid Khan, 2015).

Despite these initial setbacks, the industry's first milestone came with the release of *Teri Yaad* on August 7, 1948, in Lahore at the Parbhat Theatre. Directed by Daud Chand and starring Nasir Khan and Asha Posley, *Teri Yaad* was the first Pakistani produced Urdu-language feature film. Though it received a lukewarm commercial response, its production marked a foundational moment in the cultural landscape of the new nation, signifying the resilience and ambition of early filmmakers (Hafeez, 2015).

In the initial years following independence, the country faced a severe shortage of trained film professionals, including directors, cameramen, and editors. As most of these experts had migrated to India, the few remaining enthusiasts had to rebuild the industry from scratch. Despite the lack of facilities and skilled workers, early pioneers such as Nazir Ahmed Khan, Anwar Kamal Pasha, and Syed Shaukat Hussain Rizvi played a central role in reestablishing Lahore as the hub of Pakistani film production (Bilal, 2017).

The 1950s witnessed steady progress in the local film industry. The release of *Do Ansoo* in 1950, directed by Anwar Kamal Pasha, marked the beginning of commercially viable cinema in Pakistan. It was the country's first Urdu language Silver Jubilee film and its success encouraged further investments in film production. Anwar Kamal Pasha, often considered a founding father of Pakistani cinema, produced films with strong moral and social messages, establishing the template for future narratives (Wajid, 2015).

This formative decade, the industry also began diversifying linguistically. Although Urdu remained dominant, films in Punjabi and Pashto were also produced to cater to regional audiences. This linguistic pluralism contributed to the industry's growth and helped integrate cinema into the broader cultural fabric of Pakistani society (Bilal, 2017).

The history of Pakistani cinema has witnessed both successes and setbacks (Aslam, 2015). During all this time, Pakistani film has been through several stages. The first seven years (1948-1954) were dedicated to developing a cinema culture in a new nation. Then, from 1955 to 1965, there was a period of direct competition between Indian and Pakistani films. Following the restriction of Indian films, Pakistani cinema saw their greatest period (1966-1979). The fourth phase (1980-1995) was known for action films, especially *Maula Jatt*. Since 1996, Pakistani cinema has been in decline due to various factors, including socio-political issues, piracy, and lack of government support (Malik, 2009).

After a period of decline from the late 1980s to the early 2000s brought on by political unrest, censorship, the development of television, and Bollywood influence, the Pakistani film industry started to recover after 2012. The resurgence was mostly driven by new filmmakers, enhanced production quality, and diverse tales that resonated with modern audiences. This renaissance commenced with the success of *Bol* (2011) and *Waar* (2013), which set new standards for narrative intricacy and cinematographic excellence. *Moor* (2015) and *Zinda Bhaag* (2013) brought regional and sociopolitical themes to mainstream cinema, although subsequent films like *Jawani Phir Nahi Ani* (2015) and *Na Maloom Afraad* (2014) rejuvenated the comedic genre. This rebirth has resulted in improved filming facilities, an enhanced international reputation, and a renewed interest in the diverse cultural narratives of Pakistani cinema. (Naz, 2019).

1.4. **Pakhtun cultural representation in Lollywood**

Paracha (2013) asserts that following several years of decline, Lollywood saw a resurgence in 2013, as a new cohort of directors addressed diverse narratives and employed modern techniques. A turning point came with films such as *Waar* and *Zinda Bhaag*, which enhanced production quality and received international recognition. The Pakhtun culture was more effectively portrayed during this renaissance, with films emphasizing themes of ethnic pride, resilience, and conflict that encapsulated the diversity of Pakhtun traditions and society.

Pakhtun culture is showcased in films such as Janan, Maalik, Jaleibee, Dukhtar, Jawani Phir Nahi Ani, Saya-e-Khudaye Zuljalal, Waar and Khuda Kay Liye etc.

Pakistan's varied cultural landscape has been shaped and reflected in large part by the country's film industry. Punjabi, Sindhi, Baloch, and Pakhtun customs are among the regional cultures that have been shown in Pakistani cinema since its founding in 1948. A potent tool for showcasing traditional languages, customs, folklore, and social institutions has been cinema. However, the representation of indigenous cultures in mainstream cinema has often been subject to debate, as many films tend to either romanticize, stereotype, or marginalize certain ethnic groups (Ahmad A. N., Explorations into Pakistani cinema: introduction, 2016).

The representation of indigenous Pakistani culture in Pakistani cinema has been a topic of discussion. Filmmakers are delving deeply into the politics, social dynamics, and culture of various ethnic communities. It appears as though they are attempting to portray the spirit of indigenous identities on cinema. There are many different cultures present in Pakistani society, and they all contribute to the rich social fabric of the nation. Punjabis (44.15%), Pakhtuns (15.42%), Sindhis (14.1%), Saraikis (10.53%), Muhajirs/Urdu speakers (7.57%), and Balochis (3.57%) are the primary cultural groups. The remaining 4.66% is made up of people from many other cultural origins (Syed Afzal Moshadi Shah, April 2011).

Pakistan, nestled within the heart of South Asia, boasts a rich and vibrant cultural tapestry woven from a diverse array of ethnicities, religions, and languages. This very diversity presents unique challenges when it comes to representation within the media. This study aims to look into the public perception about the representation of Pakhtun's cultures in Lollywood.

Pakhtun culture, predominantly associated with the Pakhtun ethnic group, is deeply rooted in traditions of honor, hospitality, and social justice. Pakhtuns, who are mostly found in parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan, adhere to Pakhtunwali, an old code of ethics that places a strong emphasis on virtues including hospitality (Melmastia), honesty, and retribution (Badal). Poetry and oral traditions of storytelling are a rich part of the oral tradition. Cultural identity is strongly associated with Islam, which emphasizes patriarchy, family and tribal identity (Banerjee, 2000).

An attempt will be made here to study the Pakhtuns, or Pathans, as they are also called, the second largest cultural group in Pakistan. They are predominantly concentrated in the

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province of Pakistan and in the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and also large in Baluchistan and the major cities of Pakistan such as Karachi. The Pakhtuns are a people with a rich cultural tradition that consists of cultural traditions, music, dance, celebrations, and a code of conduct called Pakhtunwali (Kakar, 2023).

Pakistani movies are a vibrant source of culture whose potential is dual nature, on one hand continuing prejudices, and on the other, encouraging inclusion and solidarity. They are able to point the distinct practices, traditions and experiences of many cultures as an example of the diversified fabric of Pakistani culture especially that of Pakhtuns. Nevertheless, it is noted that the diverse culture of Pakistan is often poorly represented in the Pakistani cinema. Critics shed light on how harmful stereotypes and reductive representations continue to be used in a way that would distort the perception of the masses and enforce preexisting prejudices. Movies which one-sidedly depict people of certain ethnic groups in a simplified way and do not describe the details and nuances of their daily life, can be seen as an example of this phenomenon.

The opinion of Pakhtun culture on the Lollywood should be estimated. This research is important as it adds to the pool of knowledge on representation of Pakistani culture in Lollywood. Despite certain academic attention, there is still much to learn about the portrayal of Pakhtun culture in the contemporary Pakistani cinema. This paper aims at demystifying some of the misunderstandings and offering a more subtle approach to the issue of cultural representation by focusing on the public opinion through a poll based on a questionnaire.

The result is to develop a media environment that accurately reflects the diversity and depth of Pakistani society. Not only will this help to understand and appreciate more the diverse nature of the nation, but it will also set the stage of a more equal and inclusive society where all viewpoints and beliefs will be respected and considered.

1.5. Statement of the problem

The aim of this research is to examine how Lollywood films represent Pakhtun culture and how this representation influences the perception of the people, especially the Pakhtun and non-Pakhtun audiences. The research will determine whether Lollywood movies are sources of cultural distortion and will also examine the perception of the viewers to the depiction of

the Pakhtun traditions, values and characters in the Pakistani movies. The Lollywood films often display Pakhtun culture in a manner that supports the assumptions and simplifications leading to possible misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the same.

1.6. Significance

The significance of this research lies in its potential to critically interrogate and rectify the long-standing patterns of representation within Pakistani cinema, particularly as they pertain to marginalized cultural identities. By shedding light on the nuanced and often overlooked aspects of cinematic portrayal, this study contributes to the cultivation of more inclusive, accurate, and multifaceted storytelling in the national film narrative. In doing so, it challenges the dominant discourses that have historically shaped public perception, offering instead a framework that embraces diversity, authenticity, and social complexity.

This research holds the power to influence both academic and creative landscapes. It adds to the growing body of scholarly literature concerned with media representation, cultural identity, and the politics of narrative construction, thus serving as a valuable resource for future researchers and practitioners in the fields of film studies, cultural studies, and media theory. It also has the potential to inform policy making and media production practices by highlighting the cultural and social implications of exclusionary cinematic traditions and advocating for more equitable representational strategies.

This research fosters intercultural dialogue and enhances collective cultural understanding by illuminating the lived realities and expressive traditions of underrepresented communities. It sets a critical precedent for similar studies in other regional and global contexts, demonstrating how cinema can be both a mirror and a mechanism of social change. Ultimately, the findings of this research aspire not only to inspire reflection within the film industry but also to pave the way toward a more inclusive, diverse, and ethically responsible media landscape in Pakistan and beyond.

1.7. Research Objectives

1. To examine the representation of Pakhtun cultures in Lollywood films.

2. To analyse how the depiction of Pakhtun culture in Lollywood films influences public perception.
3. To explore difference in the perceptions of people from Mardan and Islamabad based people regarding the portrayal of Pakhtun culture in Lollywood.

1.8. Research Questions

2. How is Pakhtun culture represented in lollywood films?
3. How does the depiction of Pakhtun culture in Lollywood films influence public perceptions?
4. How do perceptions differ between audiences in Mardan and Islamabad regarding the portrayal of Pakhtun culture in lollywood?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 .Introduction to Media Representation

Representation in media is not a passive or neutral activity but a deliberate and constructed process that plays a crucial role in shaping public perception, cultural understanding, and social identities. According to (Hall s. , 1997), media does not merely mirror the realities of the world around us; rather, it actively constructs meaning through the repetition of specific images, language, symbols, and narratives. These mediated representations become embedded in the public consciousness and contribute to how individuals and entire communities are perceived, understood, and often stereotyped by society.

(Hall S. , 1980) The model of encoding/decoding plays a central role in this process. He states that media messages are produced with meaning by those who convey it and interpreted in different ways by the recipients depending on their social and cultural location (Hall S, 1980). This is done to stress processing of media with a complex network of ideological, political and cultural filters as opposed to passive consumption. This framework illustrates the construction of dominant narratives in the collective discourse in ethnic representation either upholding or contesting it.

This fact that media consumers are diverse is also supported by the encoding/decoding paradigm. The interpretation of the same media content may vary depending on social division aspects like class, colour, ethnicity, and political beliefs of different people and groups. This sort of diversity challenges the idea that media representations are universal and acceptable. It outlines the challenges of meaning making and how disadvantaged audiences can provide counter hegemonic meaning making possibilities.

In line with Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony, the media acts as a tool employed by the ruling class to preserve ideological control. Gramsci posited that cultural norms are not enforced by force but through consent, achieved by making certain values and ideas appear "natural" or "common sense" (Gramsci, 1971). Media plays a critical role in

reproducing these hegemonic ideologies, often reinforcing the dominance of certain ethnic or national identities while marginalizing others. The subtlety of hegemonic control lies in its ability to shape public consciousness in ways that support the status quo, often without overt coercion.

In Western media, Muslims are often portrayed in the context of terrorism, religious extremism, or oppression, particularly after 9/11. (Shaheen, 2006) Conducted a comprehensive study and found that Hollywood has repeatedly depicted Arabs and Muslims as villains, contributing to a culture of fear and misunderstanding. These recurring negative stereotypes have real world consequences, including increased discrimination, hate crimes, and policy decisions based on skewed public perceptions. Such portrayals are not limited to Western cinema; similar patterns are observed in South Asian media, where marginalized communities are often stereotyped based on historical and political biases.

The power of media representation becomes evident in how it shapes both individual and collective identities. As media scholar (Kellner, 1995) notes, media culture provides the materials through which people forge their identities. These representations can influence everything from self-image to political attitudes, particularly when they become dominant and uncontested. For ethnic minorities, the repeated depiction of their culture through a narrow lens can lead to internalized stereotypes and a sense of disconnection from the broader national identity. On the other hand, the absence of diverse and authentic representations can render these communities invisible in the cultural mainstream.

Media representations are inherently tied to power. (Michel, 1980) Argued that power is not only repressive but also productive, it produces knowledge, discourses, and truths. In media, this translates to the production of dominant discourses about ethnicity, gender, and culture. Media institutions, often aligned with state or corporate interests, play a pivotal role in determining which stories are told, whose voices are amplified, and whose experiences are marginalized. The way Pakhtuns are represented in Pakistani cinema, for instance, is not merely an artistic choice but a political act that contributes to a larger discourse about national identity, security, and belonging.

Media's role in shaping perceptions is amplified in the digital age, where content spreads rapidly across platforms, transcending traditional boundaries. Social media, streaming

services, and online news outlets have expanded the reach of media representations, but they have also introduced new challenges. The speed and volume of digital content can reinforce stereotypes more quickly and pervasively, particularly when algorithms prioritize sensational or polarizing material. Digital platforms also give underrepresented groups new platforms to share counter narratives that represent their lived realities and to question prevailing narratives.

2.2. Stereotyping and Ethnic Identity in Film

Stereotyping in movies is a widespread and deeply ingrained practice that reduces complicated human identities and behaviours to simplistic, frequently deceptive classifications. These stereotypes solidify the public's perception of entire communities, especially when they are perpetuated over time. Ethnic stereotyping, in particular, has long been a subject of critical inquiry in media and cultural studies, where scholars highlight how film and television have been used as tools to construct and perpetuate power hierarchies. Stereotyping reinforces the dominant culture's sense of superiority by shaping public attitudes and self-perceptions, while also defining the marginalised "Other".

(Said, 1978) Concept of Orientalism is pivotal in understanding how ethnic stereotypes function in film. Said claims that the West has long depicted the East, and especially the Islamic world, as dangerous, foreign, illogical, and primitive. By establishing a division between the primitive East and the civilised West, this "othering" process provides an intellectual rationale for colonisation and cultural dominance. Orientalist stereotypes are not limited to literature and historical accounts; they are also prevalent in visual media, such as South Asian and Western films, where Muslims and other ethnic minorities are frequently portrayed as passive victims, villains, or zealots.

In South Asian cinema, Orientalist inclinations are apparent in the portrayal of ethnic minorities, such as the Pakhtun community. Contemporary Pakistani cinema frequently restricts Pakhtun identity to a narrow set of characteristics, such as hypermasculinity, tribalism, militancy, and emotional stoicism. The depiction of these characteristics frequently neglects historical or cultural context, so it perpetuates a narrow and incorrect view of the culture. These representations ignore the inherent diversity of Pakhtun culture and the complex character of its political and social realities.

Stereotypical representations have been utilized in national narratives to define the limitations of the "acceptable" citizen. In Pakistan, marked by significant ethnic and linguistic diversity, cinema has been utilized to articulate a unified national identity usually influenced by the dominant Punjabi or Urdu speaking culture. Ethnic minorities, including the Pakhtuns, Baloch, and Sindhis, are frequently viewed as peripheral or divisive to national unity. By portraying the Pakhtun as either a heroic warrior or a militant threat, movies enable their symbolic marginalization from the centre of political and cultural authority.

(Bhabha H. K., 2010) the theory of imitation and ambivalence provides a significant foundation to analyse cultural stereotypes in cinema. Bhabha claims that colonial power is exercised not only by oppression but also by forcing colonized people to imitate colonizer. This process of imitation is not without uncertainty because the colonized subject is not considered as an equal but a deformed mirror. In cinema, Pakhtun roles are sometimes depicted as attempting to integrate into the mainstream Pakistan culture, but are in many ways challenged by marginalisation through ridicule, antagonism or cultural clash. Such ambivalence reflects more general societal contradictions in regard to multiculturalism and national identity.

Stereotyping propagated through media has psychological and sociological consequences. According to the cultivation theory (Gross, 1976), after the long exposure to a specific media representation, it will affect the perceptions of the viewers regarding the reality. By consistently presenting Pakhtuns as violent or backward people, the viewers may start taking these qualities as being true of the actual community, irrespective of their own experience. It can result in bias, social isolation and policy decisions that have a disproportionately negative impact on marginalised groups.

Social identity theory (Turner, 1997) assumed that self-concept is based on the affiliations of individuals to different groups. Negative or stereotyped media images or depictions of a group in a consistent, negative manner may lead to identity conflict and low self-esteem among the members. To Pakhtun youth in urban settings or living in diasporas, this portrayal of their culture in mainstream cinema can lead to a loss of connection to their culture or internalisation of stereotypes.

The Pakistani film has internalised and localised the global Pashtunwali trends in ethnic stereotyping. Bollywood has come under frequent criticism of portraying Muslims as villains, or as an illustration of backwardness, particularly in the post 9/11 era. An effort was made to counteract these images by films like the *My Name Is Khan* (Johar, 2010) but the overall trend has been of linking Muslim identity to terror. This policy transfers to regional theatres, like Lollywood, where geopolitics and the war on terror has shaped the Pakhtuns as a subject of security.

A good example is an example of the movie *Waar* (Lashari, 2013) that became a success in Pakistan economically. The film was lauded on the basis of its technical expertise and patriotic storyline but has received criticism because it depicts the terrorists with Pashto accents and in Pashtun dress, thereby implying a Pashtun identity with terrorism. Although these are minute, the association perpetuated by such portrayals has a detrimental effect on how people relate and think of others as well as society.

One should pay attention to the combination of gender and racial stereotypes. The Pakhtun woman will often appear submissive, oppressed, or in some instances absent altogether. This exclusion perpetuates a patriarchal conception of Pakhtun society and overlooks the contributions of the women to resistance, education and community leadership. Cinema influences the cultural reality and constrains the possible scope of identities that Pakhtun women can explore through the cinema.

The filmmakers sometimes attempt to challenge ethnic prejudice. Independent and regional film, combined with digital media, has created new potential for deeper storytelling. Films including "Dukhtar" (Nathaniel, 2014) and "Laal Kabootar" (Khan, 2019) portray complex Pakhtun characters that subvert traditional stereotypes. Although these initiatives are limited in scope, they demonstrate a growing awareness within the film sector of the ethical duty to represent diverse narratives.

These repeated portrayals reflect what (Said, 1978) referred to as the process of "othering," where dominant cultures construct the identity of marginalized groups by portraying them as exotic, inferior, or threatening. This process helps the dominant group define itself as superior and civilized. In Pakistani cinema, Pakhtuns are often framed as the internal 'Other' depicted as tribal, rigid, or violent, and positioned outside the national

mainstream. Such representations reduce a rich and diverse cultural identity to simplified stereotypes, reinforcing cultural distance rather than fostering understanding.

The representation of Pakhtuns in Pakistani Dramas and movies affects both how the general public perceives Pakhtuns and how Pakhtuns view themselves. Misrepresentation can lead to social alienation, reinforcing ethnic divisions within Pakistan. Films or Drams that show Pakhtuns in stereotyped roles often contribute to the public's perception of them as different from mainstream Pakistani society (Jameel, 2024).

Positive representations can foster greater understanding and appreciation of Pakhtun culture. Some films that challenge stereotypes and present Pakhtuns in a more authentic light have been well-received and contributed to shifting perceptions (Mehmood, 2017).

Postcolonial theorists such as (Bhabha H. K., 2010) argue that cultural narratives are not neutral but are often strategically employed to sustain existing power structures by representing marginalized groups in ways that align with dominant ideologies. These narratives validate the cultural and political authority of the dominant group while concurrently suppressing or misrepresenting the identity of minority cultures.

2.3 Representation of Pakhtun Culture in Lollywood

Political allegories and stereotypes, as opposed to an interest in ethnic authenticity, have always played a role in the representation of Pakhtun culture in the Lollywood. Historically, Pakistani cinema failed to depict the ethnic minorities in general and Pakhtuns in particular in any significant proportions or accurately, which is a reminder of otherness in the national narratives (Rizwan, 2023). As a result, Pakhtuns are often discussed through a shallow lens, the lens of hyper masculinity and tribalism.

Pakhtuns are one of the most important ethnic groups in Pakistan, which are mainly located in the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan. The Pakhtun culture is rich in traditions, including Pashto poetry, music, oral narrative and an important code of honor Pakhtunwali, which makes it diverse in nature and significant historically (Surat Khan, 2019). Modern day Urdu films have largely overlooked this aspect of culture. Movies have depicted the stereotypical images of Pakhtun men being violent, inflexible and conventional.

The historical evolution of the Pakhtun representation in the Pakistani cinema is represented by such a film like Yousaf Khan Sher Bano (Tabassum, 1970) in which the traditions of Pakhtun romantic stories were shown in the regional film. In post-independence Pakistan, as national narratives progressed towards a homogeneous identity, Urdu cinema marginalized regional identities to advance within a central cultural framework dominated by Punjab and Urdu speaking elites (Rizwan, 2023). This marginalization has led to the symbolic exclusion of racial diversity.

Notable films including “Waar” (Lashari, 2013) and “Yalghaar” (Rana, 2017) played an important part in connecting Pakhtun identity to national security concerns. Such films frequently show antagonists speaking Pashto or wearing tribal clothing, thus connecting Pakhtun identity with terrorism (Mehmood, 2017). This securitized portrayal embodies the global post 9/11 narrative, in which Muslims and tribal communities are frequently characterized as threats to national security (Khan S. R., 2014).

The depiction of Pakhtuns in cinema cultivates public misunderstandings and sustains systemic bias. The Cultivation Theory (Gross, 1976) asserts that frequent exposure to specific representations can distort audience perceptions, leading to prejudice and marginalization. When prevailing narratives continually portray Pakhtuns as naturally hostile or primitive, they validate exclusionary perceptions and practices towards the community (Turner, 1997).

Pakhtun women experience a heightened level of marginalisation and stereotyping. Their portrayal in cinema is frequently limited or restricted to representations of victimisation and subjugation. Such representations negate the diversity and autonomy of Pakhtun women, many of whom engage in activism, education, and political involvement (Rashid Ishaq, 2021). This gendered perspective perpetuates patriarchal standards and exacerbates the distortion of Pakhtun society.

Recently, efforts have been made to mitigate these prejudices. Films such as Dukhtar (Nathaniel, 2014) and Janaan (Jafri, 2016) offer alternate viewpoints on Pakhtun existence. In Dukhtar, the protagonist confronts repressive norms, presenting a nuanced depiction of rebellion within traditional contexts. (Naveed, 2025). Janaan presents a more modern, diasporic Pakhtun identity through a female lead who defies both Western and Pakistani stereotypes. These films reflect a gradual shift in narrative.

The Pakistani film industry is still dominated by a relatively homogenous elite, limiting the production and promotion of diverse narratives (ahmad, 2017). Government censorship and media regulation often discourage content that deviates from nationalist or religious orthodoxy (Schapkow, 2021). This structural imbalance continues to marginalize ethnic voices and restrict creative freedom.

There is a pressing need for institutional reform to support inclusive storytelling. Film schools, production houses, and media regulators must actively promote ethnic diversity, provide funding for regional filmmakers, and include ethnic studies in their curriculum. As (Hall s. , 1997) argues, representation is a site of power where cultural meanings are constructed and contested. Giving space to Pakhtun voices in national cinema is not just a cultural necessity but a democratic imperative.

The representation of Pakhtun culture in Lollywood is shaped by stereotypes, securitized narratives, and socio political biases. While independent cinema and digital media have opened avenues for more authentic portrayals, these remain exceptions rather than the norm. Through scholarly inquiry, public advocacy, and institutional change, Pakistani cinema can move toward a more pluralistic and accurate portrayal of its diverse population.

2.4 .Case Studies: Film Examples and Critical Responses

One such example is (Saba Sadiq, 2025) analysis of the Women Portrayal in Contemporary Pakistani films. The research underlines that the Pakistani film industry transcends conventional notions by offering detailed portrayals of gender relations and socioeconomic problems within Pakhtun society. This introduction of greater complexity and depth will question the prevailing assumptions and will allow audiences to understand Pakhtun culture better.

Films such as Khuda Kai Liye (Mansoor, 2007) automatically depicted Pakhtun characters on the canvas of post 9/11 Islamic fanaticism. The movie propagated the Pakhtuns in the backdrop of the war on terror thus reinforcing the stereotype of the militant Pakhtun and creating a negative image in the mind of the general society (Talha, 2018).

In Pakistani cinema, this trend is portrayed through films, especially in the movies called Yalghaar (Hassan, 2017) that provide a state centric and militarized narrative of the

Pakhtuns. The focus on violence and extremism in Pakhtun communities is a tendency that is presented in such films instead of the focus on the everyday life, traditions, and diversity of the communities. This strategy restricts the awareness of the Pakhtun culture and exposes them more to marginalization by dominating their civil and social reality with the one-sided narrative of security.

The Pakistani people enjoy the drama film *Janaan* (Azfar, 2016) which has seen a significant development in portraying the Pakhtun culture. Unlike the traditional Lollywood films, *Janaan* depicted the Pakhtuns as modern, well-educated and cosmopolitan, although they were not cut off their traditions. Critics outline that it is idealist in its depiction of the Pakhtun life, and does not take into consideration the underlying problems in society and politics (Muhammad Naseem Anwar, 2021).

This concern is reflected in the film *Yalghaar* (2017) which is produced by Hassan Rana. Pakhtun characters frequently portray themselves as militants or victims of terrorism, underscoring their connections to war zones and highlighting their military courage. The film oversimplifies Pakhtun culture, lacking the portrayal of their civilian lives, traditions, and challenges, and further perpetuates entrenched stereotypes (Kamran, 2020).

Revenge of the Worthless (Jamal, 2016) is a Pakistani movie set against the backdrop of the 2009 Swat insurgency and revolves around the local Pakhtun community's fight against the Taliban. Some critics say that the film offers a more nuanced portrayal of Pakhtun resilience because it still ties Pakhtun identity predominantly to war and violence, with less focus on their cultural richness or everyday life beyond conflict (Alavi, 2016).

Public perception and audience reception are vital in understanding the broader implications of ethnic representation in media. In a multi ethnic country like Pakistan, the way ethnic groups such as the Pakhtuns are portrayed in films not only reflects social hierarchies but also influences intergroup dynamics and national identity formation (Hall s. , 1997). The audience is not a passive recipient of media but an active interpreter, whose reading of content is shaped by social, cultural, and political experiences.

(Hall, 1980) Encoding/decoding model provides a foundational framework for understanding how audiences interpret media messages. Hall argues that media texts are encoded with meaning by producers but decoded by viewers through their own social contexts.

For instance, a portrayal of a Pakhtun character as militant might be interpreted as patriotic by one group and as ethnically biased by another. This divergence arises from the multiplicity of decoding positions dominant, negotiated, and oppositional.

Audience reception is also heavily influenced by historical and geopolitical narratives. The militarization of the north-western region of Pakistan post 9/11 and the image of the tribal communities as the source of militancy has greatly influenced the perceptions of the people (Khan C. K., 2024). Such connections have been strengthened by Pakistani films like Waar (Bilal L., 2013) and Yalghaar (Rana H. W., 2017) in which Pashto speaking people are portrayed as either a national asset or threat to national security. Metropolitan audiences tend to accept such representations unquestioningly, seeing them as nationalist, whereas Pakhtun audiences will tend to see them as reductive and biased.

The Social Identity Theory (Turner, 1997) asserts that the media has a great influence in how people tend to feel about them in group and out-group identity; when a certain ethnic group is shown repeatedly in a negative manner, it may cause a conflict with identity or it may create internalized assumptions. When Pakhtun children watch dramas or movies that show the heritage of the Pakhtuns in militarized or backward settings, they become alienated or their identity is reinforced through alternative media (Arooba Iftikhar, 2024).

The film's genre profoundly impacts viewer reception. Romantic comedy films like Janaan (Azfar, Janaan, 2016) received favourable response among Pakhtun audiences due to their representation of ethnic characters, emphasis on cultural pride, and depiction of urban, educated Pakhtuns (Parveen, 2019).

Another relevant theory is Cultural Proximity Theory (Straubhaar, 1991), which posits that audiences prefer content that reflects their own culture, language, and social experiences. When mainstream Pakistani cinema fails to portray Pakhtun culture authentically, Pakhtun audiences turn to Pashto language regional films or even foreign media for validation. This shift reflects a broader alienation from national cinematic narratives.

(Shamsa, 2024) Conducted a nationwide audience study involving 200 university students equally representing Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The findings revealed significant interprovincial differences in perception, while 70% of all students strongly agreed that ethnic stereotyping is apparent in Pakistani dramas, students from

KP, Sindh, and Baluchistan reported feeling the highest levels of misrepresentation, specifically citing portrayals of Pathans as domestic servants, Sindhis as feudal landlords, and Baloch as illiterate or foolish. Statistical analysis confirmed that students from Punjab had more neutral perceptions, while students from minority provinces showed significantly lower self-esteem, indicating harm to their ethnic self-image due to these portrayals. This statistical divide reinforces the urgent need for more inclusive and participatory storytelling in Pakistani media.

Gender representation is another lens through which audience reception diverges. Pakhtun women are often excluded from film narratives or confined to passive, oppressed roles. This lack of representation not only erases women's voices but also contributes to an imbalanced perception of Pakhtun society (Parveen, 2019). When female viewers, especially from Pakhtun communities, do not see themselves reflected on screen, it affects their sense of belonging and identity.

The psychological consequences of misrepresentation are also well documented. (Ramasubramanian, 2011) Argues that repeated exposure to negative stereotypes in media leads to increased prejudice, anxiety, and social distancing from the stereotyped group. In the Pakistani context, such portrayals can exacerbate ethnic divides and fuel institutional discrimination. Misrepresented ethnic groups may experience stereotype threat, lowering self-esteem and engagement with national identity.

Media literacy programs can help bridge the perceptual gap. By educating audiences on how to decode media texts, identify stereotypes, and question implicit biases, such programs promote critical engagement. (Oso, 2014) Emphasizes that community screenings followed by discussions offer effective platforms for intercultural dialogue, allowing diverse audiences to challenge assumptions and develop mutual understanding.

There is also a growing need to involve ethnic minorities in media production. When filmmakers, writers, and producers come from underrepresented communities, the narratives they create are more likely to reflect lived realities. This not only improves representation but also enhances reception among those communities. As (Hall s. , 1997) suggests, representation is not a mirror but a site of struggle those who control the narrative shape the meaning.

Film criticism and academic scholarship should centre marginalized perspectives. University film studies programs can integrate regional cinema and ethnic media courses to equip future media professionals with cultural awareness. Along with that government and private institutions must provide grants and platforms to support inclusive cinema.

The rise of diasporic filmmaking has also contributed to reshaping audience perception. Films created by Pakistani diaspora communities often blend global sensibilities with ethnic pride, offering alternative portrayals of identity. These films, although limited in distribution, provide critical commentary on how ethnic representation affects both home and diaspora audiences.

The reception of audience is an active negotiation of identity, meaning, and power, instead of a passive action. The representation of Pakhtuns in Pakistani movies illustrates how media may reinforce negative preconceptions or serve as an instrument for empowerment. A comprehensive approach that integrates education, participatory media, and institutional reform is essential to align representation with the experiences of ethnic groups. Only then can society viewpoints advance towards more inclusivity, empathy, and national unity.

2.5 Audience Perception and Impacts of Misrepresentation

The representation of Pakhtuns in Lollywood influences both the public opinion of Pakhtuns and their self-identity. Falsification can lead to societal alienation, intensifying ethnic conflicts in Pakistan. Films depicting Pakhtuns in stereotyped roles often influence the public's perception of them as apart from mainstream Pakistani society (Rakhshan, 2023).

Audience perception is a vital component in media studies, especially with ethnic representation. Media scholars have increasingly focused not just on the content of representation but also on how audiences interpret, internalize, or contest such portrayals. In the case of Pakhtun identity within Pakistani cinema, misrepresentation has had significant implications for both public perception and the self-identity of Pakhtun communities.

Audience reception is not a monolithic or passive process. As argued by (Hall S. , 1980), media messages are encoded with certain ideological positions by their producers, but these messages are decoded by audiences in various ways depending on their cultural, political, and social positioning. This encoding decoding model posits three possible positions of

decoding, dominant hegemonic, negotiated and oppositional. In the case of ethnic portrayals, a dominant hegemonic reading may align with state narratives or mainstream social values, while an oppositional reading might reject stereotypical representations and critique their ideological implications.

The social constructionist approach further asserts that media is a key site for constructing collective identities (Hall s. , 1997). When a community is continuously portrayed in a reductive or negative light, these portrayals become embedded in public consciousness. Over time, stereotypes repeated across films can form a media reality that may be more influential than lived experiences, particularly for individuals with limited direct contact with the portrayed group (Gross, 1976).

(Turner, 1997) Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals derive part of their identity from the social groups to which they belong. Media representations of these groups can either affirm or challenge an individual's self-concept. Misrepresentation can lead to identity dissonance, in which individuals feel estranged from both their group and the society at large (Ramasubramanian, 2011). For Pakhtun audiences, particularly youth, recurring portrayals of their community as violent, regressive, or illiterate may trigger internalized shame, resistance, or a revaluation of cultural affiliation.

Though limited in scope, several empirical studies in Pakistan have begun to map how audiences from different ethnic backgrounds perceive media representation. (Parveen, 2019) Conducted a reception based study involving urban audiences from Lahore, Karachi, and Peshawar. Punjabi and Urdu-speaking audiences frequently perceived Pakhtun representations in cinema as authentic or culturally vibrant, but Pakhtun viewers exhibited far greater criticality. Numerous Pakhtun respondents expressed sentiments of humiliation, stereotyping, and isolation, especially in films like *Waar* (2013) and *Yalghaar* (2017), which linked Pakhtun identity with terrorism or extremism.

These findings indicate that media does not operate equally among viewers; instead, reception is influenced by ethnicity, political knowledge, lived experience, and cultural identity. It also substantiates Hall's hypothesis that marginalised audiences frequently engage in oppositional readings, dismissing hegemonic media texts and pursuing alternative narratives elsewhere.

The psychological effects of media misinformation are significant and enduring. Research in media psychology indicates that frequent exposure to negative stereotypes might result in stereotype threats, a condition where individuals internalise adverse impressions and modify their behaviour accordingly (Aronson, 1995). Although it originated in Western contexts, the South Asian media landscape is gradually acknowledging its significance.

Pakhtun youth often perceive representations of their community as antagonistic, uncultured, or regressive, which may lead to feelings of alienation from mainstream society. This alienation may emerge as diminished academic performance, reluctance to participate in civic institutions, or even animosity towards other ethnic groups. (Ramasubramanian, 2011) Argues that negative media stereotypes can induce media induced stress, which affects not only individual's mental health but also their social behaviour and group dynamics.

In a study on youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, (Muhammad Kaqbad Alam, 2023) found that Pakhtun students often experienced macro aggressions based on media induced stereotypes. These students reported being subjected to jokes, social exclusion, and assumptions of extremism, all of which they traced back to cinematic representations.

Beyond individual psychology, media misrepresentation has broader implications for intergroup relations. Misleading portrayals of Pakhtuns contribute to the stigmatization and social distancing of the community. According to Gerbner's Cultivation Theory (Gross, 1976), long term media exposure influences viewers perception of social reality. If audiences consistently see Pakhtuns depicted as violent or extremist, they are likely to generalize these characteristics to the group as a whole.

(Rakhshan, 2023) explains that such portrayals help reinforce a moral hierarchy in which urban, Urdu speaking elites are framed as rational and modern, while Pakhtuns are seen as irrational and traditional. This narrative contributes to the symbolic exclusion of ethnic minorities from the national identity project and can serve as a basis for both everyday discrimination and institutional marginalization.

These portrayals intersect with state policies. During periods of political instability or counterterrorism operations, the state often amplifies narratives of Pakhtun militancy. Films that echo these narratives, whether intentionally or not, contribute to a national security

discourse that justifies surveillance, violence, or neglect in Pakhtun majority regions (Rakhshan, 2023).

Gender further complicates audience perception. Pakhtun women are either absent from media or represented as submissive, voiceless, or cloaked in patriarchal norms. When women from the community watch such portrayals, it can lead to a form of double alienation, first as ethnic minorities and second as women whose agency is denied in both real and cinematic spaces (Arooba Iftikhar B. Z., 2024).

The lack of culturally rooted, multidimensional female characters not only distorts public perception of Pakhtun women but also limits role models for young viewers. This gap highlights the need for more inclusive storytelling that considers both ethnic and gender diversity.

Despite the damaging impacts of misrepresentation, audiences are not passive. Pakhtun counter audiences have emerged both within Pakistan and in the diaspora, creating and promoting alternative narratives through independent films, social media, and academic discourse. Platforms like YouTube and Facebook presently include videos from Pakhtun vloggers, entertainers, and activists who use humour, narrative, and documentation to challenge prevailing preconceptions (Usman Khan, 2020).

These opposing narratives serve multiple functions: they affirm internal identities, provide information for outsiders, and build solidarity among marginalized communities. Despite these efforts frequently contending with a lack of exposure relative to mainstream cinema, their existence indicates a transition towards a pluralistic media environment that facilitates the amplification of disadvantaged voices.

A prominent instance is the regional film *Zama Arman* (Khan L. A., 2013), which showcases educated and urbanized Pakhtun protagonists confronting quotidian social challenges. Although limited in budget and distribution, the film was well received by local audiences and praised for its cultural authenticity. Such productions though rare, demonstrate the potential for media to reflect and reshape audience perception in more empowering ways.

Another strategy for mitigating the impacts of misrepresentation is the promotion of media literacy. When audiences are equipped with tools to critically analyse media, they are

less likely to accept stereotypes at face value. (Tornero, 2014) Argues that incorporating media analysis into school curricula can help students understand the constructed nature of media narratives, including the politics of ethnic representation.

Educational interventions can also help bridge ethnic divides, encouraging empathy and understanding through collaborative media analysis. This is particularly important in a country as ethnically diverse as Pakistan, where national cohesion depends on mutual respect and recognition.

2.6 Theoretical Insights: Hall, Said, and Bhabha

As (Hall s. , 1997) explains, representation in media constructs reality rather than mirroring it, and is influenced by ideological and cultural forces. In this context, portrayals of Pakhtuns as tribal, militant, or overly rigid reflect deeper cultural anxieties and hegemonic narratives.

(Said, 1978) Concept of Orientalism further explains how dominant groups construct marginalized cultures as the 'Other' to reinforce their own identity and authority.

(Bhabha H. K., 1994) Adds that cultural narratives are often strategically employed to sustain existing power structures by representing marginalized groups in ways that align with dominant ideologies. These narratives legitimize the cultural and political authority of the dominant group while silencing or distorting the identities of minorities.

The study of media representation and ethnic identity in postcolonial societies like Pakistan necessitates a theoretical grounding in cultural studies and postcolonial theory. Among the most influential thinkers in these domains are Stuart Hall, Edward Said, and Homi K. Bhabha. Their works provide essential tools to analyse how media creates meaning, governs cultural diversity, and perpetuates dominant narratives. This section examines the contributions of each theorist to the comprehension of ethnic representation, stereotyping, and audience perception, specifically concerning the depiction of Pakhtun identity in Pakistani cinema.

(Hall, 1997) It is famously contended that representation transcends mere reflection of reality and is, rather, a process through which meaning is actively formed. He asserts that media texts are imbued with particular meanings and ideologies, which audiences interpret differently

according to their socio-cultural contexts (Hall S., 1980). This encoding decoding paradigm debunks the illusion of media neutrality, positing that each image, phrase, and narrative possesses ideological significance.

According to (Hall s. , 1997), the “circuit of culture” which includes representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation forms a framework to understand how meaning is constructed and circulated in society. Representation is central to this circuit, as it provides the symbolic tools through which individuals understand themselves and others. In the context of ethnic identity, this means that the way Pakhtuns are represented in Pakistani cinema has a profound impact on how they are perceived both by themselves and by others.

(Hall S. , 1997) Also introduces the idea of “racialized regimes of representation”, where in minority groups are repeatedly represented through certain tropes or signs violence, backwardness, irrationality that serve to fix their identity in the public imagination. These repetitive signifiers become what Hall terms “floating signifiers”, open to different interpretations but largely anchored by dominant ideological forces.

In Pakistani films like Waar (Lashari, 2013) and Yalghaar (Hassan, 2017), Pakhtuns are often shown speaking in heavy accents, dressed in tribal attire, and engaging in militant activities. These cinematic codes communicate more than just character traits, they signal deeper assumptions about danger, extremism, and cultural otherness. Such portrayals are not arbitrary but are embedded within larger national discourses of security and integration, illustrating Hall’s view that media is a site of ideological struggle.

Hall’s emphasis on polysemy, the idea that texts have multiple meanings, explains why different audiences interpret the same representations differently. A non Pakhtun urban viewer might see a Pakhtun militant character as a patriotic trope, while a Pakhtun viewer might interpret it as a vilifying misrepresentation. This dynamic confirms that meaning is not fixed but contested, shaped by social power and positionality.

(Said, 1978) Orientalism is another foundational theory in the study of representation. Said argues that the West has historically constructed the East as its cultural and political opposite irrational, backward, exotic, and threatening. This “othering” process serves to justify domination, both colonial and cultural, by portraying the colonized as inherently inferior and in need of control.

Said focused primarily on Western colonialism, his framework is equally applicable to internal postcolonial dynamics in multi ethnic nations like Pakistan. In the Pakistani context, dominant ethnic groups particularly Urdu speaking and Punjabi elites have historically represented other groups such as Pakhtuns, Baloch, and Sindhis through Orientalist logics. These representations, though locally produced, echo colonial narratives of tribalism, savagery, and incapacity for self-rule.

Films often portray Pakhtuns as deeply religious, hyper masculine, resistant to modernity, and prone to violence (Rakhshan, 2023). These portrayals not only reinforce ethnic hierarchies but also fulfil a political function, they frame Pakhtuns as a security threat, thus legitimizing military operations and surveillance in their regions. (Said, 1978) Argue that these cinematic practices are “imaginative geographies” mental maps that draw symbolic boundaries between the civilized and the barbaric.

Said also critiques the “textual attitude”, a tendency to treat cultural representations as objective truths rather than ideological constructions. In the case of Pakistani cinema, viewers may accept stereotypical portrayals of Pakhtuns as accurate reflections of reality, particularly when these depictions are reinforced by news media and political rhetoric. This fusion of entertainment and ideology deepens the Orientalist divide and further marginalizes ethnic minorities.

Orientalism is not limited to content but also applies to style, form, and narrative structure. Films that exoticize tribal customs, romanticize backwardness, or frame urban assimilation as moral redemption participate in an Orientalist discourse. By rendering Pakhtun identity as something to be either feared or “civilized,” cinema contributes to the symbolic exclusion of the group from the national body.

(Bhabha H. K., 1994) Brings a more nuanced and psychoanalytically informed approach to the study of postcolonial representation. His concepts of ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity illuminate how power is never absolute but is negotiated and contested through cultural performance.

(Bhabha H. K., 2010) Notion of mimicry refers to the colonized subject's attempt to imitate the colonizer, which results in a representation that is “almost the same, but not quite.” In the Pakistani context, Pakhtun characters in cinema are sometimes depicted attempting to

integrate into modern, urban society, but their efforts are often ridiculed or portrayed as inadequate. As an example, a Pakhtun who changes his modern dress or even language may still be mocked because of his dialect or traditional practices. This ambivalence marks the desire to be assimilated as well as the rejection of total integration by the mainstream culture.

These interactions highlight the slippage of identity, a phenomenon identified by Bhabha whereby the minority subjects are torn between the two extremes, the tradition and the modernity. They are visible but not completely recognised, present but not empowered. This indicates the popularity of humorous Pakhtun side characters in Pakistani cinema, serving as a source of humour and as a sign of failed assimilation. All these depictions, however, in their ostensibly innocuous character, contribute to the maintenance of traditional hierarchies and the denial of full subjectivity of Pakhtuns within the national popular consciousness.

The notion of hybridity as presented by Bhabha does away with the dichotomy of colonizer and colonized, or dominant and minority. He claims that every culture is hybrid, and it is affected by the current encounters and exchanges. Coverages in the media tend to ignore this hybridity by portraying ethnic identities as impermeable and intrinsic. It has been widely believed that Pakhtuns are culturally unchanging and resistant to migration, education or urbanization. This rejection of hybridity misrepresents the truth as well as limits the possibility of identity transformation.

The Third Space concept introduced by Bhabha allows to analyse autonomous and electronic production as the domain in which the cultural meanings are negotiated. Pakhtun producers can dislodge the dominant narratives, assert their agency, and redefine their identities in the context of other venues that do not depend on the binary of tradition and modernity.

The theories of Hall, Said, and Bhabha collectively provide a complete framework of analyzing the ideological and aesthetic components in the issue of ethnic representation in the Pakistani cinema. Hall elaborates the mechanisms of creation of meaning, Said reveals the colonial background of representation, and Bhabha demonstrates the instability and performative character of cultural identities.

Such films as *Khuda Kay Liye* (Shoaib, 2007), *Waar* (Bilal L., 2013), and *Janaan* (Azfar, Jannan, 2016) reveal the theoretical frameworks that explain the narratives justifying

the current existing power structures. As it attempts to defy the stereotypes of Pakhtuns as uneducated rural people, Janaan nonetheless depends on tropes of cultural conflict and romantic resolution. On the other hand, Waar backs up state discourses of domestic threats by depicting Pashto speaking terrorists as essential enemies of the nation.

The concept is executed in support of audience perception studies. The different meanings of Pakhtun identity as perceived in ethnic lines are reminiscent of the encoding/decoding theory of Hall. The representations of the tribal people might be seen as real by non Pakhtun viewers as opposed to artificial, according to Said in his Orientalism. The concepts of replication and hybridity introduced by Bhabha can explain why the urban Pakhtuns usually felt misrepresented or marginalized in their presentational portraits in the conventional and contemporary representations of them.

2.7 .Summary and Literature Gaps

Existing literature reviewed in the foregoing paragraphs exposes a complicated, yet steady, direction in terms of the depiction of the Pakhtun identity in Pakistani cinema. The findings reveal that the movie representations of Pakhtun culture do not necessarily reflect the true nature and multi-facetedness of Pakhtun culture, because of long-standing stereotyping, ethnic bias, and recent audience and media resistance.

Although it has improved to a certain extent, the Pakistani films continue to grapple with the successful depiction of Pakhtun culture on a regular basis. Many films vacillate between celebration and criticism and they do not show the depth and diversity of the Pakhtun culture and the realities of it. This attests to an important area in future research and the implementation of change.

2.8 Theoretical framework

In academic work, and most importantly in social sciences and media studies, the theorization of a particular issue becomes key, that is, it forms the basis of any investigation. A theoretical framework provides a holistic perspective through which the researcher can study, understand and analyse the phenomenon being examined. It helps to define the main concepts, classify variables, and define the position of the research in the existing scholarly

discourse (Creswell, 2017). Absence of a well-developed theoretical framework makes research less analytical, fragmented and descriptive.

Media and mass communication are also studied in terms of theoretical frameworks since cultural narratives, symbols, and ideologies are subjects that are constantly being produced and contested. Media texts are more than a carrier of information; they are constructed on several layers of meanings that maintain the status quo of power structures, cultural identities and social hierarchies (McQuail, 2010). A theoretical framework can allow the researcher to critically analyse these complicated issues by providing established models that can explain how meaning is created, passed and interpreted.

The academic credibility and legitimacy of the research is supported by strong theoretical framework. Defining a significant contribution to the ongoing academic dialog, the researcher demonstrates a grasp of the intellectual environment as a whole and ensures that his/her work is not merely a minor addition to the already existing body of knowledge (Babbie, 2012). This is necessary both to academic rigour and relevance and impact of the study findings.

The study on the perception of the people towards the representation of Pakhtun culture in the Lollywood films would rely on the Public Perception Theory. The theory of public perception studies how opinions are formed, how they are comprehended and expressed by individuals and groups on the basis of information they consume or are exposed to in the media. It points out the distinction between media and the social and cultural discourse, the influence on mass perceptions, as well as the group interpretations of culture and identity (Noelle-Neumann, 1993).

2.9 Public Perception Theory

The theoretical roots of the Public Perception Theory can be traced back to the innovative work of an American journalist and political commentator Lippmann (1922), who made a tremendous contribution to the discussion of mass communication and media effects, as well as to the development of the public opinion. In his masterpiece, *Public Opinion*, Lippmann developed the important notion that people do not go out to the world and perceive it through objective facts but instead, through a set of indirect, symbolic senses that he aptly termed in his book, *pictures in their heads*. Lippmann states, that the political and social world

is too complicated, too remote and too inaccessible to be understood by direct experience. Consequently, individuals are forced to rely on the representations that are propagated by authoritative media institutions to interpret issues, groups and events that are not contained in their immediate environment.

These are symbolic representations that include pictures, stories, stereotypes, and cultural codes that are collected and negotiated by news media, entertainment industries and more recently, internet sites. They serve as alternatives to lived reality and over time, they become the predominant instruments with which the mass thinks and responds to the world. Media does not merely inform the people; it organizes the collective consciousness by defining the image of social groups, the values prioritized, and identities that are to be considered as the central or peripheral to the national discourse. The perception of peers about ethnic groupings, such as the Pakhtun nation in Pakistan is not created in a vacuum, but is highly influenced by the representations being made in the mainstream media, particularly with the cinema.

The current research question, which examines the representation of the Pakhtun culture in the Pakistani films and the way it shapes the opinion of the masses, is of utmost importance to this theory framework. There is a stereotyping of Pakhtuns as tribal, violent, hyper masculine, or anti-modernization in Pakistani popular cinema, which tends to employ simplistic and cliched iconography. These portrayals, when echoed over time, create the impression of Pakhtun culture in the minds of the people. Public Perception Theory is of the opinion that media representations are ideological instruments that influence interethnic relations, the maintenance of established social norms and the marginalization of cultural diversity besides being entertaining. The public tends to believe these symbolic representations as true or common sense and this promotes the persistence of prejudice beliefs, cultural miscomprehension, and political rationalization of laws that exclude people according to Lippmann.

Based on the public perception theory, the media does not only reflect the cultural norms and values but also constructs reality to its viewers. In this work, Lollywood, a major film industry in Pakistan, can be seen to be making a significant contribution to the manner in which the Pakhtun people and the rest of the Pakistani citizens perceive Pakhtun culture. The manner in which traditions, ideas and behaviours are being depicted in the movies often

depends on certain ideological perspectives which may support and encourage stereotypes and misconceptions.

In order to understand how visual stories of Pakhtun ethnicity are constructed, naturalized, and politicized to generate the perception of the same in the Pakistani society, this study applies the theory of public perception to the Pakistani film industry. It introduces cinema as a strong ideological device and a cultural product that shapes how people perceive communities, their identities and their place in the Pakistani society in general. Due to this, the concept is not only historically important, but also applicable to the contemporary discussions on identity, the role of the media, and cultural politics of multicultural societies.

The relevance of Public Perception Theory to this study lies in its ability to explain how cinematic stereotypes of Pakhtun culture become ingrained in the public imagination and shape social attitudes. As Lippmann (1922) argued, people rely on mediated “pictures in their heads” to form opinions about groups they do not directly encounter. In the Pakistani context, Lollywood provides such mediated images by repeatedly portraying Pakhtuns as tribal, militant, rigid, or hyper-masculine. These portrayals, when consumed by audiences in places like Islamabad, where direct exposure to Pakhtun communities may be limited, function as substitutes for lived experience and thereby influence public attitudes. At the same time, for audiences in Mardan, the same portrayals are decoded differently, often as misrepresentations that distort their identity. By applying Public Perception Theory, this research explains not only how these symbolic representations are constructed by Lollywood but also how they are received, internalized, or resisted by different publics. Thus, the theory is directly connected to the research objectives, survey methodology, and findings, providing a conceptual bridge between representation in cinema and its effects on interethnic perceptions in Pakistani society.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design:

In this research, the quantitative research method was used to study the perception of the Pakhtun people with regard to Pakistani cinema particularly in the context of Lollywood films. Quantitative research is the collection and analysis of numerical data and identification of trends, testing of hypotheses, and generalizations about a population (Creswell, 2017). Statistical tools will play a significant role in improving perception-based research since they measure attitudes, opinions and levels of satisfaction / discontent. Such methodology would be appropriate in the present study because it allows empirical evaluation of the response of the audience to the representation of Pakhtun identity in cinema, which ensures objectivity and accuracy.

The particular objectives of this study determine the choice of quantitative, and not qualitative or mixed-methods approach. The research will be focused on the general trend and pattern in the perception of the society, which will necessitate a large sample size and diverse population, although the qualitative approach would be valuable in the provision of in-depth results and experience. The principal tool in collection of information is an organized, closed ended survey questionnaire, which would help the scholar get standardized answers, which are suitable to be evaluated statistically on frequency, distribution, and correlation.

The quantitative methods will allow conducting a comparative analysis of the views of different demographic groups, especially Pakhtuns and non-Pakhtuns. This distinction allows the study to investigate the extent and kind of differences in viewpoints in terms of ethnicity and geographical setting (e.g., Mardan and Islamabad). This split is also essential in interpreting the various impacts of media representation on various groups of audiences.

The quantitative technique aligns with the research's theoretical framework, particularly public perception theory and its foundation in empirical media research. Lippmann (1922), Shaw (1972), and Gross (1976) contend that media repetition, agenda-setting, and symbolic representations significantly influence public perceptions of social groups. This

research employs an analytical approach to assess the magnitude and effects of these mediated factors within the Pakistani setting.

This study methodology ensures generalization, a primary benefit of quantitative investigations (Neuman, 2014). The results, obtained from a well-defined sample of three hundred people having diverse backgrounds, will yield insights that extend beyond the selected geographical areas. The broader applicability is essential for assessing the national significance of cultural representation in the Pakistani film industry.

The quantitative design allows the researcher to gather organised data, conduct statistical analysis, and draw significant conclusions regarding public perception, particularly given the ethnic dynamics present in cinematic representations. It establishes the methodological framework essential for addressing the fundamental research enquiries while upholding rigorous academic standards and trustworthiness.

3.2 Population

In social research, "population" denotes the complete set of individuals or items that the researcher aims to investigate or derive conclusions from (Neuman, 2014). This study's demographic includes both Pakhtun and non-Pakhtun Pakistani individuals, specifically targeting frequent viewers of Lollywood films. This study seeks to obtain a thorough and comparative understanding of the perception and portrayal of Pakhtun culture in Pakistani cinema by incorporating respondents from diverse ethnic origins and varied degrees of media participation.

The population is intentionally diversified to guarantee the incorporation of a broad range of societal viewpoints. This diversity is crucial in a nation such as Pakistan, where ethnic, linguistic, and regional identities significantly influence public discourse, cultural identification, and media interpretation. The study seeks to examine the impact of depiction on in group members (Pakhtuns) and outside group observers (non-Pakhtuns), concentrating on media portrayals and the outside audiences of these representations. This two-pronged tactic enhances the study in terms of reliability and depth, providing multifaceted outcomes of interior identity and outward perceptions.

Two major geographical areas were identified to sample members to participate in the survey; Mardan and Islamabad. Mardan, a province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, is an urban community that comprises mostly Pakhtuns, which makes it an ideal place to elicit feedback on people who have an emotional or cultural stake in the representation of their culture in the Pakistani film industry. Islamabad, in contrast, is a multicultural city that is inhabited by different cultures and classes. The inclusion of the research allows a wider audience in Pakistan to access the material, many of whom consume Pakhtun culture through Lollywood entertainment, but have not necessarily had the opportunity to experience it firsthand.

The selection of the areas is scientifically reasonable, since it allows to study the difference in perception based on geography and ethnicity, which is absolutely necessary in determining whether media images reinforce or break cultural barriers. The inclusion of both urban and ethnically homogenous respondents makes the results more generalizable and representative of Pakistani society as a whole which is heterogeneous in nature.

The population also includes frequent and occasional viewers of Pakistani cinema to examine whether media exposure levels influence perception. This distinction will help determine if repeated exposure to certain stereotypes leads to stronger internalization of media based representations, in line with Cultivation Theory (Gross, 1976). It will also provide insights into whether less frequent viewers have different or more varied opinions, possibly informed by personal experience or alternative media sources.

The population selected fits the objectives of the study well. It includes the cultural, regional and historical diversity needed to look at how Pakhtun culture is depicted and perceived with different societal groups. The method of population selection will ensure that the results of the research are contextually rich, factual and conceptually relevant in the multicultural media context in the country.

3.2.1. Sample and Sampling Techniques

In a quantitative research design, sampling is the process of selecting individuals in a broader population so that the resulting data can be applied to the general population with an acceptable degree of reliability (Creswell, 2017). The current study analyzes the heterogeneous demography of Pakistani film viewers with special focus on the intermixed Pakhtun and non-

Pakhtun populations of Mardan and Islamabad. The total sample size shall be three hundred people, with 150 respondents in each city in order to have geographical and demographic balance.

The study employs a mixed technique of sampling which is a combination of random and stratified sampling technique. Random sampling ensures that each individual within the targeted population has an equal opportunity to be chosen, and the selection process is least biased and the results are more credible (Neuman, 2014). Stratified sampling is applied to provide sufficient representation to critical groups, i.e. Pakhtuns and non-Pakhtuns in the sample. In stratified sampling the population is divided into definite strata on the basis of similarities (both in ethnic background and geographic location) and random sampling is conducted in each stratum. This is a proportional method that allows meaningful comparisons between the various strata (Babbie, 2012).

The given sample size (300) is methodologically sound, as it is sufficient to establish the quantitative part of the evaluation in case of the perception related research with a structured questionnaire. Conventional standards in social science research suggest that an average sample size of three hundred participants suffices for detecting correlations, patterns, and trends in medium scale population research, attaining an accuracy rate of 95% and a margin of error of approximately five to six percent (Halim, 2017). The choice of equal numbers of participants from Mardan and Islamabad ensures that the sample includes both geographical and cultural variety, with Mardan representing a primarily Pakhtun population and Islamabad having a varied urban population.

Sample methodology uses online techniques. The online distribution of the survey in Islamabad and Mardan through platforms like Google Forms is likely more feasible due to adequate internet accessibility in both cities and more transparent, accurate, and well managed data.

3.3 Data Collection

Results for the present study were gathered using a standardized questionnaire designed to evaluate public impressions of the representation of Pakhtun culture in Lollywood movies. The survey served as the main means of gathering data in this quantitative study, enabling the researcher to acquire standardized and scientifically analysed data from a varied

respondent sample. Social researchers utilize structured questionnaires to ensure uniformity in responses and to facilitate impartial comparison across demographic categories (Creswell, 2017).

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The survey was well planned to suit the main objectives of the research and consisted of multiple sections, all covering various aspects of the problem of the research. The information presented was demographic, consumption trends of films, evaluation of the involvement of the Pakistani as well as the impact of the film images, cultural consciousness, and perceptions of the people.

The questions were formulated through a Likert scale of five points, which ranged between Strongly Disagree, and Strong Agree, making it possible to have a detailed assessment of the opinions of the participant. Likert scales are especially effective in determining individual opinions, since they gauge the strength of opinions in an easy to understand and statistically analysable manner (Babbie, 2012).

There was a pilot test prior to full implementation of the survey in which twenty individuals were used, ten in the city of Islamabad and Ten in the city of Mardan to test the survey on its simplicity, significance, and accuracy. Minor adjustments have been made to enhance the expression of some of the topics and cultural sensitivity based on the responses of this pilot phase. The survey was thereafter handed to the identified sample group in the two towns.

The study was conducted between the people of Islamabad and Mardan with a wide range of individuals including students, lawyers, media people, and businesspersons. In order to achieve maximum accessibility and ease, the questionnaire was sent online through Google Forms.

The morality aspect was strictly adhered to during the data collection process All the participants were given a detailed written consent form at the start of the survey, the purpose of the study being educational without the disclosure of personal information and the voluntary character of participation. No personally identifiable information was obtained

The number of responses successfully received was 300 which comprised of 150 people of Islamabad and 150 people of Mardan. The respondents represented by the data set

consisted of both Pakhtuns and non-Pakhtuns to ensure the representational diversity of ethnicity and geography. This will result in a strong basis on which to analyse the various data and make meaningful conclusions with regards to the trend, inter-group comparisons and how the Pakistani film industry has an impact on the way people perceive Pakhtun culture.

Table-1: Male/ Female participants

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	228	76%	76%
	Female	72	24%	24%
	Total	300	100.0	100.0

Table 1 shows that the gender distribution of the respondents indicates that 76% were male and 24% were female, demonstrating a significant male majority in the sample. This disparity may reflect broader trends in media engagement, regional accessibility, or cultural dynamics related to participation in surveys and media related research in Pakistan. Despite the imbalance, both genders are represented in the study, offering a diverse perspective on public perception regarding the portrayal of Pakhtun culture in Lollywood films.

Table-2: Age of the participants

	Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-30	195	65%	65%	65%
	30-50	101	33%	33%	98.7%
	50 & above	4	1.3%	1.3%	100%
	Total	300	100%	100%	

Table 2 highlights that the age distribution of participants reveals that the majority (65%) fall within the 18-30 years age group, followed by 33.7% in the 30-50 years category. Only a small fraction (1.3%) are aged 51 and above. This age trend indicates that the study is primarily shaped by young and middle-aged adults, who are also the most active consumers of cinema in Pakistan. Their opinions offer critical insight into how modern audiences particularly youth perceive the portrayal of Pakhtun culture in contemporary Lollywood films.

Table-3: City of the participants

	City	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Mardan	150	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
	Islamabad	150	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	

In table 3 the city wise distribution indicates a perfectly balanced sample, with 50% of respondents from Mardan and 50% from Islamabad. This equal representation enables a comparative analysis between urban (Islamabad) and semi-urban/rural (Mardan) perspectives regarding the portrayal of Pakhtun culture in Lollywood films. Mardan is a Pakhtun majority region and Islamabad represents a more diverse and cosmopolitan population, this distribution strengthens the study's ability to examine how ethnic identity and geographic location influence audience perception.

Table-4 RSQ 1: Lollywood accurately represents Pakhtun culture in its movies.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	102	34%	34%	34%
	Disagree	137	45%	45%	79.7%
	Neutral	33	11%	11%	90.7%
	Strongly Agree	32	7.7%	7.7%	98.3%
	Agree	5	1.7%	1.7%	100%
	Total	3000	100	100	

This question was designed to explore the general perception among audiences regarding how authentically and accurately Pakhtun culture is represented in Pakistani mainstream cinema, specifically Lollywood. The portrayal of ethnic groups in film plays a pivotal role in shaping national narratives, societal attitudes, and inter-ethnic understanding.

The findings in table 4 reveal a significant lack of public confidence in Lollywood's portrayal of Pakhtun culture. A combined 79.7% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating that the majority believes Lollywood fails to

accurately represent Pakhtun traditions, values, and identity. Only 9.4% agreed or strongly agreed, which shows a very low level of approval. This disagreement supports the argument that mainstream Pakistani cinema often presents stereotypical or distorted images of ethnic minorities, especially the Pakhtuns. The 11% neutrality may reflect either a lack of awareness or indifference among some respondents.

Table-5 RSQ 2: Pakhtun culture in Lollywood films are portrayed with dignity.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	81	27%	27%	27%
	Disagree	138	46%	46%	73%
	Neutral	43	14.3%	14.3%	87.3%
	Agree	32	11%	11%	98.3%
	Strongly Agree	5	1.7%	1.7%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

This question was designed to explore the audience's perception of the tone, depth, and fairness with which Pakhtun identity is represented in Pakistani cinema. While accuracy addressed in Question 1 concerns factual or cultural correctness, dignity refers to whether the portrayals reflect respect, empathy, and positive human value, or whether they demean or degrade Pakhtun characters through stereotypes. This issue is especially important in a multiethnic country like Pakistan, where cinematic narratives contribute to both national cohesion and intergroup understanding. Misrepresentation or disrespectful depictions of one group can reinforce ethnic prejudices, particularly when those portrayals are widely consumed and unchallenged.

In table 5 the data shows that a combined 73% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, revealing that a majority of participants believe Pakhtun culture is not portrayed with dignity in Lollywood films. Only 12.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, reflecting limited audience approval for how Pakhtun characters are handled and 14.3% remained neutral, possibly indicating uncertainty or limited exposure to Lollywood content.

Table-6 RSQ 3: Stereotypes of Pakhtun culture are prevalent in Lollywood movies.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	55	18.3%	18.3%	18.3%
	Disagree	108	36%	36%	54.3%
	Neutral	44	14.3%	14.3%	87.3%
	Agree	66	22%	22%	91%
	Strongly Agree	27	9%	9%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

This question addresses the core issue of stereotypical representation, which is central to this research work. The portrayal of ethnic identities through stereotypes, such as showing Pakhtuns as overly aggressive, conservative, backward, or tribal, has long been a subject of academic and cultural critique in media studies. According to scholars like Edward Said (Orientalism) and Walter Lippmann (Public Opinion), stereotypes in media not only misinform but also shape public attitudes and reinforce systemic biases. Lollywood, being a dominant medium in Pakistan's entertainment industry, plays a critical role in constructing and reinforcing ethnic images. This question was intended to gauge whether audiences perceive such patterns of stereotyping in the representation of Pakhtun culture.

According to the figures table 6, 54.3% of respondents rejected the claim that stereotypes are prevalent (Strongly disagree plus Disagree), a significant 31% (Agree plus strongly agree) believed that stereotypes do exist in Lollywood's portrayal of Pakhtuns. 14.7% remained neutral, showing either uncertainty or indifference.

Table-7 RSQ 4: Stereotypes of Pakhtun culture are prevalent in Lollywood movies.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	61	20.3%	20.3%	20.3%
	Disagree				
	Neutral				

Agree	61	20.3%	20.3%	93.7%
Strongly Agree	19	6.3%	6.3%	100%
Total	300	100	100	

This question investigates audience awareness and recognition of stereotyping as a recurring pattern in the portrayal of Pakhtuns in Lollywood films. Stereotyping refers to the oversimplification or generalization of a group, often focusing on one or two exaggerated traits e.g., aggression, tribal rigidity, conservatism, while ignoring the diversity, modernity, and complexity within that culture.

According to the statics of table 7, 60% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, suggesting they do not see stereotypes as widespread in Lollywood portrayals. On the other hand, 26.6% of respondents Agree or Strongly Agree believe stereotyping is prevalent, 13.3% remained neutral, indicating either limited exposure, awareness, or uncertainty in their opinion.

These results reveal a mixed public perception regarding the prevalence of stereotypes about Pakhtuns in Lollywood films. While a majority denies their widespread presence, the substantial minority that affirms it 26.6% cannot be overlooked. This divide might stem from normalization of such portrayals, viewers may no longer recognize stereotyping because it has become a standard part of cinematic language. Alternatively, this could indicate varying levels of media literacy among respondents, with some able to critically decode stereotypes, while others take character depictions at face value.

Table-8 RSQ 5: According to my understanding, watching Lollywood films enhances my understanding of Pakhtun culture.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	101	33.7%	33.7%	33.7%
	Disagree	136	45.3%	45.3%	79%
	Neutral	36	12%	12%	91%
	Agree	23	7.7%	7.7%	98.7%

Strongly Agree	4	1.3%	1.3%	100%
Total	300	100	100	

This question was designed to explore the educational or cultural informational value of Lollywood films regarding Pakhtun culture. It aims to determine whether audiences perceive Lollywood as a credible source of cultural knowledge, or merely as an entertainment platform that distorts or oversimplifies ethnic identities.

Table No 8 clearly demonstrates that a large majority of respondents, 79% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating they do not believe that Lollywood enhances their understanding of Pakhtun culture. While Only 9% Agree or Strongly Agree believed that Lollywood films contribute positively to their cultural awareness and 12% remained neutral, showing either uncertainty or disinterest in the question of cultural education through film.

These results clearly highlight a significant disconnect between Lollywood films and cultural education, at least from the audience's perspective. The overwhelming rejection of the statement confirms that audiences do not view Lollywood as a credible or accurate source of insight into Pakhtun culture. Pakhtun identity is not only misrepresented, but is also presented in ways that fail to inform, engage, or educate. Rather than serving as a cultural bridge, Lollywood films may in fact be perpetuating confusion or reinforcing shallow stereotypes, contributing little to national cultural understanding. These findings reinforce the urgency of promoting responsible media practices, diverse storytelling, and inclusion of indigenous voices in film production to accurately represent marginalized cultures like that of the Pakhtuns.

Table-9 RSQ 6: The depiction of Pakhtun traditions in Lollywood is authentic.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	102	34%	34%	34%
	Disagree	134	44.7%	44.7%	78.7%
	Neutral	43	14.3%	14.3%	93%
	Agree	17	5.7%	5.7%	98.7%

Strongly Agree	4	1.3%	1.3%	100%
Total	300	100	100	

This inquiry centers on assessing the perceived validity of the cultural traditions shown in Lollywood films about the Pakhtun minority. The objective is to evaluate if audiences perceive the cultural elements, such as language, attire, hospitality, tribal rituals, values, religious practices, and social roles, as accurately and respectfully shown in film representations. Numerous films depicting Pakhtuns feature characters engaging in exaggerated or antiquated practices that may not accurately represent the broad and dynamic identity of the Pakhtun populace throughout regions such as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan, and tribal areas. This inquiry explicitly assesses whether audiences perceive such representations as authentic or contrived.

Table No. 9 unequivocally illustrates that a total of 78.7% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed, signifying their perception that Lollywood's representation of Pakhtun customs lacks authenticity. Only 7% of participants agree or strongly agree supported the authenticity of those portrayals and 14.3% chose Neutral, reflecting uncertainty or perhaps a lack of familiarity with either real traditions or their cinematic depiction. The data clearly shows a broad consensus among respondents that Lollywood fails to portray Pakhtun traditions authentically.

The disapproval from over three fourths of the audience points toward a systemic problem in the film industry's approach to ethnic representation. Traditions are likely being oversimplified, romanticized, or exaggerated for dramatic effect, without proper research or community involvement.

Table-10 RSQ 7: Lollywood movies portray Pakhtun culture positively.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	104	34.7%	34.7%	34.7%
	Disagree	131	43.7%	43.7%	78.3%
	Neutral	39	13%	13%	91.3%

Agree	21	7%	7%	98.3%
Strongly Agree	5	1.7%	1.7%	100%
Total	300	100	100	

This question aimed to measure whether audiences perceive a positive portrayal of Pakhtun identity in Lollywood films. The concept of positive representation is crucial in media discourse. According to media framing theory, the way media constructs a narrative including what is emphasized, excluded, or stereotyped, significantly shapes public perception. A positive frame would involve showcasing Pakhtuns in roles of leadership, intelligence, cultural richness, and social progress rather than violence, backwardness, or tribalism.

The data presented in the table No 10 shows that a combined 78.4% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, suggesting a widespread belief that Pakhtun culture is not portrayed positively in Lollywood films. Only 8.7% agree or strongly agree believed the portrayals were positive and 13% remained neutral, possibly due to lack of exposure, uncertainty, or indifference.

The audience largely rejects Lollywood's portrayal of Pakhtuns as fair or constructive. The fact that nearly 4 out of 5 respondents disagreed with the idea of positive representation suggests that current media narratives continue to marginalize or mischaracterize Pakhtun identity. Such portrayals can be deeply damaging both socially and politically. When a dominant media industry consistently associates a cultural group with violence, extremism, or backwardness, it fosters prejudice, ethnic division, and even policy bias. It also undermines the rich cultural, linguistic, and historical contributions of that group.

Table-11 RSQ 8: Lollywood movies are an effective source for non-Pakhtun audiences to get knowledge about Pakhtun culture.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	97	32.3%	32.3%	32.3%
	Disagree	125	41.7%	41.7%	74%
	Neutral	46	15.3%	15.3%	89.3%

Agree	23	7.7%	7.7%	97%
Strongly Agree	9	3%	3%	100%
Total	300	100	100	

This statement was intended to assess whether Lollywood, as a national film industry, serves an intercultural educational function, specifically for audiences outside the Pakhtun community. The portrayal of ethnic cultures in mainstream cinema is not only about representation, it also carries the power to shape interethnic perceptions and inform audiences about cultures they do not belong to.

Table No 11 illustrates that majority of respondents 74% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating that they do not believe Lollywood helps non-Pakhtuns learn about Pakhtun culture. Only 10.7% of respondents agree or strongly agree found it effective and 15.3% remained neutral, possibly due to lack of exposure or critical distance from the issue.

These results shows that Lollywood fails not only in representing Pakhtun identity accurately or respectfully for insiders but also fails to educate or inform outsiders about the culture in a meaningful way. This is a serious concern from both a media ethics and national integration standpoint. This result also challenges the idea of cinema as a "mirror of society." Instead of reflecting the cultural richness and diversity of Pakistan, Lollywood is, in this case, shown to be distorting or ignoring the cultural reality of one of its major ethnic groups.

Table-12 RSQ 9: The portrayal of Pashtuns in films fosters cultural inclusivity.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	67	22%	22%	22%
	Disagree	122	40.7%	40.7%	62.7%
	Neutral	82	27.3%	27.3%	90%
	Agree	27	9%	9%	99%
	Strongly Agree	3	1%	1%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

In a diverse country like Pakistan, where ethnic divisions can be politically sensitive and socially charged, the media plays a crucial role in either bridging or widening cultural gaps. If films depict marginalized groups in a balanced and humanizing way, they can help promote inclusivity. But if representations are one-sided, stereotypical, or biased, they can reinforce cultural alienation.

The figures of table 12 shows that a clear majority 62.7% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, suggesting that they do not believe current portrayals of Pashtuns in films support cultural inclusivity. Only 10% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed and 27.3% of respondents chose Neutral, which may reflect uncertainty or a perception that films are culturally irrelevant or vague in their messaging.

These findings offer strong empirical support for this research work that Lollywood is failing in its social responsibility to foster cultural inclusivity through its portrayal of the Pashtun community. When more than 60% of respondents reject the statement that film narratives are inclusive, it points to a systemic issue in content production, character development, and storytelling. The high neutral response rate 27.3% also reflects disconnect between media and audiences, possibly indicating that viewers either don't pay attention to inclusivity in films or are unsure how to evaluate it. This could be due to lack of media literacy or due to media normalization of exclusionary narratives.

Table-13 RSQ 10: Films often misrepresent the values of Pakhtun culture.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	13	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%
	Disagree	16	5.3%	5.3%	9.7%
	Neutral	34	11.3%	11.3%	21%
	Agree	27	42.3%	42.3%	63.3%
	Strongly Agree	110	36.7%	36.7%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

This statement probes deeply into the central concern of this research work, whether or not Lollywood misrepresents the core values of Pakhtun culture, such as honor (nang), courage, loyalty, religious devotion, and respect for women and elders. Media representation plays a key role in constructing public perception. When a film industry consistently distorts or oversimplifies a culture, it shapes how both insiders and outsiders see that culture often reinforcing damaging stereotypes.

Table No 13 indicates that a strong majority of 79% agree or strongly agree believe that films do misrepresent the values of Pakhtun culture. Only 9.6% strongly disagree or disagree disagreed with the statement, while 11.3% remained neutral. These results serve as a powerful indictment of the portrayal of Pakhtuns in Pakistani cinema. A remarkable 4 out of every 5 respondents recognize that the values and traditions of Pakhtun culture are inaccurately presented in Pakistani Film industry. This level of agreement indicates that misrepresentation is not a subtle or occasional occurrence, it is a persistent and damaging pattern.

Table-14 RSQ 11: Pakhtun characters are often shown as overly rigid in Pakistani films.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	9	3%	3%	3%
	Disagree	10	3.3%	3.3%	6.3%
	Neutral	35	11.7%	11.7%	18%
	Agree	143	47.7%	47.7%	65.7%
	Strongly Agree	103	43.3%	43.3%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

According to the data of table 14 a strong majority of 82% agree or strongly agree that Pakhtuns are often shown as overly rigid. Only 6.3% disagreed, suggesting that very few respondents felt the opposite and 11.7% chose Neutral, which may indicate uncertainty, unfamiliarity with film portrayals, or lack of awareness about the stereotyping itself.

These findings clearly reflect that audiences recognize a repetitive and limiting stereotype in Pakistani cinema, the rigid Pakhtun male, often portrayed as angry, unyielding,

tribal, or harsh in emotional or familial relationships. This trait is commonly depicted in characters who reject progress, oppose education for women, or uphold aggressive traditionalism. Such traits may exist in individuals of any background, the problem arises when they are overgeneralized and consistently attached to an entire ethnic group without balance or nuance.

Table-15 RSQ 12: Pakhtun characters are often shown as overly violent or militant in Pakistani films.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	9	3%	3%	3%
	Disagree	7	2.3%	2.3%	5.3%
	Neutral	25	8.3%	8.3%	13.6%
	Agree	122	40.7%	40.7%	54.3%
	Strongly Agree	137	45.7%	45.7%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

Table No 15 illustrates that 86.4% of respondents agree or strongly agree, recognize that Pakhtun characters are shown as overly violent or militant in films. Only 5.3% of participants disagreed, marking this as one of the strongest consensus points in the entire survey and 8.3% remained neutral which is a small fraction possibly indicating unfamiliarity or lack of recall. This is the highest agreement level across all survey questions, suggesting that the stereotype of "violent Pakhtun" is not only widely recognized but deeply entrenched in cinematic portrayals.

Pakistani films have frequently resorted to characterizing Pakhtun individuals as, Taliban militants, Gun wielding tribal lords, Short tempered aggressors, and Extremist side characters. Such portrayals lack depth, fail to distinguish between tribal identity and radicalism, and ignore the lived realities of peace loving, educated, and progressive Pakhtuns across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan, and urban centers. When such images are repeated over time, they become normalized especially in the minds of audiences with little firsthand interaction with Pakhtun communities. This can lead to discrimination in real life, ranging from

verbal stereotyping to professional bias and social exclusion. This representation has severe consequences. It feeds into national level ethnic profiling, reduces the identity of an entire community to a narrow stereotype, and potentially contributes to social marginalization, both in media and in daily interactions across Pakistan.

Table-16 RSQ 13: Pakhtun characters are often shown as overly inferior in Lollywood movies.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	13	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%
	disagree	16	5.3%	5.3%	7.9%
	Neutral	34	11.3%	11.3%	21%
	Agree	127	42.3%	42.3%	63.3%
	Strongly Agree	110	63.7%	63.7%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

The data in Table no 16 presents respondent's opinions on the statement "Pakhtun characters are often shown as overly inferior in Lollywood movies." Out of the 300 participants, the majority expressed agreement with the statement, with 127 respondents 42.3% agreeing and 110 respondents 36.7% strongly agreeing, making a combined 79% of participants perceiving that Pakhtun characters are frequently portrayed as inferior. This significant majority highlights a prevalent concern among viewers regarding the depiction of Pakhtun identity in mainstream Pakistani cinema.

A smaller proportion of respondents expressed neutrality 34 respondents which is 11.3%, indicating either uncertainty about the portrayal or a perception that representation varies depending on the film. The dissenting views, comprising 16 respondents 5.3% who disagreed and 13 respondents 4.3% who strongly disagreed, account for only 9.7% of the sample. This suggests that a minority of viewers believe Lollywood does not consistently depict Pakhtuns as inferior or may have experienced more positive portrayals.

Table-17 RSQ 14: Pakistani Movies Influence Non-Pakhtun's Perception of Pakhtun Culture in a Positive Way.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	104	34.7%	34.7%	34.7%
	Disagree	118	39.3%	39.3%	74%
	Neutral	47	15.7%	15.7%	89.7%
	Agree	20	6.7%	6.7%	96.3%
	Strongly Agree	11	3.7%	3.7%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

Table No 17 illustrates that respondents perspectives on whether Pakistani movies positively influence non Pakhtuns perceptions of Pakhtun culture. The majority of participants expressed disagreement, with 118 respondents (39.3%) disagreeing and 104 respondents (34.7%) strongly disagreeing, together representing 74% of the total sample. This indicates a strong consensus among the audience that the portrayal of Pakhtun culture in Pakistani films does not contribute positively to shaping the perceptions of non Pakhtuns.

A smaller portion of respondents, 47 participants (15.7%), maintained a neutral stance, possibly reflecting uncertainty or a perception that the impact varies depending on the specific film. Only 20 respondents (6.7%) agreed and 11 respondents (3.7%) strongly agreed with the statement, suggesting that a very small fraction of the audience perceives Pakistani films as enhancing cultural understanding.

Table-18 RSQ 15: The representation of Pakhtun women in Lollywood is fair.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	113	37.3%	37.3%	37.3%
	Disagree	120	40%	40%	77.7%
	Neutral	48	16%	16%	93.7%
	Agree	16	5.3%	5.3%	99%
	Strongly Agree	3	1%	1%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

The data in Table 18 reveals strong skepticism among respondents regarding the fairness of Pakhtun women's representation in Lollywood films. A combined 77.7% of participants disagreed (40% disagree, 37.7% strongly disagree) with the statement, suggesting that the vast majority believe portrayals are either biased, stereotypical, or misrepresentative.

A moderate 16% of respondents remained neutral, which may indicate uncertainty, limited exposure to such portrayals, or a perception that fairness depends on individual films rather than the industry as a whole. Only 5.3% agreed and 1% strongly agreed with the statement, highlighting that positive assessments of Lollywood's depiction of Pakhtun women are rare.

From a representational theory perspective, these results suggest that cinematic depictions may lack authenticity, depth, and diversity. Such portrayals risk reinforcing cultural stereotypes, especially if female characters from Pakhtun backgrounds are consistently depicted through narrow, reductive roles. In line with feminist media criticism, the low agreement rates point toward an urgent need for more complex, empowered, and realistic narratives for Pakhtun women that reflect their social, cultural, and personal diversity.

Table-19 RSQ 16: Lollywood showcases the diversity of roles played by Pakhtun women.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	87	29%	29%	29%
	Disagree	130	43.3%	43.3%	72.3%
	Neutral	62	20.7%	20.7%	93%
	Agree	18	6.7%	6.7%	96.3%
	Strongly Agree	3	1%	1%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

The responses in Table No 19 indicate a widespread perception that Lollywood does not adequately showcase the diversity of roles for Pakhtun women. A large majority 72.3% of

respondents expressed disagreement (43.3% disagree, 29.0% strongly disagree), suggesting that portrayals of Pakhtun women in Pakistani cinema remain limited and stereotypical.

A significant minority (20.7%) remained neutral, which may point to either uncertainty or limited exposure to films featuring Pakhtun female characters. Only 6% agreed and 1% strongly agreed with the statement, indicating that positive perceptions about role diversity are rare.

From a cultural representation standpoint, these results highlight a key gap in Lollywood's storytelling: the need to move beyond monolithic portrayals and represent the nuanced realities of Pakhtun women. In line with feminist and media diversity theories, limited representation can perpetuate cultural stereotypes and invisible the contributions of women from marginalized ethnic backgrounds.

Table-20 RSQ 17: Gender dynamics in Pashtun culture are well-represented in Lollywood movies.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	121	40.4%	40.3%	40.3%
	Disagree	123	41%	41%	81.3%
	Neutral	38	12.7%	12.7%	94%
	Agree	15	5%	5%	99%
	Strongly Agree	3	1%	1%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

The data from Table 20 reveals a strongly negative perception regarding the representation of gender dynamics in Pashtun culture within Lollywood movies. A vast majority 81.3% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, 40.3% strongly disagree, 41.0% disagree, indicating a consensus that cinematic portrayals fail to accurately or fairly depict the nuanced gender relations within Pashtun communities.

A smaller proportion 12.7% adopted a neutral position, possibly reflecting limited exposure to films depicting Pashtun culture or uncertainty about the accuracy of the portrayals.

Positive assessments were rare, with only 5% agreeing and 1% strongly agreeing, suggesting that very few viewers perceive Lollywood as doing justice to the complexity of gender roles in Pashtun society.

From media representation standpoint, these findings highlight a significant gap in cultural authenticity. According to cultural representation and framing theory, when gender dynamics are oversimplified or misrepresented, it can reinforce stereotypes particularly in the context of conservative and patriarchal communities, where nuanced understanding is essential.

Table-21 RSQ 18: The portrayal of Pakhtun men is usually one-dimensional.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	13	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%
	Disagree	16	5.3%	5.3%	9.6%
	Neutral	34	11.3%	11.3%	20.9%
	Agree	127	42.3%	42.3%	63.2%
	Strongly Agree	110	36.8%	36.8%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

The results from Table No 21 indicate that the overwhelming majority of respondents perceive the portrayal of Pakhtun men in Lollywood as highly one dimensional. A combined 79% of participants either agreed, 42.3% or strongly agreed, 36.7% with this assessment, suggesting a strong consensus that the cinematic depiction lacks complexity and depth. Only 9.6% of respondents expressed disagreement, either strongly disagreeing 4.3% or disagreeing 5.3%, indicating a minimal minority who believe Lollywood offers a more nuanced representation. About 11.3% of respondents remained neutral, perhaps reflecting either uncertainty or limited exposure to such portrayals.

From a cultural representation perspective, these findings suggest that Lollywood tends to rely heavily on stereotypical portrayals of Pakhtun men, possibly emphasizing traits such as aggression, conservatism, or rigidity, without presenting the diversity of personalities, occupations, and life experiences that exist in real Pashtun communities. According to framing

theory, such repetitive, narrow depictions reinforce cultural stereotypes, which can lead to misinformed public perceptions and hinder intercultural understanding.

Table-22 RSQ 19: Pakistani films highlight both strengths and struggles of Pakhtun women.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	70	23.3%	23.3%	23.3%
	Disagree	106	35.3%	35.3%	58.6%
	Neutral	69	23%	23%	81.6%
	Agree	36	12%	12%	93.6%
	Strongly Agree	19	6.3%	6.3%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

Table No 22 illustrates that a substantial majority of respondents do not believe that Pakistani films effectively highlight both the strengths and struggles of Pakhtun women. Combined, 58.6% of participants either strongly disagreed, 23.3% or disagreed, 35.3% with the statement. This suggests that many viewers feel that cinematic portrayals are imbalanced, possibly overlooking key aspects of resilience, leadership, and empowerment, while also failing to present nuanced challenges faced by women in these communities.

A notable 23% of respondents adopted a neutral stance, which may reflect uncertainty, lack of exposure to relevant films, or the perception that portrayals vary significantly between productions. Only 18.3% agree 12% and strongly agree 6.3%, felt that both strengths and struggles are adequately shown, indicating that positive representation exists but is limited.

Table-23 RSQ 20: Lollywood films provide an accurate view of Pakhtunwali traditions.

	Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	125	41.7%	41.7%	41.7%
	Disagree	120	40%	40%	81.7%
	Neutral	34	11.3%	11.3%	93%
	Agree	14	4.7%	4.7%	97.7%

Strongly Agree	7	2.3%	2.3%	100%
Total	300	100	100	

The data in Table 23 reveals that an overwhelming majority of respondents do not believe that Lollywood films provide an accurate portrayal of Pakhtunwali traditions. A combined 81.7% either strongly disagreed 41.7% or disagreed 40.0% with the statement, indicating a widespread perception that cinematic depictions fail to authentically represent the cultural code of the Pashtun people.

Only 7% of participants expressed agreement, Agree 4.7% and Strongly Agree 2.3%, suggesting that those who view film portrayals as authentic are a small minority and 11.3% remained neutral, potentially reflecting a lack of knowledge about Pakhtunwali, limited exposure to relevant films, or uncertainty about the cultural accuracy of cinematic content.

From a cultural representation standpoint, these findings align with criticisms that mainstream Pakistani cinema often prioritizes dramatization and stereotyping over cultural authenticity. Pakhtunwali, a century's old code emphasizing hospitality (melmastia), honor (nang), and revenge (badal), is often oversimplified or distorted to fit commercial narratives. Such portrayals can lead to misrepresentation, influencing public perception and potentially reinforcing cultural misunderstandings among non-Pakhtun audiences.

Table-24 RSQ 21: Pakistani films emphasize hospitality as a core value of Pakhtun culture.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	26	8.7%	8.7%	8.7%
	Disagree	56	18.7%	18.7%	27.4%
	Neutral	47	15.7%	15.7%	43.1%
	Agree	127	42.3%	42.3%	85.4%
	Strongly Agree	44	14.6%	14.6%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

The data in Table No 24 shows that a significant majority of respondents 56.9% agreed that Pakistani films emphasize hospitality as a central value of Pakhtun culture. Specifically, 42.3% agreed and 14.6% strongly agreed with the statement. This finding suggests that melmastia (hospitality), a core element of Pakhtunwali, is one of the more prominently and positively depicted aspects of Pakhtun identity in Pakistani cinema, also a noteworthy proportion of respondents 27.4%, either disagreed 18.7% or strongly disagreed 8.7%, indicating skepticism about whether hospitality is accurately or adequately portrayed. This divergence could be due to perceptions that hospitality is sometimes romanticized, exaggerated, or selectively shown in ways that do not reflect the broader realities of Pakhtun culture.

A smaller segment 15.7% remained neutral, which could indicate limited awareness, indifference, or mixed perceptions about the portrayal of hospitality in films.

Table-25 RSQ 22: Lollywood plays a vital role in educating audiences about cultural diversity.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	58	91.3%	91.3%	91.3%
	Disagree	104	34.7%	34.7%	54%
	Neutral	74	24.7%	24.7%	78.7%
	Agree	51	17%	17%	95.7%
	Strongly Agree	13	4.3%	4.3%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

Table No 25 clearly demonstrates that a predominantly critical view of Lollywood's role in promoting cultural diversity awareness. Over half of the respondents 54% either disagreed 34.7% or strongly disagreed 19.3% that Lollywood plays a vital role in educating audiences about cultural diversity. This indicates a perception that the film industry may not be making adequate or effective use of its platform to highlight the richness and variety of Pakistan's multicultural society.

A substantial proportion 24.7% of participants remained neutral, suggesting either uncertainty about Lollywood's contribution or a lack of engagement with films in ways that would inform their opinion. Only 21.3% of respondents expressed agreement, with a minimal 4.3% strongly agreeing that Lollywood effectively educates audiences on this issue.

The low agreement levels could be attributed to a perceived over reliance on stereotypical narratives, limited representation of minority cultures, or the commercial tendency to cater to mainstream audiences rather than exploring nuanced cultural themes.

Table-26 RSQ 23: Negative portrayals of Pakhtuns in Lollywood create societal prejudices.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	10	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%
	Disagree	9	3%	3%	6.3%
	Neutral	59	19.7%	19.7%	26%
	Agree	136	45.3%	45.3%	71.3%
	Strongly Agree	85	28.3%	28.3%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

The data in Table No 26 reveals a strong consensus among respondents that negative portrayals of Pakhtuns in Lollywood contribute to the creation of societal prejudices. An overwhelming 73.6% of participants agreed 45.3% or strongly agreed 28.3% with the statement, indicating a widespread recognition of the powerful influence of filmic representation on public perception.

A smaller proportion 19.7% of respondents remained neutral, possibly due to uncertainty about the causal link between cinematic portrayals and societal attitudes, or perhaps due to limited exposure to such portrayals. Only 6.3% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed, suggesting that opposition to this view is minimal.

The strong agreement among respondents also highlights a public awareness of media bias and its societal repercussions. This suggests that there is an audience demand for more

balanced, nuanced, and authentic portrayals of Pakhtun characters that reflect the diversity and richness of their culture rather than reducing them to one-dimensional tropes.

Table-27 RSQ 24: Positive portrayals in Pakistani films enhance cross-cultural respect.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	11	3.7%	3.7%	3.7%
	Disagree	15	5%	5%	8.7%
	Neutral	53	17.7%	17.7%	26.4%
	Agree	132	44%	44%	70.4%
	Strongly Agree	89	29.6%	29.6%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

The data in Table No 27 reveals a significant consensus among respondents that positive portrayals in Pakistani films enhance cross cultural respect. A total of 73.6% of respondents agreed 44.0% or strongly agreed 29.6% with the statement, underscoring the belief that cinema can play a constructive role in fostering mutual understanding and respect among diverse cultural groups.

A moderate proportion 17.7% of respondents remained neutral, which may reflect either uncertainty regarding the real-world impact of such portrayals or a lack of exposure to films that depict cultures positively. Only 8.7% of participants expressed disagreement, showing that skepticism toward this idea exists but is relatively limited.

Table-28 RSQ 25: Pakistani Movies often overdramatize Pakhtun traditions.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	8	2.7%	2.7%	2.7%
	Disagree	12	4%	4%	6.7%
	Neutral	28	9.3%	9.3%	16%
	Agree	151	50.3%	50.3%	66.3%
	Strongly Agree	101	33.7%	33.7%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

The data in Table No 28 reveals a clear consensus among respondents that Pakistani films often overdramatize Pakhtun traditions. A substantial 84% of participants either agreed 50.3% or strongly agreed 33.7% with the statement, highlighting a widespread perception that cinematic portrayals exaggerate or sensationalize cultural elements for dramatic effect.

Only 6.7% of respondents disagreed with this assertion, indicating that skepticism toward this perception is minimal. Meanwhile, 9.3% maintained a neutral stance, possibly reflecting a lack of strong opinion or limited exposure to portrayals of Pakhtun traditions in film.

Table-29 RSQ 26: Non-Pakhtun viewers are influenced by how Pakhtuns are portrayed in Lollywood movies.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	10	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
	Disagree	15	5%	5%	8.3%
	Neutral	44	14.7%	14.7%	23%
	Agree	127	42.3%	42.3%	65.3%
	Strongly Agree	104	34.7%	34.7%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

The data in Table 29 shows a strong agreement among respondents that the way Lollywood portrays Pakhtuns significantly influences the perceptions of non-Pakhtun audiences. A notable 77% agree: 42.3%, strongly agree: 34.7% affirmed this influence, suggesting that film representations play a key role in shaping interethnic perceptions and cultural understanding.

Only 8.3% of respondents expressed disagreement, while 14.7% remained neutral, potentially due to limited observation of such portrayals or uncertainty about their societal impact.

Table-30 RSQ 26: Lollywood films have a significant impact on cultural understanding in Pakistan.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	Strongly disagree	31	10.3%	10.3%	10.3%
	Disagree	38	12.7%	12.7%	23%
	Neutral	71	23.7%	23.7%	46.7%
	Agree	104	34.7%	34.7%	81.4%
	Strongly Agree	56	18.6%	18.6%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

Table No 30 illustrates that majority of respondents perceive Lollywood films as having a significant influence on cultural understanding in Pakistan. A combined 53.3% (Agree: 34.7%, Strongly Agree: 18.6%) endorsed the statement, indicating that the cinematic medium is viewed as a vital cultural conduit capable of shaping perceptions and fostering cross cultural awareness.

A notable 23% of participants disagreed (Strongly Disagree: 10.3%, Disagree: 12.7%), suggesting skepticism about the industry's role in genuinely enhancing cultural understanding. This skepticism could stem from perceptions of biased, stereotypical, or exaggerated depictions that may reinforce divisions rather than promote unity.

Interestingly, 23.7% of respondents maintained a neutral stance, possibly reflecting either a lack of exposure to diverse cinematic content or uncertainty about the extent of film influence relative to other media forms such as television, social media, or interpersonal interactions.

Table-31 RSQ 27: Pakistani Films fairly represent the diversity within Pakhtun culture.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	86	28.7%	28.7%	28.7%
	Disagree	128	42.7%	42.7%	71.4%
	Neutral	50	16.7%	16.7%	88.1%
	Agree	27	9%	9%	97.1%
	Strongly Agree	9	3%	3%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

The data in Table No 31 indicates a strong perception among respondents that Pakistani films do not adequately reflect the diversity within Pakhtun culture. A combined 71.4% of participants either strongly disagreed (28.7%) or disagreed (42.7%) with the statement, revealing a widespread belief that portrayals are narrow, stereotypical, or fail to capture the cultural variety within the Pakhtun community.

Only 12% (Agree: 9%, strongly Agree: 3%) viewed the representation as fair, suggesting that positive perceptions of inclusivity in cinematic portrayals are rare. Meanwhile, 16.7% remained neutral, possibly indicating limited exposure to relevant films or uncertainty about the accuracy of the portrayals.

Table-32 RSQ 29: Lollywood focuses equally on all Pakistani ethnic groups.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	170	56.7%	56.7%	56.7%
	Disagree	92	30.7%	30.7%	87.4%
	Neutral	25	8.3%	8.3%	95.7%
	Agree	11	3.7%	3.7%	99.4%
	Strongly Agree	2	0.6%	0.6%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

The data in Table No 32 presents a strong consensus that Lollywood does not provide equal focus to all Pakistani ethnic groups. An overwhelming 87.4% of respondents either strongly disagreed (56.7%) or disagreed (30.7%) with the statement, highlighting a prevalent belief that representation is skewed in favor of certain ethnicities, likely the dominant Punjabi and Urdu speaking groups.

Only 4.3% of respondents expressed agreement, indicating a marginal perception that Lollywood strives for balanced ethnic representation. A small portion (8.3%) remained neutral, possibly reflecting either limited engagement with a variety of Lollywood films or uncertainty about the distribution of ethnic portrayals.

Table-33 RSQ 29: The Pakistani film industry promotes an inclusive cultural narrative.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	107	35.7%	35.7%	35.7%
	Disagree	120	40%	40%	75.7%
	Neutral	53	17.7%	17.7%	93.4%
	Agree	18	6%	6%	99.4%
	Strongly Agree	2	0.6%	0.6%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

The results in Table No 33 indicate a dominant perception that the Pakistani film industry fails to promote an inclusive cultural narrative. A striking 75.7% of respondents expressed either strong disagreement (35.7%) or disagreement (40%), pointing to widespread dissatisfaction with the extent of inclusivity in film narratives.

Only a small fraction 6.6% agreed or strongly agreed that inclusivity is adequately represented, underscoring the perception that Pakistan's cinematic productions often marginalize certain cultural or ethnic identities and 17.7% remained neutral, possibly due to a lack of exposure to diverse films or uncertainty about the representation balance.

Table-34 RSQ 30: Misrepresentation in Lollywood films can cause social alienation.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	12	4%	4%	4%
	Disagree	18	2.7%	2.7%	6.7%
	Neutral	32	10.7%	10.7%	17.4%
	Agree	144	48%	48%	65.4%
	Strongly Agree	104	34.6%	34.6%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

The results in Table No 34 reveal a clear consensus among respondents that misrepresentation in Lollywood films can indeed cause social alienation. A substantial 82.6% of participants either agreed (48.0%) or strongly agreed (34.6%) with the statement. This

demonstrates a widespread belief that inaccurate, stereotypical, or biased portrayals of communities particularly ethnic or cultural groups, can contribute to feelings of marginalization and estrangement within society.

Only a small minority 6.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed, suggesting that opposition to this view is minimal along with that 10.7% of respondents were neutral, possibly due to either limited awareness of such portrayals or uncertainty regarding the extent of their societal impact.

Table-35 RSQ 31: Lollywood should engage with Pakhtun consultants for cultural accuracy.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	11	3.7%	3.7%	3.7%
	Disagree	9	3%	3%	6.7%
	Neutral	25	8.3%	8.3%	15%
	Agree	103	34.3%	34.3%	49.3%
	Strongly Agree	152	50.7%	50.7%	100%
	Total	300	100	100	

Table No. 35 shows that there is a great consensus that Lollywood should seek the services of Pakhtun cultural experts to ensure authenticity in the use of culture in the films. A significant 85% either strongly agreed (50.7 %) or agreed (34.3 %) with the statement indicating that there is a large degree of society backing up the idea of cultural consultation. The discovery highlights an increasingly recognized form of cultural sensitivity in the field of movie production and the need of the audience to see it accurately and fairly. Only a small percentage of those polled (6.7) expressed opposition or disagreement strongly with the action, and the percentage that remained unopinionated or neutral (8.3) may be explained by lack of sufficient awareness of filming procedures or by doubt that such a gathering is possible.

This finding is congruent with Stuart Hall depiction theory (1997), which holds that accurate representation minimizes mis/preconceptions of the underrepresented groups. The use of cultural experts promotes the reliability of narratives, increases the confidence of viewers, and builds good intergroup relationships.

The findings of the research do not present a simple and straightforward view of Pakhtun cultural representations especially in Lollywood. The interviewees confirmed that good attributes such as hospitality and courage have been depicted in movies but to a lesser extent as these were outweighed by the chosen and in most cases erroneous images. The responses received in Mardan and Islamabad showed a high level of agreement that the negative representations of the movies encourage cultural bias and create a biased attitude of the non-Pakhtun audience, which is in line with the framing theory that repetition of stories creates a perception among the audience. The fact that Lollywood tends to exaggerate Pakhtun traditions in order to entertain many participants was seen as a negative tendency. According to participants, it strengthens stereotypes, presenting a rich culture of Pakistan in a few, highly exaggerated features, thus not informing people enough with regards to the culture richness Pakistan possesses. It has also been viewed that the Pakistani film industry heavily focuses on ethnic affiliations, mostly focusing on Punjabi representation, and other ethnicities such as the Pakhtuns are placed on the backburner. Some participants argued that positive depictions have the potential of fostering cross cultural respect, but they noted that such examples are rare and inadequate in negating the negative images.

The agreement on the social implications of such representations is great. A substantial plurality of participants consented to the notion that cinema distortions cultivate the cultural isolation of Pakhtuns as well as non-Pakhtuns, and contribute to the formation of the attitude of us versus them among Pakhtuns. It was more apparent in Mardan respondents, whose closeness to the culture made the effects of stereotyping more real and personal, whereas Islamabad respondents expressed their relative indifference to some of the domains, which could be explained by their mediated rather than direct engagement with the problem. The figures indicated high support of involving Pakhtun consultants in movie making since the respondents asserted their inclusion would enhance cultural authenticity in the screenplay, language, dressing, and storytelling. This practice is commensurable with the values of various media policies like the culture of peace journalism which promotes authenticity to eliminate misinterpretations of cultures. The findings indicate that, although Lollywood can be used to overcome cultural barriers, most of the time the Pakhtun culture presented in it reaffirms the assumptions, does not fully represent diversity, and supports the social discrimination. The study highlights the urgent necessity of the fair storytelling that will reflect the Pakhtun culture

in all its multifaceted reality, and the purpose of such an endeavor is to signify the ethnic diversity of Pakistan and promote interethnic respect and understanding. Breaking the labels of simple prejudices and being involved in cultural insiders, the Lollywood might contribute greatly to ensuring national harmony, instead of division in the sphere of culture.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Discussion

The survey findings reveal that Lollywood movies overwhelmingly fail to provide authentic, balanced, or dignified representations of Pakhtun culture. A striking 80 percent of respondents disagreed with the statement that Pakistani films depict Pakhtun life accurately. Respondents emphasized that portrayals are exaggerated, dramatized, and largely dependent on narrow stereotypes such as militancy, violence, tribal rigidity, and excessive masculinity. Respondents also raised concerns about the portrayal of Pakhtun women, who are often limited to roles that are unfairly constructed and lack both depth and agency. In most cases, female characters appear as passive victims or background figures rather than as empowered individuals reflecting the realities of modern Pakhtun society. Although hospitality (*melmastia*) was highlighted as one of the few positive traits associated with Pashtuns on screen, many respondents stressed that even this was often presented in a romanticized or superficial way that fails to capture its true cultural meaning. These results confirm that Lollywood tends to flatten a rich and diverse culture into simplistic tropes, thereby distorting lived realities. Instead of functioning as a cultural bridge, Lollywood has historically reinforced an image of Pakhtuns that prioritizes stereotypes over authenticity. The answer to the first research question demonstrates that cinematic portrayals have misrepresented the community by exaggerating certain traits and ignoring the broader complexity of Pakhtun social, cultural, and intellectual life.

The results of this study clearly suggest that such stereotypical portrayals do not remain confined to the screen but actively shape the attitudes of audiences in negative ways. Over 70 percent of survey participants agreed that misrepresentation in films fosters cultural bias, strengthens harmful stereotypes, and contributes to social alienation. For many respondents, films not only reproduce discriminatory imagery but also legitimize and normalize it, leading individuals to internalize biased views. Respondents from Mardan, in particular, displayed heightened sensitivity toward misrepresentation because of their direct cultural affiliation with the community. They expressed that such portrayals act as a direct affront to their identity and

dignity, making them feel alienated from the national narrative promoted by mainstream cinema. These participants emphasized that stereotypes of violence and rigidity do not reflect the lived experiences of most Pakhtuns, yet because of their repetition in films, outsiders often accept them as “truth.” Respondents from Islamabad, while also acknowledging misrepresentation, tended to display more neutrality in their responses. This suggests that their knowledge of Pakhtun culture is mediated rather than experiential, and Lollywood often functions as their primary source of cultural imagery. Their attitudes are more shaped by cinematic representations than by direct interaction with the community. The findings confirm that Lollywood narratives do not foster inclusivity or empathy. Instead, they encourage discriminatory perceptions, with negative stereotypes becoming internalized as common sense knowledge. This directly answers the second research question, cinematic portrayals significantly influence individual attitudes, but they do so by reinforcing prejudice rather than breaking it.

The comparative data from Mardan and Islamabad respondents provided critical insight into how cinematic portrayals influence different audiences. While both groups acknowledged the dominance of negative images in Lollywood, the degree of impact varied substantially. For non-Pakhtun respondents, particularly those from Islamabad, the data showed a strong tendency to internalize stereotypes. Nearly 77 percent of respondents confirmed that portrayals in films strongly shape how outsiders perceive Pakhtuns. These portrayals, dominated by images of militancy, rigidity, or tribal backwardness, often become the only reference point through which non-Pakhtuns imagine the community. This creates a powerful mediated perception, consistent with Lippmann’s Public Perception Theory, where people rely on “pictures in their heads” constructed by the media instead of first-hand knowledge. On the other hand, Pakhtun respondents from Mardan expressed deeper concern about cultural alienation. They emphasized that misrepresentation was not only inaccurate but also damaging to their social identity. Many respondents argued that Lollywood films strip away the complexity of Pakhtun life and reduce it to one-dimensional caricatures. They pointed out that such portrayals make it difficult for them to be understood and accepted by others, reinforcing feelings of marginalization. Thus, in response to the third research question, Lollywood films shape public attitudes differently across social groups: for non-Pakhtuns, films act as the

primary source of knowledge that reinforces biased views, while for Pakhtuns, they produce alienation and misrepresentation that erodes cultural dignity.

From these findings the widening disconnect between cinematic representation and lived cultural experience. Respondents from Mardan consistently emphasized that Lollywood's portrayals do not reflect their reality. They pointed to traditions of hospitality, poetry, family values, and resilience as being overlooked in favor of sensationalized depictions of violence and extremism. Non-Pakhtun respondents also acknowledged this disconnect, admitting that the stereotypes they encountered on screen rarely matched their personal interactions with Pakhtuns in everyday life. This discrepancy highlights the constructed nature of media stereotypes, as theorized by Lippmann, and underscores the power of cinema to shape perception even when it diverges from reality. This disconnect also suggests an opportunity for Pakistani cinema: if filmmakers commit to accurate and diverse representations, they can serve as a powerful medium for fostering mutual understanding. Films like *Janaan* and *Moor* were mentioned by some respondents as examples of more balanced depictions, suggesting that alternative portrayals are possible.

5.2. Conclusion

This study examines how Pakhtun culture has been represented in the Pakistani cinema, and identifies a constant tension between the commercial imperatives of a cinema narrative and the need to be truly representative of culture. As a source of art, the movie industry tends to dramatize the Pakhtun culture in crude and unrealistic ways instead of creating the complex representations. These representations have, over decades of Lollywood existence, coalesced into a distinctive body of narrative and visual codes that regularly portrays the ethnic Pakhtun type as unwavering, combative, highly traditional, and often in conflict with the modernizing world. The fact that such cliches persist in existence can be seen as demonstrative of their deep-seated position within the visual language of the film industry and the way in which they can be used as a shortcut that prevents a more in-depth analysis of the richness and diversity of the culture depicted in them.

The implications of this on narrative expediencies are substantial. Concentrating on spectacle rather than substance, directors undermine the proper and complete image of Pakhtun

culture. In so doing, they create an image of reality which the audience, especially ones with little or no understanding of the real situation of Pakhtun communities, can take to be real. The embrace serves to reinforce the prejudices that exist in a society and eventually influences the audiences into believing and having opinions that perpetuate the prejudice rather than abolishing them. These descriptions have a significant effect on society in a heterogeneous society like Pakistan where interethnic understanding is the key to social cohesiveness.

The discrepancy in the representation of gender in such stories is especially evident. Based on the findings of the survey, women are often the recipients of such roles that support the overall narrative of male heroes, acting as symbols of the glory, romance or duty rather than multidimensional characters. The complex Pakhtun reality of women, their roles in the family, society, education and work place, are seldom questioned. The films can be very much in the nature of women as observers of male dominated action or as one in a middle state of being neither of tradition nor rebellion without discussing the independence, strength and leadership skills of women in the real world. This tendency devalues the position of women and reinforces the obsolete gender inequality and builds them into the mind of the society.

When positive representations come into occasion, they are subject to overriding preconceptions. A film can emphasize the proud hospitality and goodwill of the Pakhtun people, but these impressions are often overstated, and they obscure the multidimensionality of the Pakhtuns. Hospitality has turned into an act of performance rather than a cultural principle and courage is presented as an ever-present willingness to fight rather than a deep sense of justice and protection. This narrow description makes the intricate social conventions into detached, and most of the times, overstated attributes, which ultimately diminishes their significance.

The cultural representation is very lacking in the movie production. The inclination of the film industry to be centered around the perspective of an outsider contributes to the coming out with the depictions that rely on the second-hand opinions and cliched cinematic depictions rather than the actual life of the contemporary Pakistani. Movies are inclined to disseminate myths because of the participation of cultural insiders, either experts, writers, or performers. In such cases, the discourses that are created are those that lean towards consumer needs influenced by the misperceptions that have come before instead of the actuality. The process

is self-sustaining; stereotypes in earlier films impact the plot of later films, reinforcing the audiences' beliefs that the stereotypes are actually true.

The continuance of such a cycle demonstrates either creative or organizational rigidity. Producers tend to use tropes that are already established due to their perceived economic feasibility as audiences are believed to have expectations as to the way they ought to be depicted and moving out of these stereotypes can be considered an economic risk. At the institutional level there has been a disorganized interaction between the film industry and the various cultural groups that it represents. With no incentive or mechanism that will make reliability desirable, directors work in an environment where misrepresentation does not come with any significant penalty.

The wider implications of such portrayals are beyond the movie genre. In a nation where the cinema is a fundamental means of pleasure and cultural education, the image of ethnic groups can shape the view of society, interethnic relations, and policy views. Whenever a particular cultural grouping gets consistently represented through the lens of violence, primitivism, or resistance to change, the result is the construction of a narrative of alienation that can make integration and mutual respect more difficult. In contrast, romanticizing or exaggerating national qualities without context, may have the eroticizing effect of devolution of diversity into a superficial stereotype.

It is important to realize that the shortcomings of depiction are not just the results of malice or intentional distortion. These problems are often caused by structural weaknesses in the Lollywood industry, shortage of research funding, inability to access remote or tribal locations to gain authentic stories, or increasing urban-based creative teams with little knowledge of Pakhtun society. The financial need to attract the wide audience, in turn, can result in the low quality of the storytelling, which aims at the general consumption and thus weakens the cultural identity.

The study also focuses on change opportunities. The preferences of viewers are dynamic; evidence indicates that viewers are fond of storylines that are characterized by depth, authenticity and emotional connections. The cultural facts have been dealt with in a thoughtful manner by the movies that have been portraying either the Pakhtun culture or other cultural

traditions in a fair manner and have proved that economic success and fair representation is not mutually exclusive. By adopting more participatory storytelling approach that takes into consideration community knowledge and firsthand accounts, the industry will end the vicious cycle of misrepresentation.

Awareness and education are essential to the filming community. We must make an effort to get producers, directors and writers to view proper depiction as not a restriction but rather a creative challenge. The authentic cultural narratives can serve as a strong foundation of narratives that are innovative, engaging and current that serve as alternatives to tradition. Such transition would assist the depicted cultural groups, and enrich the diversity and abundance of Pakistan cinema in general.

The findings of the study indicate that cinema is a vehicle that dispatches cultural narratives, thus, making narrative a cooperative venture between directors and their portrayed populations. The realization of this goal demands a change in creative approaches and institutional support by cultural organizations, industrial and educational programs that prepare the future generation of movie-makers. In the absence of such efforts, the tension between the cinema and the cultural reality would have been maintained, and the vast opportunities of movies as a tool of social interpretation will have been left unused.

The Pakistani film industry reflects the tensions that exist within the Pakistani film industry, including the conflict between economic viability and cultural imperative, the reinforcement of biases rooted in the societal structure, and the lack of a system to hold the representation to account. The current state of representation is characterized by distortion and simplification; but the way to a better state is clear and accessible. It entails the embracement of the complexities of the depicted cultures, establishment of a relationship with the cultural insiders, and the realization that reliability is not an obstacle to creativity but a source of its great potential. By adopting these measures, the Pakistani cinema will be able to take one step further, towards achieving its mission of being a reflection of the society and a source of empathy, understanding, and cohesion as a nation.

5.2. Recommendation

This study demonstrates how the Pakistani cinema industry has a deep influence on the way people perceive cultural groups (especially Pakhtun people) which has been portrayed in the simplistic heroic form as well as negative stereotyping. The representation of such cultural groups in the movies is not only an aesthetic decision, but a cultural gesture with significant social consequences. Therefore, an urgent need is the presence of cooperation between the moviemakers, policymakers, and authors to ensure a non-judgmental and open movie culture. The filmmakers need to underline the authenticity of culture as an essential component of the creation process. This involves the overcoming of shallow assumptions and deep-rooted biases and the development of productive interaction with those communities they represent. Talking to cultural experts, anthropologists, and Pakhtun cultural group representatives, it is possible to get valuable information about the language peculiarities, social norms, and real-life incidents, which are often omitted in cinematic narratives. The inclusion of regional perspectives in the script development, casting, and dialogue coaching helps producers to steer clear of misrepresentation to create more mature and engaging stories. The casting should be done very vigorously with a view of identifying and elevating actors of the represented cultures to ensure originality and representation within the creative industry. Production companies must support the inclusion of directors and writers in cultural awareness training and workshops or training programs on inclusive storytelling strategies. Although financial prosperity tends to serve as a driving force behind filmmaking, there is plenty of evidence across the world that indicates that authenticity and richness in cultural representation can make a film more marketable and help create a following.

The legislators can have a decisive role to play in transforming the cultural discourse of the film industry. Benefits that can be introduced by authorities to promote moral and research-based practices of filmmakers include tax cuts, special grants, and awards to the films that contain proven ethnic accuracy. These measures would indicate that the correct depiction is not just an idealistic vision but also a key element of the national cultural policy. Cooperation between cultural departments, academic institutions and the movie industry can enhance the creative process, as it will make available to moviemaker's ethnographic research, historical archives, and cultural heritage resources. Such measures would enhance realistic images and

enhance the role of cinema in promoting national unity and cordial relations among the different cultural communities in Pakistan.

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