

Adaptation bug bites Indian OTT world



A still from the Israeli show Hostages



A still from Luther

Radhika Bhirani

The remake trend is moving beyond Bollywood. The OTT universe is rapidly tapping into foreign series and giving them an Indian makeover, much to the satiation of an audience hungry for new content.

British thriller series Doctor Foster is the latest to be made into the Rasika Dugal-starrer Out of Love. But an exciting slate is awaited — of desi versions of Israeli shows Fauda, The Missing, The Beauty and The Baker and The Stylist; of British crime thriller Luther; and American crime series Ray Donovan.

These are in line after Indian avatars of Hostages, The Office, Criminal Justice and La Famiglia (Mind The Malhotras), have been lapped up by viewers. “The term is

adaptation, not remake,” clarifies Sameer Nair, CEO, Applause Entertainment Limited, promising that Fauda, with an Indian touch, will be “superlative”.

The trend is not new. Adaptations have happened the world over, across platforms, languages and cultures. “The key is to find a show or a movie which we, as creative people, believe has a story, emotions, and a bunch of characters that are universal and that will travel and translate well into our local culture,” Nair explains.

According to producer Goldie Behl, who is adapting The Stylist, about a small-town girl who gets her first break in fashion, having something “tried and tested in another market” is always a plus. “And if we can value add to it with our Indian ethos, then it’s even



A scene from Out of Love



A scene from Criminal Justice

more interesting,” he says.

Most OTT platforms in India are experimenting with adaptations — whether it is stories from books or from shows from other countries and in other languages.

Adaptations have a huge advantage, avers Gaurav Banerjee, president and head,

Hindi Entertainment, Star India, which has been at the forefront of churning such content. “The number of people who would have watched the original story would be limited when compared to the huge audience base we are adapting the story for,” Banerjee says.

At the core is an appeal to Indian sensibilities. “It’s about taking a great story, a great tale and great set of dramatic emotions to a brand new audience that has no idea about this content, and enjoy it in their language, with their actors, cultural milieu and all of that. It’s not a competition to say we will make a better version, which is why we call it an adaptation,” Nair adds.

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