



LIBRARY AS A PLACE OF SERENITY: A CASE STUDY ON THE MOVIE '1942 A LOVE STORY '

Ashish Sharma¹ and Snigdha Naskar²

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Library & Information Science, Rabindra Bharati University & Assistant Librarian, Techno India University, West Bengal, Kolkata, India

² Supervisor, Assistant Professor, Department of Library & Information Science, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, India

Abstract

Purpose: This paper examines the portrayal of the library as a setting for social interactions and romantic development in Hindi films, using the case study of "1942: A Love Story".

Research Method: A qualitative case study methodology was adopted, involving content analysis of the film's library settings. This included an analysis of the library's physical setting, character interactions, social function, romance, and the significance of the library setting.

Findings: The study shows that the Town Library is a multi-dimensional organisation with educational, social, cultural, and romantic purposes. The library serves as an appropriate setting for social interaction and relationship development between the protagonists, as it provides opportunities for communication and the building of Psychological Connection. The depiction of the song "Rooth Na Jana" in the Town Library enhances the library's romantic element. Moreover, the library represents intellectual and cultural refinement and safety amid political instability.

Originality: This research will contribute to the field of library science by examining the portrayal of libraries as non-traditional social-romantic spaces in Bollywood films.

Keywords: Library portrayal, romantic space, social space, Library Space, 1942: A Love Story, Cinematic Libraries, Cultural Representation, Town Library

Introduction:

In Indian cinema, the library has always been portrayed as a place where the quest for knowledge unfolds. But in recent times, Hindi cinema depicts the library as a versatile space for socialising and romance. This is due to a shift in society's view of the library from a purely educational institution to one of culture and emotion (Sharma & Naskar, 2026).

There is an interesting case in point in the Hindi film 1942: A Love Story, directed by Vidhu Vinod Chopra. This movie, set in the context of India's fight for freedom, tells the story of the love affair between two individuals, Naren and Rajeshwari. Among the places depicted in this film, the library serves as a socially important space where interactions occur and relationships begin to grow (Chopra, 1994).

This paper examines the portrayal of the library as a socio-romantic space. The analysis of the library as a social and romantic space in the movie 1942: A Love Story is explored. An analysis of the library as a visual symbol, a narrative tool, and a symbol is undertaken to contribute to the broader discourse on its use in Hindi films (Chopra, 1994).

Literature Review:

The critical analysis by Sharma and Naskar in their study focuses on the portrayal of libraries and librarians in the film The Storyteller, in which the library is depicted as more of a space for memory, storytelling, and cultural preservation than a mere storage place for books. This study, through visual and narrative analyses, reveals that the library is a safe space where



Cover Page



the stories of the past are stored and can be rediscovered. The librarian is presented as a helping hand, a mediator, and a cultural champion who helps patrons access information (Sharma & Naskar, 2026c).

The study by Picalho examines how librarians are represented in popular music videos, showing that common stereotypes persist: librarians are quiet, orderly, and domineering. On the other hand, there are indications of change, as some images of librarians depict them as cheerful, communicative, and sociable. This evolving portrayal highlights professional skills, leadership qualities, and community engagement, while keeping the humane aspect of librarians alive. Such images may help break down old stereotypes about librarians and create a positive image of them. Further research into the representations of librarians across various media is recommended (Picalho, 2025).

This research study by Sharma and Naskar examines the representation of libraries and librarians in the Gujarati web series "Library Ek Anokhi Varta". This series portrays an academic library as an inviting place for education and self-development. The librarian, Mansukh Kaka, is portrayed as a helpful, kind person who supports patrons and works in the library. In this regard, the study emphasises the positive portrayal of young people's reading practices and the importance of libraries in education. Nonetheless, this web series fails to represent modern library technologies and library personnel (Sharma & Naskar, 2026b).

This paper by Morita and Laksmi examines how the public library's recreational role is depicted in the movie "The Library" (2015). The research finds that the movie presents the public library as an inviting place associated with joy and positive feelings. Library is depicted as a place where people can have fun, learn, and be happy, as shown by Emily, Samuel, and Ruth, among other characters. In contrast to the image of the library in traditional movies, which is often associated with boredom and constraint, this movie highlights the library's positive role in society and locality (Morita & Laksmi, 2018).

The research paper by Sharma and Naskar analyses the depiction of Indian libraries and library professionals in documentary films released between 1990 and 2025. In documentaries such as Eloor Library, Books for All, and Pustaka Mane, libraries are depicted as community-centric organisations that promote learning and social growth. Librarians have been depicted as mentors who help learners learn, rather than just bookkeepers. It is revealed that the role of technology in libraries and changing perceptions among people is being captured in increasing numbers. However, there are lacunae in the depiction of academic and special libraries, librarians from varied backgrounds, and disabled learners (Sharma & Naskar, 2026a).

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative case study methodology to explore the library's image as a social and romantic place in the Hindi movie 1942: A Love Story. The research will use content analysis as the primary technique for analysing the library scenes in the movie. Special emphasis was placed on the physical design of the library, books and information materials, interactions among characters, the romance in the story, as well as the overall social and cultural role of the library setting. Data collection was conducted through repeated observation of relevant scenes and dialogue.

Limitations

The present research is limited to a single Hindi movie, 1942: A Love Story, and thus cannot be said to cover all aspects of libraries that are portrayed in Indian movies. This is due to the use of qualitative methods to analyse visual and narrative material, which may involve some subjectivity. Furthermore, this study considers only scenes involving libraries and does not examine the effect of such portrayals on audiences.

Movie Synopsis & Character Dynamics:

Naren Singh (Anil Kapoor): Naren was the son of Diwan Hari Pratap Singh, a loyal British employee. His Father works for the brutal British General Douglas, who wants to become a Rai Bahadur from the British government. Falls in love with Rajeshwari despite political unrest (1942: A Love Story, Wikipedia, n.d.).



Cover Page



Rajeshwari "Rajjo" Pathak (Manisha Koirala): Rajjo was the daughter of Raghuveer Pathak, a revolutionary fighting against British rule. Her father decided to kill Douglas for murdering his son. So he came to Kasauli village with Rajjo (1942: A Love Story, Wikipedia, n.d.).

The Town Library was situated in the village of Kasauli.

1942: A Love Story is a Hindi film that is a love drama directed by Vidhu Vinod Chopra. This critically acclaimed movie depicts the love between Naren Singh and Rajeshwari Pathak amid the Indian freedom movement against British imperialism. While Naren's father was supporting British rule, Rajjo's father was a revolutionary. Although they came from different backgrounds and faced difficult times during the 1940s due to the Indian independence movement against British colonisation, they fell in love. Despite differences in their families and the era's difficult political atmosphere, Naren and Rajjo fall deeply in love (1942: A love story (1994) - synopsis - imdb).

A notable feature of the film is the prominent depiction of the Town Library as a place where the characters' relationship develops. Rajjo is shown to be a book lover; she frequently visits the Town Library, while Naren is drawn to it as he tries to meet her and learn more about her. In the library, the two characters meet and share their emotions, thereby fostering their relationship. There are many scenes from the movie, including the song 'Rooth Na Jana,' that have been shot at the library itself (Vidhu Vinod Chopra Films, 2012b). Thus, the Town Library appears to be an important social and emotional place in the movie. Thus, the library provides a socially acceptable place and intellectual environment where Rajjo and Naren exchange their thoughts, and Rajjo gets books for study (1942: A love story (1994) - synopsis - imdb).

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to achieve the following objectives.

1. To assess the depiction of the library in the film 1942: A Love Story.
2. To study the library as a social space in the film.
3. To evaluate the importance of the library in the development of romance.
4. To find out how the library scenes assist in the development of the plot.
5. To study the connection between books, reading, and romance in the film.
6. To assess the cultural importance of the library space.
7. To analyse the general image of the library depicted in this film.

Significance of the Study

The current research contributes to the growing body of literature at the crossroads of Library and Information Science and Film Studies by investigating the representation of the library as a place of social and romantic encounters in the film "1942: A Love Story" (Chopra, 1994). This paper differs from traditional research, which focuses on libraries as information centres, by highlighting other aspects of libraries, such as their social and emotional significance. The study demonstrates that films influence people's perceptions of library spaces and inspire them with additional cultural meaning.

Portrayal of the Library in 1942: A Love Story

The Town Library, depicted in "1942: A Love Story," is portrayed as an intellectual, elegant, and socially important institution. The library plays an important role in the story and is much more than just the setting in which it unfolds. The library is characterised by large reading tables, bookshelves, catalogue cabinets, reference sections, a reading section with lights, and a spacious interior. All these things contribute to creating an environment of intellectuality, culture, and refinement. The design and arrangement of collections in the library reflect the public library prevalent during the colonial era in India (Chopra, 1994).

The cinematic library depicted in this film is the Town Library in Kasauli village. It was open at 9 a.m. The library is portrayed as a quiet, organised environment where one can read and gain information. Many books are displayed throughout



Cover Page



the scenes to show that this place is the main centre for acquiring knowledge. Card catalogue cabinets are also depicted in the movie as part of old libraries, so users can search for their books in these catalogues. Rajjo once said she had never seen a library or books like that before (Chopra, 1994).

On the other hand, the library is portrayed as a welcoming, easily accessible place for readers. The readers are free to move around in the reading rooms, explore the library's collections, interact near the shelves, and converse without compromising the educational setting. This means the library is used for both learning and socialising.

This visual depiction of the library also conveys a sense of sophistication and modernity. This is achieved through an elegant interior, decorative lighting, and organised arrangements in the library. Contrary to how libraries have often been depicted in movies, where they are shown as secluded places, the library in this movie looks alive and user-friendly.

Another characteristic of this town library worth mentioning here is the lack of a librarian who exercises strict supervision in any form. Rather, the library setting facilitates independent discovery and social interactions. This representation indicates the library as a public institution that combines intellectual activities with social interaction. In this way, the Town Library represents a sign of education, culture, public knowledge, and civilised social interaction.

Discussion

The library scenes in the movie 1942: A Love Story show the cinema's power to redefine libraries' meaning beyond education (Chopra, 1994). Although the Town Library serves as a place for storing literature and knowledge, it has many more important roles than these from the perspective of the plot. The library serves as the social and romantic setting where the characters interact.

One of the most important features of the library's portrayal is that it serves as a socially accepted place for interaction. This movie takes place in the 1940s, an era when certain social norms governed the behaviour of young men and women. Under these circumstances, the library becomes an ideal place for interactions. This is because the library is known to be a centre for educational and cultural activities (Chopra, 1994).

The library also functions as a place of romance. There are various instances in the play that indicate dialogue, emotional interactions, and personal interactions between the characters. Instead of occurring in private places, the interactions take place in a public place dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge. The comparison makes an association between intellect and emotions. Thus, the library is a venue where romance blossoms through interaction and conversation.

Moreover, the books and other study materials serve a symbolic purpose within the movie's story. The bookshelves laden with books and other literary items create an atmosphere of study and cultural sophistication in the library. The romantic relationship between Naren and Rajjo was formed in the library, a place of knowledge and learning. So the library here itself demonstrates both learning and self-discovery.

Furthermore, the card catalogue cabinets and the collections shown in the library shots lend credibility to the setting. This is because such items help convey the idea that the library is an institution concerned with knowledge and access to information. But the film does not end its portrayal of the library at this level. On the contrary, it portrays the library as a dynamic social place.

The depiction of the library can be considered in tune with contemporary concepts of libraries as community places. Contemporary theories of libraries now consider them not only as centres for information but also as places that facilitate social interaction. The Town Library in 1942: A Love Story is a case in point, illustrating such a conception of the library, as well as social activities and intellectual growth.

Overall, the library is presented as an entity with multiple roles, including education, culture, social interaction, and even romance. In this movie, the common perception of libraries as quiet and isolated is debunked; instead, they are shown as



Cover Page



places of knowledge, culture, and human interaction. The portrayal of the library in the movie is positive for its image and importance. So the movie conveys the library's positive role in our society and highlights its significance.

Findings:

Key findings of this study are as follows:

1. The library is depicted as more than a place of books and study.
2. The library is a socially approved place where young people can meet.
3. The library setting allows for the development of romantic relationships.
4. The library environment is a mirror of culture and education.
5. The appearance of a library plays an important role in the process of character development.
6. Setting provides intimacy without any problems with society.
7. The issues of education and romance are interconnected within the story.
8. The movie creates a positive image of libraries in society.
9. Naren once said, "This library is a treasure house of wisdom."
10. The library supports both knowledge acquisition and social interaction.
11. The depiction offers insights into the future role of libraries.
12. An entire song scene was filmed in the library.

Conclusion

This study investigated the depiction of the Town Library in the film 1942: A Love Story (Chopra, 1994). It highlights the importance of the Town Library as a social and romantic setting in the film. It shows how the Town Library is depicted not just as an ordinary place for storing books and information, but as a multilayered entity that enables learning, communication, emotional expression, and romance. Due to its visual, narrative, and symbolic significance, the Town Library serves as an important element of the film and plays a key role in the development of Naren and Rajeshwari's romance.

The findings show that the library performs several interconnected roles. As a place of learning, it represents intellectual growth and refinement. The library contains a large number of books, catalogues, reading tables, and other reference literature illustrating its role as a place of education and underscoring the significance of information availability in the public domain. Naren's view of the library as "a treasure trove of knowledge" is yet another illustration of its role as a place of intellectual discourse. On the other hand, the library serves as a social space where people can communicate in a socially acceptable manner. From the perspective of the 1940s, the library offers a socially appropriate place for encounters of young men and women.

Significantly, what is much more important is that this movie depicts the library as a romantic place. All the dialogue, affection, playfulness, and eye contact between the protagonists take place in the library, making it an environment conducive to emotional and intimate encounters. Indeed, the song "Rooth Na Jana," set in a library, also emphasises the library's significance in the development of romance (Vidhu Vinod Chopra Films, 2012b). Thus, the example shows how cinema stories may associate the library not only with knowledge but also with familiarity and affection. This film presents knowledge and emotional growth as complementary experiences.

The research also sheds light on the symbolic importance of the library as a safe haven amid political upheaval. The movie is set against the backdrop of the fight for Indian independence and contrasts the violence and chaos of the outside world with the library's peaceful, systematic, and nurturing environment. Through such a portrayal, the library serves as a place where individual relationships can thrive even amid social and political discord.



Cover Page



The picture is consistent with current views on libraries, as today's perception of libraries is centred on their social involvement and community-oriented approach. Characteristics of the modern public library include accessibility, inclusivity, cultural engagement, and networking. All of these aspects are included in the concept of the library depicted in "The Library in 1942: A Love Story". The film challenges conventional stereotypes and contributes to a positive public image of libraries.

Ultimately, 1942: A Love Story is a great cinematic interpretation of the library as a place of intersection between knowledge, culture, socialisation, and love (Chopra, 1994). As the movie shows, libraries do not always function as educational institutions but can be regarded as places that contribute greatly to people's social and emotional lives. In addition, this paper makes an important contribution to the expanding literature on the subject by demonstrating how films influence public perceptions of library spaces.

Reference:

1. 1942: A love story (1994) - synopsis - imdb. IMDb. (n.d.). Accessed on 21 December 2025 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0109010/plotsummary/#synopsis>
2. 1942: A Love Story, Wikipedia. (n.d.). Wikipedia. Retrieved January 23, 2026, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1942:_A_Love_Story
3. Chopra, V. V. (Director). (1994, July 15). 1942: A Love story. Vinod Chopra Productions. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0109010/>
4. Morita, S., & Laksmi, L. (2018). Representation of Public Library Recreation Function in the film The Library (2015). PUSTABIBLIA Journal of Library and Information Science, 2(2), 163. <https://doi.org/10.18326/pustabiblia.v2i2.163-181>
5. Naskar, S. (2010). Tagore's vision on Education and libraries. Calcutta University Journal of Information Studies, 12, 134–137.
6. Naskar, S. (2019). An evolutionary journey in the method of preservation of information and libraries. In Trends in Lis education , research & practice IV: Libraries for all: exploring the role of public libraries and information center's for sustainable development (pp. 30–39). Rabindra Bharati University.
7. Naskar, S. (2025). INTEGRATING INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS IN MODERN LIBRARY SERVICES AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT. In REDSHINE Publication eBooks. <https://doi.org/10.25215/1105875024.05>.
8. Naskar, S., & Das, D. (2026). "Adda", identity, and digital culture: Negotiating Bengali informal public life through social media. *Journal of Social Review and Development*, 5(2), 70–73. <https://doi.org/10.64171/JSRD.5.2.70-73>
9. Picalho, A. C. (2025). Image of the librarian in five music videos: Narrative roles and stereotypes. *Tibannndaru: Jurnal Ilmu Perpustakaan Dan Informasi*, 9(2), 150–157. <https://journal.uwks.ac.id/Tibannndaru/article/view/4898/pdf>
10. Roy, P. (2025, November 22). 1942: A Love Story premieres its restored version at International Film Festival of India, re-release set for January. The Telegraph. <https://t2online.in/screen/bollywood/1942--a-love-story--premieres-its-restored-version-at-international-film-festival-of-india--re-release-set-for-january/2002293>
11. Sharma, A., & Naskar, S. (2026a). Portrayal of Indian libraries and librarians within the documentary films. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Research*, 12(2), 155–159. <https://www.socialsciencejournal.in/assets/archives/2026/vol12issue2/12164.pdf>
12. Sharma, A., & Naskar, S. (2026b). Representation of library infrastructure and professional identity of librarians in the web series Library EK Anokhi Varta: an Analytical study. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention (IJHSSI)*, 15(6), 13–18. <https://doi.org/10.35629/7722-15061318> ISSN (Online): 2319 – 7722, ISSN (Print): 2319 – 7714
13. Sharma, A., & Naskar, S. (2026c). Projection of the Library and the Librarian in the Movie 'The Storyteller': A Critical Review. *College Libraries*, 41(1), 47–53. Retrieved from <https://collegelibraries.in/index.php/CL/article/view/236>



Cover Page



-
14. Sood, S. (2020, January 5). 1942: A Love Story — the swansong that brought R.D. Burman back to stay. ThePrint. Retrieved December 24, 2026, from <https://theprint.in/feature/reel-take/1942-a-love-story-the-swansong-that-brought-r-d-burman-back-to-stay/344818/>
 15. Vidhu Vinod Chopra Films. (2012b, July 13). Rooth na Jaana 1942: A Love Story [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved December 9, 2025, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AavdSKP8Em0>