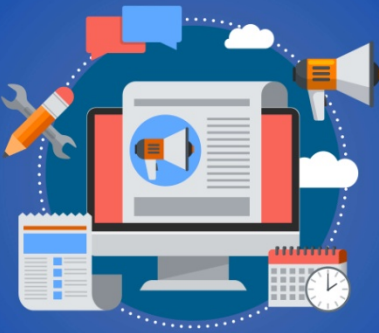


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The Legends of Rajasthan in Indian Cinema

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Abstract:

Literature and cinema both are popular and important part of human entertainment. Literature has its root in society from a long time. Even before the invention of writing, literature was present in the form of folk literature or oral literature. Although cinema came in the zone of entertainment long after literature but it had made a considerable place for itself. Cinema has bigger reach in the masses in comparison of literature. Cinema does a fantabulous work in preserving the literary works. Over the period of time several pieces of literary art have been adapted into movies. Sometimes the impact of the stories of the regional literature is so powerful that the renowned film makers can't behold themselves back to not to make a movie on the popular stories. The legendary lives of Rajasthan kings, queens and warriors have intrigued the Indian film makers. That's why the larger than life stories of King Prithviraj Chauhan, Maharana Pratap, Veer Amar Singh Rathore, Durgadas Rathore and queen Padmavati have been presented on the big screen by Indian film makers. The legends of Rajasthan have such universal appeal in their stories that it attracts all kinds of people from the various regions of the country.

Keywords: Indian literature, Indian cinema, Rajasthan, legends, movie adaptations, folk literature.

Introduction:

Cinema and literature both are enormous part of human entertainment. Literature is often considered as the mirror of society. Cinema has its reach to the masses. To watch cinema it is not necessary to be educated, but to read literature education is must. Cinema is the optimal medium to deliver literature to the common people. The adaption of literature increases its reach into the masses. Where literature provides a person freedom to contemplate the words and imagine things on his own, cinema presents that imagination in virtual form through technology.

Literature and cinema both have righteous effects on the people. Literature and cinema both are created and inspired by the society and influence society in return. Fiction delivers the message more entertainingly in comparison of nonfiction among the people. Literature was one of the crucial part of entertainment when there was no cinema and now when cinema exists, it has increased the reach of literature among the people through its adaption.

Review of literature:

Literature has been a tremendous source of inspiration and adaption for movies. The folk literature is considered as the oldest form of literature. The folk literature has survived in oral form in the various parts of the world and it makes it distinctive from the written literature. Cinema gives the old and timeless stories perseverance and aid them to survive from oblivion.

Rajasthani folk literature possess many terrific stories of the region of Rajasthan, India. The description of love, hatred, revenge, war and magic in the folk stories and songs in the folk literature inspired Indian film industry to pay their attention towards it and make movies on them. The reigns of the kings and their great love stories have been the centre of attraction of the Indian film directors.

1. Queen Padmavati:

Padmavat the story of a beautiful virtuous queen stalked by a cruel tyrant was composed by Malik Mohammed Jayasi. He described in his epic poem queen Padmavati of Singhal Island (now Sri Lanka) daughter of king Gandharwasen married to Ratan Singh of Chittorgarh. Jayasi described in his epic a parrot of Chittorgarh, who flies and joins the court of Allauddin Khilji, Mughal emperor. The Mughal emperor after hearing about the eye capturing beauty description of queen Padmavati from the parrot decides to abduct the queen. In his further plan he tricks Ratan Singh, queen's husband and kidnaps him. Gora and Badal the brave warriors of Chittorgarh go and set the king free. In Ratan Singh's absence the king of Kumbhalner Devpal sends proposal to queen padmavati to marry him. The enraged king Ratan Singh involves in a battle with Devpal and after getting him killed Ratan Singh gets mortally injured, and eventually dies in the battle. Allauddin Khilji when comes to know about kings sudden demise, decides to grab the opportunity to abduct the queen, Padmavati. On the other side Padmavati with her fellow

women of Chittorgarh palace commits mass suicide by jumping into the pool of fire, known as “Jauhar”.

Malik Mohammed Jayasi a Sufi poet of 16th century wrote the epic poem “Padmawat” in 1540. The original epic poem later inspired the other versions of the poem in different languages. This poem was also a major source of inspiration and adaption of movies and television series.

Sutapa Basu the author of the book “Padmavati: the queen tells her own story” published in 2017 goes to the roots of the history of queen Padmavati’s existence. She has visited the palace and has given the details about the “Jauhar” in her book.

Ramya Sreenivasan in the introduction of her book “The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen” states that one of the oldest Indian comic book “Amar Chitra Katha” subtitled as “the glorious heritage of India” claims the credibility of the queen as a historical person and not as just a work of fiction. The book has depicted the queen as a powerful historical queen who denied to bend the knees in front of a Mughal emperor and sacrificed her life protecting her sanctity.

The renowned Indian film director Jaswant Jhawari directed a movie on queen padmavati in 1964, entitled “Rani Padmini”. In this movie Ratan Singh duels with Khilji. Ratan Singh dies in the arms of Khilji, who at the end announces Padmavati as his sister. In 2018 Sanjay Leela Bhansali directed movie “Padmaavat” got released. The movie created a major controversy in the whole nation. Bhansali said his movie was inspired by Jayasi’s Padmavat and is not based on the real history of the queen as many historical facts were manipulated in the movie.

2. Amar Singh Rathore:

Rajvi Amar Singh in his book “The Medieval History of Rajasthan: Western Rajasthan” described Amar Singh Rathore of Nagour as a brave courtier later turned a rebel of the court of Mughal emperor Shahjahan. Amar Singh was once a celebrated warrior of Mughal dynasty later turned as a big threat to the king. Rajvi further stated in his book that Amar Singh who was once on a visit to Agra fort was insulted by Mughal emperor’s brother in law Salabat Khan in his absence. The offended Rajput warrior Amar Singh beheaded Salabat Khan, killed all his soldiers and escaped from the fort without a single injury. Later the furious emperor gave orders to kill him. No one even dared to face Amar Singh, but his brother in law Arjun Singh in the temptation of getting reward from

the emperor, backstabbed and killed Amar Singh. Though later he too was killed by the men of emperor.

According to the official website of Agra tourism the gate from where Amar Singh Rathore had escaped renamed by Shahjahan from “Akbar gate” to “Amar Singh gate” to honour his bravery and to penance over his mistake. But some historians has also belief that Shahjahan considered it as an insult of the Mughal dynasty and he stopped the usage of that gate, later the British rulers renamed it to honour the chivalry of the fearless Rajput warrior.

The Indian cinema presented the glorious life of Amar Singh Rathore on big screen in 1957. The movie was directed by Jaswant Jhaveri and entitled “Veer Amar Singh Rathore”. The lead characters were played by Jairaj and Nirupa Roy. The chivalry of Amar Singh Rathore is still sung in folk Rajasthani songs and stories.

3. Durgadas Rathore :

The book “Bharat Ke 1235 Varshiya Swatantrata Sangram Ka Itihas volume 4” has detailed the description of a brave Rajasthani warrior Durgadas Rathore. Durgadas Rathore was the son of Askaran Rathore a Rajput minister in the court of the king of Marwar dynasty’s Jaswant Singh, born in 1638 in Jodhpur

L.S. Rathore in his book “Veer Durgadas Rathore: an epic” has discussed the chivalry of Durgadas Rathore. After the death of Jaswant Singh, king of Marwar dynasty in 1678, Durgadas Rathore protected the infant baby of the king from the enemy emperor of Mughal dynasty, Aurangzeb. Defeating all the plans to kill the prince and himself by the hands of enemies the brave warrior made the prince king of Marwar dynasty in 1707.

The folk stories and folk songs of Rajasthan still celebrates the chivalry of the brave warrior Durgadas Rathore. Indian cinema too hasn’t left behind of being impressed from Durgadas Rathore. The renowned film director Ramchandra Thakur directed the movie “Veer Durgadas Rathore” in 1960. The black and white movie was well received by the viewers.

4. Maharana Pratap:

Maharana Pratap belonged to the Sisodiya clan of Mewar dynasty. Maharana pratap was born in the Kumbhalgarh fort on 9th may in 1540. He is one among the most

celebrated king of Indian history. With the dispute with his own family, Maharana Pratap was crowned as the king by the nobility of Mewar in 1572. Dr. Bhawani Singh Rana in his 2003 book “Maharana Pratap” wrote that in 1568 the Sisodiya royal family lost the fertile land of east sides to the Mughals. Akbar, the Mughal emperor wanted Maharana to bend the knee before him but he denied.

The renowned Hindi poet Suryakant Tripathi “Nirala” in his 1988 published book “Maharana Pratap” described that Maharana’s decision enraged Akbar, who sent his commander Man Singh to fight against Maharana Pratap in the battle of Haldighati. Although the Mughals won the battle in 1576 but they didn’t succeed to capture Maharana. Maharana denied to live in palace and other royal luxuries until he got his later lost western side of the dynasty. Maharana died at the age of 56 due to some fatal injuries he got during hunting.

In 1961 the legend of Maharana Pratap was presented in Indian cinema by Indian movie maker Jaswant Jhaveri. The leading characters were played by famous Indian actors Jairaj, Nirupa Roy and Bipin Gupta. The movie has excellent music of renowned Indian singers Manna dey, Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosley. In 2012 Rajasthani film director and producer Dr. Pradeep Kumawat also presented the legend of Maharana in his movie “Maharana Pratap: the first freedom fighter”. The music of the movie was presented by leading Indian music company T-series with songs sung by Jagjit Singh, Sadhana Sargam and Roop Kumar Rathod among others.

5. Prithviraj Chauhan:

Cynthia Tablot in her 2016 published book “Prithviraj Chauhan and the Indian Past 1200-2000” has stated that Prithviraj Chauhan is considered as the last Hindu emperor of India. Prithviraj Chauhan was born in 1166 in Patan, Gujarat. He was crowned as the king after his grandfather’s death in 1171 in Ajmer, Rajasthan. Jayanaka, a historian and poet of Prithviraj’s court wrote in his 1191-1192 CE epic poem “Prithviraj Vijaya” that Prithviraj at very tender age won the most battles himself in the early years of his reign.

S.L. Nagouri, Pranav dev and Kanta Nagouri in their collective work “Madhya Kaleen Bharat Ka Itihas” wrote that Muhammad Gori attacked the Chauhan dynasty first time in 1191 in the battle of Tarain but he was brutally defeated by the force of Prithviraj Chauhan. However in the second battle of Tarain in 1192 Chauhan

was defeated by the force of Gori. It is also stated that Jayachand betrayed him and joined the army of Muhammed Gori.

Chand Bardai, the poet of Prithviraj's royal court claimed in his epic poem "Prithviraj Raso" that when Gori captured Chauhan, he tortured him to change his religion from Hinduism to Islam. Prithviraj denied his proposal over and over again. Enraged by Prithviraj's behaviour then enraged Gori gave commands to pierce his eyes with hot iron rods. Later Chand Bardai tricked Gori to witness the greatness Prithviraj's art of archery. Blind Prithviraj who was an expert in shooting the arrows by hearing the sound only, killed Gori by hearing Chand Bardai's reference of his sitting. Later both Chand Bardai and Prithviraj Chauhan killed each other to avoid death from the enemies. However some historians have considered "Prithviraj Raso" a work of mere fiction and not reliable for historic information. They have stated that Muhammed Gori reigned over India many years after killing Prithviraj Chauhan as he was not killed by his hands.

According to Imdb, a movie website in 1959 Indian film director Harsukh Jagneshwar Bhatt made the movie "Prithviraj Chauhan". The story, screenplay and dialogues were written by Anant Shyam. The role of Prithviraj Chauhan was played by Jairaj, Muhammed Gori's role by D. K. Sapru and queen Sanyukta's role by Chand Usmani. Yashraj films also announced a movie on the legend of Prithviraj Chauhan casting Akshay Kumar as the lead role, proposed to be released in 2020.

Research methodology:

The applied methodology in this research paper is 'observation method'. The information gained from the secondary sources is applied in this research paper. Various movie websites and articles, historical books, fictions and folk tales have been observed during writing this research paper. The original books as well as the reference of other writers in those books have been also considered. Padmavat by Malik Muhammed Jayasi, Prithviraj Raso by Chand Bardai, Prithviraj Vijaya by Jayakaran are some of original and contemporary works of that time have been observed for the research.

Padmavati: the Queen Tells her Own Story by Sutapa Basu, and the many lives of a Rajput queen by Ramya Sreenivasan, Prithviraj Chauhan an the Indian past 1200-2000 by Cynthia Tablot, Madhya Kaleen Bharat Ka Itihas collectively by S.N. Nagouri, Pranav dev and Kanta Nagouri, are the further references of the originally written texts of the ancient incidents. On

Amar Singh Rathore “the Medieval history of Rajasthan: Western Rajasthan” by Rajvi Amar Singh was considered and for the authentication of the historical facts the official website of the Agra fort was also visited. The books “Bharat Ke 1235 Varshiya Swatantrata Sangram Ka Itihas; volume 4” and “veer Durgadas Rathore: an epic” by L.S. Rathore gave a detailed description about the magnificent life of a great warrior of Rajasthan Durgadas Rathore. Dr. Bhawani Singh Rana’s 2003 published book “Maharana Pratap” and renowned Hindi writer Suryakant Tripathi Nirala’s book of same title were considered to get the facts about the struggles of the great king of Mewar dynasty. Furthermore I’ve watched the movies based on the lives of the legends of Rajasthan. For movies’ release dates and other information most trustworthy film website Imdb was visited.

Conclusion:

Legends of heroes and heroines of history are celebrated around the world. These legends survives in the oral form or in the folk literature, and later they become the part of written literature. Movie industries of different regions see a good potential in the stories of folk legends. Though these legends belong to a particular region but they have the universal qualities to attract the readers or viewers of the world. Indian movie industry has adapted the magnificent stories of Rajasthan and introduced to the world some terrific stories.

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