

## The Role of the Bollywood Entertainment Industry in the Destruction of the Muslim Family

Relaxation and enjoyment are highly sought elements in the material world of stress. The easiest access to entertainment is the 'TV' providing people with all sort of amusement at home, but containing content undermining Muslim family values. Even after the separation of Pakistan from India, cultural confusion remained, as Islam may have been the official religion of the new country, and of the majority of the people, but it never gained the status of a system of laws that was being implemented on the people. Marriages turned into big displays, and dowry is seen as the guarantee for a girl's happiness. Baby showers (godh bhara) have become a norm and widows are restricted to white clothes. Basant (spring festival) and Holi (colour festival) have been adopted as our very own cultural festivals. All this was never a part of Muslim culture but was first adopted by living directly with the Hindu population and later indirectly through films and plays.

The Indian film industry (Bollywood) has always depicted its view of Asian culture in a very colourful way, leaving a strong impact not only on the viewers' minds but on those who were working to develop a film/drama industry in Pakistan. Writers make up stories, and these are turned into dramas and films, which then become the dreams of millions of people. Bollywood never feels shy to steal a story from Hollywood, and so by the time we get a version in Pakistan it is already heavily loaded with both Hindu and Western cultural concepts. The famous film "The Godfather" was copied by both India and Pakistan, under the same name, whether its vulgar dresses, open mixing between men and women, demeaning humour, slavery to desires or feminism, everything is present in Pakistani dramas and films. In an effort to show a rich culture, onscreen wedding ceremonies are so fancy that it seems that no one among the team remembers that India and Pakistan have shameful numbers of people living below the poverty line. Still this has resulted in the development of a market for very expensive bridal wear that of course needs lavish fashion shows where women display these dresses without any attention paid to Islamic injunctions.

In imitating the Western and Indian culture, many Muslims of Pakistan have lost their Islamic identity and this is clearly shown in the dramas and films made by our entertainment industry. The only goal is to present whatever sells. So vulgarity and shamelessness is adopted in the name of 'culture'.

Allah (swt) says in the Quran, ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّبَكَ رَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمُ﴾ **"Oh mankind! What has misled you from your Lord, most Generous?"** [Al-Infitaar: 6]

How this colourful disobedience destroys Pakistan's Muslim-majority society is as follows:

### Effects on youth:

Islam defines the relationship between a man and woman as an important foundation of the society and it gives clear guidelines on how to maintain piety. ﴿قُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَعْضُوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ﴾ **"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and to protect their private parts. That is better for them. Allah knows the details of what they do. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and protect their private parts."** [An-Nur: 30]

The way this relationship is depicted by the entertainment industry is by reducing the male-female relationship to romance of a cheap nature, and something that should take priority above all else, forgetting the purpose of being to the extent that it seems that being alive is being in love. The impact of all this is poisonous and can be noticed in the behaviour of youth. In 2015 a heart-wrenching incident exposed the film industry's influence on the youth where a grade 10 student killed his female class-fellow and committed suicide. They left behind two letters for their parents and had their names engraved on each other's arms. There is a famous Indian film "Ek Duje Ke Liye" (For each other) which mirrors the 'Romeo and Juliet' concept, where the couple ends their lives by committing suicide because the family is against their union. This was an extreme case, but many live in a grey area, and they may not become news but fancy living a life which is no less than that of a movie hero or heroine. Universities and colleges are ideal places for starting a love affair, as most Indian and Pakistani films and dramas only show educational institutions as places where boys and girls meet and love relationships flourish.

Another case that drew attention was of Qandeel Baloch, a poor girl from the village blinded by the charm of glitz and glamour. A copy of the programme American Idol, that has an Indian and then Pakistani version gave Qandeel the chance to become prominent. This type of programme encourages youth to cross boundaries and try their luck with fame. Grand houses and big cars shown on screen create desire and greed in youth and they start thinking that money is the only source of appreciation and acceptance. They start fancying a life where for a girl, a handsome man with a grand house and a big car and an army of servants is the ideal husband; and for the boy, a heavily made-up girl who cannot go above a certain weight and whose father has a huge business waiting for the boy to take over. This is taking away the concept of contentment and happiness within the means that Allah has provided.

The recent increase in the number of days of celebrations before a wedding has also proved to be a trendsetter. Mehndi that used to be a private cultural affair of the family, where relatives would get together and enjoy a day before the wedding has turned into a heavily choreographed dance performance that is practised for days under an expert's supervision. Is it Muslim culture where a bride-to-be gives a dance performance in front of her husband-to-be and other members of the family? This challenges the sacred limits that Allah has defined for the relationship between non-mahrem men and women.

### **How it affects life after marriage:**

Although the entertainment industry is an exaggeration of public sentiment, it also plays a role in influencing people and forming their opinions of expectations from certain relationships, particularly those created by marriage. With the concept of "then they lived happily ever after" it seems that life's struggles are resolved with marriage, whereas marriage is the mere beginning; and the beauty of the relationship is that you support each other in worshipping Allah swt and fulfilling your obligations.

Islam defines marriage as something which does fulfil the procreation instinct but in such a way that it protects the community and society and preserves the human race. Screen marriages are far away from reality and set impossible standards for the young couples to achieve. Often, the husband or wife expect the 'romanticised' treatment from their spouse in the way presented by these dramas and films, such that if they do not match up to such unrealistic expectations, it creates frustration, resentment and tension within the marriage. This not only puts at risk the relationship

between a husband and wife but all other relationships linked to them. In real life both the partners may have extended families that need care and support, which may be difficult but it should not make such people less eligible for marriage. After all Allah (swt) knows the strength of His slave better than anyone else, and if a Muslim deals with his relations with mercy, he will certainly be rewarded with Allah's mercy. **يَا أَيُّهَا**

**“Oh mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, who created you from a single person, and from him created his wife, and from them both He created many men and women”.** [An-Nisa:1]

### **How it destroys family life and children:**

Children are often depicted as little lords who are often seen insulting their parents in the name of silly love or stupid innocence. Children are shown as questioning their right of freedom and desiring worldly goods and parents endlessly providing them with their wishes. Another important thing is the concept of how a mother must look. Incidents have been noted where a little child refuses to take his or her mother to school as she does not fit the standard of looking extra thin and beautiful. Instead of spending time on the training of their children, mothers end up spending more time at fitness places to achieve the ideal look. Celebrities have made it even more difficult by coming out in public with a so-called 'perfect body' just a few weeks after giving birth. When children see their parents blindly running after such glamour, they automatically start following the same pattern resulting in the development of self-absorbed people, obsessed with the way they look and who are never satisfied with themselves and their lives. The relationship of a child and parent should be of respect and learning.

Muslim family values have always been a very strong component of the Muslim identity. This entertainment industry is busy destroying these values. Hours and hours of morning shows and talk shows are continuously brainwashing people. It should also not be forgotten that western governments impose their influence upon states through using the media. It is an important colonial tool. The onetime release of the pictures of various TV personalities at the US embassy was not an isolated event but showed how influence can be exerted.

The safety of the Muslim family system is only possible with the implementation of Shariah law under the flag of the Khilafah where Muslim men and Muslim women will be able to live their lives in obedience to Allah (swt). The Khilafah will make sure that no immorality or any corrupt concept reaches the people in the name of entertainment.

**إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَنَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا**

**“The men and women who give charity and fasting men and women, and the men and women who guard their chastity and the men and women who remember Allah much, Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and great reward.”** [Al-Ahzab:35]

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by**

**Ikhlāq Jehan**

**Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir**