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## Vikas Swarup's Q & A on screen: A study

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### Abstract

Film adaptation, now, is a form of literature. Different texts wide across the world are getting their reshape on the screen after being carved out scripts to meet the needs of the audiences and the producers. The paper is designed to analyze how Vikas Swarup's novel Q & A is adapted into film Slumdog Millionaire being carved out into script in the rewritten formant. Te differences between the text and the script have been discussed. The film Slumdog Millionaire becomes hit on the box incurring a huge profit.

**Keywords:** Film, movie, script, adaptation, screen, text, dialogue, campus novel & deletion

### Introduction

As a fiction, Q & A is unique for deconstructing the reality Mega show Kon Benenga Kord Pati to attract the audience for business. Reality behind the show is to unearth the corruption in the reality show programme. The writer, a bureaucrat, attempts to go deep into finding how the company and the producer of the show hoodwink the common mass for their benefit. In this way the government has not any guide lines to control and check such types of shows which are not what these parade off. Vikas Swarup deconstructs the fraud behind the reality show program sponsored in private channels by multinational companies.

How the companies, in India, with the help of administration and policy, exploit the poor and unprivileged people in the name of different reality shows. The mass media like TV and Android cell phone regulate and influence the activities of people. The media often keeps people in prejudice about the different products. To sell their products in the nook and corner of the country, the companies compete among themselves devising different innovative plans of advertisements in TV. In this connection they follow the western model of reality show program which attract he audience for their participation. In the reality show program common people's participation and to become millionaire overnight attract them to sit before the show and prepare to participate chasing the dream of becoming millionaire overnight. Some people chase dream to become millionaires. The show basically attracts the easily earners.

The text deconstructs the postmodern hyper reality that deceives people to land them in simulacra. The postmodern people gripped by materialistic pursuit are often entangled in different frauds. The common people suffer like Ram Muhammad Thomas and cool their heels in jail even though they are honest and hardworking. How the multinational companies, with the help of local administration, exploit common mass is the plot of the text. The police and local administration lend a deaf ear to the grievances of the slum dwellers for which the crimes in slums soar.

The text reveals the reality how the slum dwellers in Andhari, the largest slum of Asia, "live like breasts and die like insects." The crowded slum often witness clashes, feuds and tug of wars even for a bucket of water. People queue before common communal latrine and before water taps. Even round the clock hard working falls short for two times meals a day. Such exploitation is due to surplus labour. Labour surplus in the slum leads to exploitation.

The slum people are very hard hearted for witnessing crimes which are often inflicted upon them either for any blunders or for being innocent. The gruesome crimes like rape, murders, violence pickpockets and thefts are common and day to day incidents. Police patrolling often fail to check the crimes and sometimes police promote the crime like drug trafficking with the help of the drug peddlers.

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Slum lives in urban areas are portrayed by the modern Indian fiction. Novelists like Amit Choudhury, Amitav Ghosh, Indra Sinha and A Rabinid Adiga. Amit Chodhury portrays Calcutta and its dusty lanes with small huts in both sides. The crowded under developed areas in the remote areas of Calcutta is also infested by poverty, crimes and violence. People struggle for two time meals a day that is very pathetic. The poverty of Calcutta is portrayed in the films of Satyajit Roy which have already been analyzed in different chapters in different theoretical perspectives.

Vikas Swaru focuses on the reality show and its fidelity. The shrewdest way of lulling people to the products of the multinational companies is only possible by the reality shows. These shows conducted by the super stars get the common people directly involved which attracted millions of viewers. The common people get the scope to interact with the most popular Bollywood stars which is telecast in TV channels. In this way millions of viewers prepared themselves for the show chasing the dreams to be millionaire overnight.

The text Q & A wipes out the misconception that only educated people could be successful who the avid readers are only. But Swarup proves that any common people born and brought up in the slums are much more experienced and matured about life and society. They learn by doing the things which Gandhiji wanted to add in the school syllabus. Really the illiterate slum dwellers who struggle to survive by facing all the hardships from the dawn to dusk are leaned people. The eighteen years old Ram Muhammad Thomas could answer all the questions put him on the hot seat not by getting data and information from different texts rather he lived a life in the different corners of the country with different people that helped him learn. Each question put in the show has a story behind it connecting the life and career of Ram Muhammad Thomas.

How Thomas grows up struggling with life and circumstances in different places and situation has been narrated in the text. Thomas is only a character who represents the slum children of our country who strive only to live by eating something. How hard the life is! Where mothers leave their new born babies in the dustbins to lock horn with its luck is only due to poverty. A lot of children are born even without the desires of their mothers. Women give birth out of lack of sex education. They are sex workers but due to illiteracy they do not follow proper birth control or contraceptive. They are often encountered with rapes and render sex services without preparation as a result they conceived.

Thomas's entry in to the mega reality show is also accidental. His victory in the show is more accidental than his luck. His victory winning the show answering all the questions put by Prema Kumar is also accidental and directly linked to his luck. It is natural to doubt how an illiterate slum boy wins the reality show when the most brilliant people could not even answers half of the questions put to them and leave the show in the middle. The company's devise is to flush out the person on the hot seat from the middle by putting difficult questions. Even any people sitting on the hot seat fail to answer the question taking all the lifelines. It may be exceptional but questionable and doubtful. So the company, taking the advantage of the weakness of Thomas, ventures to deprive him of the million rupees cash prize by alleging false

allegation against him that he had answered all the questions by adapting fraud.

The company's atrocities on poor are amply found in literature by displacement and labor exploitation. Most of the texts portray how the proletariats are exploited and tortured by the bourgeois. The bourgeois become more and more reach and the proletariats become more and more poor.

Swarup discovers a new technique the companies devised to cheat and exploit the slum dwellers. It is often alleged that the rich people hiring the slum people in cheap rate to lure them for supari killing. It is the rich who stand on the way for the development of the slum to provide them the basic amenities' of life. So slum dwellers are compelled to consume illegal electricity, water and other amenities provided people who pay tax for these.

The crime rate of cities increases due to the mental disorder and beastly life style of the slum dwellers. They face scarcity and protest even fulfilling their basic minimum needs. Their mental health falls rapidly as a result they resort on alcohol to get rid of their trauma but it becomes aggravated in course of time. The education and health standard is not adequate provided by different NGOs. These organizations render services in the slums for their advertisement to get foreign aids. Emphasis is given for photo to cover the media.

The struggling youth grown up in slums, when came in the contact with the rich as servant, they scanned the character of aristocrat properly. Thomas narrates his interaction with different aristocratic people from the different section of life. He serves different rich people- businessmen, cine stars, to the tourists as a guide, in the church and slum. He gets a through idea about the society where lives as manual labor living just hand to mouth.

Knowledge one gets from books but wisdom from living the life facing different challenges. To sit on the hot seat one needs knowledge which, in the words of T. S. Eliot, is lost in information, but wisdom of the illiterate slum dwellers is least noticed that was Thomas exhibited in the reality show. The reality show is meant to discover the talents which are generally remain unnoticed. The multinational companies took the help of the reality show to reach their customers which they successfully do and reach their goals transacting business.

In Q & A multination companies, as portrayed by Swarup, are not only the exploiters but also the promoters of displacements permeating poverty among the lower section of the society. They lest care about others. Only profit is their main motto. They could hire politicians and hijack the government policies in their favors. The text paints slums which symbolizes poverty. As if the problems and poverty are unending in the slums. The slum dwellers are left to their doom. As if they are destined to suffer from the cradle till the grave.

Other section of people only uses the slum dwellers for their work. Most of them are unskilled and semi-skilled labors. They work for the development of the cities and upper class people but their contribution for the construction of the cities is lest recognized. Some of them clean latrine tanks and street sweepers. They are the people who are their only to serve other even living with problems and poverty.

The text, after its publication, is reviewed by various agencies inside and outside India. All the review admits that

Q & A is an innovative fiction having unique title portraying reality shows' reality which is unknown to common viewers. The New York Time says, "Swarup writes humorsly and keeps the surprise coming". The comment is accurate. From the beginning till the end, the text is humours. The characters, police station and the policemen are humourly portrayed. The physique of the police is cartooned and their language and way of interaction using unparliamentarily language are very humourous. How the police station in the metropolitan city functions with certain corrupt police personnel have been delineated humourously. All the apparatus, calendar, walls and TV set are old and outdated. The table and chairs are partially broken. The table cloth needs immediate washing is placed on the table unnoticed. The police is very casual handling the case and in the investigation. The commission is fixed with the criminals to take the case in their favor. People have to purchase the justice or someone like advocate Smita will appear as the incarnation bail out of the cobwebs of the complex legal procedures which ceaselessly harass the unprivileged.

The fiction concludes with humorously also. Thomas owns the prize and the reality is unveiled. The company's cunning cheating also caught at last and it has to pay the money that it advertised before. The film *Slumdog Millionaire* is not as humorous as the text Q & A. The script writer did not want to keep the humorous part of the text to make it emotional and pathetic. Except the main characters other side and minor characters are very humors. The dialogue of the script could not retain the much humor as the text. Swarup's selection of words for humor is unique. He uses irony and paradoxes while describing something through the characters that is very satiric and humorous. The paradoxical dialogues are generally found in case of the comic characters to suit the film and audiences. Sometimes the minor comic characters of the text are deleted in the scripts for time adjustment. Time adjustment and scripts carved out from the texts for two to three hours duration has been analyzed already.

Associated Press comments about Swarup's skill in sketching the characters, saying, "Swarup gets inside his characters and bring them to life". (Praise for Q & A) The characters are really living. The reader feels and experiences all these problems which Ram Muhammad Thomas goes through. The problems and plights Thomas faces are universally found in India particularly in the slums of the cities and rural areas where people. People, even educated, are bound to dance to the tune of the aristocratic and powerful people. The police experiences are lively and realistic. Everywhere in India people get tortured by police and people have lost faith in the law enforcing agencies. The legal system and the police as a part have been used as the ruling party and the rich want. The poor people seldom get justice fighting against the rich. The fate of a poor man in court and policy custody is very precarious. One has to either pay bribe or to pressurize the police by politicians to get relief from the atrocities of the legal system. The third degree meted out Thomas in the police custody is very common in India though it very inhuman and goes against human right violation. The third degree on Thomas is accurately portrayed in the film what is commonly found in India.

So the characters, plots and sub-plots are real and lively. Swaru mostly uses simple and colloquial languages in the present simple. Generally the Indian writers in English write

in past simple and occasionally uses the present simple in case of narrating the philosophy of universal truth. The script of *Slumdog Millionaire* skips the style of Swarup and adopts its own style of description and narration.

The Washington Post Book World says, "Q & A is a fast paced read which will leave you satisfyingly stunned. Readers will consider themselves winners after spending time in the world of this very rich tale". (Praise for Q & A) It implies how a reader finds his own reflection in the tale told by the writer. A writer is successful in case sketching characters that represent everybody. This uniqueness sketching living characters are rarely found. The protagonist is portrayed as metaphor representing the whole youth of the country either living in slum or in the countryside.

The Plain Dealer comments Q & A as, "A delightful, fast-paced fairy tale." It is really a fairy tale which has its reflection more on the film than that of the text. The appearance of advocate Smita to rescue Thomas from the atrocities of policy is just like the appearance of an angel for the rescue of a true devotee. It is more mythical than real but is common in the film and tales. The fairy adds interests stirring the imagination of the readers to enter into the fairy world. Imagination and fairy tales dealing with some mysterious characters like Smita and their dramatic appearances make the plot appears like fairy tale but sometimes it is realistic. Swarup's text stands on the half-way house in between the fairy tale and a story delineating the hard reality of life in slums. Hard reality needs certain myth to make the plot readable otherwise it becomes more a journalistic report than a tale. Swarup handles mixing both the fact and fiction in right proportion.

The most vibrant comment aired by publishers Weekly on Q & A is worth mentioning. It says, "Rams appeal lies in his childlike openness and wonder, and that of the story lies in hearing the full life unwinding from the tiniest of the details." The review on the text is often quoted by most of the scholars of literature on fiction.

The character of Ram Muhammad Thomas is unique one for portraying a boy in the slum possessing extraordinary intuitiveness. The inner strength studying the situation is always superior to academic knowledge. Most of the modern people stress on education and some want higher studies but a few give emphases on the intuitiveness put one in the complex situations. The uniqueness of the sketching a character like Thomas opens a new path nurturing children for developing their IQ and intuitiveness. A child receives education from circumstances and learns better doing the works, facing the hard realities of life and from failures. Failure and displacement from one place to another place searching for work brings better experience about life and situation. The people confined in a particular place also get their knowledge confined. What information they get about the outside world is empirical and bookish. Without experiencing a situation it is difficult to get the first hand information about it. Swarup opens a new path and new idea in this fiction through sketching the character of Thomas.

Various types of characters from various strata of society are placed in right place and chapters. Their relation and interaction with others is formal and stereotypes. People from different corners of the country are thronged in Mumbai, the dream city of India. Thousands of people come here every to try their luck with success. In film it is shown how the children are trafficked from the countryside to Mumbai for different works like prostitutions.

Mumbai awakes round the clock without rest. The mega city rarely takes rest unlike other cities of India. People are very busy and work over and excess chasing their dreams which run faster than their efforts. At last life ends pathetically. Painful death of Meena Kumari, a famous cine star, is the classic example of the end of life just like a beast. Nobody sees her dying. Her decomposed body was discovered many days after her demise. It is only the example. Thousands of middle class and lower middle class people die like Meena Kumari every day. The film knowingly deletes the dark side of Bollywood which Swaru sketches through the character of the reputed cine star. But Sobha De writ detail about the dark sides of the Bollywood in her fiction. Most her fiction depict the dark sides of the cine stars and their life style.

Indian fictions generally portray the postcolonial problems. History in postcolonial novels is a common theme. But Swrup's fictions are postmodern in their approach. He portrays problems but does not try to make it universal rather parochial. The scenes in the slums of Mumbai are the universal problems of India where people live like beasts and die like insects. The darts of the slums which both the film and text portrays is due to only over population. The crowd slum in the city run without any kind of basic needs as a result the slum dwellers get their basic needs fulfilled by any means. They often steal and caught red handed and are thrashed till get crippled. They are left either to beg or to leave the place for their nativity.

The slum dwellers are snubbed and are treated like servants. Most of the middle class and lower middle class people do not pay them minimum respect. Every moment they pocket the insult and go ahead in their work. The novelist brings a relationship of the aristocratic, middle class and the lower middle class' dealings with the slum dwellers through the characters of the Thomas.

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