



## From an 'Imagined Landscape' to Iconic Destination: Bollywood Film and Its Impact on Tourism

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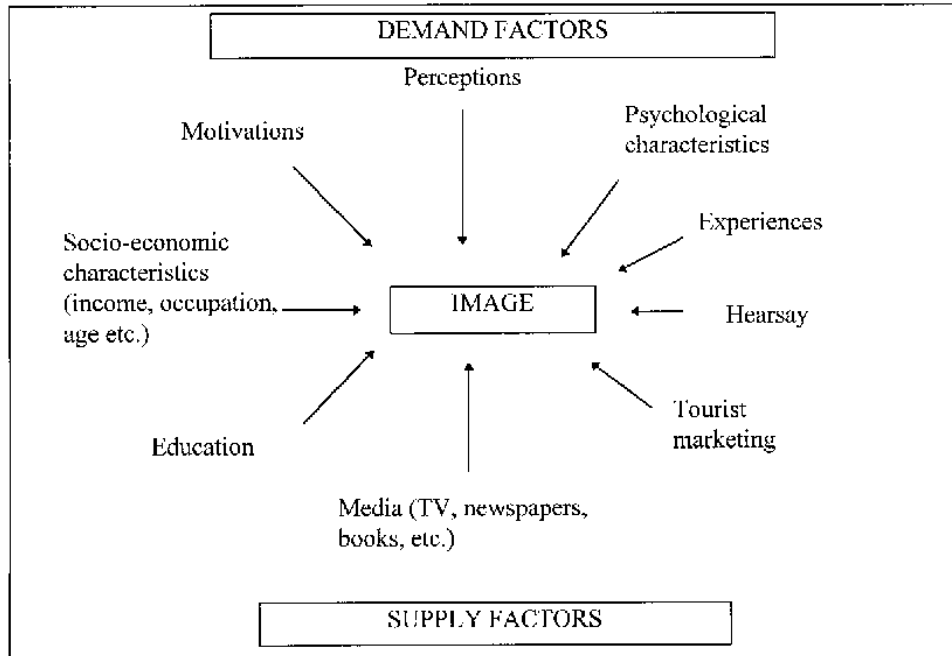
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**ABSTRACT:** Tourism destinations are a product of the 'brand personality' of the space and depend on the cultural influence and collective consciousness. The tourists look for the emotional connection with the destination and re-imagine the self as part of larger community. Thus people's choice of travelling gets influenced by the representation of the landscape on the screen enveloped in symbolic connotation, narrative emotion and cultural nostalgia. Being one of the biggest film industries all over the world Bollywood, has its own impact over the audience of India and also cater to the global market with specific agenda. The constant construction, reconstruction and representation of space in Bollywood films through its production promote ideology of consumption. With its ever growing market Bollywood film makes an impact over Indian Diaspora. The search for root and identity inspire the NRIs to travel back to the 'Homeland'. Their journey back to new modern India is a voyage from West to East, Modern to Tradition, 'Others' to 'Self'. Each space on screen put forward interpretations, specific to the character, local and identity. Travelling to a geographical landscape gets attached with the process of self discovery. The onscreen emotion engages in a conversation with the off screen domain as tourist destination. The Bollywood stars become the face of tourism industry. This paper critically examines the impact of film on tourism. How the Bollywood promotes tourism, plays a huge role in constructing the collective identity and influence the economic and social development.

**KEYWORD:** Bollywood Film, Cinematic landscapes, Space and identity, Tourism, Travel Industry.

### INTRODUCTION

Branding provide any product an identity within the marketplace. Destination Branding is now an integral part of tourism industry. The concept of branding highly connected with the process of marketing, placing and mapping. If the internal branding is about creating lucrative environment and brand development in relation to collective pride and identity, the external branding build up brand values and meets goals and objectives (Hall, 2010). Different sources influence the market value of the product. The influence over destination branding can be solely commercial or may have an indirect influence as cultural diligence. The concept of destination image is complex and according to Lawson and Baud Bovy 'image' has two categories; individual and stereotypical (Lawson, 1977). The key factors are "expression of real knowledge, impressions, prejudices, imagination and emotional feelings that an individual or a group has of a specific place." Many theorists and researchers have different opinion on that. Stabler has explained the factors that influence the development of the image, can be divided into supply and demand. Demand factors are supported by organic information (TV, books, word of mouth, school) as in the case of tourism destinations (Stabler, 1988).



Factors influencing the formation of consumers' tourist image (source: Stabler, 1988).

Capriotti addressed three theoretical aspects of brand image construction - 1) The image as fiction 2) The image as an icon 3) The image as an attitude (Capriotti, 1992). The first one deals with a construction of the image which is extension of consumer's mental image and not necessarily correspond the reality. The second attribute is more of an iconic representation of an object, when the third one is a projection of an attitude determined by cognitive dimension, affective dimension and behavioral dimension (Lopes, 2011). Furthermore, Bollywood Films plays a crucial role for authenticating the image construction of any destination in India, based on the three theoretical aspect of brand image construction proposed by Capriotti.

**History of Cinematic Construction of Space**

The concept of 'space' is very problematic in Indian cinema. Gardiès explains in *L'espace au cinéma* (1993) the association of four various kinds of 'space' linked to Cinema. Those are mainly Cinematographic Space, Diegetic Space, Narrative Space and Viewer Space (Levy, 2013). The last two are essential parameters of construction of space as a world which is autonomous though has an emotional impact on audience. While the narrative space deals with the relationship of the on screen character with specific space ("giving substance to the story in which they are involved"), the viewer space works on the layer of Communication, reception and interpretation.

In Indian cinema, from its inception, the representation of geographic or conceptual enclosure is the reflection of the collective imagination backed by the ideological agenda with distinct social & political dimension. After independence the nationalist ideology reflected on the screen where the village is imagined as the more secure and pure space for the citizen of India. Films like *Mother India* (1955) upheld the promise of Nation Building project and the mother became the icon for the nation. The mother, a righteous citizen who is the symbol of chastity, culture and tradition perceives her 'Home' as sacred and ready to sacrifice to conserve its honor. The landscape of the village was highlighted throughout the film with a psychic projection of 'domain of sovereignty', becomes a symbol of 'innate core of Indianness' (Chatterjee, 1993).

However we can see a different scenario in films from later period. The dialectical urban landscape introduced the 'Culture of Modern' preserving the traits of transition. The 'real city' coexisted with 'cinematic city' on the onscreen space 'driven by subjective and psychic projection'. (Virdi, 2004) Streets in Bombay Cinema became a space for the community with the elements of injustice, revenge, freedom, romance and death. Gradually the signs and symbols of cityscape led to a convergence of all urban subjectivity,



certain lifestyle and projection of modernity on screen. 1950 to 1970 is the period witnessed the growth in Tourism all over the world. While in India an emphasis was on basic development and infrastructure to endorse tourism as part of five years economic plan. Along with that the major cities of India turn out to be the popular tourist places, following the imagery presence on the filmic space.

In the later period, the territorial space of village is inhabited by the old crippled feudal lord and lunatic dacoits (Sholay, 1975). Yet at the same time the space 'Ramgarh' becomes the symbol of honor, justice, rebellion and order. Ramnagar is a village near Bangalore which was given the screen name of 'Ramgarh' in the film. The landscape of the real village was refurbished during the shooting of the film. Gradually the spot became a popular tourist spot and a phenomenon. Thus these prove the collective imagination of the nation about space and on the other hand it also proves that how reel persuade the real. (Mukherjee, 2014) Even the glimpses of multi dimensional landscape of Kashmir increased the importance of the place both as tourist destination and also as the shooting location (Kashmir Ki Kali - 1964, Bobby - 1973). It is also interesting how the Indian audience was introduced to the exotic global destinations through film like Sangam (1964), Love in Tokyo (1966), An Evening in Paris (1967), and Silsila (1981). In these films we can see the renovation of landscape as the 'Couple's Space' with a ban on Private. The foreign locations propagated the exclusivity of the Indian Culture and it was expected the characters will remain within moral codes (Prasad, 1998). The 'Indian touch' eased the anxiety concerning the unknown on the foreign land. The use of lighter camera and color encouraged stepping more outside the indoor and glimpses of remarkable landscape provoked the audience to indulge into romancing with the idea of travel. Cinematic representation actually convinced audiences to travel around the places shown in films and thus the cinematic becomes subjective.

### Going Global: The Diaspora & Home Coming

During 90s, Indian cinema witnessed a new era. When India was literally getting exposed to the concept of Globalization, the similar wave impacted on different media especially on Film and Television. Indian Diaspora and Globalization are entangled since the very beginning of 1990s which reflected in many policies taken by Indian government. To be very specific these new economic reforms institutionalized and established the new relationship with the Home Land and recognized them as NRI (Non-Resident Indians) or PIO (People of Indian Origin). On the other hand for Indian Government the new relationship became "source of foreign exchange, investment and entrepreneurial activities (Voigt-Graf, March 2005)". The term 'Diaspora' is related with the concept of uprooting and attachment. Derived from the Greek word 'Disperse', Diaspora points out towards the geographical displacement. But gradually it contained more cultural discourses like an ethnic community settling down to a country with a nostalgic feeling or attachment to their home land. With a similar approach the global concept of 'Indianness' among the NRIs emerged with specific economic goal infecting the route of migration, globalization, media and government policies (Boyle, 2009).

Indian Cinema was no exception. According to Ashish Rajadhyaksha the "Bollywoodization" of Hindi Cinema or to be very specific Mumbai Film Industry points out towards a redefined Cultural connotation with new consumerist attitude and backed by globalization, liberalization of market, growth of IT/ITES and privatization. Also it is interesting that instead of becoming a simulation of Hollywood, Bollywood films went global with Indian touch and the audience expected complex and comprehensive connection of the global and local (Rajadhyaksha, Dec, 2010). By 1990s the Indian audience witnessed the total corporatization of the Mumbai Film industry with new marketing strategies and promotion through mobile phone ring tones to websites, commercials, off screen campaigns by the stars etc. The consumerist culture left its own impression on the representation itself. The cinematic plot revolved around alternative lifestyle of wealthy Indians living in the west with "hugely extravagant interiors, lavish jewelry, designer clothes, shopping at malls, eating and drinking out at clubs and bars, and engaging in expensive sports such as skiing, water-gliding, and motor racing" (Rao, 2010). This change in cinematic representation and perception influenced both the decision making and the parameter of experience for potential tourists as space transformed into the container for consumerist dream, epitome of Indian value and restored identity. Hollinshead commented on the future of 'Diaspora tourism' – "Tourism will not only regularly re-make and de-make old diasporas, it will quite frequently be one of, or the principal communicative vehicle by which all sorts of new diasporas and neo-tribal groups seek to reveal and legitimize themselves" (Hollinshead, 2004).

Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge was released in 1995 and this film is one of the specific examples which redefined the narrative landscape. The journey of Raj and Simran's romance revolves around different space signifying different characteristic, emotion



and conflicts. Starting from London, then Switzerland and ending at the village of Punjab, it becomes a journey of rediscovering and delineating self and nation. London is represented as the space dominated with westernization and the quest for identity in the foreign land. The enormous landscape of Switzerland becomes a symbol of modern world, a space for 'Couple', with no interference from the authority or the father figure. Whereas, other part of the story is in the backdrop of the vast mustard field and ancestral home in a village of Punjab establishes homecoming, nostalgia, Indianness, Tradition and family values. After DDLG, films like *Pardes* (1997), *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998), *Kaho Naa ....Pyaar Hai* (2000), *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (2001), *Kal Ho Na Ho* (2003), *Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna* (2006), *Krrish* (2006), *Namastey London* (2007) followed the similar trend and helped in remapping the tourism industry.

According to the report from Ministry of Tourism

“During the period of the survey, viz, January to December 2003, 16,64,817 NRIs departed from India through various exit points. The highest numbers were recorded from U.K. (11.20%), followed by U.S.A. (9.67%), Canada (9.27%), Sri Lanka (9.13%), U.A.E. (7.22%) and Sudan (5.01%) being the countries with more than 5% share”. (Ministry of Tourism, 2003)

So the Indian Diaspora obviously became the potential market for Bollywood, with a huge audience base nearly of 3.2 billion people from all over the world. Even among the whole population 2 millions are from Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin in UK and in United States with 1.7 million Indians. According to various researches the revenue earned from NRI market is setting new benchmark every year. Even we can see many award shows are hosted in different parts of the world especially in the countries with huge Indian origin residents like UK, Dubai, Amsterdam, Singapore, South Africa, Malaysia etc. The Diasporic population reconnects with the origin through the symbolic Indianness in the screen. This detour to Indian origin establishes a renewed relationship between moving images and deterritorialized viewers. The cinematic Homecoming symbolizes a journey from western modern professional space to the world of purity and honesty with significant global identity. The global market witnesses the new 'India' ready to be explored. In the meanwhile the gorgeous foreign landscape on the screen becomes the next holiday destination for Indian citizens. Most of the big budget and blockbuster films are shot in the destinations like Dubai, Singapore, Thailand, South Africa, UK, Spain, Ireland and New Zealand. So these countries are elated with a good deal of revenues in the pocket and trying for the next step of destination promotion. Added to this many Bollywood stars promotes tourism of different countries and are associated as brand ambassador. Some of the names are:

Name of the Stars	Endorsing the tourism of
Shah Rukh Khan	Dubai Tourism
Ranveer Singh	Switzerland
Parineeti Chopra	Australia
Yami Gautam	Hong Kong Tourism
Ileana D'Cruz	Fiji
Sidharth Malhotra	New Zealand

The involvement of the Bollywood stars in the tourism industry is resulting into higher footfall of the tourists in respective lands. As for Switzerland it is observed a 30% increase in application of Visa where for New Zealand surge in the number of Indian traveler. The success of the film *Kaho na Pyaar Hain* compelled them to expand the immigration counter from 500 sq.ft. to 5000 sq.ft. due to rise in the numbers of visitors. The similar kind of narrative is there for Dubai with a tie up with the icon Shah Rukh Khan with 2.1 million visitors from India. (Vhora, 2018)



## Changing Horizon, Rediscovering Self: India and the World

In recent times the shift in ideology is prominent in Bollywood films. The new era films are the films for the millennial and it is interesting how films as a medium interact between socio-economic aspect and the cultural sphere of globalization. These films underline a transgression from traditional codes and value to a multi-nationalized consumerist world with reordering old value system. To be very specific, one may observe the conflict of placing the 'Self' in the cinematic context. These films points out to a journey of the archetype and the saga of rediscovering self in different spaces in different shapes and lights. Psychologist Carl Jung explains that the archetypes are actually the reflection of the "collective unconscious". Since these archetype characters like the Hero or the antagonist or the Wise man are extension of the cultural construct and reflection of human mind, it seems more convincing to the individual as real. Following the similar context, Joseph John Campbell identifies pattern of Hero's Journey in mythology and how it is told and retold again and again in various forms. Based on Campbell's theory Christopher Vogler identifies 12 stages of Hero's Journey, generally observed in cinema.

Zindegi Na Milegi Dobara (2011) is the perfect example of the new age hero's voyage where we can easily identify Vogler's stages of Hero's Journey (Voytilla, 1999). It is not only a story of three friends on a road trip but also a journey of rediscovering 'Self'. Zoya Akhtar infuses this heroic saga with framing glamorized European landscape along with the concept of 'Global' culture of late capitalist era. Thus, all these leads to the horizon of travel meet pleasure. The film increased outbound tourism to Spain from India by 32 per cent in 2011. Interestingly in the website of SOTC this film appears as an example of travel packages to Spain (SOTC). It becomes a symbol for "A lifestyle full of Adrenaline Rush" as the tagline of the adventure partner Mountain Dew is "Dar ke age jeet hai". Along with that numerous instances are available on several online platforms where the user enquires about the travel package cost and Itinerary for the similar trip of Zindegi Na Milegi Dobara. Other films like Yeh Jawani Hai Deewani, Dil Dhadakne Do, Jab Harry Met Sejal, Cocktail and Tamasha, are the perfect examples of the influence cinema has on people's travel choices; be it outbound or inbound destinations, backpacking to adventure tour, destination marriage to Mediterranean cruise trips. Even film like Salam Namaste (2005) not only popularizes the Australia as holiday destination but also promote the space as an epitome of urban metropolitan consumerist lifestyle.

On the other hand these films not only romanticize the exotic overseas background but also romanticize traveling to the land where the individual is free from the ethical burden. Also, the expedition to the 'Other' land refers to get away from the contradiction of the usual life at 'Home' and a desire to 'construct an alternative' following the quest for an 'authentic self' in the striking scenery of Corsica or the picturesque of Manali. (Cohen, 2010) Imtiaz Ali's Tamasha and Jab We Met dwells on the concept of searching for 'true' inner self and unexplored emotion that has been defeated by the mechanical order. In the similar line, these films deals with the idea of reappearing back to the daily life and re-positioning self into the order. Thus this metamorphic journey inspires people to set off on a trip to these places. Whereas in the film like Hum Tum (2004) and Love Aaj Kal (2009) depicts travel as a allegory to the journey of life, a plot with Chaos, Catharsis and Conclusion. Imtiaz Ali explains his thought on representation of travel in his film as

"I feel places leave an indelible impression on people. It can change you forever. As a filmmaker, I'm glad to have shot in offbeat locations, and that has given a fillip to smaller and more interesting places. After we shot Rockstar in Prague, the Czech Republic said the number of Indian tourists shot up. Somebody started a Jab We Met bus tour in Manali." (Ansari, 2017)

## CONCLUSION

In this paper I have tried to evaluate the influence of cinema on the market of tourism industry as researches help us to understand that people gets attracted to the locations that they experience through cinematic representation. The locations which dominate the screen also rule the 'psychological scapes' and influence the buyers' decisions. Though the relationship of Hindi cinema and the tourism industry is old, only change is the change of equation over the year. It is evident that films are proven to be more powerful and credible tool to convince potential tourists with durable effect and can easily reach out to larger base of millions of follower. People not only identify with the on screen characters but also shares an emotional connection with the spaces. The tourist destinations become a commodity and a domain of collective fantasy. Thus many countries around the world try to attract the Indian Film Makers to use their territory as location. Salaam Namaste (2005) is known to be the first Bollywood film to be entirely shot in



Australia. State tourism commissions of Australia considered the film *Salaam Namaste*, potential of 'destination branding' that would help to pull the business investments as well as travelers to Australia and contributed an amount of A\$10,000 to the film. The central characters in this film played by Pretty Zinta and Saif Ali Khan are students travelling to Australia are an ideal illustration as by 2016 India becomes the "Second-largest source country for international student enrollment in Australia". Even the renowned director Yash Chopra was honored by Swiss Government for promoting Switzerland as destination of dream through his films. In May, 2016 a statue was installed and in 2011, a train was named after him followed by titled as the Ambassador of Interlaken (Correspondent, 2017). For *Salaam Namaste* Tourism Victoria made sure to shoot on some of the specific location that will attract Indian tourists. In this similar line generally film shows the montage of different tourist spots. *Jab We Met* captures some of the most lush and picturesque North-Indian destinations as such Rohtang pass and roads towards Kelong and Ladakh. Malayalam Film 'Veetilekkulla Vazhi' (The Way Home: 2011) is a visual delight and becomes a travelogue with glimpses from the locations of Jaisalmer, Ajmer, Jodhpur, Delhi and Ladakh. The locations transforms into characters. The real locations becomes the inhabited space of the icons like Raj and Simran (Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge), Geet (*Jab We Met*), Daljeet 'DJ' (Rang De Basanti), Jordan (Rockstar), Riya and Karan (Hum Tum). The remarkable landscapes transformed into ideal travel destinations backed by collective imagination. Even this leads to the possibilities of preservation of local and unfamiliar landscape popularize by Bollywood films – Wai (Swades), Kunariya and Kotay (Lagaan), Tikamgarh, Khurai (Peepli Live), Ramanagara (Sholey) etc. These locations turn into visual spectacles, which perfectly match with the concept of modern tourism. It creates illusion of reality and manipulates consumer's behavior. People crave to be part of the 'imagined landscape'. Cinema turns out to be the traveler's guiding star, reshaping and repositioning over the years with changing horizon.

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