

**FROM PAPER TO SCREEN: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ONSCREEN  
ADAPTATIONS FROM LITERATURE WITH REFERENCETO THE  
GUIDE , TRAIN TO PAKISTAN AND PINJAR**

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**Abstract**

Man, being socially hungry creature, is always on a ride to know more information, what others are doing, how they are enacting and why? These questions make us rely on literature made available to us, films inspired by the literature and everything that portrays the culture only to walk along with the society updated and informed. 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. 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.

This study is based on three Bollywood movies i.e. 'Guide', 'Train to Pakistan' and 'Pinjar' which have been inspired by R.K. Narayan's *The Guide*, Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar*. 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:** Screen Adaptations, Bollywood Film maker, Content analysis, Audience, Novels.

**Introduction**

Literature has been a way of artistic expression for centuries now. Writers have told tales about gods and goddesses, heroes and their valiant victories, historical epics, romantic tragedies, comic incidents, legendary episodes, and much more. Cinema is by far doing the same thing for quite a few years now. One major strong point in cinema, which is absent in literature, is the advantage of visually showing the whole picture on the screen that helps the audience connect with the moment more closely. What writers of these literatures are blessed with are the Indian Film directors, who have time and again found their interests within the enlightening or hard hitting and petrifying truths enclosed

within the well-researched and knitted content. Films in India often reflect politics, culture, poverty, corruption, patriarchy and over and all disposes the very essence of our culture. Inspired by novels or literature that embraced the culturist value, directors have triumphed the action of putting life into the meaningful framed words. If literature has an impact on culture, so does a Film based upon it; to a greater extent. Indian Films like 'Hyderabad Blues' by Kukunoor, 'Salaam Bombay' by Meera Nair, 'Choker Bali' by Rituparno Ghosh, 'Devdas' by Bhansali, 'Water', one of the trilogy by Deepa Mehta and 'Slumdog Millionaire' by Danny Boyle portrays the life and its situation of Indian society.

For a long time, there has existed an interrelationship and mutual influence between literature and other forms of artistic expressions. This has resulted in painting and music based on works of fiction, drama and poetry, as well as literary works emulating pictorial styles and musical structures. The creative exchange between literature and film was initiated in the last decade of the 19th Century. Initially, film was most related to photography and painting. With the passage of the time, many changes have been made in the film industry. As scientific development advances, many new techniques have been adopted in the film making process. With the help of camera, sound and animation, film has become very interesting and audience catching. In the ancient time, people were fond of watching dramas and with the advent of film industry; the interest of watching drama has changed into watching films. There is a grand and interesting history of the origin and development of Indian film industry, i.e. Bollywood.

Cinema and Literature are two distinct but equally extraordinary works of art. Where literature was a popular form of expression during the 18th and 19th century, cinema has taken its place by the 20th century onwards. There has been a changing trend in the representation of Indian films through the years. The way movies were made in the 1950s is completely different from the way it is done in the twenty first century. Most movies generally like to deliver what the audience desired, and thus the main reason for the shift in the theme and plot of movies would be the shift in the mind-set of the people watching it. 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. Being the largest film producing nation, Indians never fall behind in lacking stories or concept for the films. Apart from trying our creative talent on comedy, fiction, romance, action, horror or thriller, we have always relied upon literature in search for virtuous stories; while every film genre has an Indian social connection for sure which is a reflection of the culture. Though book worms often argue and are unhappy of the adoptions saying, "never judge a book by the Film", there are majority

who loves these book stories turned into life within the frames. The time consumption of adapting is huge because primarily the literature is some or the other way related to the culture and keeping the same tone, connecting with the audience interest a writer/director has to adapt the reflection of the society as a secondary significant task; it becomes more complex if the genre is historical. Examples of Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Ritwik Ghatak, and Shyam Benegal who have had flawlessly transformed many novel words to screen dialogues is inspiring.

### **Films Based on Literature**

There are many films based on literature. At the time of adaptation, many changes have been made to make the films interesting and eye catching. Numerous films have been made from literature. Some of the Films adapted from Indian literature are: 'Pinjar' - One of the most appreciated works of Amrita Pritam, *Pinjar* is a story set in India's partition. On a screen version, with the same name in 2003 the story defines hardships faced by the rural Indian women who were restricted with society laws.'Shatranj Ke Khiladi' - Directed and adapted by Satyajit Ray in 1977, the film is inspired by a book story with the same name by Munshi Premchand revolving around struggle for Independence and dissolution of the princely states. 'Saawariya' - A story inspired by Fyodor Dostoevsky's short story 'White Nights', is adapted by Sanjay Leela Bhansali in 2007.

There are many such Bollywood films which take inspiration from the novels, just like 'Ramleela' by Sanjay Leela Bhansali was inspired by William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Chetan Bhagat's *Two States* adaption into the same name film was the complete reflection of the society and its fight against the losing the love to caste. People tend to relate more when the book/story/concept is transformed into a film.

. Films like 'Jane Eyre', 'Les Misérables', 'The Great Gatsby', 'Wuthering Heights', 'Anna Karenina', 'The Importance of Being Earnest', 'Pride and Prejudice', 'Moby Dick', 'Guide', 'Omkaara' 'Parineeta', '3 Idiots', 'Kai Po Che', 'The Blue Umbrella', 'Tere Mere Sapne', 'Pinjar', 'Namesake', '2 State's', 'Train to Pakistan', 'Tamas' etc are based on literature. Sometimes it may happen that literature is more interesting than films and sometime films are more interesting than original text.

### **Results and Discussions**

As far as title of the paper is concerned, this paper discusses in detail R.K. Narayan's *The Guide*, Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and Amrita Pritam's novel *Pinjar* respectively.

### ***The Guide* (Novel) & 'Guide'(Film) - Similarities and Differences**

*The Guide* is a novel by R.K. Narayan, published in 1958. Like most of Narayan's works the novel is based on Malgudi, the fictional town in South India. The novel

describes the transformation of the protagonist, Raju, from a tour guide to a spiritual guide and then one of the greatest holy men of India. The novel brought its author the 1960 Sahitya Akademi Award for English, by the Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters. It is a story of a common guide Raju. Raju performs his duty as a railway guide of Malgudi. Rosie is a heroine of the novel who is a dancer marries to a scholar Marco. Marco is an archaeologist who is always busy with his research work and he does not pay attention to his beautiful and pretty wife Rosie. With the course of time she falls in love with Raju. His husband leaves her and she lives with Raju against his orthodox mother. With the help of Raju, Rosie becomes a famous and successful dancer. However apart from the core story of Raju, Rosie and Marco many episodes and incidents like Raju's childhood, Raju's father's shop business, Raju's mother talk with her brother etc. have been developed by Narayan fully. Raju is arrested by the police for his malpractice and on his release from jail he does not return to his village and roams here and there and eventually reaches at another village, by an innocent villager Velan he is misunderstood as a saint. All the villagers worship him like a great saint and they have great faith in him. As a result, he has to make fast for twelve days to please the God of rain and at the end of the novel Raju scarifies and rain falls.

'Guide' is a Hindi romantic film, directed by Vijay Anand. The film was released in 1965. Dev Anand and Waheeda Rehman play as a leading character in the film. A 120-minute U.S. version was written by Pearl S. Buck, and directed and produced by Tad Danielewski. The film was screened at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival, 42 years after its release.

The movie opens with Raju (Dev Anand) being released from jail. Raju was a freelance guide, who earned his living by taking tourists to historic sites. One day, a wealthy and aging archaeologist, Marco (Kishore Sahu) comes to the city with his young wife Rosie (Waheeda Rehman), the daughter of a courtesan. Marco wants to do some research on the caves outside the city and hires Raju as his guide. Marco is very busy with his research meanwhile his wife Rosie wants to visit many historical places with her husband but he refuses to come with her and orders Raju to show him various historical places. With the passage of time, both Rosie and Raju develop feelings of love, visit many places, and exchange their ideas, thoughts and feelings with each other. One day on returning from her visit, Rosie goes to meet Marco at the cave where he is generally busy with his research work and finds a girl making love with him. She decides to leave her husband and runs in anger. Raju helps her and offers a shelter in her home against his mother's wish. With the course of the time many incidents take place and movie moves ahead. Raju makes her a famous dancer and he sets her schedule of her dance program. He is arrested by the police for his malpractice. Thus, he ruins his life and business both

at a time. Due to his good conduct in the jail, his punishment is lessening down and he is released earlier than the decided date. He reaches another village where he is mistaken as a saint by an innocent villager and he tells his entire story. All the villagers believe him a great saint and have great faith in him. He has to make fast for the villagers to please the God of rain. At the end of the film his mother and Rosie both come to meet him and he dies by hoping that rain may fall.

Certain changes have been made by the filmmaker in the film. First of all, the filmmaker changes the background of the story from Malgudi to Rajasthan. He also uses the flashback techniques in the film. Many incidents like Raju's childhood, his father's shop business, Marco's conduct etc. have been eliminated from the film. Romantic songs and scenes are added to make the film interesting. Thus, both film and novel are interesting in their own way.

### ***Train to Pakistan* (Novel) & 'Train to Pakistan'(Film) - Similarities and Differences**

*Train to Pakistan* is a novel by Khushwant Singh published in 1956. Originally, it was published as *Mano Majra*, a masterpiece containing perfect narrative sequences, artistically planned plot and characters full of life can be coined as the first major Indian English novel on Partition. As V.A. Shahne opines, "It is a grim story of individuals and communities caught into the vortex of the partition of undivided India into two states in 1947" (Shahne 332).

The novel can be divided into four parts viz. (i) Dacoity, (ii) Kaliyug, (iii) Mano Majra, and (iv) Karma. These sub-titles are characteristically Indian.

The novel is set in a small village, Mano Majra, of Punjab province on the Indo-Pak border in 1947, where the action and interaction of the characters and events of the novel take place. When the Indian sub-continent was passing through the most turbulent period of its history, the Partition accompanied with migration, civil war communal riots, mass killings, women raped and abducted, children injured and property destroyed, the tiny village Mano Majra seems to be away from the communal problems and fratricidal conflict. Sikhs and Muslims, equal in number, live like brothers at Mano Majra. The simple and innocent people dwelling here are still unaware of the things happening outside their village.

However, the peaceful life of Mano Majra people is disturbed by Mali and his friends, the dacoits, and their routine chores are churned into bits by an untimely arrival of a train from Pakistan. Mali, a dacoit, with his gang murders a money lender – Lala Ramlal, who refuses to part with his treasury. After committing the crime and before leaving the village, these dacoits throw a few bangles in the house of Jugga, Jaggat Singh. He is a local dacoit, who had served several sentences in the past and was ordered by the local police not to leave his house after sunset. But at the time of Lala Ramlal's murder

he was with Nooran, the Muslim weaver's daughter, in the outskirts of Mano Majra. When Nooran and Jugga return to the village, they find people disturbed due to the dacoit and murder.

Hukumchand, the recently transferred divisional commissioner, is staying in the officer's rest house. He is engaged that night in a sensual and sexual affair with a teen aged prostitute Haseena. Soon, disturbed by the gunshots and chaos, he leaves the girl and goes to enquire about the happenings. The police come to Mano Majra the next day to collect the details of the happening. The same day, an educated man Iqbal, who calls himself a socialist, comes to Mano Majra by a train and settles at the Gurudwara. He has been sent there for the political enlightenment of the people. Iqbal, not for once also, reveals his religion. Both Jugga and Iqbal are held by police on the charge of murdering Lala Ramlal. Hukumchand orders serve action to get the truth out from both of them. On the other hand, a little disturbed Mano Majra gets the major attack very soon. The peaceful atmosphere of the village soon sees its end.

The events start moving fast. Dark clouds of fear and distrust start hovering over the Muslims and Sikhs of the village. Brotherhood and unity start giving space to apprehensions and hatred. Muslims evacuate their houses and leave for Chandannagar camp for shelter and to be transported to Pakistan soon later.

The arrival of Sikhs from outside and the news of beastly atrocities on them and their brothers in Pakistan bring the attitude of the people to crisis. The Sikh and Hindu fanatics decide to take revenge upon Muslim for what they had done to Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan. They plan to blow up the train that was to carry Muslim refugees to Pakistan. Both Nooran with Jugga's child in her womb and Haseena are to go to Pakistan by the same train.

Hukumchand experiences helplessness about the nearby ghastly future. He takes a chance by releasing Jugga and Iqbal. He feels that either of the two would be able to save the train. But Iqbal, like Hukumchand feels helpless and withdraws. Jugga comes to know about Nooran and the plan to blow the train. Nooran was also travelling by the same train. He determines to save her. He goes to the bridge and cuts the rope connecting the explosive material with his 'Kirpan' and lets the train cross the border safely. The intention was just one: to save Nooran's life. In the process, he is shot by the Sikh fanatics. Jugga falls on the railway track and the train to Pakistan runs past his body carrying other people along with Nooran safely to their destined station.

'Train to Pakistan' is a Hindi film released in 1998 and directed by Pamela Rooks. It sets in Mano Majra which is a silent village on the border of India and Pakistan, close to where the railway line crosses the Sutlej River. The film develops around the love affair of small-time dacoit Juggut Singh (Nirmal Pandey), with a local Muslim girl,

Nooran (Smriti Mishra). Mano Majra incidentally was the original title of the book upon its release in 1956. The villagers are a mix of Sikhs and Muslims, who live in harmony. The Sikhs own most of the land, and the Muslims work as labourers. During the summer of 1947, when the Partition of India was taking place, the entire country was a hotbed of extremism and intolerance. The Muslims in India moved towards the newly formed Pakistan, and the Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan migrated to refugee camps in India. One day, a train arrives from Pakistan, which carries bodies of all the travellers who have been butchered while they tried to depart from Pakistan. That is when this quiet village is changed forever. The entire film is based on the original novel. Mohan Agashe played his role as Hukum Chand, Nirmal Pandey as Jaggat Singh, Jagaa, Rajit Kapoor as Iqbal, Smriti Mishra as Nooran, Divya Dutta as the Muslim prostitute girl, Mangal Dhillon as the Sub Inspector in the film.

Singh's novel was thematically quite strong and appealing and to adapt it on a silver screen was a challenging task. And Rooks was not an exception. Neither has Rooks excluded much from the novel, nor has she included anything from any other sources. But she has introduced a few alternatives in the characters belonging to the original work. Rooks, in the screen adaptation has presented Hukumchand, the District Magistrate and Deputy Commissioner reminisce the past of Mano Majra. Unlike Khushwant Singh, Rooks has tried to balance the ghost train and bodies in the river (Sikhs and Hindus massacred by Muslims) by showing Sikh Militants looting the Muslims of Mano Majra. Pamela Rooks has tried her best to render it on the screen. It does depict horror and trauma of the Partition period being faithful to the source text. It is too accurate and thus upto certain extent helps the less perspective reader to understand the novel and to appreciate it better. It faithfully retains the attributes

### ***Pinjar* (Novel) & 'Pinjar'(Film) - Similarities and Differences**

*Pinjar* is a novel written by Amrita Pritam, recipient of Bhartiya Gyanpith Award. It has been later translated into English entitled as *The Skeleton* by Khushwant Singh. The novel published in 1950, soon after Partition. In 2003, almost after fifty years the novel has been brought on screen by Chankya fame director Chandraprakash Dwivedi. In the words of D. R. More, "Pinjar is remarkable for its poetic presentment of the theme of the exploitation of the weaker sex on the background of the partition tragedy" (More235).

The novel deals with the exploitation of the women by the men. Though the novel has the background of the partition, it differs from other partition novels. In novel, the play of love and hate, the complexities of human mind above all the predicament of the abducted women are depicted the background of the partition-tragedy.

In *The Skeleton*, Amrita Pritam tells us the story of a worn Pooro, who is first abducted and then married by a Muslim boy named Rashida, and her final reconciliation with her fate. She longs to a family of moneylenders of Chatto, a village in the Punjab. She is young and beautiful and her marriage is fixed with young and handsome youth, Ram Chand from Rattoval, neighbouring village. But unfortunately, Rashida, a Muslim boy has his eye on her for a long time, abducts and takes her home and finally marries her. The ill-starred and disappointed Pooro escapes from Rashida's house and goes back to her parents who ask her to back to Rashida. As the parents close their doors upon her, she goes back to Rashida, adjusts herself with him and in the course time gives birth to a child. Now she is given a Muslim name Hamida. Pooro-turned-Hamida, however, finds it very difficult live in the Muslim house.

About this time, the partition fever soars up and all no Muslims have to undergo several trials and tribulations. After partition, turmoil is over; the Indian police and army come to take the abducted Hindu and Sikh girls to their homes. Many women go to India happily but Pooro decides to live with her husband and son in newly created Pakistan. It is on this note of Pooro's reconciliation with the changed circumstances that the novel ends. Thus, in the novel, Amrita Pritam has presented her own experience of partition.

'Pinjar' is a Hindi film directed by Chandraprakash Dwivedi and released in 2003. The film is totally based on the English novel *The Skeleton* by Amrita Pritam. Almost all the episodes are taken from the original novel. To make it more interesting, certain cinematographic changes have been made. The film sets during the partition time i.e. the Hindu-Muslim problems during the partition of India. Urmila Matondkar, Manoj Bajpayee and Sanjay Suri are in the lead roles in the film. Besides critical acclaim, the film also won the National Film Award for Best Feature Film on National Integration.

The novel *Pinjar* is a sad tale of sufferings of Pooro and other females starting from pre-partition period in 1936 followed by abductions of females during Partition of the sub-continent. The film *Pinjar* is about the same sufferings and exploitations of Pooro and other females but at the eve of Partition. Pooro's suffering on the screen start in 1946 and extends up to 1947 where the film ends. Dwivedi does not lengthen Pooro's suffering for eleven long years. He also decreases the number of sufferers as compared to the novel *Pinjar*. There is no reference to Kammo or Tara's characters or their sufferings. The mad woman played by Seema Biswas, the Hindu female refugee whom Pooro helps to reach the Hindu camp and Laajo are the only sufferers shown on the screen. One of the reasons could be that he wishes to focus more on the core events and centralize the major characters, and through access to their psyche, wants his viewers to re-experience the event of partition and the novel too.



Thus, the victims are depicted more as sufferers of communalism during the Partition period. There is a shift in the time period and degree of sorrow and also in the number of the sufferers. This reduction in tragedy helps to balance the audience's capacity of enduring it. Tragedy on the screen does fulfil the function of Catharsis. But too much of tragedy, especially on the screen may dilute the effect and prove melodramatic. The reducing of the time period turns the story purely a Partition film.

### **Conclusion**

Thus, it can be said that Literature and film are the different branches of the same tree. Though both these arts have certain connections and differences, both have a similarity of taking its readers/audience to a different world. Creators of both film and literature are sailing in the same boat. They share a same passion for expressing ideas and emotions and transporting us into different worlds, real and imaginary. Many films are based on the literature and many fictions are also made from the films. Both have their effects on each other. That's why it is true to say that Literature and Bollywood are made for each other. 'Pinjar', 'Train to Pakistan' and 'Guide' are readers and audience catching films and novels. So, literature plays a very important role in every aspect which gives meanings and words to expressions and feelings.

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