

# Adaptation of the novel 'Devdas' in the Film 'Devdas' by Sanjay Leela Bhansali

In Bollywood, numerous adaptations have been produced using the great books. Devdas is a standout amongst the most well known and best example of those movies. The novel Devdas was written in Bengali in 1917 by Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, who is usually acclaimed as an 'Incredible Storyteller'. The account of Devdas has been adapted by P. C. Barua who directed three variants of Devdas between 1935 to 1937, in Bengali, Hindi, and Assamese; different adaptations have been made in Tamil and Malayalam. In 1955, Bimal Roy also adapted the narrative of Devdas featuring Dilip Kumar as a male protagonist and became a huge success in the history of Bollywood film. Again in 2002, a standout amongst the most popular director of India of the present day, 'Sanjay Leela Bhansali', who is well known for his established flicks; Monsoon, Guzaarish, Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam, Goliyon Ki Raaslika Ram – Leela, Bajirao Mastani and the most controversial film of 2018 Padmavat, has also adapted the story of this classical novel 'Devdas'.

Devdas by Sarat Chandra Chatterjee is one of the classics of Indian Literature, subject to many film adaptations in Indian Cinema. Sarat Chandra Chatterjee was one of the leading literary deities of Bengal, he published several books earlier Nishkriti, Charitraheen, Parineeta, and Srikanta, but his most famous novel is Devdas. Devdas is a tragic story of a man called Devdas who adored however never got his beloved. The hero Devdas imparted an attractive adolescence to his beautiful mate Parvati (prevalently known as Paro), and the incomparable love developed in Paro's heart much before Devdas could realize. Devdas and Paro, both from Brahmin families, are close beloved companions and also neighbours. Devdas is a spoilt, insidious, grumpy kid who demonstrates little enthusiasm for learning at the neighborhood town school. He played traps on his instructor and cohorts while Paro, a delicate however obstinate young lady, making the most of his tricks. These adolescent tendencies proceeded through adulthood; fast to outrage each other, they would not long after make peace. Expanding protestations at school against Devdas lead his dad, Narayana Mukherjee, to send him to Calcutta to proceed with his training. Returning for excursions, Devdas would race to Paro's home. As time goes on, Paro's grandmother thinks of arranging their marriage. However, this idea is rejected by Kaushalya, the mother of Devdas, citing the vast disparity in the economic status between their families. Responding to this familial insult, Paro's father, Nilkant Chakraborty, arranges a match between Paro and a wealthy widower. When Paro learns of this plan, she secretly meets Devdas, hoping that he will propose marriage despite his family's opposition. Instead, Devdas meekly approaches his parents, who again refuse to accede to the match. In a state of helplessness, Devdas flees to Calcutta from where he writes to Paro, stating that he never thought of crystallizing his love for her into marriage. Immediately upon posting the letter, Devdas realises his mistake. He rushes back to the village and attempts to convince Paro of his fidelity, but by then Paro's marriage plans have moved to an advanced

stage. She declines Devdas's offer and chides him for his cowardice and vacillation. Her marriage to the rich, much older zamindar goes ahead. Utterly dejected, Devdas, in a reflection of childhood temperament, strikes Paro on the forehead with his hand-stick, causing a bleeding injury. This mark becomes a semiotic 'sindhur', the vermilion that married Indian women carry on their foreheads, which remains as such even after her marriage.

Back in Calcutta, Chunni Babu, the friend of Devdas, introduces him to a courtesan, Chandramukhi. She does not appeal to Devdas, who believes that prostitutes have no values. Devdas begins to drink and brood over his days with Paro. Meanwhile, his father dies, his widowed mother leaves for Varanasi to spend her remaining days at this holy place and his brother divides the family property equally between the two, telling Devdas curtly not to squander his share of money.

Chandramukhi, in the interim, falls in love with Devdas, despite his rejection of her. Giving up her courtesan life, she moves to a neighbouring village in an attempt to live in an upright fashion. News that Devdas suffers poor health brings her back to Calcutta. There, in order to locate him and get him good treatment, she sells her bangles. After a thorough search at last she locates him on a street in the dead of night and brings him to her rented house to look after him. Devdas is appears downwards, thanks to drink and despair. Moreover, he is confused about whom he truly loves, and how these feelings fly in the face of his familial values. Sensing his fast-approaching death, Devdas returns to Paro, wishing to fulfil a vow that he would return to her once before he dies. He dies on her doorstep. Paro runs towards the door, but is prevented by family members from opening it and approaching the dead Devdas.

The popular love story of Devdas has seen many adaptations over decades in India and has been made in regional languages too. However, the three popular Hindi versions of Devdas were released in 1936 (by P.C. Barua), 1955 (by Bimal Roy) and 2002 (by Sanjay Leela Bhansali). 'Devdas', portrays a tragic triangular love story between Devdas, Parvati and Chandramukhi. Piyush Roy in his article '*Filming a metaphor: Cinematic liberties, Navarasa influences and digressions in adaptation in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Devdas*' said:

"'Devdas' is a landmark 20th century tragic-romantic Indian novella by Saratchandra Chattopadhyay. In the nine decades since its publication, the story has acquired a cult status in Indian cinema and society courtesy its many stated and inspired film adaptations"<sup>1</sup>.

The plot is set in pre-independent Bengal. 'Devdas' tells the story of Devdas Mukherjee (Shahrukh Khan) who returns to his Calcutta home from London. The story, which was written in novel, didn't mention London at all, but this was inserted into this storyline to give the lead actor more sophistication, and also to somehow brand him an outsider without explicitly stating it. The original story itself was rather simple – Devdas wants his childhood sweetheart, and even though his girlfriend's family has no apparent problem with this, his own family clearly does. One of the most significant aspects of the film is the difference

created between the “high culture” of the upper caste Bengalis and the “low culture” of the lower caste Bengalis of the then society portrayed in the film. Parvati’s father, although being a zamindar himself, marries a dancer woman. Sumitra, Paro’s mother had been a dancer of the Jatra parties, a form of dance and theatre from Bengal, before her marriage, which Devdas’ father condescendingly comments to be “embarrassing”. However, a similar difference between ‘high culture’ and ‘low culture’ can also be seen in the portrayal of the scenes considering Chandramukhi, the courtesan and the ‘elite’ people in the film, which in Chandramukhi’s case consists of all the conventional Bengali people irrespective of their caste or class.

Paro, for instance, herself was rejected for marriage with Devdas by his family based on the fact that her mother had been a “*nautanki wala*”.<sup>2</sup> Instead of being empathetic and understanding towards Chandramukhi, Paro also holds a similar disdainful notion towards the “*tawaif*”. Paro, on her visit to Chandramukhi, comments “*Tawaifo ki takdeer mein shohar nahi hote...*”<sup>3</sup> (There are no husbands in the luck of a courtesan). However, later, Paro does take a stand for Chandramukhi in front of her husband’s family. She visits Chandramukhi in her brothel and welcomes her to a Durga puja to the royal place of Paro's in laws. Amusingly, the Durga Puja, as said in the film, isn't finished without the dirt from the yard of a courtesan's brothel! Chandramukhi keeps her oath and visits the royal house. Be that as it may, Paro gives a false identity of Chandramukhi to her in laws, dreading the responses of the then society. Towards the finish of a dance sequence, Chandramukhi's actual personality is uncovered. Paro gets angry responses from her in laws. She tries to stand firm for Chandramukhi before her family however at last Paro's voice isn't heard. Chandramukhi needs to leave that place in tears. Paro is rebuffed and requested to stay inside perpetually, for the dread that venturing outside the male centric limits would free Paro from the male centric shackles bound to her and enable her to represent a test to the power structure simply like Chandramukhi.

Chandramukhi, performs before her male gathering of people, displaying her ability of music and dance. Anyway her insight about these artistic expressions are thought to be 'low culture' and looked downward on by the 'higher class' people. The concubine in contrast with the lady of the imperial house is to a great extent depicted as a strong lady. In her house of ill-repute, she is appeared to have expert over her clients. In the film, one of her clients, Kalibabu, carries on improperly with her. Chandramukhi orders him to abandon her place immediately which Kalibabu additionally obeys with no further word. Gregory D. Booth in one of his articles states the meaning of the Urdu word “*tawaif*” (courtesan) as a ‘performing artist’. He says, ‘cinematic tawaifs are female characters that often (and despite their situations) appear to possess more independence and often assertiveness (in cinematic terms) than most normal female roles.’ Booth illustrates his arguments with an example from a Hindi feature film, *Amiri Garibi* (Richness Poorness), stating that Sona, the “*tawaif*” in the film replies with disdain to the villains in the movie who come to her “*kotha*” and forces her to perform for them, ‘No one gives me orders in my house, behave properly or get out.’<sup>4</sup>

Booth draws a correlation between the lady of the house, which he says to be traditionally named as "devi" and the "tawaif". He says that the little measure of organization that the "devi" has is inside the limits set by the male centric power structure of the then society. One specific detail he states is about the suffixes related to the names of the ladies of the house and the prostitutes. The lady of the house is alluded to as 'devi truly meaning goddess—or an assortment of terms utilized for female relatives, for example, bahen [sister], bhabi [brother's wife], chachi [auntie], and so on., contingent upon age, economic wellbeing, relationship, and so on. Respectable Indian women were thus exempted from the male sexualised gaze by being associated with either divinity or with one's own family.' On the other hand, a courtesan is referred to as 'jan or bai attached to their names, as markers of professional tawaif status.'<sup>5</sup> So, a courtesan can be basically considered to be a professional, working woman. In the film, *Devdas*, the Chandramukhi once mentions to Devdas that she has so much wealth that she treads on it. Thus, the inferior status given to her by a structure governed by patriarchal power, who obviously considers her to be a challenge to their rule, is self explanatory.

However, at different cases in the film, it is likewise demonstrated that the mistress views herself as the other lady in Devdas' life, she views herself as his "kadmo ka dhool"<sup>6</sup> (dirt under Devdas' feet) when contrasted with Paro, whom she supposes to be his life's blossom. We may take note of that Chandramukhi can be thought to be a slender of intensity who ideologically inculcates the power chain of importance of the then society depicted in the film.

The film portrays that the courtesan does not, rather cannot get the hero's love by virtue of being the other woman. Her love for Devdas remains unrequited throughout. Devdas comments at one time, '*Tum aurat ho. Pehchano apne aapko. Aurat maa hoti hain, behen hoti hain, patni hoti hain, dost hoti hain aur jab woh kuch nahi hoti, tawaif hoti hain.*'<sup>7</sup> (You are a woman. Recognise yourself. 'A woman is a mother, a sister, a wife or a friend: and when she is nothing she is a tawaif.') When he is heartbroken, he seeks temporary respite in Chandramukhi's kotha but never accepts her as his lover. As already discussed, the film features Chandramukhi's character as a capillary of power, for this situation as well, she additionally points the finger at her "destiny" of not being adored, to her calling in view of which she deserts her fine arts, wishing this would convey her near Devdas. At the point when this too neglects to concede her desire, she acknowledges herself to be a servant to him and deals with him when he is gravely sick. Devdas, at last, be that as it may, bites the dust on Parvati's doorsteps and not in Chandramukhi's arms. Accordingly, the mistress isn't at all given the space of being cherished.

The film is unobtrusively unique in relation to the book. Devdas' landing, Paro's state of mind and even the place where they exchange their ideas are unmistakable. Bhansali embedded honey bee figuratively with a foundation sound to give the sentimental effect in it. To demonstrate the way of life Bhansali utilizes Bengali linguistic inputs.

In the novel discussion with respect to Paro's marriage was exceptionally descriptive and long, however in film it was truant. The book gives the depiction about Paro's trouble however in film it was absent. The content of the film is totally unique in relation to the novel yet the substance is same, there are just a few exchanges from the first content. In the novel, short discussion occurred among Devdas and his dad. In any case, the disposition of mother was erratic in the book. It was hard to state whether she is agreeable to Devdas or against. Be that as it may, in the film, content is extraordinary. Devdas' father saw Paro in his room when she was prepared to return to her home. As Paro came to her home her mother begin making inquiries. Dialog amongst Devdas and his father changed over into face off regarding. His father persistently offending Paro and her family. Devdas was trying to save Paro, her family and his affection. Devdas' Bhabhi was assuming a negative part in the film which was truant in the book.

In the book, there is depiction of Devdas' condition where his still, small voice gets terribly pricked, to consider Paro in the wake of getting letter. The book exhibited Devdas as understudy. In the book there is a portrayal about Devdas' landing in home, however in motion picture it was truant. In the book, there is a depiction of arrangement of brothel house. Portrayal of time and surrey are additionally present, yet in film the running steed carriage demonstrated where the hero and his friend demonstration in voice over shot. Bhansali has demonstrated the lovely perspective of Brothel Street, with waterway and lighting. Surrey changed into horse carriage. In the brothel house Chunni Babu acquainted Devdas with the leader of the courtesan who was sitting with the gathering of young ladies. This episode was absent in the book. In this scene, Bhansali has demonstrated another face later he done the part of reprobate in the film. Mentality of Bhansali's Chandramukhi was exceptionally over the top. The main gathering of Devdas and Chandramukhi was exhibited in figurative way. Chandramukhi saw Devdas' picture in reflect as she swung to look Devdas straightforwardly, the mirror has been broken by her hair. The reflection of Devdas beneath the reflection of Chandramukhi's hair give a sensuous feeling to the audience. The treatment of Chandramukhi was different by Devdas here. Chunni Babu did not leave the brothel house as he did in book. Discussion regarding Paro between Devdas and Chunni Babu were done in Brothel. When Devdas left brothel for Paro, in that scene Chandramukhi's eyes continuously following him.

In the book, there are physical depiction of a whole two day and one night travel. At first Devdas asked for a horse pulled car (*baggi*), at then palki. Toward the end he got the choice of bullock cart. In the street the driver took lunch, however, Devdas took some water and demonstrated the driver a 100 rupee note to drive fast; such episodes are missing in the film rendition. In the film, the entire arrangement turns into a ton quicker as the method of transportation changes from bullock cart to horse carriage. Sanjay Leela Bhansali presents the sound of whiplash as an image of memory assaults. On occasion Devdas looks behind the carriage as though the past is pursuing him constantly. The internal unrest breaks subsequently breaks the obstruction of the real world and Devdas looks more like a spooky individual as opposed to a man just tormented by his past. The dialect assumes a critical part here as the content varies a ton from the first book.

Music has much part as a component here in this arrangement. In the book, there are unequivocal portrayal of Devdas and his having a place. Paro's significant other heard the news of biting the dust individual and gave the request to call the specialist. In this specific scene the essential scenes done by Paro's better half, which was missing in the film. The Devdas' death occurred before Paro, however in film Paro couldn't see the substance of Devdas before his demise. The book talked about the portrayal of Devdas' malady that was absent in film. In the film, the whole grouping as true to life instrument to give an effect on gathering of people i.e. ambient melodies, earth lamp (diya), chandelier, white pearl accessory, brow sign of Paro, the pot of red shading, red feet print on floor, shading on finger, fundamental entryway. These things allegorically utilized as a part of film, this specific scene joined all the figurative apparatus which has been utilized as a part of the film. Specialist occasion is available here. Following shot gave the lamentable effect on gathering of people. Memory assault was available here. In the book, Devdas did not see Paro before his demise, but rather in film through the blurred sight Devdas saw the exertion of Paro that she was racing to come outside the house. To demonstrate the expanded and true to life affect on gathering of people, the entryway was abruptly shut before Paro reached the door. As the door shut Devdas has taken final gasp. The funeral and funeral pyre was totally truant in the film.

Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Devdas was a standout amongst the most expansive film in the historical backdrop of Indian Cinema. Allegorical creation is regular in the movie; the story stays same however to pull in the crowd the chief utilized distinctive cinematography and objects of impacts. Bhansali's utilization of colour played a vital role and new techniques are also used to show the scenes larger than real life. Dialogues are not the same as in the book. Be that as it may, Bhansali prevails with regards to making the air of the genuine story through his adjustments in exchanges. Objects and signs are basic in the film. We discovered alterations and changes at the level of plots and sets. This adaptation of Devdas is a long way from the book. Director attempted to catch the old frame through the new lens.

Presently Devdas has turned into the intense character in Indian Cinema. It comes under the center of attraction to the entire directors, it isn't settled for Indian Cinema however it get the consideration of whole South Asian Countries. Devdas turned into a famous character. The term Devdas itself makes a vagueness, it is hard to clarify the stupendous accomplishment of Devdas text and additionally film. At some degree we can state that, narrative art of the Devdas has ground-breaking fascination for the group of onlookers.

### **References:**

1. Roy, Piyush. *Filming a metaphor: Cinematic liberties, Navarasa in fluencies and digressions in adaptation in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Devdas*. Vol. 1. Pp. 31-49 [www.southasianist.ed.ac.uk/2012](http://www.southasianist.ed.ac.uk/2012). Cited on 15/07/2018.
2. Devdas (The Film). Dir. Sanjay Leela Bhansali. India. 2002.
3. Ibid.

4. D. Booth, Gregory. 'Making a Woman from a Tawaif: Courtesan as Heroes in Hindi Cinema'. Newzealand: Newzealand Journal of Asian Studies, 2017.
5. Ibid.
6. Devdas (The Film). Dir. Sanjay Leela Bhansali. India. 2002.
7. D. Booth, Gregory. '*Making a Woman from a Tawaif: Courtesan as Heroes in Hindi Cinema*'. Newzealand: Newzealand Journal of Asian Studies, 2017.

\*\*\*

