

A Study on Screen Adaptations from Literature with Reference to Chetan Bhagat's Novel

Manmeet Kaur¹, Divya Rastogi Kapoor²

^{1,2}Assistant Professors, Delhi Metropolitan Education, Sector-62, Noida.

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Abstract

In order to cater a huge audience, film makers from all over the world have adopted literature writings for movie making. The key purpose of these screen adaptations lies in giving visual appeal to the black and white words of the author's writings. Furthermore, there are restricted readers for different genres and subject of novel and literature respectively. But film making satisfies the hunger of a large heterogeneous audience with the element of 'entertainment'. The idea of screen adaptations dates back years ago when people had limited options for entertainment and recreational activities. The study is based on movies made in Bollywood which have been inspired by the writings of novelists. This is a qualitative research in which Chetan Bhagat's novel 'Five Point Someone' and '2 States' have been taken up by Bollywood film makers to make movies '3 Idiots' and '2 States' respectively. The research methodology will be content analysis that how writer's experience with words can make movie audience fall for it through the adaptations.

Keywords: Audience, Content analysis, Novels, Screen adaptations, Bollywood film maker, 2 States, five point someone

Introduction

Film spectators/audiences are important in making a movie a grand success. According to Cambridge Dictionary, "audience is the group of people together in one place to watch or listen to a play, film and someone speaking¹." Audiences are very important to grasp the content of media say as print, electronic and digital. Media these days is working and providing content keeping in view the target audience because it is the audience that makes the content popular to read and share. Cinema is the important medium to entertain and educate spectators by providing them valuable information. Cinema falls under different genres like romance, action, thriller, comedy, off beat,

cult, classic, animated and soon²⁽ⁱ⁾. In the year 2013, we have celebrated 100 years of Indian cinema which was started with the vision and passion of Dadasaheb Phalke, father of Indian cinema²⁽ⁱⁱ⁾. One mode of infotainment through cinema is screen adaptations from literature. From the studies of Goerge Bluestone (*Novels into Film 1954*), he argued that novel is a protean which is comprised of essays, letters, histories, epic, romance. Adding to it, he also argued that film is also a protean which has assimilated photography, music, dialogue, visible colour, audible sound³. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, "novel is an invented prose narrative of considerable length and a certain complexity that deals imaginatively with human experience. There may be two simple reasons why film

¹Newsonair.nic.in

²Cambridge Dictionary

³Wikipedia.org

Corresponding Author: Manmeet Kaur, Delhi Metropolitan Education, Sector-62, Noida.

E-mail Id: manmeetkaur08@gmail.com

Orcid Id: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9676-945X>

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makers choose novels or literature to make movies. First, Novels have in-built audience e.g. Chetan Bhagat's series which has been adapted by film makers to make a movie and showcase on big screen. The second reason is that the story is told which means the content is there; it just needs to be adapted but the process is not easy as it sounds. It has been observed that literature adaptation is not a new concept in Indian Cinema. Since the inception of Indian Cinema, film makers are taking references of literature and novels as the story line of their projects. In fact, the first ever full-length Indian silent feature film was an adaptation from a mythological character *Raja Harishchandra*. Since then, Indian filmmakers have directly or indirectly taken references from various mythological and social stories in order to make their films. PrakashJha's directorial commercial movie '*Rajneeti*', is regarded as a modern day "*Mahabharata*".

Literary works of various types and from various periods can be compared with films based on them. The researcher is able to recognize the similarities and differences between these two media and discover the literary qualities inherent in almost all genres cinema. By studying the art of film adaptation we are necessarily forced to make distinctions about the art forms being adapted and doing the adaptations.

Michael Klein and Gillian Parker discuss adaptation theories in *The English Novel and the Movies*, (NY: Ungar, 1981). They see three types of adaptation as:

1. "most films based on classic novels attempt to give the impression of being faithful, that is, literal, translations."
2. "retains the core of the structure of the narrative, while significantly re-interpreting, or in some cases de-constructing, the source text."
3. "regards the source merely as raw material, as simply the occasion for an original work".

Morris Beja in *Film and Literature*, (New York: Longman, 1977) sees two major "schools" of adaptation, and admits that they are oversimplified in his presentation:

1. The screenwriter believes that integrity of the original work be preserved, and therefore that it should not be tampered with and should in fact be uppermost in the adapter's mind.
2. The screenwriter believes that it's proper and in fact necessary to adapt the original work freely, in order to create -- in the different medium that is now being employed -- a new, different work of art with its own integrity.

Various questions arise while adapting one medium to other for audience's entertainment and to make two way flow of information like:

- What is lost and what is gained in the passage from page to screen?
- How can literary theory and film theory enable us to 'read' screen adaptations?
- How are screen adaptations affected by modes of production and reception?
- What effect will new technologies have on writing and reading literature?

Writing a screenplay is very different from writing a book. Yet, there have been many filmmakers who have succeeded in bringing a common platform for the book lovers and cinema lovers. Here's a list of Bollywood films that are based on ChetanBhagat's Novels:

3 Idiots: Directed by Raju Hirani, *3 Idiots in Hindi* and *Nanban in Tamil* is adapted from Chetan Bhagat's best-selling novel '*Five Point Someone*'. The film starring Aamir Khan, Kareena Kapoor, R. Madhavan, Sharman Joshi and Boman Irani as lead actors became the first highest grossing Bollywood movie.

Kai Po Che: The film is again based on Chetan Bhagat's novel '*The Three Mistakes of my life*' starring new faces Sushant Singh Rajput, Rajkummar Rao and Amit Sadh as the three main protagonists. Set in Ahmedabad, this novel adaptation is directed by Abhishek Kapoor.

Hello: The film is based on Chetan Bhagat's novel, '*One Night @ the Call Center*' directed by Atul Agnihotri.

2 States: The film was again adapted from Chetan Bhagat's novel '*2 States*'. Arjun Kapoor and Alia Bhatt starring 2 States is directed by Abhishek Varman is an Indian romantic-comedy film.

There are also various other films which are popular in terms of audience acceptability like

Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam (1962) Influenced from Bimal Mitra's Bengali novel '*Saheb Bibi Golam*' and was produced by Guru Dutt.

Tere Mere Sapne (1972) directed by Vijay Anand based on novel '*The Citadel*' by A J Cronin.

Pinjar (2003) Punjabi novel '*Pinjar*' by Amrita Pritam portrays Hindu-Muslim problems during the partition of India.

Namesake (2007) based on the first book by Jhumpa Lahiri was directed by director Mira Nair.

Umrao Jaan(1981) was a period film based on a Urdu novel '*Umrao Jaan Ada*' by Mirza Hadi Ruswa.

Black Friday(2007) film was based on a novel written by S. Hussain Zaidi and was directed by Anurag Kashyap.

Devdas (1955) was adapted by Bimal Roy starring Dilip Kumar, V Jayanthimala, Suchitra Sen based on 1917 Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay's novel '*Devdas*'.

Maqbool (2004) This film was based on William Shakespeare's famous play '*Macbeth*'.

Guide (1965) is based on a novel by RK Narayan with the same name '*Guide*'.

Omkara (2006) The film was directed by Vishal is an adaption of Shakespeare's novel '*Othello*'.

Parineeta (2005) This Bollywood musical film is based on a Bengali novel '*Parineeta*' by Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay.

Objectives

Every study is conducted with some objective. The present study is taken with an objective

- To study the popularity of screen adaptation among viewers
- To compare and analyse the characterisation, story and content between novels and movies

Hypothesis

In the words of Landberg, "A hypothesis is tentative generalization, the validity of which remains to be tested". Research Hypotheses is a prediction of the outcome of a study. It is assumption or supposition by the researcher which may be proved or may be disapproved. The Hypothesis for the present study:

1. Movies are more popular than literature or novels due to heterogeneous audience
2. Content is not always similar with that of the script of the movie

Research Methodology

The present study is based on content analysis which is a method for summarizing any form of content by counting various aspects of the content. This enables a more objective evaluation than comparing content based on the impressions of an audience. The content that is analysed can be in any form to begin with, but is often converted into written words before it is analysed. The original source can be printed publications, broadcast programs, other recordings, the internet, or live situations. If you're also doing audience research, the main reason for also doing content analysis is to be able to make links between causes (e.g. program content) and effect (e.g. audience size).

Literature Review

March 9, 2011 The Times of India, Sanat Savanali mentioned in the article '**Adaptation of novels and plays for films**' that

Marathi literature is playing an important role to entertain the regional cinema audience through cinema. Milind Bokil, Sanjay Jadhav, Rajesh Kolan and Majesh Manjrekar are few names to mention who have adopted the words of literature and transformed them into frames.

The Indian Express in its report "**Arjun Kapoor in adaptation of Chetan Bhagat's Revolution 2020**" stated that Arjun Kapoor once again has his eyes set on another love story created by novelist Chetan Bhagat's *Revolution 2020* in which he will be playing the role of Gopal.

The Indian Express in its report "**Mohit Suri to direct Chetan Bhagat's 'Half Girlfriend' film adaptation**", stated that Mohit Suri is set to direct the film adaptation of author Chetan Bhagat's upcoming novel '*Half Girlfriend*', which is about a Bihari boy who has fallen in love with a girl from upper class society. This will be Bhagat's sixth novel to be made into a film after '*3 Idiots*' based on '*Five Point Someone*', '*Hello*' based on '*One Night @ The Call Centre*', '*The Three Mistakes of My Life*' as '*Kai Po Che*', '*2 States*' based on '*2 States: The Story of My Marriage*' and a yet-untitled upcoming film based on '*Revolution 2020*'.

The Times of India dated May 13, 2014 in its report, "**2 States crosses the 100 crore mark at box-office**" stated that Chetan Bhagat's novel *2 States: The story of my Marriage* adapted for film *2 States* has shown good success at the box office. The audiences had shown excitement to watch the movie after reading the novel.

India times report stated that till 2013, movie *3 Idiots* was considered at the top of all for highest grossing worldwide. But after in year 2013, movie *Chennai Express* starring Shahrukh Khan and Deepika Padukone broke the record and entered in 400 crore club.

Differences between a novel and its screen adaptations

The fact which needs to be understood is that screen adaptations are different art form, and they are really something independent from the book. A novel is quite long and involved often running to over 250-300 pages or may be even longer. But on the contrary, the average film is around 90-120 minutes. And each minute of screen time on average is one page of screenplay. So the average screenplay runs 90-120 pages, and a lot of that is white space.

Another major difference between books and film is that visual images stimulate our perceptions directly, while written words can do this indirectly. Film is a more sensory experience than reading. Besides verbal language, there is also colour, movement, and sound.

Adding to it, film does not allow us the same freedom a novel does like to interact with the plot or characters by

imagining them in our minds. For some viewers, this is often the most frustrating aspect of turning a novel into a film for those who actually enjoys reading literature and novel. Audience behaves in a different manner. Sometimes they enjoy literature and sometimes they enjoy film. This is due to the reason filmmaking is restricted as far as time is considered. At times, plot has to change accordingly or filmmaker has to cut the scene which actually exists in novel.

Film adaptation is an art whose limits depend on a moving image, mass audience, and industrial production is bound to differ from an art whose limits depend on language, a limited audience, and individual creation.

But the theory of adaptation is a big question in academia. In April 2003 Oxford University held a conference, "Reading Screens: From text to film, TV and new media" which raised the following questions⁴:

- What is lost and what is gained in the passage from page to screen?
- How can literary theory and film theory enable us to 'read' screen adaptations?
- How are screen adaptations affected by modes of production and reception?
- What effect will new technologies have on writing and reading literature?

Indian cinema audiences have accepted the adaptations with optimism with a view to get entertainment. Apart from mythology, Indian cinema has adapted some masterworks of authors like Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, Rabindranath Tagore and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. Many of Satyajit Ray's films including *Pather Panchali*, *Apur Sansar* and *Shatranj Ke Khiladi* were made from the prevalent influences of Bengali and Hindi writers. Later in 1960s and 70s, novels of Gulshan Nanda became an inspiration for several hit films like *Kati Patang*, *Neel Kamal*, *Khilona* and *Sharmilee*.

Data Collection

The data collection is based on reading and watching Chetan Bhagat's novels '*2 States: The Story of My Marriage*' and *Five Point Someone* and its adaptations *2 States* and *3 Idiots* respectively. Here Chetan Bhagat's novels have been taken into consideration for analysis of content which afterwards adapted by filmmakers Abhishek Verma and Rajkumar Hirani to make entertaining movies for audiences.

Summary

2 States movie is inspired by Chetan Bhagat's novel *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*. The movie is a romantic story of a Punjabi boy who falls in love with a Tamil girl. The story depicts the cultural clash between them

and their families. Krish Malhotra (Arjun Kapoor) and Ananya Swaminathan (Alia Bhatt) who hailed from two different states of India fall deeply in love and want to get married. Now, as they have convinced their parents they are trying to make their parents meet and know each other. For this purpose, both families go for a holiday trip to Goa. Their dreams shattered as Ananya's parents find something fishy between Krish's mom and him. Ananya's family finally ended up deciding that Krish and Ananya cannot marry each other. But at last Krish's father who was like an enemy for Krish, helped Krish and Ananya to get married. Krish's father met Ananya's family and convinced them for marriage. They really had very hard time to convince each other's parents and finally get married. The couple had two kids.

Novel

2 States - The Story of My Marriage is the second Chetan Bhagat book after *Five Point Someone* which is entirely based on his personal life. Chetan wrote this novel after he quit his job at an investment bank. The book is partially autobiographical, revolves around the lives of Krish (Punjabi Boy) and Ananya (Tamilian girl) belonging to different states of India and the problems they face in convincing parents to give consent to their marriage. The best part of the book is the choice of narrator which happens to be Chetan himself as Krish. He comes across as level-headed, sharp-witted and genuinely nice so that even when the action starts to loosen, you remain interested in the twists and turns of his life.

3 Idiots

3 Idiots is the story about 3 individuals Ranchodas Shyamaldas Chanchad alias Rancho (Aamir Khan), Raju Rastogi (Sharman Joshi) and Farhan Qureshi (R Madhavan) and their vile, vindictive college director Viru Sahastrabudhe alias Virus. Now it is about 3 friends with different backgrounds who meet at one of the most prestigious college "Imperial College of Engineering". Story revolves around Farhan and Raju who are in search of their missing friend the intelligent and Unique Rancho. Rancho is the one who influences his friends to take right path and suddenly disappears after completing college.

Novel Five Point Someone

This novel is about what not to do in IIT. It is one of the bestselling books which talks on 3 IIT-ians who try to be different from the usual geeks due to which life takes a roller coaster ride. The main characters in this story are Hari Kumar (yet another ordinary guy who tries to be others), Ryan Oberoi (The Brilliant rich and spoilt guy who

⁴<http://www.britishcouncil.org/seminars-themes-arts-0331.htm>

wants to be unique in everything) and Alok (boy from poor back ground twined with family problems), Neha (Hari's girl-friend and the daughter of the HOD of department in

IIT), Viru (A strict usual IIT-ian faculty who judges students only on GPA), IIT campus (integral part of the story where all important episodes takes place).

Tabulation

Parameters	Novel-- 2 States	Movie-- 2 States
Earnings	Bestseller	60.77cr + 21.5cr ⁵
Popularity	Youth	Universal
Characterisation	Detailed and elaborated	Names changed as per the script demands
Audience/reader acceptability	Very High	Very High
Climax	Happy ending	Same as of book
Star Ratings	4.5 (source Amazon)	3.5 (source Filmybeats)

Parameters	Novel—Five point Someone	Movie—3 Idiots
Earnings	Bestseller	202 cr + 100 Cr*
Popularity	Youth	Universal
Characterisation	Detailed and elaborated	Same names
Audience/reader acceptability	Very High	Very High
Climax	Happy ending	Different from book
Star rating	3.43 (source goodreads)	4 (source IMBD)

*Domestic Box office collection + Overseas Box Office Collection

Results and Analysis

From this research paper, it has been observed that novel is a detailed and stretched form of description which elaborates the scene, character and makes imaginative images in the mind of a reader. The major challenge of a filmmaker is to make a movie in a limited time frame as per the audience choice. These days it has been observed that spectators have become selective in terms of content and genera of the films. Readers when become film spectators started relating the characters of novels in the movie. They have some imaginative images in their minds after reading novels. A bestseller was a book that sold approximately 5,000 copies but today, a bestseller is considered to be a book to sell maximum of 10,000 copies. This shows a robustly growing market with high expectation of readers from their favourite novelist/writer. 2 States movie has crossed 102 crores of box office collection after four weeks and had declared a hit. It had entered the 100 crore club where several parameters played an important role for making it a big hit. Arjun Kapoor- Aliya Bhatt fresh pair, script adapted from famous Indian novelist Chetan Bhagat and supporting cast of talented actors like Revathy, Amrita Singh and Ronit Roy added extra bonus to the success of the movie.

If we look upon the revenue of movie 3 Idiots directed by Rajkumar Hirani, it was the first movie in the history of Indian Cinema to enter into the 100 crore business club.

Novel 2 States: The Story of My Marriage v/s Movie 2 States

Similarities

2 States is a story of Krish (A Punjabi) and Ananya (Tamilian) who meet each other at India's best educational institution, IIM-A, became friends, fall in love and eventually plan to get married. They started convincing their parents and their to-be in laws instead of separating from each other. 2 States involved the culture, tradition, mind-set, way of living of Krish and Ananya's parents. Krish and Ananya struggle a lot and finally make it to a big Indian wedding and afterwards blessed with two sons.

Differences

There were not many differences between the novel and movie. But the second part of the film which was the crux to the whole story, seemed like quite hurriedly taken. As novel is the lengthy version of the story, the limitation of the movie to make it short and timely. A few scenes included

⁵Business standard

in promo were cut off, just not to hurt the sentiments of the South Indians. There were some changes with the Companies where Krish and Ananya got placed. Also, the boring episodes of Krish getting transferred, his boss and his colleagues at Chennai are omitted.

Novel Five Point Someone v/s Movie 3 Idiots

Similarities

Broadly speaking, the plot of the film is the same as the book. Both stories are about three students of an engineering college who form an inseparable friendship over incidents that take place in the college. The three characters in the book are very similar to those of the movie. While one of them - Ryan (Aamir as Rancho) is radical and thinks differently from the rest, the second boy Hari (Madhavan as Farhaan) is a confused character. The book's third character Alok (Sharman as Raju) is facing severe financial and domestic pressures. Some dialogues in the movie like the examiner looked at me as if I had asked for his kidneys and define machine seems to be a straight taken from the book. In the book, Neha (Kareena as Pia) tells her dad Cherian (Professor Viru played by Boman Irani) why her brother committed suicide due to the latter's demanding and dominating behaviour. Similar episode takes place in the film as well. However, the book talks about this incident in much more detail than the movie which covers this in a single scene.

Differences

Though the narrators are the same, the narrator of the book Hari romances the professor's daughter, the filmmakers give the romantic mileage to Rancho. The paper stealing episode is the turning point of the book. It causes Alok to jump out of the window to commit suicide. This scene however, is twisted in the movie as Raju jumps out of the window because Boman decides to rusticate him because of hooliganism. The biggest difference comes in the second half of the movie. While the book finishes at graduation, the film goes beyond it and builds on the future of the characters till 10 years later. It talks about how their careers have shaped and how their mediocrity in college played into the future.

Conclusion

According to Poulomi Chatterjee, managing editor of Hachette India, few years back, fiction was restricted to literary fiction and foreign fiction which was enjoyed by and perhaps even accessible to a smaller demography. But now, people are reading home-grown popular fiction. The younger generations would not like to read fiction perhaps. Apart from the campus novel an attempt has been made by various writers to write novels of different genres like romance, humour, crime and thrillers, adventure and even

science fiction. The movie was said to be adaption of the book. Though the screenplay, script travels differently that one cannot deny the fact that it is an initiative for making the adaptations and literature popular.

H-1 Movies are more popular than literature or novels due to heterogeneous audience.

H-2 Content is not always similar with that of the script of the movie.

From this research it has seen that it's not only movies which are popular among audiences. Booklovers are still alive who are fond of reading books with a cup of coffee. Booklovers have made literature still alive in their hearts and minds. From star ratings and bookselling revenues of books, literature is still enjoying its space and charm in the hearts and minds of the readers. Because filmmakers have to consider the taste of audience, the demand of the present time and target audience as per the place and country, it forces the script to be changed from the original novel to make the authenticity of both the medium. To conclude, literature plays a very important role in every aspect which gives meanings and words to expressions and feelings.

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