

**RESEARCH PAPER****Cinema Industry of China and Pakistan in the Perspective of the Belt and Road Initiative****<sup>1</sup>Zhou Wei and <sup>2</sup>Dr. Rukhsana Iftikhar\***

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**\*Corresponding Author**      [Irukhsana7@gmail.com](mailto:Irukhsana7@gmail.com)**ABSTRACT**

"Belt and Road" initiative by China, has been increasing in frequency and depth of cultural exploration between China and Pakistan. The objective of the paper is to highlight the cultural collaboration in the field of cinema between China and Pakistan after the massive development of belt and road initiative. As a crucial component of the cultural industry, cinema serves as a medium for cultural interactions between the two nations. This study delves into the exchange and collaboration of Pakistani cinema culture in China after 2013, examining the historical trajectory of Pakistani cinema exchanges in China. Furthermore, it evaluates the significant role played by Pakistani cinema in advancing cultural diplomacy and exchanges between China and Pakistan, thereby greatly contributing to the bilateral friendship and cultural ties between the two nations. The qualitative method of research is used especially examining the movies response in China. The release of Pakistani films in China and their cooperation in making of animated opened new era of joint cinema industry. This initiative in the field of cinema paved a way for exploring new arenas in cultural collaboration between China and Pakistan. More new projects would be initiated between China and Pakistan to strengthen the cultural ties between two countries.

**Keywords:** Belt and Road, Cultural Exchanges, Pakistani Cinema**Introduction**

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan in 1951, the two countries have forged a strong alliance, with China regarding Pakistan as a loyal and dependable friend, often referred to as "Iron Pakistan". With the acceleration of globalization and the "Belt and Road" initiative, along with the development of the "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor", comprehensive cooperation has been undertaken in areas such as economy, politics, and culture. This has led to increased and deepening cultural exchanges and cooperation between the two nations. Films, as a significant cultural medium, play a crucial role in fostering mutual understanding and friendship between different countries and peoples. The introduction and promotion of Pakistani cinemas in China not only enrich and expand the Chinese cinema market, but also facilitate cultural exchanges and interactions, thus making lasting contributions to the bond between the two peoples. The exchanges and sharing of civilizations serve as a key driver in the advancement of human civilization and the promotion of global peace and development.

Throughout September and October of 2013, President Xi Jinping of China unveiled the significant initiatives of creating the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, commonly known as the Belt and Road Initiative (B&R), during his trips to Central Asia and Southeast Asia. This initiative was further emphasized in 2014 when President Xi stressed the importance of civilization exchange and mutual understanding for the progress of human civilization and world peace (Kun, 2019). In 2015, China's National

Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), and Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) jointly released a document titled "Vision and Actions for Promoting the Construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road" to boost the development of the Belt and Road Initiative. Efforts were also made to enhance people-to-people communication among the countries along the Belt and Road through cultural activities and cooperation in the production and translation of high-quality broadcasting, cinema, and television dramas (Xinhua, 2017).

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, President Xi Jinping has continually expanded on the topic of world civilization exchanges in the new era, further developing the Marxist concept of civilization. This in turn led to the establishment of a comprehensive ideology about civilization exchange and mutual understanding which has provided effective guidance for the cultural exchange practices within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative (Xiu, 1956).

The collaboration between China and Pakistan in the cinema industry serves as a means to bolster cultural exchanges and diplomatic ties between the two nations. By deepening cinema cooperation and exchanges, the two countries aim to facilitate mutual learning, thereby contributing to the development of a shared future for mankind under the Belt and Road initiative. This cinema exchange is pivotal in enhancing cultural diplomacy, providing theoretical guidance, and fostering a positive diplomatic image for both nations. Moreover, it holds practical significance in promoting cultural exchanges, strengthening mutual trust, fostering international cinema industry cooperation, and providing support for the implementation of the "One Belt and One Road" initiative. Recognizing the power of culture as a soft power, the significance of cinema and television works in facilitating cross-cultural communication cannot be overstated (Yonglin, 1987).

## Literature Review

The study of the developmental history of Pakistani cinema has seen considerable accomplishments from both Chinese and foreign scholars. Notable works on this subject include *Pakistan Cinema 1947-1997* by Mushtaq Gazdar, *Film and Cinephilia in Pakistan Beyond Life and Death and Cinema and Society Film and Social Change in Pakistan* by Ali Nobil Ahmad and Ali Khan, *Love, War, and Other Longings Essays on Cinema in Pakistan* by Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar and Asad Ali. The earliest Chinese scholar to delve into the sphere of Pakistani cinema was Zhuang Xiu, whose thesis titled *Recent Development of Pakistani Cinema* was published in the *World Cinema* journal in November 1956. Drawing from literary materials in the Soviet Union's *Foreign Literature* magazine and India's *Screen News* in 1956, Zhuang Xiu provided insights into the film output and the number of cinemas in Pakistan in 1953, 1954, and 1955 (Ullah, 2021). The article also addresses the conference arranged by the Pakistani Government with the aim of expanding the presence of Pakistani films in the foreign film markets of East Africa, Singapore, Indonesia, and Turkey (Qiang, 2022).

In 1987, Chinese academic Lu Shuilin's article *Pakistan Film Industry* was published in *South Asia Studies*. The article comprehensively examined the evolution of Lahore's film industry prior to the India-Pakistan partition in 1947, the challenges and restructuring it underwent from 1947 to 1954, as well as the Pakistani government's decision to boycott Indian films in 1959, thus safeguarding the growth of its own film industry (Qiang, 2022). The 1950s and 1960s marked a prosperous era for Pakistan's film industry, characterized by rapid expansion in film production and the establishment of numerous film studios. Despite a drop in film production by the late 1970s, the total production for the decade still amounted to 1007. Starting from the late 1970s, Pakistan's film industry experienced a decline and has since stagnated further during the 1980s. This decline is evident in the closure of cinemas, reduced film production, and a substantial decrease in audience attendance.

Currently, Wang Shan has achieved significant research milestones in the realm of Pakistani films in China. In her article titled "Pakistani Film Industry under the Changing Times," Wang Shan posits that the trajectory of Pakistan's film industry is intricately intertwined with the nation's political dynamics, societal transformations, and economic framework. The article delineates eight distinct periods in Pakistan's film industry, spanning from the pre-partition era's prosperity, through the post-partition decade of challenges, to the subsequent reform under Ashu Khan's leadership, the Bhutto family's reign of change, the subsequent decline, the 1980s and 1990s renaissance, the early 21st-century constriction, and the ongoing resurgence in the form of the new film movement. Wang Shan delves into an elaborate review of each period's impact on Pakistan's film landscape. Building on this groundwork, the article also focuses on the contemporary new film movement in Pakistan, alongside the nascent phenomena arising within the country's film industry in light of the One Belt and One Road initiative and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor construction. Within her article *Observation of Pakistan's Film Industry in 2019*, Wang Shan succinctly encapsulates the box office performance of Pakistan's film industry in 2019, provides an overview of the three major entities - the ARY Group, Hum Group, and Distribution Club-within Pakistan's film industry, and scrutinizes the cinematic production in 2019, categorizing it into romantic comedies, military films, and action films (Qiang, 2022).

The research article *Examining the Emergence and Challenges of Pakistani Homegrown Sports Cinema* delves into the analysis of two notable film releases: *Main Hoon Shahid Afridi(2013)* and *Shah(2015)*. It explores the evolution and current standing of sports films originating from Pakistan, scrutinizing the impediments and struggles encountered by the country's sports movie industry. Furthermore, it investigates the prospective opportunities that may arise with the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, assessing its potential impact on the advancement of Pakistani sports cinema within the realms of policy and business environments.

The study titled *Shawa Ghimizi and Holey Jeans: Exploring Cinematic Costumes in Pakistani New Wave Films* delves into the analysis of costume portrayal in Pakistani New Wave movies such as *Khuda Kay Liye (2007)*, *Teeja in Trouble (2018)* and *Chalay Thay Sath (2017)*. The focus is on the intricate interplay between traditional and modern clothing worn by male and female characters, spotlighting the coexistence of South Asian tradition and Western fashion. Beyond the sartorial contrast, the films' narrative ethics highlight the dichotomy between notions of "evil and backwardness" and "justice and goodness," alluding to a metaphorical reflection on the restraints placed on women in Pakistani society and the portrayal of empowerment and emasculation of both genders in the movies. The significance of traditional and modern attire in Pakistani New Wave cinema serves as a pivotal instrument for a profound contemplation of Pakistani national identity fostered by the cultural vanguards of the Pakistani New Wave, particularly the directors and pr

In the 1980s, Professor Huang Xianwen from Wuhan University, a leading expert on Oriental films, delved into the story-lines of Pakistani films *Mere Naam Hai Mohabaat(1975)* and *Insaan aur Aadmi (1970)* (Xianwen,2005). After the translation and release of 12 Pakistani films in China during that time, the introduction of *Parwaaz Hay Junoon (2018)* sparked significant interest among Chinese scholars, leading to extensive research on Pakistani cinema.

In Qi Zhihui's article, *only a country can have a home: A Study of Patriotic Emotions in Pakistani Theme Movies-Parwaaz Hay Junoon as an Example*, an analysis from the viewpoint of Goffman's emotional research is presented. The research focuses on three aspects of individual emotional portrayal: the representation of national supremacy through the soldier image, collective emotional resonance involving family affection, friendship, and love, and the manifestation of patriotic feelings as the core of national consciousness. Through the movie *Parwaaz Hay Junoon (2018)*, the patriotic theme of "only

a country can have a home" is observed. *Rising Aspirations: depicting the Pakistani essence on celluloid*. By crafting the narrative around the Pakistani Air Force ensemble, the writer adeptly captured the rich tapestry of Pakistani society, diverse values, as well as the sentiments of patriotism and unwavering dedication.

Examining the latest progress in China-Pakistan film and television collaboration amid the "One Belt and One Road" initiative, Wang Shan evaluates the challenges encountered in developing collaborative film and television projects between China and Pakistan, while also sharing insights into the seamless introduction of *Parwaaz Hay Junoon* (2018) to the Chinese audience. Additionally, she provides commentary on the Chinese Film Festival, Chinese Film Day, and other noteworthy commercial film screening events hosted in Pakistan.

## Material and Methods

A qualitative research method is used to get the information of the historical material published in form of books, articles and periodicals. As this research deals with the films so the descriptive analysis of the films is also the part of the research method for the paper.

## The Journey of Pakistani Films to China

The screening and exchange of Pakistani films in China can be roughly divided into two stages. The first stage saw the introduction of 12 Pakistani films from 1957 to 1991, many of which became household names. The earliest film was *Baghi* (1956) (Upper and Lower sets) in 1957, translated by the Shanghai Film Translation Factory. Legendary Punjabi film hero Sultan Rahi made his first film appearance in *Baghi* as an extra in a gang of thugs (Mushtaq, 2019). In 1980, the Pakistani film *Mere Naam Hai Mohabaat* (1975) (Upper and Lower sets), translated by Changchun Film Studio, won the Ministry of Culture Award for Excellent Translation and Production of the year for its theme song "Happy Time," which was translated into Mandarin and sung by Zheng Xulan with Urdu lyrics. The movie was a sensation in China and captivated hundreds of millions of viewers at a time when the Pakistani film industry was ranked nearly among the top four in the global film industry (Qiang, 2017). In 1981, *Insaan aur Aadmi* (1970) (Shanghai Film Translation Factory) garnered strong reception in China. These two films were the masterpieces of the renowned Pakistani film playwright, director, producer, and art maestro Mr. Shebaab Kilanvi. Director Shebaab died on November 5, 1982, and Chinese scholar, Du Lisheng, published a memoir about the film master (Lisheng, 1983). In 1985, the Shanghai Film Translation Factory translated *Teray Bina Kya Jeena* (1982) and *Pakeeza* (1979) while in 1986, and *Jaisay Jantay Nahin* (1969) in 1987, *Pechan* (1975) was translated and released in China by the Youth Film Studio of Beijing Film Academy (Yonglin, 1987). The film *Aahat* (1982) from Pakistan, produced by Changxin Film Studio in 1988, was translated by Changchun Film Studio, with dubbing by Hu Lianhua, Jin Yi, Song Lijie, Zhang Xiuyan, Xu Dan, Pan Shulan, and others in China. Shanghai Film Translation and Production Factory translated *Aina* (1977) and *Aisa Bhi Hota Hai* (1965) in 1989, and *Shani* (1989) in 1991. *Aina* was a musical love story with a tinge of social comment. Starring Shabnam, Nadeem, Rehan, Qavi, Bahar, Hanif and Shahzeb and produced by M.A. Shamsi of Kashif Films, it was, in the real sense, director Nazrul Islam's brainchild (Mushtaq, 2019). *The Orphan Girl* screened in China in 1989, was translated by the Changchun Film Studio Translation and Production Branch.

Pakistani movie songs have deeply impacted Chinese audiences, with many exceptional tracks gaining popularity and becoming integral to the films. For instance, the theme song "Forever Love" from the movie *Mere Naam Hai Mohabaat* (1975) and the captivating interlude in the recent Pakistani feature film *Pehchan* (1975) are standout examples. These songs not only possess a melodic quality but also intricately weave into the narrative, serving as an invisible yet significant presence throughout the movie (Peiyuan,

1987). Additionally, the compelling plots and emotionally resonant themes in Pakistani cinema deeply connect with Chinese audiences .

Following the implementation of the "Belt and Road" initiative by China in 2013, cultural exchanges between China and Pakistan surged, facilitating increased interaction. Pakistani films reached Chinese audiences through diverse platforms such as the China-Pakistan Film Exchange Summit, the Silk Road Film Festival, the Pakistan Film Festival, and cinematic screenings. In December 2017, the Golden Rock Summit and China-Pakistan Film Exchange Season took place at the Dalian Campus of Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts, with the successful hosting of the China-Pakistan "Belt and Road" Film Art and Film Science Expert Forum. The panel of experts actively engaged with the "Belt and Road" initiative, enhancing cultural exchanges between China and Pakistan through film culture interactions, and delving into thorough discussions on integrating and advancing the cultural resources of China and Pakistan within the film culture industry cooperation perspective (Shan, 2018).

The 5th Silk Road International Film Festival 2018 International Young Directors Academic Exchange Meeting took place in Xi'an from October 9 to 12, 2018. This film festival featured a dedicated section for Pakistani cinema, displaying a total of nine films from Pakistan, including two feature films and seven short films. The festival also included a special tribute to Mr. Jamal Shah, the Chairman of the National Arts Council of Pakistan, with a screening of his film *Revenge of the Worthless* (2016). Additionally, the audience had the opportunity to view works by five young Pakistani directors, such as *Taking Actions* and *Let the Sun Rise*. Despite the relatively early stage of their careers, the young directors' films offered a fresh perspective and strikingly captured the natural landscapes of Pakistan, as well as the diverse lives and psychological states of its people. These presentations provided valuable insight into the neighboring country's development and its burgeoning film industry. The Pakistani film section was enriched by the presence of Mr. Aijaz Gull, a renowned film critic, who co-authored the book *Journey through Lens: Pakistani Cinema* with the young director, Jamal Sohel. The duo presented this book at the exchange meeting, adding an enriching dimension to the 5th Silk Road International Film Festival 2018 International Young Directors Exchange Meeting (Shan, 2018).

During the China-Pakistan Economic and Trade Sub-Forum on April 27, 2019, an agreement was signed for the introduction of the first Pakistani film *Parwaaz Hay Junoon* in China. The agreement, certified by Razaq Dawood, Advisor to the Prime Minister of Pakistan and Special Envoy, involved Beijing Huohuo Pictures and Chenming Pictures. *Parwaaz Hay Junoon* which means lion's heart in Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, embodies the burgeoning diplomatic relationship between China and Pakistan, especially considering its release in mainland China - a Market that had not welcomed Pakistani films for 45 years. Directed by Haseeb Hasan and featuring notable actors such as Hamza Ali Abbas, Hania Amar, Ahad Raza Mir, and Shaz Khan, the film *Parwaaz Hay Junoon* made its mark as a wave in realist commercial Pakistani cinema in 2018. The film, acknowledged as a masterpiece, commemorates the 70th anniversary of diplomatic ties between China and Pakistan, and was the culmination of significant support from entities such as the Pakistan Air Force (PAF), reflecting a shift towards using film as a social change tool and a platform for official government presentations. PAF supported the film industry by providing financial assistance, with *Parwaaz Hay Junoon* being the flagship project associated with PAF's initiatives in film production (Waqas, 2020).

Director Haseeb Hasan, an individual with a background in medical education, has been active in the television and film industry since 1995. With significant creative expertise gained through roles as a director's assistant, he has successfully helmed several TV series since 2013, all of which garnered positive reception. In 2018, his debut film *Parwaaz Hai Junoon* secured the top spot in the Pakistani box office and saw an international release in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and other countries, despite grossing only \$26,000 in overseas box office revenue (Ullah, 2021).

In commemoration of the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan, the "Pakistan Film Exhibition," jointly organized by the National Film Administration and the Pakistan Embassy in China, and hosted by the China Film Archive, kicked off in Beijing on August 4, 2021. With the screening of five outstanding Pakistani films from recent years, namely *Motorcycle Girl* (2018) and *Ho Mann Jahaan* (2016) along with captivating titles such as *Blind Love* (2016) *Bin Roye* (2015) and *Punjab Nahi Jaungi* (2017), the Chinese audience can gain deeper insights into Pakistan's culture and traditions. Notably, *Blind Love* is an action-packed Pakistani film amalgamating suspense, crime, and romance elements, whereas the other romance-themed films portray lively and enthralling song and dance sequences .

In October 2023, the Pakistani movie *In Flames* made its debut in China at the Pingyao International Film Festival's Crouching Tiger section. The film is directed by ZARRAR KAHN, a Pakistani-Canadian filmmaker hailing from Karachi. His work *In Flames*, notably became the first South Asian horror film to be shortlisted for the Cannes Directors' Fortnight. Kahn has garnered recognition from various esteemed platforms such as the Toronto International Film Festival Talent Camp, Locarno Film Academy, Locarno Open Doors, Busan International Film Festival Asian Film Academy, and the Canadian Film Center Directors Laboratory. His creations were showcased and acknowledged at over 70 global film festivals, including the Novo Film Festival and the London Film Festival (Ullah, 2021). Kahn passionately endeavors to narrate the tales of historically marginalized communities, striving to provide them a platform. Through *In Flames* director Kahn aims to delve into the ramifications faced by women in a highly patriarchal society, unveiling the psychological effects of gender oppression and the terrifying encounters of young individuals in Pakistan when they embark on romantic relationships. *In Flames* aspires to illuminate both the enchanting and somber facets of Karachi, prompting viewers to witness the myriad arduous decisions necessary for survival in this realm (Xinhua, 2017).

On October 12, 2018, the signing event for the China-Pakistan co-production film *Heavenly Road* took place during the 5th Silk Road International Film Festival in Xi'an. *Heavenly Road* is being produced by Qingdao City Media Film and Television Culture Company, in collaboration with Shaanxi Media Convergence and Pakistan Hannekada Film Company. The movie is inspired by real-life stories and aims to authentically portray the historical journey of Chinese enterprises engaging in the "Belt and Road" initiative, as they join hands with Pakistan to develop the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor for mutual benefit and regional prosperity. Moreover, the movie will pay tribute to Chinese and Pakistani entrepreneurs and social activists who have played pivotal roles in fostering friendship between the two countries, highlighting the humanitarian and inclusive nature of the relationship between the people of China and Pakistan (Asif, 2021). Additionally, *Heavenly Road* will also be presented as a TV series and a comprehensive documentary to advance China-Pakistan friendship and contribute to the realization of the "Belt and Road" Initiative across multiple facets of the entertainment industry, including movies, TV series, and book publishing. President Jamal Shah expressed his deep honor at being involved in the creation of "Heavenly Road." He emphasized that the protagonist, Yuan Jianmin, serves as a testament to the values of selfless dedication and signifies the ethos of the present era illustrated through the prism of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Jamal envisages that the completion of this cinematic endeavor will further fortify the genuine and unbreakable bond between Pakistan and China, surpassing even the sentiment conveyed in the poetic verse "Higher than mountains, deeper than the sea, sweeter than honey" (Shan, 2018).

The 2019 China-Pakistan joint project *Thata Girl*, helmed by director Yang Jin and produced by Wang Xiaoshuai, narrates a touching tale of "mutual redemption" involving a Chinese girl and a group of Pakistani girls. This movie, spearheaded by the Chinese team, was predominantly filmed in Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, with assistance from Pakistani partner company Hunerkada Films. The shooting process spanned almost two months,

marking a significant milestone in the history of collaboration between China and Pakistan. Notably, deep friendships and alliances were forged between the working teams of both nations during the production (Kiran, 2021). In October 2019, the film was shortlisted for the 3rd Pingyao International Film Festival. On October 13, 2019, *Thata Girl* made its debut as the opening film in the "From Shanxi" section of the festival. Subsequently, on October 15, 2019, *Thata Girl* clinched the "Story of the Year" award in the Media Honors section of the 6th Silk Road International Film Festival and picked up a nomination for Feature Film of the Year (Shan, 2019). On August 3, 2023, the National Arts Council Theater in Islamabad hosted an audience passionately watching the China-Pakistan collaborative feature film *Thata Girl*.

The film *Chalay Thay Saath*, helmed by Pakistan but with financial backing from China, marks the first-ever inclusion of Chinese actors. Canadian-Chinese actor Kent S Leung takes the lead role, alongside Pakistani actress Syra Shehroz as the female lead. The movie made its debut in major Pakistani theaters on April 21, 2017, and later achieved a successful release in Hong Kong in 2018. In June 2018, it represented Pakistan at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Film Festival in Qingdao. Pakistan's Hannekada Film Company is involved in the production of the movie *CUT*, narrating the revival of Pakistan's fading film industry through collaboration with China. The romantic sparks between the Chinese and Pakistani lead actors serve to highlight the cross-border cooperation. The film is set to be directed by acclaimed Pakistani actor, director, and producer Jamal Shah.

*Allahyar and the Legend of Markhor* (2018), the first animated film co-produced by China and Pakistan, made its debut in Chinese theaters on December 25th, 2021, with a mainland China box office collection of 1.069 million yuan. This film, a significant cultural endeavor to commemorate the 70th anniversary of China-Pakistani diplomatic relations, reflects the collaborative efforts of filmmakers from both countries over a span of four years. As a key cultural project to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan, the film is the first animated film jointly produced by China and Pakistan, and it is the crystallization of the wisdom of the filmmakers of the two countries who have worked together for four years (Qiang, 2022).

The film recounts the journey of Araya, a courageous and upright Pakistani boy, who discovers the ability to communicate with animals after rescuing a twisted-horn goat named Meilu amid a chaotic situation. Together, they overcome numerous obstacles and confront poachers and wolves while escorting Meilu home. Along the way, they befriend Hilo, the owl, and Chaku, the snow leopard. With the assistance of the Chinese border police, the poachers are brought to justice and the goats safely returned home. Eventually, Meilu reunites with her parents, and Araya reunites with his father. Having specialized in character animation from Vancouver Film School, the film's director, Uzair Zaheer Khan said, "One was that I wanted to demonstrate that our country's CG artists can create quality work at par with what's being produced overseas. We have so many decent artists in Pakistan and not enough projects, so I thought if we put together something nice, it would encourage others to contribute towards the local animation industry." (Sonya, 2018).

*Allahyar and the Legend of Markhor* celebrates the genuine bond of enduring challenges together, as well as the central theme of the interconnectedness of China and Pakistan through their shared mountains, rivers, and humanistic affinities. Through the portrayal of mythical imagery and the promotion of ecological awareness, the film conveys cultural values cherished by the people of both China and Pakistan – reverence for nature and love for humanity, and the harmonious coexistence of the celestial and human realms (Qiuyang, 2021). The film seamlessly combines visual aesthetics and internal artistic expression found in animated films, highlighting the common values of Pakistan and China and presenting spiritual values and compelling narratives that resonate with Chinese and Pakistani audiences.

The film prominently incorporates Pakistani mythological elements into its theme and storyline. Drawing inspiration from Pakistani folklore, the movie prominently showcases the image of the twisted-horn goat, which holds significant cultural symbolism throughout the narrative. Given that the markhor goat is Pakistan's national animal, the movie leverages the belief from local mythology that the markhor goat possesses a powerful instinct to safeguard those dear to them. The mythical portrayal of the markhor goat in the movie symbolizes the embodiment of Pakistan's national spirit. The central storyline revolves around the theme of protecting the horned goat. Through the character of the young boy Araya, the film exemplifies the essence of Pakistani national culture, characterized by courage and the pursuit of wisdom. As Araya transitions from a timid, bullied boy to a fearless and learned "beast language boy" while defending and rescuing Meilu, the movie infuses mythological imagery to connect with audiences on a spiritual level. The portrayal of Araya's fantasy adventure and the depiction of mythological elements creates a profound cultural resonance within the Chinese audience, aligning with the traditional essence and national spirit of Pakistan. *Allahyar and the Legend of Markhor* stands as the maiden successful endeavor in the co-production of animated films between China and Pakistan, garnering significant attention and affection from Chinese viewers following its release in China.

### **Conclusion**

The "One Belt, One Road" initiative has led to increased cooperation in movie culture between Pakistan and China. With over 70 years of diplomatic relations, cultural exchanges between the two countries have deep roots, creating a shared cultural heritage. As the enduring friendship between China and Pakistan continues, there is ample opportunity for humanistic exchanges and collaboration. Humanities exchanges serve as a crucial means to foster mutual understanding and build a strong community between the people of China and Pakistan. The two nations are actively working with governmental departments to organize film festivals, exhibitions, co-productions, and media platform screenings, aiming to showcase each other's film and television works. Using film as a medium, China and Pakistan are promoting genuine communication and cultural understanding, fostering lasting friendship and contributing positively to their relationship. This endeavor is not only building a bridge for spiritual exchanges but also injecting a constructive force for the substantial advancement of China-Pakistan cultural cooperation.

### **Recommendations**

A sustainable continuation on cultural exchange between China and Pakistan in field of cinema is the need of the time.

- More and more film projects must be initiated between China and Pakistan to develop a better cultural understanding between two nations.
- Co-production in the other fields of cultural exchange is also required.
- National identity can cater through cinema in China and Pakistan.
- Pakistan's Film industry can get benefits from the advancement of Chinese cinema.
- Joint cultural project in the field of cinema is also very helpful for man to man contact between two nations.



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