

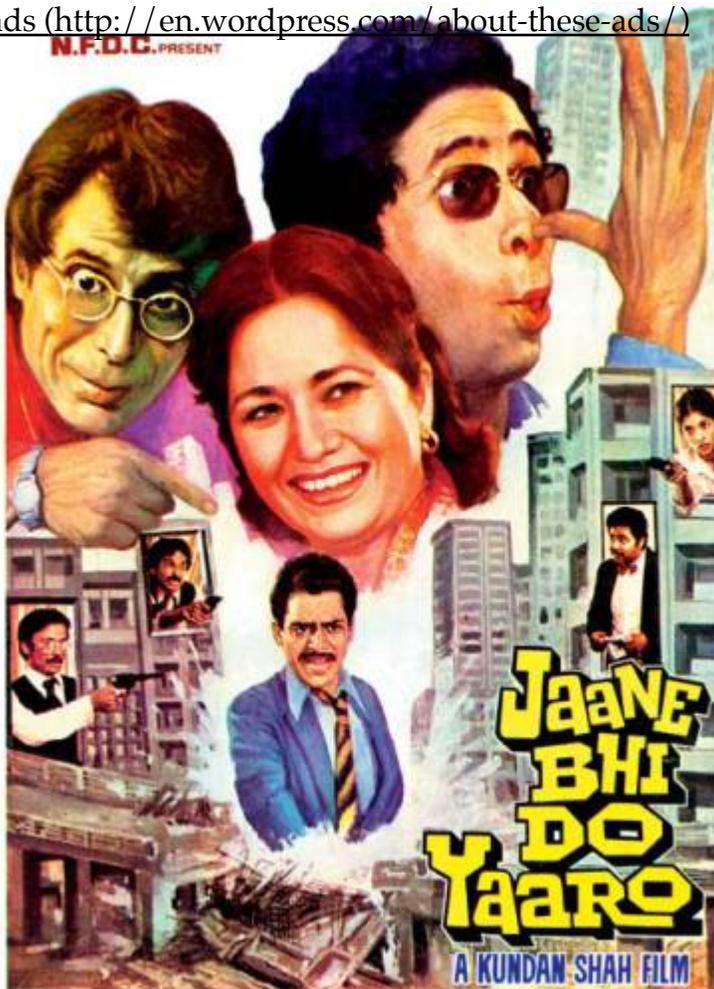
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the news. the views. the juice.

## The 5 stereotypes of journalists in Bollywood

16 August 2013

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[/wiki/Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaane_Bhi_Do_Yaaro)

In the 1983 hit comedy, Jaane bhi do yaaro, Naseeruddin Shah and Ravi Vaswani work as freelance photographers for Khabardar, a muckraking magazine edited by “Shobha Sen”, played by Bhakti Barve Inamdar

Much as the role of the hero and the heroine has morphed in the Hindi film industry, so has the depiction of the villain and the vamp—and, of course, the journalist.

From a poorly paid, poorly dressed, *paan*-chewing *jholawala* working for a “cause”, we are now (largely) shown as slick, loud-mouthed, loose-tongued buffoons, in bed with the crooked and the corrupt, and not very different from them.

Two young London-based Indian journalists, **Ruhi Khan** (formerly of *Hindustan Times*, *Mumbai Mirror* & NDTV) and her husband **Danish Khan** (formerly of *Mid-Day* and *Mumbai Mirror*), have analysed 33 films over the last 30 years and written a paper for the journal “*The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture* (<http://ijpc.org>)” published by the University of Southern California at Annenberg (<http://annenberg.usc.edu/>).

“Our analysis revealed five popular representations of the journalist that we have classified as **romantic companion, glamour chaser, investigative superhero, power magnate, and brainless mouthpiece.**

“These categories, though distinct, can also find themselves sharing screen space and often overlapping in the same film’s narrative.

“These stereotypes have been so strongly entrenched in Bollywood scripts that even films inspired by reallife incidences fail to break free of them.”

Here, the Khans introduce their work.

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<http://ijpc.org/journal/index.php/ijpcjournal/article/view/38/63>

By **RUHI KHAN** (<http://ruhi-khan.blogspot.in/>) and **DANISH KHAN** (<http://urdufigures.blogspot.in/>)

Working as journalists in India's tinsel town Mumbai-home to Bollywood cinema, one often comes across various public prejudices against the reporter. From being revered and trusted to help foster change for the better, to being accused of trivialising the profession or manipulating news for profits.

The [IJPC article](http://ijpc.org/journal/index.php/ijpcjournal/article/view/38/63) (<http://ijpc.org/journal/index.php/ijpcjournal/article/view/38/63>) stemmed for our desire to find out how such public perceptions are influenced. In this article we analyse only one element – perhaps one of the greatest factors that can affect mass perceptions—Bollywood films.

Most commercial films are not a prism reflecting reality, but a figment of someone's imagination and desire to see the world as he or she would like to. Hindi film is devoid of much reality and is often an exaggeration, yet it defines its audience's aspirations and perceptions.

And this is what [the article](http://ijpc.org/journal/index.php/ijpcjournal/article/view/38/63) (<http://ijpc.org/journal/index.php/ijpcjournal/article/view/38/63>) reflects—the caricature images of journalists portrayed by Bollywood, from their most Romeo-like romantic image to their most macho Rambo superhero.

We analysed 33 films over a 30-year period from 1981 to 2011, ranging from “*Mr. India*” to “*Rockstar*,” where the role of the journalist or media has been important in the film's narrative script or has been entrenched in public memory for its journalistic aspects.

Our analysis revealed five popular representations of journalists. We found many Bollywood films depicting journalists as a Romantic Companion to the other lead protagonist. This is where the focus is on the scribe's singing, dancing or seducing skills rather than his reporting.

A more realistic category is the Glamour Chaser where reporters are portrayed as flies fluttering around a ‘celebrity’ candy. Need we say more on this, doesn't seem much difference in real and reel life journalists in this category?

In the Investigative Superhero category the journalist makes powerful enemies in the course of his or her investigative work, just like a superhero who takes on the bad guys. This category showed us two opposite depictions of journalists. While the first half of the period in which our analysis takes place showed investigative reporters often paying a heavy price for their work- often being martyrs in the process; in the latter part the journalist began leveraging his or her profession to safeguard himself or herself by garnering the power of the fourth estate and mobilizing public support and scrutiny.

Next, category Power Magnate shows the media as ‘kingmakers’ holding the power to sway decisions on prominent issues. Prominent senior journalists are ‘sense-makers’ where in they have the power to influence how the public should interpret complex issues.

The last category is the one most journalists in real life are very uncomfortable to even acknowledge but the reel gives plenty of examples to entrench it strongly in public memory—the Brainless

Mouthpiece speaks of the most prevalent public perception where journalists are shown as brainless twits who simply follow instructions, bytes, or gossip without questioning anything.

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**Read the full paper: [From Romeo to Rambo](http://ijpc.org/journal/index.php/ijpcjournal/article/view/38/63) (<http://ijpc.org/journal/index.php/ijpcjournal/article/view/38/63>)**

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**Raveen Tandon as Shobha De: [Glamorous, sexy, brainy, seductive](http://wearethebest.wordpress.com/2012/11/16/30-plus-glamorous-sexy-brainy-and-seductive/)**  
(<http://wearethebest.wordpress.com/2012/11/16/30-plus-glamorous-sexy-brainy-and-seductive/>)

**Look, who wants to play [Christiane Amanpour: Kareena Kapoor](http://wearethebest.wordpress.com/2012/11/10/look-who-wants-to-play-christiane-amanpour/)** (<http://wearethebest.wordpress.com/2012/11/10/look-who-wants-to-play-christiane-amanpour/>)

**Emran Hashmi to play [Rajdeep Sardesai, Arnab Goswami](http://wearethebest.wordpress.com/2012/04/07/mouth-ka-saudagar-to-play-rajdeep-arnab/)** (<http://wearethebest.wordpress.com/2012/04/07/mouth-ka-saudagar-to-play-rajdeep-arnab/>)

**Journalism film [Dev Anand](http://wearethebest.wordpress.com/2011/12/05/the-journalism-film-that-dev-anand-didnt-make/) didn't make featuring [Shekhar Gupta](http://wearethebest.wordpress.com/2011/12/05/the-journalism-film-that-dev-anand-didnt-make/)** (<http://wearethebest.wordpress.com/2011/12/05/the-journalism-film-that-dev-anand-didnt-make/>)

**[Ram Gopal Verma's hit and Rann: 'I want to expose media'](http://wearethebest.wordpress.com/2010/01/15/hit-and-rann-i-want-to-expose-the-media/)** (<http://wearethebest.wordpress.com/2010/01/15/hit-and-rann-i-want-to-expose-the-media/>)

**Will the underworld a hot reporter like [Gul Panag?](http://wearethebest.wordpress.com/2012/01/12/will-underworld-dons-trust-such-a-hot-reporter/)** (<http://wearethebest.wordpress.com/2012/01/12/will-underworld-dons-trust-such-a-hot-reporter/>)

**[Anju Mahendroo](https://wearethebest.wordpress.com/2011/10/04/enter-the-queen-bee-of-bombay-film-journalists/) plays queen bee of film journalism, [Devyani](https://wearethebest.wordpress.com/2011/10/04/enter-the-queen-bee-of-bombay-film-journalists/)** (<https://wearethebest.wordpress.com/2011/10/04/enter-the-queen-bee-of-bombay-film-journalists/>)

**For [Sashi Kumar, Ranganath Bharadwaj](http://wearethebest.wordpress.com/2009/10/04/for-some-journos-acting-is-second-string-in-bow/), acting is second nature** (<http://wearethebest.wordpress.com/2009/10/04/for-some-journos-acting-is-second-string-in-bow/>)

**Finally, Karnataka gets an acting chief minister: [Ravi Belagere](http://churumuri.wordpress.com/2007/11/22/finally-karnataka-gets-an-acting-chief-minister/)** (<http://churumuri.wordpress.com/2007/11/22/finally-karnataka-gets-an-acting-chief-minister/>)

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