

## **Abstract**

Indian cinema, especially Bollywood, has recently witnessed an unprecedented growth in the production of Biopics, or the biographical films. This resurgence of the biopic is an interesting phenomenon and offers an intriguing area of academic research to many branches of Film Studies like genre studies, narrative research, reception and cognitive studies, etc. Due to the inherent hybridity of genres, biopics were initially classed as historical films and it is only recently, with the seminal work of George F. Custen in 1992; *Bio/Pics: How Hollywood Constructed History*, that biopic is considered a genre with conventions of its own. Review of the relevant literature suggests that there is a dearth of research on biographical films, specifically in the Indian context.

The present study attempts to examine the narrative style and structure of Hindi biopics with an objective to trace the patterns of similarity in a sample of five films: *Aligarh*, *Mary Kom*, *Rang Rasiya*, *Paan Singh Tomar*, and *Manjhi: The Mountain Man*. The study analyses the overall style and structure of the films and also compares how specific narrative components are structured and depicted by different films; both in terms of content as well as style. Cinematographic elements of film style i.e. shot duration, shot scale, shot angle and camera movement; and the transition rate have been explored using techniques of ‘Statistical Style Analysis’. Thus, the shot-length data for which a range of variables have been recorded is analysed through descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression.

The results of the analysis show that the biopics are indeed similar to each other in many aspects. Despite some deviations, based on the results it can be concluded that though the films chosen for the study are produced by different filmmakers, the time period in which they are made is different and they are all the stories of different individuals whose lives have a very distinct trajectory but

still certain interesting identifiable patterns can be traced in their cinematic style. These patterns in many cases are strikingly similar and it is quite evident that to a great extent similarities exist due the narrative content. The results suggest that all the biopics structure the stories in a similar way, and also depict these narratives in a very similar formal style, with the same kind of technical choices.

The study tries to understand the underlying formal patterns of Hindi biopics and both similarities and dissimilarities are enquired in detail. Therefore, this work is an empirical investigation of film style and structure which makes this thesis a significant contribution to existing film research in India by adding a novel perspective to film analysis in terms of Hindi biopics.