Muslim Representations in Tamil Cinema

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Abstract

When the rightwing thoughts and ideologies gets deepened in the many minds of a country which has diversified culture, then the idea of pointing out 'who is and who is not' belong to that country grows wider (Cottle 2006; Modood 1992, 2003, 2005). Hindutva ideology of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its political wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have set a new definition for "Us" and "Them" and cultural boundaries for people in terms of Indian nationhood. People with rightwing ideologies try to connect them with nationhood, and try to detach the other sects of people especially minorities from the nationhood and patriotism. RSS, BJP and its fringes have projected a perception to the people that the protection of new cultural boundaries of the Hindu nation from alien intrusion is the necessity of new India. Here, the term alien and non-Hindu "Them" categorically represent Muslims who is being outside its geo-cultural boundaries (Kumar, 2013). To make it possible and to cultivate the same in the society need for media representation comes in there (Nadadur, A., 2006). To accomplish their cultural agenda of portraying Muslims as threat and enemy to their Hindu nation, RSS and BJP has effectively used national media and Bollywood film industry by fabricating disjunctive images of Muslims and misrepresenting them as anti-national. This article will examine the nature of portrayal and hence representation of Muslims in Tamil cinema because Tamil popular cinemas are politically and ideologically loaded. Since Tamil cinema has become part and parcel of Tamil people life, it is the need of the day to study whether Tamil cinema industry is also in the grip of tentacles of RSS and BJP.
Keywords: *Islam, Muslims, Terrorism, Patriotism, Radical groups*

Introduction

A society is a political space where some intended associations look for chances to frame a set of rules to govern and control social life. These associations concentrate on formal rules and demand some social orders. Intended associations of any type for instance religion deliberately try to shape and reshape rules to govern their existing society (Qamaruddin, M., 1985). Religion is one of the major concerns of man and influence of religious dogma has become irresistible in man's life. Religious faiths and customs are far from being uniform. But religions in common force us to think the other religion as a fake one and the followers of other religion will be in hell in their eternal life. These kind of religious attitudes divide people, make them to believe that their religion is

superior. Also it has become the guiding and controlling power in political movements, education, economics, and in day to day life practices. As a result of this, they even try to impose their religious dominance on others which lead to conflicts.

Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Jainism, Parsi are the major religions of India. The unique feature of India is Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs, etc., all lives in close proximity. But after the 1947 partition, the conflict between India and Pakistan increased because of religious identities of Hindus and Muslims. The communal tension in India was inherited by the newly created states. After the 70 years of separation, the dispute and the conflicts has not subsided. This enmity has an additional dimension within India i.e., allowing

religious prejudice against Muslims and over the decades the prejudicial trends have become more pronounced. It is the major cause for every kind of religious unrest situations and communal conflict which has become a common feature of India. India has changed significantly in all its spheres in the past decades and that has to do with its national ideologies. Since the Hindus are in an overwhelming majority, Muslims are somewhat marginalized and discriminated (H.A. Gani, 1978).

In recent years a generalized notion we likely to hear about Muslims from the common people is "All Muslims are not terrorists but all the terrorists are Muslims". Muslims of Indian sub-continent especially southern India has rich history for about 1400 years. Yet they were labelled as 'others', disloyal, anti-socials, fundamentalists, terrorists etc. by rightwing ideologists. When the rightwing thoughts, beliefs and ideologies gets deepened in the many minds of a country which has diversified culture, then the idea of pointing out 'who is and who is not' belong to that country grows wider (Cottle 2006; Modood 1992, 2003, 2005). Not all the majoritarian but people with rightwing ideas tries to connect them with nationhood, patriotism and hence nationalism. Also they try to detach the other sects of people especially minorities from the nationhood and patriotism (Nadadur, A.' 2006). To make it possible and to cultivate the same in the society need for media representation comes in there. In many respects, the media representation of minority groups is a 'double-edged sword'. First, it marginalizes minority voices, thus, they are virtually ignored or invisible (Saeed, 1999). Simultaneously, the actual representation of minority groups is often construed in negative discourses (Hartmann and Husband, 1974). When these frameworks are applied to audiences who have little social contact with minority groups, the role of the media as sole provider or primary definer (Hall, 1978) becomes crucial (Van Dijk 1991). Cottle argues that the media hold a powerful position in articulating, conveying and explaining specific discourses that help represent (and misrepresent) minority groups (Cottle 2000, 2006). Srividya Ramasubramanian quotes Mitra's statement that our understanding about other religion, their culture and values are often recollected by our memory which we had received through mediated visual information (Mitra, 1999). Mass media especially film, television and New media because of their transnational nature have easily penetrated in the minds of mass regardless of their boundaries, and emerged as a compelling weapon.

Media and Muslims

Social scientists say that every war begins, thrives and ends with Media. From the beginning, every aspect of media is being used as a potent weapon to construct and reshape people's perception. The concept of construction of social reality is about how the individuals perceive their world and make sense of it. In short, the world what we see is sculpt by the media. The process by which the media interpret and construct the world or external reality for us is called representation (Rajasekhar, S., & Venkataraghavan, M., 2020).

"What they (media) exercise is the power to represent the world in certain definite ways. And because there are many different and conflicting ways in which the meaning about the world can be constructed, it matters profoundly what and who gets represented, who and what regularly and routinely gets left out; and how things, people, events, relationships are represented. What we know of society depends on how things are represented to us and that knowledge in turn informs what we do and what policies we are prepared to accept", (Miller 2002,). The above statement by Miller gives us a clear picture about the role of media in representation of certain groups and what kind of effect may occur if one regularly and routinely gets left out in media. The media play a large part in the formation of positive and negative images and self-images of minorities.

The perception of people about Islam and Muslims across the world is pathetic because nowadays media plays a very important and undeniable role in constructing hatred towards Muslims (Poole, 2000). People perceive and started to believe that Islam and Muslims not as peaceful or humble, but full of violence and barbaric (Patel S, 1999). Benn and Jawad write that the hostility towards Islam and Muslims are "closely linked to media portrayals of Islam as barbaric, irrational, primitive and sexist." (Benn and Jawad, 2004). Egorova and Tudor cite European

researches in suggesting that expressions used in the media such as "Islamic terrorism", "Islamic bombs" and "Violent Islam" have resulted in a negative perception of Islam (Egorva and Tudor, 2003). A recent survey by the Pew Foundation found more Americans distrustful of Islam than ever before. To them, Islam is not peace or humility, but it is violence and bloodshed. Audiences of western media as well as Asia are seeing "Muslims" as terrorist and killing the innocent people in the name of a religion on TV almost every day (Poole, 2000). In recent days, representations about Muslims are like, they are extremists, they sell and buy women like commodities and they fight and kill civilians in the name of Islam. This makes everyone to think bad about Islam & Muslims.

Silva (2017) in his article quoted Dunn and Shaheen statement that researchers have expressed their worrying concern that representations of Muslims in world media are often associated with violence and conflict, most notably terrorism (Dunn, 2001; Shaheen, 2009). Nurullah discuss that, this is not a new trend, Muslims are negativized by the worldly media, particularly since the events of 9/11 (Nurullah, 2010). In a country like India, when the leaders, people representatives and administrators of the government and government sectors are occupied by minds having rightwing thoughts, the media representations of religious minorities especially Muslim minority is obviously in negative tone (Nadadur, A., 2006). The discourse on Islam and Muslims in the Tamil media also is negative. Niaz Ahmed in his research titled "A study on the representation of Islam and Muslims in Tirunelveli edition of Tamil dailies", found that Tamil dailies represent Islam and Muslims in the negative way and overall they achieve the same negative result – the creation of otherness and hatred towards Islam and Muslims (Ahmed, N., 2016). And particularly in the analysis of social change and development, the role of cinema has been recognized as critical and moreover discussions are incomplete if we don't take into account the worries and concerns of the citizens about the role of cinema (Khan, M. A., & Bokhari, S. Z., 2011). If one idea prevails strongly in a society then it can be transmitted from one society to another through cinema. The images shown by the movies have certain imprints on the minds of the viewers (Ramasubramanian, S., 2005). Cinema's contribution in image making is inevitable. As cinema can develop the image, in the same way they can distort the image also. Role played by Cinema in the formation of positive and negative images and self-images of minorities is more significant.

After the tragic incident of Twin tower attack on 9/11, 2001 we can observe that the entire western world joined their hands to wage a war against terrorism. After that, Muslims regardless of age or gender are blamed as terrorists all over the world. The wave of picturing Muslims as terrorist, invaded the world almost at the same time. Since 1990s Indian films especially the Bollywood films portrayed Muslims as terrorists and negative minded people (Rajasekhar, S., & Venkataraghavan, M., 2020). Khan and Bokhari says that Bollywood film industry used "war against terrorism" banner efficiently and increased the frequency of portraying Muslims as terrorists in their films. Bollywood made plenty of movies in which Muslims are shown as bad people who are not faithful to their motherland and involved in fostering violence in Indian areas (Khan, M. A., & Bokhari, S. Z., 2011). The Hindu-Muslim hatred was increased after such films. As like Bollywood, Tamil Cinema Industry (Kollywood) also globally accredited. Though Muslims are second largest community in Tamil Nadu, frequency of appearance of Muslim characters in Tamil cinema is meagre. The gradual transformation in representing Muslims from good neighbour, tailors, and petti shop owners to negative representation in Tamil cinema started from the actor Kamal Hassan starred film "Vetri Vizha", released on the occasion of Deepavali festival on 28th October 1989. And the film Roja (1992) is first of its kind which deliberately portrayed practicing Muslims as terrorists.

Research Method and Analysis
Research Problem
Media text degrading Muslims started vigorously with strategic planning in all sorts of media. In the beginning of 90's Tamil film industry portrayed Muslims of neighbouring countries like mercenaries and terrorists. But after the demolition of Babri Masjid and the Coimbatore bomb blast, Tamil film industry gradually started to portray Indian

Muslims and Muslims of Tamil Nadu as goons, anti-social elements, rapists, mercenaries and eventually as terrorists who kills innocent people in the name of religion. Then the second steep inclination in the degradation of Muslims through Media text felt after the tragic incident of WTC attack on 9/11 not only in Tamil Nadu, India but all over the world. This trend has grown because of specific government agenda aimed at achieving political ends from entertainment industry (Nadadur, A., 2006). Researcher here identified a problem that negative image and negative portrayal of Muslims in Tamil cinema would have increased after 9/11. So the researcher confined his research to examine whether the negative images of Muslims in Tamil cinema increased post 9/11 or not. Because, since Tamil popular cinemas are politically and ideologically loaded and has become part and parcel of Tamil people life it cannot be separated from the life and culture of the Tamil society (Jesudoss, 2009). So, it is the need of the day to study whether Tamil cinema industry is also in the grip of tentacles of RSS and BJP.

Methodology

Meanings are the heart of any communication. How we perceive something is the base for meaning making. Meaning making is not "transmitted" to us, instead we actively create it according to a complex interplay of codes or conventions of which we are normally unaware. We the human beings generate meaning by recognizing patterns of information and organize them to interpret. The meaning what we make out of those signs are from which we have perceived in the past or even things that we can merely imagine by combining memories, things that might be in the past or future experience. Each and every shot of a film have underlying meanings. Deconstructing and decoding the hidden messages of signs can reveal whose realities are privileged and whose are suppressed. Content analysis is an efficient method to investigate the content or text disseminated through the media. Walizer and Wienir (1978) define content analysis as any systematic procedure devised to examine the content of recorded information. So, content analysis methodology will be the apt method for carrying out this research systematically.

The aim of this research is to scientifically analyze the messages concealed within the "signs and symbols" presented in a scene or sequence with a Muslim representation and hence the portrayals of Muslims in Tamil cinema post 9/11. The following objectives, research questions and hypotheses are set to do systematic study:

Objectives

1. To examine the nature of portrayals of Muslim characters in Tamil Cinema.
2. To find whether the Tamil Cinema portrays the Muslims with stereotype images?
3. To find what extent the Tamil Cinema is unbiased in presenting Muslim characters?
4. To find what are the new terminologies and trends used to distort the images of Muslims?
5. To find whether the Tamil Cinema portraying only cross-border terrorism or the Tamil Nadu Muslims are also getting yield to the fundamentalism and terrorism concept?

Research Questions

1. How Tamil cinema presenting and distorting the images of Muslims?
2. Are Muslims being portrayed as terrorists killing innocent people in the name of religion?

Hypothesis

- H1. Portrayal of Muslims in Tamil Cinema is more negative than positive.
- H2. The negative portrayal of Muslims in Tamil cinema has tremendously increased after 9/11.

The following 4 films from 20 films with Muslim representations in it have purposely been chosen which were released between 2002 and 2016. The following cinemas were chosen based on three factors: (1) Mass heroes acted cinemas (2) Presence of Muslim Characters and (3) Popularity of the movie

1. Daas – Actor Jeyam Ravi (2005)
2. Velayutham – Actor Vijay (2011)
3. Thuppaki – Actor Vijay (2012)
4. Vaanam – Actor Prakash Raj, Silambarasan and Bharath (2011)

The content, characterization, costume and appearance, location, set properties and artifacts,

dialogues, lighting, Camera movements, music and all the other diegetic & non-diegetic sounds used in each and every scene / sequence of the above mentioned films are considered as variables and will be analyzed for quantitative data. A Scene is a division of the feature film that presented continuous action in one place or a single unit of dialogue taking place in the context of the film. Similarly, a sequence in a film means it is a series of scenes that form a distinct narrative unit, which is usually connected either by a unity of location or a unity of time. To some extent, qualitative method will also be used to infer the extent of negative portrayals of Muslims in the Tamil cinema. In order to carry out scientific and systematic analysis, the researcher also made following 10 content categories as variables:

1. Characterization
2. Costume/Appearance
3. Locations / Set properties / Artifacts
4. Lighting and Camera movements
5. BGM and scoring
6. Dialogues/Body Language
7. Religious practices
8. Patriotism
9. Profession
10. Subliminal message.

The objective behind this study is to discover the slant of the content or text appeared in the selected Tamil cinema. The term slant refers to the standpoint taken in the film. The researcher divided the slant into three categories; Favourable, Unfavourable and Neutral. Sometimes a scene or sequence may or may not have all the 10 categories. Considering this, the researcher decided to use "A" for absence of any of the content category in the scene or sequence along with the three slants favourable, unfavourable and neutral. Wherever we see "A" in the coding it means null (absence of character and/or the other variables) and it will help us to find which variable is left regularly in the films while quantifying the data.
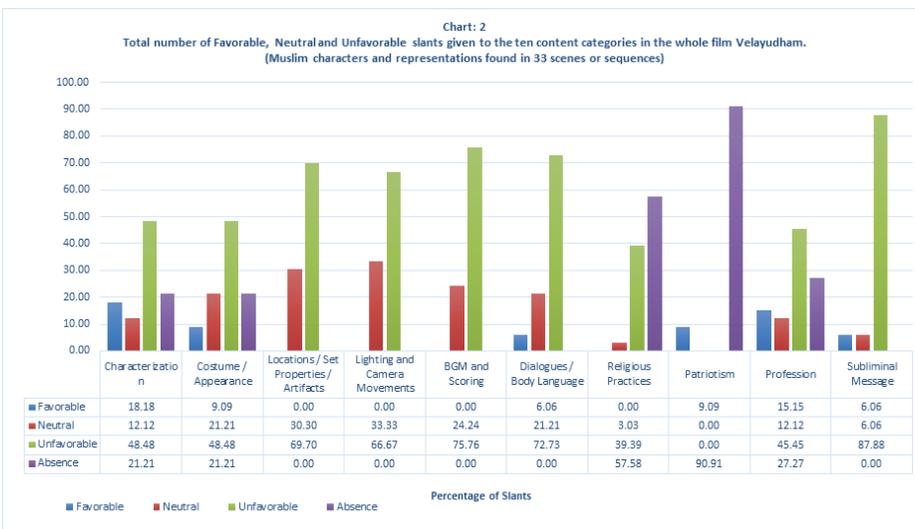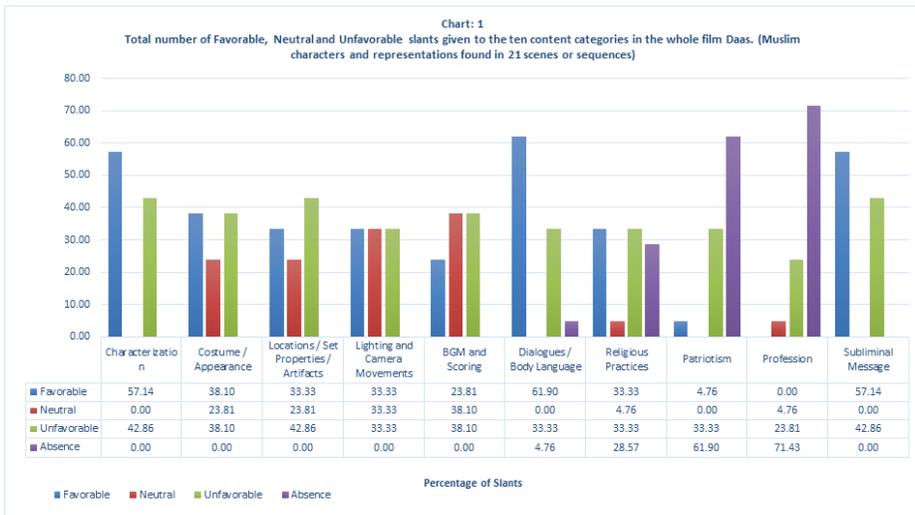
Data Analysis

Table 1 Consolidated Table Representing Total Number of Favorable, Neutral, Unfavorable and Absence Slants for the Ten Content Categories in all the Four Films

| Films | Slants | Content Categories | | | | | | | | | | Total % |
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Dass	% of Favourable	57.14	38.10	33.33	33.33	23.80	61.90	33.33	4.76	0	57.14	**34.29**
	% of Neutral	0.00	23.81	23.81	33.33	38.1	0	4.77	0	4.76	0	**12.86**
	% of Un-favourable	42.86	38.10	42.86	33.34	38.1	33.34	33.33	33.34	23.81	42.86	**36.19**
	% of Absence	0	0	0	0	0	4.76	28.57	61.9	71.43	0	**16.67**
Velayudham	% of Favourable	18.18	9.09	0	0	0	6.06	0	9.09	15.15	6.06	**6.36**
	% of Neutral	12.12	21.21	30.3	33.33	24.24	21.21	3.03	0	12.12	6.06	**16.36**
	% of Un-favourable	48.49	48.49	69.7	66.67	75.76	72.73	39.39	0	45.46	87.88	**55.45**
	% of Absence	21.21	21.21	0	0	0	0	57.58	90.91	27.27	0	**21.82**
Vaanam	% of Favourable	58.82	52.94	17.65	17.65	17.65	35.29	52.94	17.65	0	11.76	**28.24**
	% of Neutral	0	17.65	35.29	29.41	5.88	17.65	0	0	0	11.76	**11.76**
	% of Un-favourable	41.18	29.41	47.06	52.94	70.59	47.06	41.18	35.29	47.06	70.6	**48.24**
	% of Absence	0	0	0	0	5.88	0	5.88	47.06	52.94	5.88	**11.76**

Thuppakki	% of Favourable	5	5	2.5	2.5	2.5	0	5	5	5	5	**3.75**
	% of Neutral	0	10	52.5	52.5	20	0	0	0	0	0	**13.5**
	% of Un-favourable	55	45	45	45	72.5	90	10	0	62.5	95	**52**
	% of Absence	40	40	0	0	5	10	85	95	32.5	0	**30.75**

1. Characterization, 2. Costume and Appearance, 3. Locations/Set properties/Artifacts, 4. Lighting and Camera movements, 5. BGM and Scoring, 6. Dialogues and Body language, 7. Religious Practices, 8. Patriotism, 9. Profession, 10. Subliminal message

Chart: 1
Total number of Favorable, Neutral and Unfavorable slants given to the ten content categories in the whole film Daas. (Muslim characters and representations found in 21 scenes or sequences)

Chart: 2
Total number of Favorable, Neutral and Unfavorable slants given to the ten content categories in the whole film Velayudham. (Muslim characters and representations found in 33 scenes or sequences)

Chart: 3
Total number of Favorable, Neutral and Unfavorable slants given to the ten content categories in the whole film Vaanam. (Muslim characters and representations found in 17 scenes or sequences)

	Characterization	Costume / Appearance	Locations / Set Properties / Artifacts	Lighting and Camera Movements	BGM and Scoring	Dialogues / Body Language	Religious Practices	Patriotism	Profession	Subliminal Message
Favourable	58.82	52.94	17.65	17.65	17.65	35.29	52.94	17.65	0.00	11.76
Neutral	0.00	17.65	35.29	29.41	5.88	17.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	11.76
Unfavourable	41.18	29.41	47.06	52.94	70.59	47.06	41.18	35.29	47.06	70.59
Absence	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.88	0.00	5.88	47.06	52.94	5.88

Percentage of Slants

Chart : 4
Total number of Favorable, Neutral and Unfavorable slants given to the ten content categories in the whole film Thuppakki. (Muslim characters and representations found in 40 scenes or sequences)

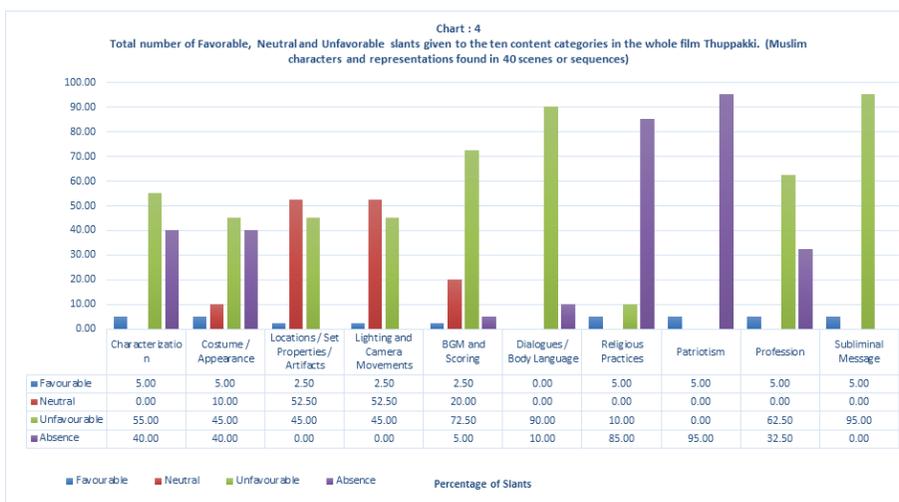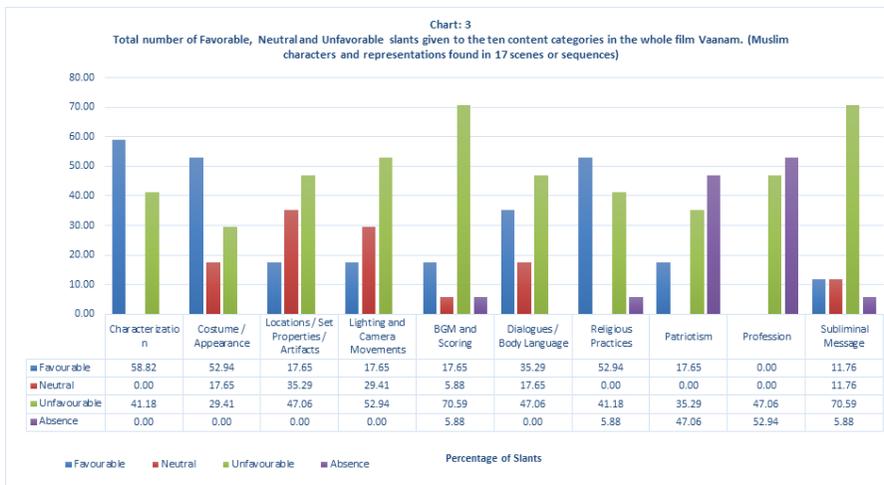|	Characterization	Costume / Appearance	Locations / Set Properties / Artifacts	Lighting and Camera Movements	BGM and Scoring	Dialogues / Body Language	Religious Practices	Patriotism	Profession	Subliminal Message
Favourable	5.00	5.00	2.50	2.50	2.50	0.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Neutral	0.00	10.00	52.50	52.50	20.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Unfavourable	55.00	45.00	45.00	45.00	72.50	90.00	10.00	0.00	62.50	95.00
Absence	40.00	40.00	0.00	0.00	5.00	10.00	85.00	95.00	32.50	0.00

Percentage of Slants

Table 2 Percentage of Favourable, Neutral, Unfavourable and Absence Slants in all the Four Films

Films	% of Favourable Slant	% of Neutral Slant	% of Unfavourable Slant	% of Absence
Dass	34.29	12.86	36.19	16.66
Velayudham	6.36	16.36	55.45	21.83
Vaanam	28.24	11.76	48.24	11.76
Thuppaki	3.75	13.5	52	30.75
Total	72.64	54.48	191.88	81
Percentage	18.16	13.62	47.97	20.25

Table: 3 Percentage of Slants for the Content Categories Patriotism and Profession in all the Four Films

Films	% of Favourable Slant		% of Neutral Slant		% of Unfavourable Slant		% of Absence	
	Patriotism	Profession	Patrio tism	Profession	Patriotism	Profession	Patriotism	Profession
Dass	4.76	0.00	4.77	4.76	33.34	23.81	61.9	71.43
Velayudham	9.09	15.15	3.03	12.12	0	45.46	90.91	27.27
Vaanam	17.65	0	0	0	35.29	47.06	47.06	52.94
Thuppaki	5	5	0	0	0	62.5	95	32.5
Total	36.50	20.15	7.8	16.88	68.63	178.83	294.87	184.14
Percentage	9.125	5.0375	1.95	4.22	17.1575	44.7075	73.7175	46.035

Findings and Conclusion

From the analysis it is evident that the nature of portrayals of Islam and Muslims in Tamil cinema is more negative and stereotyped than the neutral and positive portrayal. Overall percentage of favourable slant is 18.16%, neutral is 13.62% but the percentage of negative and unfavourable slant is 47.97% and percentage of absence of some important content category is 20.25%. The percentage of absence holds the second position next to negative representation. This trend is also a kind of negative representation, because directors of the above mentioned films, has left out some important content categories like profession and patriotism for the positive Muslim characters. This negative representation or misrepresentation can be linked to the development of 'racism' namely Islamophobia, which has its roots in cultural representations of the 'other'.

The findings based on the research objectives are like: (1) Practicing Muslims of previous generations are good human, but the practicing Muslim of this current generation are not caring and loveable (2) A good Muslim of this current generation doesn't like to portray him as a practicing Muslims (3) If a Muslim starts to practice Islam well and make him/her to appear like a practicing Muslim, then gradually, knowingly or unknowingly he/she distance himself from other Non-Muslim friends. As a result of that changes the public may get suspicion whether he/she has any link with terrorist groups i.e. practicing Muslims of current generation are "*Jihadist*" (4) Another dangerous way of portrayals in the Tamil cinema is that any Muslim (in practicing Muslim appearance or don't exhibit any Muslim identity), whether an elderly old person, middle aged and a youngster can be a terrorist or a sleeper cell who might have connections with some Islamic radical groups (5) They use Arabic words like "*Nikkah*" and use new words to represent their kinships in their usual dialects (6) They say "*Assalamu Alaikum*" *(May the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon you)* even to their non-Muslim friends (7) At least one person in a Muslim family works in abroad (8) Some ladies in a Muslim family obsessed to cinema and TV serials (9) More members in a family (10) The Tamil cinema industry is also often portraying Muslims with stereotyped images, for instance, Islam is the only religion which preaches its followers "Muslims" to kill even innocent public in the name of Jihad. This kind of portrayal and representation is observed in all the analyzed four films. To uphold this negative portrayal, film directors used the pictures of "Mecca and Madina", the holy places of Muslims as wallpaper images in the laptop of negative Muslim characters. Also by using properties like Quran, backdrop with Quran verses, reciting Quran verses before beheading someone in-front of the video camera, wall posters with the words in English saying "Jihad is life and Shahadat is the real life", guns, weapons, ammunitions, India maps, etc., film directors tried to cultivate the belief that Muslims are the only people indulge themselves in the terrorism activities to kill innocent people (11) In all the analyzed four Tamil cinema, only one positive Muslim character (Asst. Commissioner of Police Feroz Khan characterization in the film Velayudham) is been represented as government official with decent role. The painful portrayal observed in the analysis is no specific professional identity is been given to any other positive Muslim characters. But when it comes for negative Muslim

characters, all of them are portrayed as well trained terrorists and a Muslim in IAS rank (Kamaruddin IAS character in the film Thuppakki) also portrayed as a traitor and who is ready to collapse the Indian defence system. Stereotypically portraying Muslims as terrorist may cultivate hatred towards Islam and Muslims in the society. But portraying a Muslim who is in high command position in the government as traitor to his own country, may create more impact in the society. This trend of portrayal will create obstacles for the Muslims who try to come up in the government sectors. (12) Since the Tamil Nadu is a state for Unity, Harmony and Peace, people belong to different religion, different languages and from various other state also have been settled in different districts of Tamil Nadu. As a result of this, diversified cultural practices are there within the same religion and Muslims are no exception for the same. This special feature of Tamil Nadu state sometimes creates confusion to people who are in art and creative industry. As discussed in the film Daas, film director of the cinema Vaanam, is also not very clear in representing Urdu speaking and Tamil speaking Muslims. Two reasons for this argument are (a) Muslim characters in Tamil Cinema are portrayed in a way that they don't pronounce/speak Tamil well and we can feel Urdu / Hindi influence in their usual dialects, but this is not true. (b) The character name of Prakash Raj, Rahimuddin Quraishi. The word "Quraishi" is an Arabic word represents a leading tribe of Mecca during the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (*Peace be upon Him*). Prophet's mother was a member of it. Usually Tamil speaking Muslims of Tamil Nadu don't have names like this.

The answer for the research objectives 3 & 4 are (a) 47.97% of contents in the analyzed four Tamil cinemas are in un-favourable and negative tone and (b) 20.25% shows the absence of some important content categories in the film text. The latter value of stance absence should also be consider as unfavourable tone in representing Muslims, because purposely avoiding, omitting or leaving Muslims in relation with the content category profession and patriotism in the Tamil films.

So, when the Tamil films regularly and routinely leaves back positive Muslim characters in relation with the content category profession and patriotism, it will helps the political party and other groups having right wing ideologies to alienate and exclude the Muslim society and it will be easy for them to blame Muslims that they are non-patriotic and against nations. Following are some examples for the trends and new terminologies used in Tamil cinema to distort the images of Muslims and how biased the Tamil cinemas are in representing Muslims: (a) The "Allah Pitcahi" characterization in the film Daas reinforces the thought to the Tamil audience that, at least one person in a Muslim family works abroad and return home once in a 3 or 5 years. During their vacation they search their wife only for having sex. (b) In the film "Vaanam" names of places used in the film are a mechanic shop near New College, near Triplicane Mosque and streets of Triplicane. Muslims especially Urdu speaking Muslims are living more in number in all these places. Using the names of real places in the films may cultivate a belief among the audience that any Muslim men or youngsters of those places can be a terrorist or a member of any radical groups. (c) In the cinema 'Velayudham' the location used in the first opening sequence portrays Afghan and Pakistan as terrorist manufacturing countries. Five ladies are also shown in that location as slaves there to do chores like cooking foods for them and other services for the militants. In recent years, through the media every audience know that the terrorist groups like Taliban, Al-Qaeda or ISIS captures women from other religions or places and uses them slaves. (d) Except the film "Daas", Film directors of "Velayudham", "Vaanam", and "Thuppakki" tried their best to cultivate hatred towards Islam and Muslims through Muzammil Ibrahim characterization in the cinema Velayudham, Nazir, Jaleel and Mansoor Khan Characterization in the cinema Vaanam and Jamal characterization in the cinema Thuppakki. (e) To cultivate more fear and hatred towards Islam and Muslims, film directors used same pattern of scenes or sequences. For instance, very cruel dialogues, actions like killing police constables, doctors, nurses, ladies, pregnant ladies, gents, kids and aged people are given to the lead negative Muslim characters. Also bomb blast sequences in public transport, in the restaurant or where more common people gather. Showing places like highly crowded market, mall, theatre, hospitals, public

transports, government offices, trains and other public service entities etc., are usual locations used by film directors for bomb blast sequence. (f) The other important biased representation of Islam and Muslims noticed in the film Vaanam is when the character Karpooram offers Lord Krishna idol to Doctor to save her, Doctor becomes emotional and agrees to give treatment and save her life. But immediately after this scene team members of Mansoor Khan coming there to rescue him and to execute their cruel inhuman plan of killing innocent people in the hospital. Director tried to inculcate the belief to the audience that Islam is the only religion preaches it's believers to kill innocent people in the name of God. (g) The directors of the film "Daas" and "Thuppakki" tried to show that the Muslim youngsters of this generation are planning their terror activities in their home itself. And to the maximum, in the film "Thuppakki", women members in the family of the terrorist leader Jamal also know about his activities. (h) Azahn is the call to Muslims for prayer which is been announced before the scheduled five times prayer. But in the film "Vaanam", Azahn sound included aftere the prayer. It shows the negligence as well as the ignorance of Non-Muslim film directors towards Islam and Muslims. (i) In the film Daas, Anwar's conversation with Razak conveys to the audience that "Bilal has got the contract for flower decoration and furniture arrangement for this political function, so you all can enter there without any problem". This negative portrayal may create an impression in the society that no one should give any contracts to the Muslims especially for government functions. (j) Politician "Ulaganathan" character in the film Velayudham confesses himself as a worst man. In his dialogue everyone can understand that he does women trafficking and sells them to Dubai, Yemen and Oman. All the three countries what he mentioned is a Muslim country. And the politician is also ready to kill any number of people but only for money. But the negative Muslim characters in the film Velayudham are killing innocent people only in the name of religion. (k) The words of the news reader convey a message to the audience that "so far North India was witnessing and experiencing the terrorist attacks, but now terrorist attacks and activities are increasing in Tamil Nadu also". It tries to impart a feel that the terrorists' infiltrations are becoming

common in Tamil Nadu also. Words of the news reader make the audience to believe that either terrorist from other countries infiltrating into Tamil Nadu or Muslims of India get trained by the terrorist groups. In the film "Thuppakki" also director tried to reinforce this belief among the audience through the dialogue of terrorist leader Jamal that "*Tamil konjam konjam theriyum ana Tamiliangala niraiya theriyum*" meaning "I know little Tamil to speak, but I know more Tamilians". We can decode many messages from this dialogue. From this dialogue we can interpret two messages, one is many Muslims of Tamil Nadu also have link to the terrorist organizations and acts like *sleeper cells* and the second point is many persons like Inba Sekaran from Tamil Nadu also there to help them. (l) Director of the film Velayudham is more biased in representing Muslims in negative tone that he consciously used the word rowdies to mention non-muslim anti-social elements, but used the word terrorists to use Muslim characters who indulge themselves in anti-social and inhuman activities.Also to reinforce the thought that the bomb blast has done by some terrorist group not by rowdies, a journalist asks question to the Assistant Commissioner of Police Mr. Feroz Khan as follows "சார் இந்த பாம்ப்ளாஸ்ட்க்கு எந்த இயக்கமாவது பொறுப் பேற்றிருக்கா?" (Sir, did any terrorist or radical organization take responsibility for this bomb blast?) By using the word "*Iyakkam*" (organization) it is obvious that the media is portraying some terrorist group. (m) Except the director of the film "Vaanam", directors of the other three films are more specific in not showing any Muslim victims in the bomb blast sequences. (n) And the other way of biased representation of Muslims in the film "Velayudham" is when the news reader says that most of the schools and colleges are declared holiday, film director showed only the institutions run by Christian managements. Here the director tried to construct that, most of the knowledge imparting institutions are run by Christian managements and he is very much specific on not to show any institutions run by Muslims and any Islamic structures. Because we can interpret that the bomb blasts will not takes place in a Mosque or in any Islamic structures instead the terrorist may target institutions,

temples and public places like railway stations, bus stand, shopping malls, markets, hospitals, parks, beach etc. That is why less people are shown in the locations like temples, parks and beach and police protection also given to these places. But film director is more specific in not to show any Muslims in the above mentioned locations.

And the last question given in the objectives is, "To find whether the Tamil Cinema portraying only cross-border terrorism or the Tamil Nadu Muslims are also getting yield to the fundamentalism and terrorism concept?" Answer to this question is directors of the analyzed four films tried to cultivate both the aspect that, terrorism related activities in India and in Tamil Naduis because of cross-border terrorism from the neighbouring countires and at the same time Muslims of Tamil Nadu are also getting yield to the fundamentalism, extremism and terrorism concepts. To authenticate this statement directors of the films "Daas" and "Vaanam", tried to construct a belief through the Anwar character of the film "Daas" and Nazir character of the film "Vaanam" as the victim of some religious riots took place in 1990s and because of that they had attached them with some Islamic radical groups and indulge themselves in terror activities to quench their anger towards the political system. A dialogue of Anwar during an argument about Jihad with his father and others, exemplifies the above said statement. Anwar characterization in the film Daas and Nazir, Mansoor Khan & Jaleel characterization in the film Vaanam tries to justify their inhuman act by saying its"Jihad". In the film "Daas" dialogues of Daas and in the film "Vaanam" dialogues of police officer generalizes whole Muslim community of Tamil Nadu as Terrorists.

From the above discussions, we can conclude the answers for the proposed two research question is, Yes, Tamil Cinema is distorting and presenting the negative images of Islam and hence Muslims. On the whole, 68.22% of the analyzed content elucidates us that the Tamil Cinema had distorted the images of Islam and Muslims, and regardless of age they are portrayed as terrorists and bad people. And the proposed hypotheses are also proved that the portrayals of images of Muslims in Tamil cinema are more negative than positive and the negative portrayal of Islam and Muslim in Tamil Cinema has tremendously increased post 9/11.

The gradual transformation in representing Muslims from good neighbour, tailors, and petti shop owners to negative representation started from the actor Kamal Hassan starred film "Vetri Vizha", released on the occasion of Deepavali festival on 28th October 1989. It was directed by Prathap K. Pothan and it was a block buster film in Kamal Hassan's acting career. In this film the name of the antagonist is "Zinda" and his appearance symbolizes him as a Muslim. Since then especially after the illegal demolition of Babri Masjid by the RSS karsevaks till 2001 approximately 20 films were released with Muslim representations. Some important film to be mentioned from the list is Roja (1992), I love India (1993), Airport (1993), Nethaji (1996), Ulavuthurai (1998), Uyire (1998), Kallazhagar (1999), Heyram (2000), Vallarasu (2000) and Narasimma (2001).

To be specific, directors of the above mentioned films portrayed Muslims of neighbouring country or of Kashmir as terrorists and as anti-social elements like mercenary or goons who do the terror activities for the sake of money. And moreover no film of this period has portrayed Muslim terrorists killing hundreds of innocent public in the name of religion; instead they indulge themselves in anti-social activities like killing some important political leader to bring political instability or to create chaos in the country. And most important thing to be noticed is no terrorists are portrayed as practicing Muslims except in the film Roja and Uyire. The films of these period distorted images of Muslims but not the images of Islam. Actor Vijayakanth of Tamil film industry popularly called as "Captain" for because in most of his films, he saves India from Pakistan terrorists. The other two popular actors who often portrayed Muslims as terrorists or as anti-social elements in Tamil films are actor Arjun Sarja and actor Sarath Kumar. We can see some transition in representing Islam and Tamil Nadu Muslims in the Tamil cinema after Coimbatore bomb blast which took place on 14th February 1998. But after the tragic incident of terror attack on Twin towers on 11th September 2001, in the name of "War on Terror", whole Indian film industry, especially in Tamil cinema industry also negative portrayal of Islam and Muslim has increased tremendously. Before 9/11 we can

notice negative representation of Tamil Nadu Muslims in Tamil cinema as goons, mercenaries and anti-social elements. But post 9/11 we can observe in Tamil cinema that, they started to demonize Islam as well, which helped the political agenda to accomplish the mission of isolating and secluding Muslims as terrorists from the Tamil society. The above findings and discussions authenticates that Tamil cinema industry is also in the grip of tentacles of RSS and BJP.

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