

**POLITICS AND CINEMA:
A STUDY OF N. T. R. PHENOMENON**

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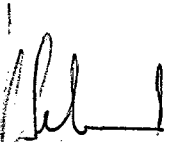
T. V. LAXMI NARASAI AH


**CENTRE FOR POLITICAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110 067**

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This is to certify that the dissertation,
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for the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil)
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(PROF. K. SESHADRI)
SUPERVISOR.


CHAIRMAN.

PREFACE

It is in a moment of high frivolity that this project was undertaken. Since then it has gone through different phases and faced many trials. To work on a subject like films may be outside the established tradition and consequently received its due share of scepticism as well as encouragement. Apart from this subjective side of the problem, objectively the difficulty was to avoid it becoming, or being considered as trivial. The problems were both substantial and methodological. Socialologically informed literature on Indian Films is scarce and no serious work has been done in this field. Moreover, a comprehensive treatment of the subject required a competence in political and mob psychology, sociology of film, familiarity with Indian mythological tradition etc. I can not claim to have any of them, for my knowledge in those fields are far from adequate. This study is only a preliminary attempt, which may be developed at a later time.

Many persons have helped me in preparing this dissertation and I like to acknowledge them;

First, I thank Prof. Seshadri for his invaluable suggestions and patience to put up with my irregular work schedule;

Mr. Rajeev Bhargava, for his guidance at the earlier stages of the work and giving it a form and direction;

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My friends, who kept my morale in difficult
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I N T R O D U C T I O N

The media of communication in general and films in particular have attracted minimum academic attention in India, judging by the extent of research done in other fields of sociology and political Science. Even today films do not enjoy the prestige of being considered worthy of serious discussion and research. But this view is slowly changing with increasing awareness and manifestation of influence of movies on society and its politics.

In India the film medium has definite and significant impact in at least two states, that is in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Politics and film had been interwoven in Tamil Nadu for a long time. The film medium had been skillfully employed by the leaders of Dravidian movement to propagate party ideals and to win support of the people. It has been a major vehicle of Dravidian movement. The power of the medium was exemplified by the rise of DMK and its capture of power in 1967 assembly elections in Tamil Nadu. In Andhra Pradesh the impact was of a different nature and an indirect one. Telugu Desam party, nine-months after its formation by a popular film-hero, won the assembly elections in 1983 defeating Congress which was ruling the State ever since its formation in 1956. In both the cases while there are some similarities, many dissimilarities can also be found. Even at the national level many film-personalities entered into politics with varying degrees of success while many more intend to join.

The above presentation is not to undermine other significant social and political factors. The attempt is to understand the role of a particular element in combination with others. More simply, the problem is analysed only from a particular point of view. The study is mainly concerned with the success of N.T.R. in Andhra Pradesh. This will suggest us the possible answers to describe the phenomena as a whole.

What are the reasons for the above mentioned political developments? Surely there must be something peculiar to film medium to have the kind of impact it had on Indian politics. This is aided by the type of political culture India has. The explanation is based on a search for possible answers in the nature of film medium, content of 'popular' Indian cinema and operating Social and Political factors. It is necessary because, if it is the situation which creates function, we should look into specific situations to assess the relative importance of various factors. As suggested, the study will be mainly analytical and explanatory in nature. It is based on the assumption that N.T.R. could be successful not irrespective of being a popular film-hero, but only because of it. The role of his image is exemplified in the type of campaign he carried out during the elections. Keeping in view the nature of the problem and the kind of study it is to proceed on the following lines.

The first chapter is devoted to a discussion on the framework of analysis to be followed. This is done at two levels. First, the relationship between films and Society is discussed to understand the dynamics of their interaction. Second, there is

also a need to understand how leadership is analysed. The various approaches followed by Social scientists are considered in this regard. This chapter is also in the nature of ^a survey of ^{the} existing literature on these aspects so far as they have a bearing on the problem. The two aspects are first studied ^P independently to know how the former can have impact at latter level.

To understand the impact of any medium, it is also necessary to analyse the nature and content of that particular medium, for the nature of the impact is determined by them. Consequently, the next two chapters deal with these two aspects. The second chapter deals with the nature of the film medium being suited to be fantastic and the kind of audience reaction which is determined by it.

The third chapter deals with the content of 'popular' Indian cinema, which alongwith the nature of the medium created its own 'stars' and brought immense popularity to film heroes. It is based on the assumption that popular films are of ^{the} same nature in all languages in India, only with minor differences. They are essentially similar in many respects, having the same kind of influences which determine their content.

Final chapter is devoted to the analysis of political developments in Andhra Pradesh which enabled N.T.R. to become Chief-minister in a short span of time, after founding his own party. The fact of he being a popular film-hero, the kind of image he acquired among Telugu audience, Social and political conditions are taken into account to arrive at a complete explanation. In the end, there is a short comparison and contrast with Tamil Nadu to enhance the understanding of the potential of film medium to have impact on Indian Society and its politics.

CHAPTER ONE

TOWARDS A FRAME - WORK OF ANALYSIS

Communication may be regarded as the art of transmitting information, ideas and attitudes from one person to another. Thus the term mass communication refers to "institutions and techniques by which specialized social groups employ technological devices (press, radio, film etc.) to disseminate symbolic content to large heterogeneous and widely dispersed audiences."¹ Certain social conditions are to be present for the development of mass communications as defined above. Urbanization, industrialization and modernization have created these conditions in modern societies. Migration to urban areas, spread of literacy, increase in leisure time and income are some of the reasons for the phenomena of mass communication. But, as we shall see later, films can dispense with some of these requirements because of its different kind of appeal.

What are the functions of media of mass communication? As its definition indicates the primary function is the dissemination of ideas and information to a large population. The functions also include, as Morris Janowitz puts it, the transmission of a society's heritage from ~~een~~ one generation to another, the collection of information for the surveillance of the environment and correlation of various parts of the society in response to changes in the environment.² Mass Media, while performing these functions, both reflect the social structure and values of a society and operate as agents of social change. However social scientists view mass

media as limited agents of social change and as only one element among others, such as technological progress, organizational controls, cultural and ideological forms and the process of socialization and personality development. Apart from its limited role, the mass media are to be considered as both causes and effects, that is, treated as both independent and dependent variables because of the diffuse nature of the communication process.

Mass media are also one of the important agencies of socialization. Socialization is a process whereby an individual is integrated into society as he grows up. It involves learning of ideas and social mores and acquiring attitudes which are conducive to social cohesion. An individual is expected to learn the appropriate behaviour which is expected of him in different kinds of social situations. Thus, anything which transmits information and ideas connected with behaviour and attitudes will have a bearing on socialization process. Obviously, family, school, work or employment situation are important agencies of socialization. But in a modern world in which change occurs at a fast rate than learning, an individual's learning at younger age is to be constantly supplemented. The role of mass media as agents of socialization occur at this level, as a vast amount of information and ideas are transmitted by them which affects the behaviour and attitude of individuals.

If politics and society are organically linked, the process of socialization itself will have an effect on politics of society. Nevertheless, political scientists talk in terms of political communication and political socialization as analogous processes to socialization. Thus political socialization is defined in broader terms as "encompassing all political learning, formal and informal, deliberate and unplanned, at every stage of life cycle, including not only explicitly political learning but also nominally nonpolitical learning that affects political behaviour, such as learning of politically relevant social attitudes and the acquisition of politically relevant personality characteristics."³ So defined, political socialization is also a function of mass media, films not being excluded. Social outlook and standards may be passed on not only in upbringing and education, but attitudes can also be conveyed and implanted in ways which are more unsystematic and less intentional - for instance, through various forms of entertainment.⁴ Here myths and values are not presented as such but camouflaged. Even if it is not in the direction of effecting major changes, it is an active process of reinforcement. Thus how the politically relevant ideas are learned and condition an individual's orientation to politics forms the basic concern of political socialization. It is a means whereby political system supports and maintains

itself and is regarded as one of the four input functions performed by all political systems. Film, apart from being a mass communication medium, is having the function of entertainment as its predominant concern. In this respect it is more akin to a drama. Most of the times, a narrative cinema is nothing but a filmed play. In a film, like in a play, all things are present to all people. It is a combination of song, music, dance and drama. Hence its appeal to all kinds of people. Film is technically more sophisticated and has ~~xx~~ certain added advantages. In a play, whole stage is always present and a selective projection is not possible as in a film. A spectator views film through the ~~y~~ eyes of camera. As we shall see in the subsequent sections, the functions of a film are determined by its distinct characteristics.

FILM AND SOCIETY

In the previous section the relationship between mass media and society is discussed with a view to put the study of films in a proper perspective. It is also mentioned that films stand out among all media because of its different and peculiar characteristics. Of all the communication media, motion pictures have the most universal impact as they can transcend the linguistic, cultural and national barriers. They are essentially visual, but appeal to both visual and auditory senses. Audience receive a sense of enjoyment as a dominant reaction. It is true that many motion pictures have a goal no more ambitious than to give the viewers a period of relaxation through comedy, romantic drama or suspense shows. Also, with ~~x~~ extremely heavy investment involved in producing films, they

are aimed at an educational level sufficiently broad to attract huge audience. In their fear of offending organized social, religious and economic groups, the makers of the films too often avoid dealing with major social problems. Andrew Sarris makes the same point when he writes: "The enormous expense of production and the publicity attendant on exhibition make it mandatory for films to be in tune either with their society or at least with a sympathetic subculture within that society."⁶

While the above limitations and considerations do not make it possible for most of the films to be directly related to politics of a society, it is not correct to conclude that they are no way related. Although most of the films are 'entertainers' it is not the only function they perform. Apart from entertaining, films can educate as well as inform. Now it is widely realized that 'films also reflect the currents and attitudes in a society, its politics.'⁷ Film production and consumption being a part of social activity cannot be untouched by politics of a society. As Furhammer and Isackson put it: "The cinema does not exist in a sublime state of innocence, untouched by the world.' It also has a political content, whether conscious or unconscious, hidden or overt."⁸ It is not an exaggeration to say that even the most escapist movies manage to make statements about their society. It can also be argued that 'all films are ultimately political either as statements or evasions'⁹ President Sukarno is said to have stated that Hollywood film (unpolitical)

forms the most efficient political cinema as they keep masses away from politics.¹⁰

Thus politics and cinema may be related in different ways. On the one hand, there is genre of 'political' films which explicitly deal with political themes and events of the past or present. These are made with a clear intention to serve the purpose of propaganda. Newsreels and documentaries can also be included in this genre. All other feature films may be related in indirect ways as discussed above. Some of the American and European movies before and after the Second World War fall under the former category. Furhammer and Isaackson conducted a detailed analysis of some of these movies. The focus of attention was on how the native cause was justified and its people glorified, while the enemy is put in bad light. The purpose of their study is stated at the outset in preface: 'It is mainly a collection of essays on movies which have a clear political purpose, on the cinema as a weapon of propaganda'.¹¹ Andrew Sarris also published a collection of his essays on political films, along with some other essays, under the title 'politics and cinema'.¹²

In the second kind of studies, it is apt to mention a work by Siegfried Kracauer here. He studied German films produced between 1922 and the beginning of the Hitler regime. It makes use of psychological theory which states that society, nation or population possesses a 'collective unconscious'.

It is employed by some analysts for those elements in the individual's unconscious derived from the experiences of the race and Kracauer believes that motion pictures reflect and satisfy these needs. It is Kracauer's thesis that in these films are found the reflected needs, striving and tensions of the German people. Further, Kracauer assumes that the analysis of these films not only reveals the characteristics of the German mass mind, but enables the historian to understand and predict Nazism. Embedded within the manifest content of the films of this period, Kracauer finds motifs which had a special significance both for those who made the films and for those who saw them. He states that what films reflect are not so much explicit credos as ~~phys~~ psychological dispositions, but those deep layers of collective mentality which extend more or less below the dimension of consciousness.¹³

Daniel Lerner in his book, "The Passing of a traditional Society" emphasized the importance of media in the modernization process.¹⁴ Media participation is treated as an opening wedge in the emergence of a modern, participant society. It is the vehicle of an expanding horizon, or what he calls the 'mobile personality'. Mass communication, in speeding and expanding the spread of knowledge acts as the great 'multiplier' in development. Writing about the Middle-East, Albert Hourani has argued that the process of change is

speeded by one manifestation of western civilization above all - the film.¹⁵ Lerner writing specifically about the films say, 'where the impact of cinema has been massive and sustained, as in modern Lebanon, the results are highly visible.'¹⁶ He also writes, "The movies teach new desires and new satisfactions. They portray roles in which richer lives are lived, and provide clues as to how those roles can be enacted by others."¹⁷

Harold Lasswell has provided a scheme for research in communication process. He identified four elements in any communication and put his scheme as 'who tells what whom with what effect? For any communication to take place there must be three elements: A source (transmitter), medium and receiver. Research in communication has tended to concentrate on any or all of the aspects. Since the present study has the aim of studying a particular impact of film on society, it falls under the last element in the scheme as provided by Lasswell. But as it is intended to be explanatory, not experimental, even the other questions cannot be ignored. Emphasis on any one aspect will be inadequate and incomplete. As already said in the introduction, this study will examine both the medium and its effect.

Now we come to the study of films in particular. The question has been rightly posed by Furhammer and Isackson at the end of their study on politics and film: 'Whether it is the intentions or effects that makes a film a political act?'¹⁸ It has been evident that intentions may not

produce the desired effects and indeed may have exactly opposite ones (as with 'The Birth of a Nation' of Griffith). So they suggest that 'what takes place must be assessed not only at the production level but also at the consumer level.'¹⁷ Thus, it is not sufficient to study the content of a number of films, but the reaction and expectations of the audience should also be taken into account.

MARXIST ANALYSIS:

Classical Marxists analysed culture as a part of 'Superstructure' deriving its form and content from economic 'base'. The analysis is linked with ideology and legitimation and its underlying assumptions are those expressed by Marx in different texts, as for example in the preface to the "contribution to the critique of political economy," where he observed that social being determines the social consciousness rather than vice-versa. In 'The German Ideology' Marx and Engels observed that:

"The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e., the class which is ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The classes which has the means of material production at its disposal has the control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby,

generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it... their (ruling class) ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch."²⁰

It was Antonio Gramsci who developed his concept of 'hegemony' in his works.²¹ According to him, ruling class does not merely force subordinate classes into conformity by domination, but wins their acquiescence through ideology. Althusser, introduced another dimension in his celebrated essayon 'ideology and ideological state apparatuses' when he said that for the functioning of capitalist system what is important is not only reproduction of forces of production, but also reproduction of relations of production.²²

The Frankfurt school theorists feel that the conventional analysis presented above is insufficient,²³ They insisted that cultural phenomena could not be analysed within the simple base-superstructure model. They also believed that culture can not be understood independent of social totality, 'In itself'. The attention was focussed on an assessment of the mode in which ideas and beliefs are transmitted by 'popular culture'. As individual consciousness and unconsciousness were encroached upon by agencies which organise free time-for example the radio, television, film and professional sport industries, they

perceived the importance of developing^a sociology of 'mass culture'. Later they replaced it for the word 'culture industry', for mass culture does not rise from masses spontaneously. Culture today is not the product of genuine demands, rather, it is the result of demand which are evoked and manipulated.²⁴

The main ideas of the Frankfurt school theorists are as follows; The culture industry produces for mass consumption and significantly contributes to the determination of that consumption. For people are now being treated as objects, machines, 'outside as well as inside' the workshop. The consumer, as the producer, has no sovereignty. Its goal is the production of goods that are profitable and consumable. It operates to ensure its own reproduction.²⁵

What are the effects of culture industry according to them? Adorno writes 'It impedes the development of autonomous, independent individuals who judge and decide consciously for themselves.'²⁶ Through displaced wish-fulfillment, substitute gratification, the industry seeks to meet individual needs for diversion and distraction. In doing so, it encourages identification with prevailing norms and conditions. They say that the industry appeals

to, develops from and reinforces a state of dependence, anxiety and ego weakness. The message it conveys is one of adjustment and obedience.²⁷

So far, we have outlined the liberal and marxist approaches. Each approach has its limitations if strictly adhered, to. The present study tries to borrow ideas from both as they are suitable to the analysis. In other words, it simply follows 'eclectic' method, for its obvious advantages. When the content of the films is discussed, it treats it as part of popular culture. With regard to effects, it is felt that the consideration of 'Star System' in a Society is a useful analytical tool to understand the phenomena in Indian context.

So far the attempt was to understand the relationship between films and society and how their interaction can be analysed. As said in the introduction of this study, one of the influences of films in India is popular film-heroes becoming political leaders. The attempt here is to understand how the image acquired acting in the movies played a dominant role in the emergence of N.T.R. so, there is a need to understand how the phenomena of leadership in a society is analysed to complete the discussion on framework of analysis.

ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a complex social phenomenon. It can be defined as 'a role or function played in a situation within a context of culture, to attain a specified goal of goals'.²⁸ The above definition makes it clear that there are many elements which need attention in the study of leadership.

The study of the leadership largely centred around analysis at various levels and different aspects. The study of the leadership can be carried out at different levels like tribal, rural, regional and national. Social scientists have analysed the changing composition and recruitment of leadership at all these levels.²⁹ Further, in a democratic society the recruitment may be done from many occupations and diverse strata of society. The focus of some studies has been the social, economic, political and educational background of the leaders. The changes brought about by changing economic and social conditions were given due attention. The national leadership in third world countries, which were liberated after Second World war, was analysed in great detail. There are studies on leadership in developed and industrialized countries as well.³⁰ More or less, all these studies are based on empirical research. But the more fundamental question to be answered is

how the approach to the study of leadership is determined, Now the following discussion concentrates on this aspect. It is true that leadership has broadly two dimensions, psychological and sociological. Each aspect is considered separately before discussing about the approach.

There are number of ways in which one individual may be different from others in certain social situations and is said to be 'leading' others. It is inherent in the concept of leadership that others are aware of him and he exercises influence upon them. Further, 'leading' also implies a shared direction, and this, in turn, implies that all parties have a common goal or at least similar or compatible ones. Hollander and Julian say that leader influence suggests a positive contribution towards the attainment of these goals. What are the elements which are present in this relationship? Definition of simplest unit of analysis in leadership as 'the act of leading' lead us to identify four basic elements; (1) the leader, with his characteristic ability and personality and his resources relevant to goal attainment; (2) the followers, who also have relevant abilities, personality characteristics and resources, (3) the situation within which the relationship occurs, (4) the tasks with which they are confronted. The nature of the leader-influence relationship and the characterization of the act of leading are to be understood in terms of interaction between these four sets of variables. 31

'Interaction' theories suggest that leadership in any form might be understood in terms of the four variables mentioned above. In the context of these theories there is a room for thorough exploration of the extent to which attributes of leaders are related to the process of leadership. The earliest explanation of leadership phenomena was given in terms of personal qualities that, while partially modifiable and learnable, characterized the individual and established his dominance of and influence in any situation. Gibb's report of situational shifting of leadership in small groups and Stodgill's study of literature on personality traits revealed that those personality traits which are leadership traits depend upon the situation and requirement of the group. Many other studies have also provided the evidence that personality factors contribute to the emergence and maintenance of leadership status. ³²

Analysis of leadership from the sociological point of view took the form of 'great man' theory, 'elite theory' Weber's analysis of authority, and leadership based on technical competence in industrialized countries etc. The approach is determined according to the time and orientation of the individual writer. According to great-man theory, outstanding leaders determine the course of history. These writers place exclusive emphasis on great individuals, for example, Neolean Bonaparte, and argue that the course of history would have been different but for these leaders. This type of explanation is a much too

simplistic one. Models of ruling elite explain social systems in terms of power concentrated in the hands of relatively small and exclusive leadership groups. The principal theorists of this school are Vilfredo Pareto, Mosca, Michels and recently C.W. Mills. Pareto talked of 'circulation of élites' according to which one group of elite replace another at the top. Michels said that leadership and democracy are incompatible and leadership inevitably becomes oligarchic owing to the very nature of power.³⁴ C.W. Mills analysed power structure in United States and came to the conclusion that it is dominated by a 'power elite' that is in command of the major organizations of the society.³⁵

Weber's analysis of pure form of authority is of some importance here as will be made clear later. He classified it into three types according to the kind of the claims to 'legitimacy' typically made by each. Every system of authority tries to win the consent of the governed, that is, wants to legitimise itself instead of relying upon coercive power. Depending upon the type of legitimacy which is claimed, the type of obedience, the kind of administrative staff and mode of exercising authority will differ. The validity of claims to legitimacy may be based on; (1) Rational grounds which rests on a belief in the legality of patterns of normative rules and the right of those elected to authority under such rules to issue commands; (2) Traditional grounds which rests on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of the

status of those exercising authority under them; (3) charismatic grounds which rests on the devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism or on exemplary character of an individual person.³⁶

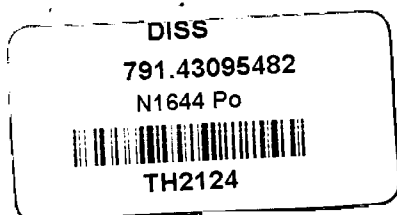
Although these types of authority are not found in pure form in the external world, they are useful as ideal-types. Each form of authority found in the external world contain elements from two or all of them. An ideal-type as such is constructed by the abstraction and combination of a number of elements which, although found in reality, are rarely discovered in this specific term. Such an ideal-type is neither a description of any aspect of reality, nor is it a hypothesis. It enables us to focus precisely upon theoretically relevant aspects of empirical reality. It also aids in comparison, generalization and explanation. This becomes clear when analysis of charismatic leadership is taken up at a later chapter. After a rather short treatment of literature on leadership, now specifically the various approaches are discussed.

In psychological or 'trait approach' the focus is on the leader himself, to the exclusion of other variables. Initially this took the shape of great man theory which assumed that leadership could be explained by psychological or physical characteristics or traits of leaders which are presumed to differentiate them from others. Some sought unitary leadership traits capable of characterizing leaders wherever found. Others

looked for constellation of traits constituting general leadership. Wolfenstein has made a comparative study of four leaders viz. Hitler, Churchill, Lenin and Gandhi. He analysed the lives of each leader in some detail and looked for common psychological traits arriving at the conclusion that these leaders had unusually well developed and ego supportive super egos. All of them had relative lack of objective ties, viewed the world as divided into good and evil camps and had single minded devotion for purpose - all of which developed out of resolution of the adolescent identity crisis.³⁷

In another study, Charles Cell has constructed a charismatic scale taking into consideration a number of factors like attitude of leaders and their popularity during their life-time. He applied it to a number of leaders and placed them in decreasing order on charismatic scale, as Hitler, Mussolini, Sukarno, Mao, Castro Charles de Gaulle and Lenin.³⁸ Many arguments can be advanced against this type of studies. So far little evidence has been found for the existence of universal character traits that define the essential and distinguishing qualities of leadership. Moreover, as we have already seen, relevance of a trait will depend on the specific situation in which it occurs. This brings us to the second major approach.

The 'situational' type of analysis, on the other hand, views leadership as a function of the situation. The



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situationist does not abandon the search for significant personality characteristics but attempt to look for them in situations containing common elements. Even though they take into account personal qualities of leaders, main emphasis is placed upon the social conditions that give rise to leadership.

So far, the ^{two} aspects of the problem are independently discussed. The impact of the film on politics at leadership level is only one manifestation of it exemplified in the case of Andhra Pradesh. In Tamil Nadu the impact had been different. Even in this state film-heroes played no insignificant role in popularization of party ideals and programmes. This particular personality trait, that is, being a film-hero, found to be extremely useful in both the states. In the final chapter the developments in both the states is discussed from the point of view of the framework presented in the foregoing discussion.

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CHAPTER TWO

FILM AND AUDIENCE

In this Chapter an attempt is made to analyse the nature and characteristics of film medium. To understand the impact of any medium, it is necessary to understand its nature too, for, quite often the impact is determined by it. Unlike any other medium film is most suited to be 'fantastic'. It makes people believe in impossible things happening. The reaction of the audience is conditioned by the two aspects of the film, that ^{is} realistic character of its images and their movement. While dealing with the reaction of audience, an attempt is made to analyse the character of film-viewing, and finally how movies function to audience.

Before starting our analysis, a few points are to be made clear. The research with regard to the reaction of the audience has not been systematic. Moreover, often the results are not supporting each other. But, here the study is not concerned with the change in attitudes of spectators either with regard to propaganda films or other kind of films. We are only concerned with the fantastic aspect of the nature of the medium, which, as we shall see in the next chapter, together with the content of the popular cinema make not only films popular, but also to a great extent its heroes and to a less extent others connected with it. Indian films serving the conscious phantasies of the audience, became not only well established as a big industry, but also become a necessity rather than a luxury.

T.E. Hulme in his book 'Speculations' says that there is an eternal antagonism in all arts between realism and formalism.¹ Yet both of these different artistic attitudes are born of a like attitude to the chaos of experience which is life itself. The realist looks at experience steadily and records it to analyse this in the process. The formalist rejects actuality as such except in so far as he can create a permanent form of beauty from it which he may eternalize in the processes of arts and literature.² This antagonism gives rise to two different views about the nature of the art. The realist tradition maintaining that 'Art imitates nature' or holds 'mirror up to nature'. Therefore the ideal of art is to 'create an illusion of reality'. This view has a long tradition which can be traced back to the ideas of Aristototele. Opposing this, an antirealist tradition denies that the goal of art is to imitate nature. They maintain that to create a work of art is not simply to copy the world, ^{but to add significant new form to the materials.} The object may express the feelings and emotions of its creator, or that the artist manages to impose a beautiful or significant form on materials with which he works.³

Applying these ideas to the film medium, one can arrive at two different views about the nature and function of the film medium. If the goal of art is only to imitate nature, then motion picture make it possible to achieve this ideal in an unprecedented way. According to this view film should try to record the physical reality in an objective manner. But anti-realist view gives rise to the opinion that film, like any other

art form, must offer an interpretation of the world and try to create new forms of reality.⁴

Kracauer, who belongs to realist School ~~that~~ says that film art 'literally redeems this world from its dormant state, its state of virtual non-existence, by endeavouring to experience it through the camera.'⁵ Unlike Kracauer, Bazin views the films' realism as an expression of the mythic, not scientific spirit, and believes that the function of film is not to redeem physical reality but to exempt audience from their physical destiny. Rudolf Arnheim, on the other hand, refutes the view that cinema is a mere mechanical reproduction of physical reality. If it were, it would not be an art. He tries to show what the differences between film image and standard perception of physical reality are. The film image suffers from a reduction of depth, a distortion of perspective and accentuation of perspective overlapping, etc.⁶

The above cited views express the difference of opinion between realist and formalist Schools of thought. But V.F. Perkins has a different opinion: "The central achievement of film is to be found in fictional narration, which achieves a synthesis of film's two tendencies. In this film achieves its unique blend of photographic realism and dramatic illusion."⁷

There are two basic features of the film. They are the mechanism employed and the creation of an illusion of motion. More than any other art film is technologically determined. The history of the film is the history of the invention of its means. Film is necessarily an art of illusion from the very

beginning. Both by fabricating the images to be projected and by manipulating the speed and sequence of their projection, film can and do revel in the creation of most elaborate illusions. Sparshott regards many of the views expressed by Panofsky, Kracauer, and Arnheim as dogmas. "Whatever be done with a medium is among its possibilities and hence true to it in a sense that has yet to be shown to be illegitimate".⁸ He offers an account of film medium which indicates both its great range and special features - its unique way of representing space, time and motion. He says: "Film is unique in its capacity for visual recording and analysis, in its ability to convey the unique present reality of things, in its ability to reveal qualities of lives; but also in its formal freedom, its capacity for realizing fantasy and developing abstract forms".⁹ Roger Manvell also expresses the same view that film is a technical medium ~~suited~~ suited to be fantastic. The film has been a playground for fantasy from the start when Melies of France went star-gazing on the moon. The film remains an expert medium for fantasy because it is so realistic, 'seeing is believing'. The films can make all things credible. 'The truer regions of fantasy lie not in the easy technique of superimposed images, but in the fantastic approach to life round in films.'¹⁰

Having considered various ^{views} expressed about the nature and function of film medium, now we turn to the questions of audience expectations and gratifications, characterization of film experience etc.

How can we characterize film experience ? How do spectators reel inside a movie-house ? Kracauer analyses this in detail. He says that films can be expected to influence the spectator in a manner denied to other media. ~~the~~ The first effect is the impact on the senses. Different kinds of pictures call forth different reactions. Some films address themselves directly to the intellect, some function merely as symbols or such. 'Film images primarily affect spectator's ~~sense~~ senses, engaging him physiologically, before he is in a position to respond intellectually.'¹¹ Kracauer gives the following reasons for the above assumption. Films record physical reality for its own sake. Struck by the reality character of the resultant images, the spectator can not help reacting to them as he would to the material aspect of the nature. Hence their appeal to sensitivity. Keeping with the recording obligations, film also renders the world in motion. By its very nature, film is a succession of ever-changing images which altogether gives the impression of a flow, a constant movement. Moreover, film may feature or represent things moving. 'Movement is the alpha and omega of the medium'. Movement is attractive in itself and acts as a physiological stimulus.¹²

The second effect of the film viewing is lowered consciousness. He says that with physiological stimulus, organic tensions and excitement will follow. It appears that with the moviegoer, the self as mainspring of thought and decisions relinquishes its power of control. In contrast to theatre where people are themselves, in cinema they dissolve into all

things and beings. Film tend to weaken spectator's consciousness, which is furthered by darkness in movie-houses. Darkness reduces contact with actuality and lulls their mind. Film is compared with drug because of its stupefying effects.¹³ Lowered consciousness may lead to dreaming. Moviegoer finds himself in a state between waking and sleeping, which favours hypnotic fantasies. To the extent that films are mass entertainment, they are bound to cater to desires and day dreams of the public at large. This is why Hollywood is termed as 'dream factory'. The events on the screen can be supposed to bear somehow an actual dream patterns of audience.¹⁴

Spershott also compares viewing a film with a dream. He says: "There are indeed many ways in which film going is like dreaming, but the likeness is always qualified". Films are like dreams involving spectator in a world whose course he cannot control, but it is unlike them in that their world does not incorporate the dream of effort and participation.¹⁵

Christian Metz points out the differences between dreaming and film-viewing. The dreamer does not know that he is dreaming; the film spectator knows that he is at the cinema.¹⁶ The second major difference between the filmic and dream experience ~~derives~~ derives from the first. Filmic perception is a real perception which is not reducible to any internal psychological process. The film image belongs to that class of 'real images' (paintings, drawings, engravings, etc) which psychologists oppose to 'mental images'. The difference between the two is what separates perception from imagination in terms of a phenomenology of consciousness. What characterizes filmic perception is that

it involves a stimulus, whereas dream 'perception does not'.¹⁷ Christian Metz feels that filmviewing is more akin to a day dream. Daydream is a waking activity like filmic ~~state~~ state and unlike dream. This is Freud's 'Tagtraum', the daytime dream, in short, conscious phantasy. 'The degree and manner of logical coherence of the novelistic film are rather like those of the 'petit roman' or 'story' which are Freud's terms for conscious phantasy.'¹⁸

Christian Metz also says that film being akin to day-dream, serves as fantasy fulfilment. To quote him: "With its authentic (external) images and sounds, the novelistic film helps nourish the subjects' phantasy flux with supplementary material brought in from outside and irrigates the figures of his desire; it is not to be doubted the classical cinema is among other things a practice of affective fulfilment. All fiction - what Freud calls 'fancy', serves this same purpose, it proposes behavioural schemes and libidinal prototypes, corporal postures, types of dress, models of free behaviour or seduction and is the initialing authority for perpetual adolescence, the classical film has taken, in relay fashion, the historical place of the nineteenth century novel (if itself descended from the ancient epic)".¹⁹

This, Phantasy relationship is further exemplified by Spectator's reaction to movies either as pleasant or as unpleasant. Again to quote him: "From the topographical point of view, filmic unpleasure can arise, depending on

the circumstances, from two distinct sources, and sometimes from their convergent action. It can arise on the side of id when the id is insufficiently nourished by the diegesis of the film; (when) instinctual satisfaction is stingily dealt out, we have then a case of frustration in proper sense (actual frustration in Freudian terms); hence films that seem to us 'dull' or 'boring' etc. But aggressivity against the film...can result equally from an intervention of the superego and the defences of the ego which are frightened and counter-attack, when the satisfaction of the id has, on the contrary, too intense, as sometimes happens with films in bad taste, or films that go too far, or are childish, or sentimental, or sado-pornographic films etc.; in a word, films against which we defend ourselves by smiling or laughing, by an allegation of stupidity, grotesqueness, or lack of verisimilitude".²⁰

In short, if the spectator is to like a film, the details of the narration must sufficiently please his conscious and unconscious phantasies to permit him an instinctual satisfaction, and this satisfaction must stay within certain limits, must not pass the point at which anxiety and rejection would be mobilized.

In terms of wish-fulfilment also, film-viewing is more in the nature of a daydream than a dream. The film is twice inferior to dream in this regard; it is alien and it is felt as 'less true'. In relation to the daydream, the balance is shifted. The emotional satisfaction provided by the film is no less than in the day-dream. It is a question in both cases

of a pseudo-belief, a consented-to simulation. "The profound conformity to one's images, if occurs, is a specific joy receiving from the from the external world images that are usually internal, seeing the familiar images inscribed in a physical location (the screen), of discovering in this way something almost realisable in them of reeling for a moment that they are ~~phen~~ perhaps not inseparable from the tonality of which most often attends them, from the common and accepted yet slightly despairing impression of the impossible".²¹ The dream responds more to the pure wish in its original madness; the film is more reasonable and measured satisfaction wherein enter a larger share of compromise. If the film and daydream are in more direct competition than the films and dream, if they ceaselessly encroach upon each other, it is because they occur at a point of adaptation to reality. The dream belongs to the childhood and night, the film and daydream are adult and belong to day.²²

Theorists have also compared viewing a film both with reading a novel and with watching a play. Spectator enjoys the solitude as in the case of former and reacts to significant events humanly in the company of others, as in the case of latter. Watching a film preserves the modern sense of privacy, offering the viewer both invisibility and absence of responsibility. The experience is essentially 'voyeuristic' and sometimes even pornographic.

For Parker Tyler, film experience is more explicitly sexual and psychological. For him the 'dark-enshrouded passivity encourages the 'daylight dream'. In this state the movie screen transcends its role as a mirror of nature and the viewer's unconscious mind can read the film's images symbolically. He says that the resonant images of a Hollywood film mirror mythic cultural values and evoke primitive responses in the mass audience. He says that comparative mythology and psychoanalysis have made us aware of the persistence of deep psychic needs, and the film responds, to these needs in away the contemporary popular religions fail to do.²³ Ken Kelman observes that 'the spectator is reduced to a voyeur - which is, increasingly, the individual's role in society at large.²⁴

So far we have discussed the nature of the film medium and characterization of film-viewing. But what do audience get out of films? Before answering the above question, it should be made clear that research in this area has not, been systematic and consequently definite answers can not be found. Nevertheless there is lot of analytical literature available in this regard. They give us a insight into the process and mechanism involved. Motion pictures achieve their effects because they help the individual to cognize his world. 'cognition' is the response of an individual in the situation which is selective and creative and not simply passive. 'Like the folk tale, classic drama, primitive story telling or medieval morality play, the film may be regarded as a means through which the

individual understands himself, his social roles and the values of this groups'.²⁵ It is also a means by which the individual orients himself in a universe of events which appear to occur haphazardly and chaotically. His need for meaningful experience is a need for order. ~~Ps~~ Psychologically, an important aspect is that of participation. It is the special characteristic of this ~~dem~~ medium that the individual, has an opportunity to project himself into situations and to some degree share in experiences otherwise denied to him. He may move into a world other than his own and acquire social identities and play social roles in many groups otherwise inaccessible to him. He may vicariously experience how other people react in a variety of situations.²⁶

There are some other ideas about how movies might function as; Audience can learn from movies informally. In films are modelled many life situations that the ordinary person will sooner or later face. How they are handled is may or may not itself be exemplary, but the ~~every~~ fact of being able to anticipate them is valuable. There are several ways in which this learning function of movies can be used by audience. Many movies are not set in the groups to which most of the audience belongs, but rather among groups to which they aspire to belong. Examples are the films about the rich, the powerful, the glamo^urous, the successful. Such groups are reference points for audience. If the young see a film about married life, if the poor see a film about the middleclass, and if the films are remotely plausible, this will make concrete

for them the characteristics of their reference group. Powdemaker notes that 'audience tend to accept as true that part of a movie-story which is beyond their experience'.²⁷ Associated with this function is another learning function, namely, status aspiration. Sometimes the movies will portray a way of life in such a way as to attribute to it a high status.

A further aspect of this whole matter is anticipatory socialization; those of a lower status or belonging to groups different from reference groups to which they aspire, can learn from the films how these groups behave and to adopt lifestyles they have come to think are appropriate.

Another function is reinforcement of values. Working class may like the movies which show heroes as adventurous and successful, who is faithful to his duties, where education and wealth play not a much significant role.²⁹ This portrayal of certain characters and ways of life in movies is suffused with approval. When middle-class ways are held up for all to admire, this legitimates the middle-class way of life. Movies can also confer status on what they portray by bringing legitimacy to them. As Jarvie puts it, 'Values and mores can be shown as remarkable or even admirable and hence have their status enhanced. Because movies feature stars, stardom has status; because middle-class life is extolled, it is important and worthwhile.'³⁰

Now we come to the important function of movies, that is, identification and escape. Movies often picture either heroes,

or events or locales with which the movie-goer can identify. To identify with a virile or successful hero, to feel part of the exciting events which surround him, to imagine oneself transplanted to exotic locales, is a form of vicarious enjoyment. But why do spectators need to escape into fantasy life? Freud in his 'Civilization and its Discontents' expressed the view that all humans need compensation because physically all human life consists of sublimation, repression and frustration. There is a human need to fantasize in the same way as there is a need to sleep, or need to dream. Coping with reality can go on only if occasionally there is a respite from it, a respite where we imagine a world with other problems, or no problems, and where there is childish fantasy of omnipotence prevail. What audience do is then to act out the problems of real life in unreal ways, which may release tension as dreams are thought to do. 31

To conclude this chapter, it can be said that film medium is technically suited to be fantastic and audience reaction is determined by this nature of the film. Film combines photographic reality and dramatic illusion and functions in a number of ways to its audience. One of the important functions is to act as an escape from the real, drudgery life for audience. This combined with the nature of the popular Indian Cinema, makes its heroes very popular with audience.

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CHAPTER THREE

POPULAR INDIAN CINEMA - AN ANALYSIS

In this chapter an attempt is made to analyse and understand 'popular' Indian Cinema, which, along with the nature of the medium as discussed in the previous chapter, made not only the Cinema as the most important form of entertainment for many people, but also created its own 'stars'. The phenomena of 'Star System' is discussed completely in next chapter when describing the success of NTR in Andhra Pradesh.

It is said that the discussion will centre around popular India Cinema. But the preliminary question to be answered is what is an Indian Cinema? There are movies made in most of the languages in India and what is to be taken as representative of all-India film? Hindi film is the obvious choice because of its countrywide acceptance and apparently national character. The analysis of hindi film should be applicable to films in other languages for the simple reason that only 'entertainment' or 'commercial' movies are taken into account here, which, to a large extent are same in every language. This is underscored the fact that many movies, from other languages are successfully remade in Hindi, and vice-versa, with necessary modifications. The characterization in movies, structure of the plot and treatment of the problem undertaken are same in this kind of movies in which ever language they are made. For this very reason literature available on India cinema is devoted to Hindi cinema to a large extent,

and the same is taken into account here.

It is not to say that Hindi and regional cinema are identical in all respects. The differences between them stem from the following reasons. The regional film has its roots and sense of identity and stresses the elements of regional tradition. It has the advantage of addressing to a more homogeneous audience and employing local nuances calculated to appeal to special sentiments.¹ Contrasting to this, Hindi films, as satyajit Ray puts it, present a synthetic and non-existent society. They do away with the bothersome aspect of social identification.² Consequently the characters are more superficial and the treatment more fluid and general. Trying to reach wider audience, they emphasize only those elements which have an all-India appeal and tries not to be identified with any particular region in either characters or story-line. Apart from these, there are no basic differences in the treatment of popular movies in various languages. In this regard Hindi film is truly representative of all-India film.

Swami Agehananda Bharati, an American anthropologist says that 'the typical Indian film is an 'artefact' in natyam tradition. ³ The Sanskrit term 'natyam' denotes music, vocal and instrumental, as well as dance and acting. The basic ingredients of an all-India film testify this. It comprises an operatic assembly of all possible spectacles, sentiments, melodrama, music and dancing.⁴ Satyajit Ray lists the following as essential in an average film; It should be in colour, have six or seven songs, dance,

stereotyped characters; dwellings which do not exist outside the studio floor, locations in various hill stations and sometimes in foreign countries. "This may well be the classical nine-rasas prescription carried to its nth limit of crudity.⁵ Barnow Erik and Krishnaswamy also speak of 'Bombay formula' for success. 'A film should include one or two major stars, at least half-a-dozen songs, two or three dance sequences with romance around idolized stars. Obstacles to love are provided by villainy or accidents and not due to any social problems. Dance and song provide the conventionalised substitutes for love-making as well as for emotional crisis.'⁶ Thus the nature of popular Indian cinema is determined by the compulsions as perceived by the producers and imagined expectations of the audience. Chidanand Dasgupta puts the interaction in the following manner: 'What passes for acting is a game between the producer and audience played with well established types-the crying mother, the doting father, the dancing, singing, dewy-eyed heroine, the sad-faced or epileptic hero, the comic, the precocious child. The situations are stock situations with stock responses too ready-made to require any exploration of why or how something has happened; The films are long as folk entertainment has always been. The opposition between good and evil is sharp, as it has always been in the epics and legends.'⁷ The elements of popular film being what they are, how can we analyse and understand it? Before answering the

above question, it is important to understand the influences on Indian cinema which shaped its content and form.

There are both external and internal influences on Indian Cinema. Externally Hollywood film had the most profound impact. Each genre in Hollywood had its counterpart in India. 'Almost every passing phase of the American Cinema has had its repercussion on Indian film.⁸ Stories are often lifted and modified to suit Indian conditions. It was possible, as the American cinema is a 'synthesis of values and expressions easier to accept for international audiences ! 9 The internal factors are many and come from different sources.

Understandably, epic tradition is the single largest influence on Indian cinema. Many features follow from this, such as, 'tendency to exaggerate reality, the extravagant scenes and sentiments, the mixture of conflicting emotions, and the slow, deliberately paced exposition of the main theme (with endless distractions from minor sources, each complete in itself), the black and white characterization.¹⁰ The literary tradition has also its contribution to make, like the markedly melodramatic strain, the exaggeration of sentiment and accumulation of coincidence.¹¹ Film became prominent and a substitute for traditional forms of entertainment because it incorporated all these elements fulfilling the diverse needs for drama, music, farce and dancing.

Producers of the movies are motivated by the goal of

making profits for the money they invest. Consequently film-makers have to create a work which is singular enough to fascinate and excite and general enough to excite many. They must appeal to those concerns of the audience which are shared. So, a film can be studied as a collective fantasy, a group day-dream, in contrast to the individualised fantasy incorporated in a work of literature, a painting. Sudhir Kakar analyses popular film from this aspect. 12

Like other high fantasy products, such as children's fairy tales and adult day-dreams, popular film emphasizes the central features of fantasy; the fulfilment of wishes, the humbling of competitors and the destruction of enemies. After expected twists and turns, film reaches the inevitable happy-ending repeating the message that failure of ~~evil~~ evil is inevitable. 13 Another feature is the oversimplification of situations and the elimination of detail, unless the detail is absolutely necessary. The characters of popular film are always typical, never unique, and without the unnerving complexity of real people. The hero and the villain, the heroine and her best friend, the loving-father and the cruel step-mother are never ambivalent. The intention is to appeal to 'child ego state' within audience, to arouse quick sympathies and antipathies and thus encourage identification. 14

Here the attempt is to understand the popular film as fantasy product. But what is fantasy? The origins of fantasy lie in the unavoidable conflict between one's

desires, formulated as demands on human environment, and the environment's inability or unwillingness to fulfill those desires. Fantasy acts as a bridge between desire and reality. Robert J. Stoller describes fantasy as 'the vehicle of hope, healer of trauma, protector from realities, concealer of truth, fixer of identity, restorer of tranquility, enemy of fear and sadness, cleanser of the soul!'.¹⁵ Popular film is a fantasy only in this special sense.

Another dimension of popular film is it being a spectacle, and not an artistic endeavour. Ashish Nandy analyses popular films from this point of view.¹⁶ In a spectacle black is black and white is white and all shades of grey and scrupulously avoided. 'A spectacle has to be an overstatement.'¹⁷ It is the form of the overstatement which is important, not its content. A popular film tries to be convincing as a spectacle by exaggeration.

'Spectacles have to be anti-psychological in their content; they can be psychological only in their impact.'¹⁸ The characters do not develop through situations in these films, rather the situations develop through characters. The story is told through a series of incidents which are interwoven through artificial means such as coincidences and accidents. Thus, judged by the logic of their structure, such films are anti-psychological.

The film story does not generally have an unexpected conclusion, but only a predictable climax. It bases its

appeal not on the linear development of a story line but on the special configuration which the film presents of the many known elements or themes derived from popular stories and traditional tales.

As an American Anthropologist Aghananda Bharati says, the relationship between the screen tale and the people who watch, it, is between people and their projections, not between people and other people.¹⁹ The subject and execution of films are totally predictable and hence more stereotype than modern European movies. Stereotype does not imply unrealistic, the degree of realism not being part of its definition. 'Frequency, reinforced by object extension, constitutes stereotyping'.²⁰ Some of the stereotypes may be true to life, while others are not. Thus, where as tight-fisted, ill-willed tradesman may indeed exist, the nubile, smiling, singing, dancing, car-driving Hindu girl does not; nor her nubile, heroic, healthy, handsome, desperate lover. Often it appears that the most unreal characters score best in movie popularity as they serve as fantasy objects. As already mentioned, the hero is a stereotype in a popular cinema and is contrasted with the villain. By and large Indian hero is mainly of two kinds.²¹ One is the sensitive, charming youngman, who is within the society and has a great respect for Indian ideals. Another is a rough and tough character who relies more on brawn than brain and is outside the society. In last decade the first type of hero gave way to the second type. It is interesting to study changing

archtype of hero, which is not devoid of social influences.

From the heroes of the end forties and early fifties, emerged three major ones, embodying the romantic ideals of the time. Raj Kapoor was the first urban Indian hero. A loss of both humanitarian ethics and oriental values formed the centre of his plots. His portrayal of naive hero lost in big bad world, probably represented the growing fears of urbanization at that time.²² Dev Anand still played lost-in-town- hero, who wanted to change the world but didn't know how. The films of the late '50' s were a kaleidoscope of romance, pessimism and rejection. In the sixties Rajesh Khanna emerged as the top hero. He represented a mixture of acceptable values, old and new. He played middle-class, urban, romantic hero, who had human strengths and failings.²³ In the seventies he was superseded by the image of angry young man, an anti-hero, epitomized by the rise of Amitabh Bachan. The new hero had scant regard for law, morals and ethics and questioned the system which wronged him.²⁴ Girish Karnad says that, if one were to relate the changing hero-type to the audience towards which he is directed, one can say that there is a gradual change from a middleclass to an essentially working class target.²⁵

The hero as the centre of the plot, serves as the care of popular cinema. Being an individual he is easily identifiable and thus serves as a stereotype to be admired or aped. Identification is aided by the portrayal of the character of hero in a movie. In contrast to villain, hero

is all virt^{ou}ues and a respository of ideals. If poor, he will be honest and hard-working and rights against oppressive system; if rich, he is benevolent and sacrificing. Generally either the hero or heroine will be rich and the other poor. In the poor house everybody is endowed with golden hearts and possesses love for one another. In contrast to this, in rich houses affluence brings distance between family members and the point that true love cannot be bought by money is forcefully presented. Quite often there will be eulogy of poverty which is equated with honesty and self-respect. Whether rich or poor hero will have necessary physical and moral powers to achieve what he seeks. In almost all the films, he sings and dances. In one variety of films where the hero is sensitive and romantic the problems are created by social differences, ^{which later} are reconciled and the father who was much concerned about social status and wealth changes his heart and offers the hand of his daughter to hero. In the second variety of films, where he is a tough man, the villain will be a dacoit or kingpin of international smuggling gang. The society is portrayed as weak and the message given is that only strong people achieve what they want in this society. What is most important, however, is, in both kinds of films the solutions offered are unrealistic and individual which are not rational.

In conclusion, one can say that popular Indian cinema being what it is, influenced and shaped by various factors as discussed above, acts as a conscious collective fantasy for audience. The stereo-typed characters, ^{which} encourage identi-

fiction makes its heroes very popular. They acquire an image which transcends the individual films in which they act and usually a strong individual impression will be present on the roles they enact.

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Op.Cit. P. 60
22. See N.Madhavan, 'The Hero; A Sociological explanation'
in Time of India, 31 Jan, 1986.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. See g- Girish Karnad in India International Centre
Quarterly, Vol.8 -1981.

CHAPTER FOUR

EMERGENCE OF N.T.R.

In Andhra Pradesh assembly elections held in January 1983, Telugu Desam party came to power after nine months of its formation by a film-hero Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao, popularly known as N.T.R. The Congress Party which was ruling the state ever since its formation in 1956, faced the defeat for the first time. Andhra Pradesh returned all but one Lok Sabha candidates even in 1977, when in most parts of the country Congress was rejected. In 1978 Assembly Elections and 1980 Lok Sabha elections too, the state favoured Congress. Thus it has always been a stronghold of this party. But Telugu Desam came to power disproving many election forecasts. For a second time in India, after Tamil Nadu a film-hero became a chief Minister. Undoubtedly there are many factors which brought out this development. Some of the important factors are the popularity of NTR being a film hero, decline of Congress due to various reasons discussed later and the prevailing social and political conditions in that state during the time of elections. In Tamil Nadu the impact had been a long and sustained one. In both the cases there are some similarities and many dissimilarities. After analysing political developments in Andhra Pradesh, a comparison is made with Tamil Nadu to enhance the understanding of the role of film medium in politics. This chapter starts with an examination of why film-personalities are popular

among Indian people and seeks to understand the phenomena of 'star system' sociologically.

Film personalities all over the world enjoy preeminence among people. The phenomena of Stardom is not peculiar to only Hollywood cinema. In India the film personalities are much talked about and occupy most of the leisure time of the people. It is not to say that all of them enjoy the same kind of attention and prestige. It depends on each individual actor's abilities and the kind of image acquired. Only some of them deserve the label 'stars', as they possess larger-than-life image in the eyes of audience. They are admired, not merely envied, and looked upon with awe.

What are the social and cultural reasons which give rise to the above phenomenon? They are not far to seek. Movie-going has almost acquired ritual status among Indian people. As the literacy rate is very low, reading books and magazines figure nowhere in their leisure activity. Films are the only form of entertainment for vast multitude of them. It is the only one which is within the reach of their economic status, as they cannot afford other expensive ways of entertainment. Chidanand Das Gupta rightly observes, "the reasons for the appeal of films are the erosion of the traditional forms of folk entertainment, trek into the cities in search of employment and by this cinema quickly established itself as the only diversion of the public fulfilling its diverse needs for drama, music....."¹ It is

also because television has not yet replaced films as in developed countries for obvious technological and economic reasons. Thus films stay as the dominant medium in India at present. We observe that popularity of film-personalities is not less to do with the popularity of the medium. Apart from them, sportsmen and others those associated with entertainment are equally popular. This phenomena is termed as 'star system' and stem from several reasons. The following disoession is to understand this phenomenon from a sociological pointof view.

In every society there are two categories of persons whose behaviour is an object of attention by the members of that society. The persons who hold political, economic and religious power are, presumably, one category of persons because of the consequences their actions have on the present and future generations of society. The second category of persons are those whose institutional power is very limited or non-existent, but whose doings and a way of life arouse a considerable and even a maximum degree of interest. These are variously called as stars, idols or 'divi'.²

What are the social conditions which giverise to this phenomenon? The primary condition is the growth in size of societies. In a large-scale society there is a high level of interdependencein which only small number of persons provide reference to all. The element of mutuality

is lacking in the interaction as people know the star but he views them as multitude. The second condition is the increase in economic wealth which facilitates mobilization of interests and attention. But in some societies, low level of economic development also brought out this development as in India where cinema stars are very popular and in Latin America where football players enjoy the same kind of prestige. As for the third condition, the stars bear witness to the possibility of social mobility. Their success is seen as achieved through their talent and hard-work. For this very reason, they are admired, not envied. The great improvement in their status is seen to be obtained not by illicit means but by their meritorious conduct and exceptional or charismatic qualities.³

Thus, 'stars' are those members of the community whom all can evaluate, love or criticize. They are chosen objects of collective gossip, the channels of which are mass media of communication. The highly successful sportsmen, film personalities form the core group, but do not exhaust them. Most of the members belong to entertainment world. The group is not structured and has very fluid and uncertain limits. In Hollywood we have the examples of Humphrey Bogart, Sophia Laren, Marilyn Monroe and Gina Lollabrigada only to mention a few. In India also we have many of them in different languages.

Stardom and charisma: When both these words are used in general sense rather than restricted, they are comparable. Stardom is a phenomenon by which a certain individual attracts in the eyes of many others, an unconditional admiration and interest. The particular individual is credited with exceptional qualities superior to others. Likewise Weber defined 'charisma' as "certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and is treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities."⁴

This is to say that 'stars' are charismatic figures in the eyes of their followers. It does not constitute a power relationship as stars don't have institutional power or their actions have any effect on the society. They are judged by the standards of the roles they are playing. The criterion of evaluation is highly specific, i.e. in a particular role.

But in certain societies under some social conditions this quality may be diffused. For example in one south American country football players victorious in a world championship were selected as parliamentary deputies. In Brazil, the manager of the football team is regarded as the second most important person after the president. Likewise in many other countries also football players are ~~ex~~ very popular. In India we have witnessed many film personalities entering

politics with varying degree of success. In Tamil Nadu from the beginning there have been intimate relationship between politics and cinema. But, NTR was not associated with any party or movement before entering into politics and within nine months after establishing a party could come out successful in the elections, emerging as a charismatic leader.

Analysis of Charismatic Leadership

Weber's definition of charisma sounds psychological. Charisma is "certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and is treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman or specifically exceptional powers or qualities". On the other hand Weber also recognised the existence of a social basis for its exercise. Charisma has to be socially validated. Thus Weber was concerned with both psychological and sociological components. Charisma is a 'gift of grace' to a person and does not require external confirmation, yet without social validation charisma does not exist. These two orientations are manifested when he said:

"It is recognition on the part of those subject to authority which is decisive for the validity of charisma," and, 'No prophet has ever regarded his quality as dependent upon the attitude of masses towards him'.⁵

Weber was discussing charisma in his analysis of three ideal types of authority, based on the kind of legitimacy

claimed by each. His original concept was that the provisioning of all demands that go beyond those of everyday routine has a charismatic foundation. The charismatic men are 'natural' leaders - in times of psychic, physical, economic, ethical, religious and political distress - are neither office holders nor men who acquire expert knowledge and serve for remuneration. These leaders are holders of specific gifts of the body and spirit which are believed to be supernatural and not accessible to everybody. Weber says that in primitive societies this particular kind of deference was paid to the prophets, to people with a reputation for therapeutic or legal wisdom, to the leaders in the hunt, and heroes in war. Weber also held that charisma is pure only in its emergence and it gets transformed to either traditional or rational authority depending upon the type of succession followed.⁶

Many writers have expressed doubts about the validity of using this concept in other fields.⁷ But as parsons says, 'Charisma covers a field considerably broader than what is generally called religion.'⁸ As Shils points out, Weber also applied the concept to creative, expansive and innovating personalities who are regarded as 'extraordinary' even though they neither claim to possess divine grace nor have it imputed to them.⁹ Parsons also says that 'Charisma is not a metaphysical entity but a strictly empirical, observable quality of men and things in relation to human acts and attitudes.'¹⁰ Thus the concept of charisma is

useful by focussing upon the social conditions within which it develops.¹¹ The degree to which incipient charismatics are generated is a function, to some degree, of the cultural pattern of society which may encourage or impede them. Thus charismatic leadership is not a label that can be applied but a problematic relation between a leader and his followers which can be investigated.

It is true that no leader succeeds unless the circumstances are propitious. It is only when the message conveyed by charismatics to social groups is relevant and meaningful within the social context that authority emerges. He succeeds when a potential following exists because of the problem some people face. The importance of both the leader and the context in which he moves is suggested in the conclusion of a historian of reformation, Eli Chinoy, that 'Martin Luther King found public opinion super saturated with revolt; all that was needed to precipitate it was a pebble thrown in.'¹² In a situation where increasing number of people are dissatisfied with the existing conditions, charismatic leaders may emerge. What is important is not the personality of the leader alone, but what he stands for, the issues he is associated with, the grievances he seeks to put right, the manner in which he proposes to do so and more importantly the time he chooses to do this.¹³

Emergence of NTR is sought to be examined in the above discussed framework of analysis.

NTR as a Film Hero

NTR entered into film industry in 1949 in the role of a police inspector in 'Mana Desam' (our country). In a career spanning thirty three years, he worked in 292 films out of which 274 are in Telugu. His films can be classified into socials, mythologicals, folklores and historicals. Although he is most famous for his mythological roles, he acted only in 42 of them. 184 of his films were socials, 55 folklores and 11 historicals. After his first film, he worked for Vijaya productions in four films, all of which are successes. They were 'Paatala Bhairavi', 'Mallewari', 'Pedalichesi choodu' and 'Chandraharam', all directed by eminent directors of that time. In 'Paatala Bhairavi', a folklore, he acts as a commoner who ascends the throne after rescuing the princess from the hands of a wicked magician. He also wins the heart of the princess.

The first godly role that Rama Rao played was in his 30 th film, 'Maya Bazar' as Lord Krishna. Of the thirty films he acted before, twenty had celebrated hundred-day runs. So it is not true to say that he became famous only with mythologicals. One film that brought him fame for playing godly role was 'Sri Venkateshwara Mahatmyam (1960)'. The film tells the story of Lord Venkateswara, the god of seven hills and incarnation of Vishnu. There is a scene in which he emerges from the idol of the Lord and walks towards

the camera - the audience. This particular scene created a deep impression on the viewers and the identification between man and God was complete. Rama Rao also played some anti-hero roles putting them in a favourable light. Here the portrayal was to show that they are not as bad as they are made out to be. He played Ravana in 'Sita Rama Kalyanam' (1961), Rama in 'Lavakusha' (1963), Duryodhana in 'Sri Krishna Pandaveeyam' (1966), Bhima in 'Pandava Vanavasam' (1968), three roles viz. Karna, Duryodhana and Arjuna in 'Dana Veera Sur a Karna' (1977). 'Lava Kusha' ran for a record 75 weeks. Thus while he is remembered most for his roles as Rama and Krishna, his positive interpretation of traditionally negative characters like Duryodhana, Karna and Ravana won him critical acclaim. Of the 42 mythologicals, he played Krishna in seventeen films. Thus he acted as almost all important characters in Indian mythology. His mythological films were a great success with audience. Two of his films ran for fifty-weeks, seven for twenty-five weeks and twenty-five others had a hundred day run in 225 theatres. What another actor Jaggaiah says about Rama Rao is worth quoting: "He developed his own diction, very important in mythologicals. His cultivated gesticulations and his personality was a great asset that helped him to become a super star." 14

Majority of his films were socials as already mentioned. Most of them are family dramas where the hero is the embodiment of all that is good. Films are too numerous

in this genre to mention. 'Pettandarlu' (Power wielders) released in 1970, narrates the highhandedness of the village bigwigs and the way a young man teaches them a lesson, winning the approbation of the people. His socials were no different from his counterpart in Tamil Nadu or an average Hindi film, discussed in ~~second~~^{third} chapter.

Thus he got a good and godly image among Telugu audience enacting different types of roles. While in mythologicals he played divine roles and performed miracles, in folklores he played the Swashbuckling hero, who bestowed with superhuman qualities goes about punishing the wicked and rescuing damsels in distress emerging as the victor and darling of the heroines. In socials, whatever role he played, he always stood for all that was good, noble and brave fighting against all that was bad, mean and corrupt. Thus over the years he got the image of a gallant saviour who punished the villains after facing the near impossible odds, ultimately emerging victorious. As we shall see, this image served him well when he entered into politics.

Apart from being a successful film-hero, NTR acquired a name of being an honest person. He also participated in many social service activities by collecting money at the time of natural calamities. In a bio-data published in 1977, it was stated that he -

- (1) collected nearly Rs. 1,50,000 for Rayalaseema famine relief fund in 1952.
- (2) collected more than Rs. 3 lakhs for police constable family welfare fund in 1965:
- (3) collected more than Rs. 30 lakhs for National Defence Fund in the wake of Indo-Pak war in 1965:
- (4) In 1977, a cyclone hit the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh. NTR along with some other film personalities toured the state and collected Rs. 15 lakhs for Andhra Cyclone Relief Fund.¹⁵

Decline of Congress

Since the formation of the state in 1956, the Congress had hardly faced any challenge in Andhra Pradesh. The emergence of a regional party in Telugu Desam and its ascent to power in 1983 warrants a review of Congress party's functioning in Andhra Pradesh. The Congress 'support structure' was the landed gentry, agricultural and industrial labourers; in terms of caste it enjoyed the allegiance of principal castes in Andhra, Echeduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, backward classes and minorities. They had reposed faith in the economic and social policies of Congress like land reforms, nationalization of banks, 20 - point programme etc.,¹⁶

Initially the leadership of Congress party came from Brahmins and other educated upper middle classes, from urban areas as in other parts of the country. As an electoral study puts

it: "The party's leadership shifted in the late fifties and early sixties, from the urban centres to the rural periphery, from the educated middle class in the cities to the rural elite. From the higher urban based caste to middle peasant castes."¹⁷ The split in 1969 resulted in the initiation of many radical programmes which sought to transform the Congress Party from the party of the privileged to the party of the masses. In Andhra Pradesh since 1982 there was a dynamic change in the support structure of the Congress. An election survey conducted by department of political science, Osmania University, Hyderabad indicates a wide support to Congress from backward classes (58.7%), the minorities (43.1%) and the low castes (34.1%).¹⁸ In contrast to this, a state-wide study of 1980 parliamentary elections indicated a decline in support for Congress from backward classes (47.5%), minorities (23.7%) and Scheduled Castes (10%).¹⁹ Thus there was a decline of support from backward classes and minorities by 1980.

The political developments in Andhra Pradesh from 1980 to 1983 further eroded the credibility of Congress. The failure at both government and party level was exemplified by change of four Chief Ministers in a span of three years. Dr. Chenna Reddy became chief minister after 1978 assembly elections. Many defections took place in his tenure which resulted in the decline of strength of Janata from 60 to 16 and Congress (U) from 30 to 3 in 2½ years. Many corruption

charges were also levelled against him and his cabinet colleagues. His style of functioning coupled with the pompous celebration of his 60th birthday resulted in growing dissidence.²⁰ Finally he was to resign on 10th October 1980 and Anjaiah took over as chief minister. At the time of election, he was a Rajya Sabha member. Prior to that Anjaiah was defeated in the assembly elections from the Musheerabad constituency. In order to accommodate all factions, he formed a 61-member ministry. Every third MLA became a minister which was against the recommendations of Administrative Reforms Commission. He became a laughing stock in the eyes of public.²¹ Anjaiah was followed by B. Venkatram. A leading news magazine, Sunday described his election as 'Exit Mr Anjaiah, Enter Mr Nobody', and compared him with Babasaheb Bhosle of Maharashtra and Shiv Charan Mathur of Rajasthan. Vijay Bhaskar Reddy became chief minister fifteen weeks prior to the assembly elections. He was a minister in Brahmananda Reddy's cabinet and resigned in 1971. He joined Congress (I) only before 1980 parliamentary elections. In a short span of time he could not bring back credibility to the party which eventually lost to Telugu Desam.

The centralizing tendency in Indian politics clearly manifested in the case of Andhra Pradesh too. There was a wide-spread feeling that party affairs are stage-managed from Delhi as seen in the frequent changes in leadership. Later Rama Rao successfully exploited this by accusing Congress leadership of selling the pride of Telugu people

in the streets of New Delhi. Thus the decline of Congress can be seen due to factionalism, centralized politics and corruption which eroded its credibility. Emergence of Telugu Desam is, thus, in accordance with the logic of Indian politics at that time and Andhra Pradesh in particular.

Success of Telugu Desam

On 21 March 1982 Rama Rao announced that soon he would launch a political party. On March 29, he formally inaugurated the steering committee of the party. Explaining the idea behind naming the party Telugu Desam he said: "I have decided to devote myself to the cause of our state. I have decided to fight to revive the glory of our proud cultural heritage and for our language. Therefore, we will call our party Telugu Desam."²² After forming the party in March, in the span of nine months, NTR emerged as leader of Telugu people. His emergence has all the characteristics of a charismatic leader which was discussed earlier. In order to understand this rise, we should analyse his theme and style of campaigning which was aided by his cinematic image.

Explaining why he entered into political field, Rama Rao said: "They (people) have given me their affection, patronised my films, made me rich and famous. It is my duty now to repay this debt."²³ Echoing the same sentiment in a pamphlet 'My Mission', he said that his duty towards

his people and state has not ended simply as an artist and he would like to devote the rest of his life to the cause of the State. In the same pamphlet he questioned the state of affairs in the state and held Congress responsible for the miseries of the farmers, poverty of the workers and insecurity of the women. His appeal was mainly emotional. He asked Telugu people to look back into the glorious past when they earned name as brave people when Satavhanas and Kakatiyas ruled and the rich cultural heritage in the form of language and literature they developed. He urged them to compare that with present state of affairs. He alleged that people didnot have the freedom of electing their own Chief Minister and State Congress leadership was a puppet in the hands of central leaders. He declared atthe end that his main concern would be ^{to} ~~the~~ revive the glory of the past and the rich cultural heritage of the Telugu people, their self-respect.

The theme of his entire campaigning was also on the same lines. He asked people to dethrone the corrupt rulers who have forgotten their self-esteem. By this they should make it clear that nobody could take them for granted and they were the masters of their own destiny. This emotional appeal was aided by his experience of acting in films. His oratory was a great asset to him which created a powerful rapport with people. His gestures and body language also helped in driving home his point. His campaigners used large hoardings

of his image as lord Krishna heaped with garlands blowing a conch shell.²⁵

The victory of Telugu Desam is not an unimportant one in the context of political developments in India. This has many facets, viz. Centre-State relations, effect of strong primordial sentiments in political mobilization, the influence of cinematic image among people etc., Any explanation should take into account political situation at that time in the country and particularly in Pradesh. George Mathew analyses the victory of Telugu Desam in this light.²⁶ Since late 1960s there was more centralization resulting in the neglect of regional feelings on the political, economic as well as cultural levels (e.g. ignoring local political leadership, farmer's demands, language demands etc.). The success of Telugu Desam party can be seen as an inevitable response to this tendency. The failure of Congress leadership in Andhra Pradesh at both governmental and party level was a direct result of this centralizing tendency. There was widespread feeling that the political affairs in Andhra are stage-managed from Delhi as exemplified in the change of four chief ministers in a span of three years.

Appeal to a primordial Sentiment

Primordial in the literal sense means that which is formed earliest or that which is first in order. In sociological literature this is used to identify that which evokes intense and comprehensive solidarity among people.

Edward Shils for instance identifies common territory of origin and residence, common place of work, ties of blood and sexual connection as primordial. It has many functional levels in view of the context in which it becomes operational like caste, religion, linguistic and cultural identities in Indian context.²⁷

One of the important election planks of the Telugu Desam party was to restore the self-respect of sixty million Telugu people. NTR's main political slogan was Telugu Atmagavavam (Telugu self-respect). The appeal to the primordial sentiment is evident by the type of campaign carried out by the Telugu Desam in the form of Pamphlets, cassettes and posters.²⁸

There were cassettes which mimicked the faux pas of Anjaiah and other leaders of the previous government in songs, parody and poetry. There were other cassettes which recalled the songs of patriots like Gurajada Appa Rao and plays and other works of Kandukuri Veersalingam. They also referred to the story of Alluri Sitarama Ragu (a patriot who fought against the British rule) in Burrakatha. Interspersed with such songs, the cassettes recorded NTR'S speeches in which he lamented that in the land where Gurajada had left his foot-points, the land which is soaked by the blood of Alluri, the land which had produced great poets like Nannaya, Tikkana, Errana and more recently leaders like Sriramulu and Prakasam, a land which had produced such poets,

Social reformers and heroes, now has leaders who were selling its pride and prestige and self-respect on the streets of Delhi.²⁹

The pamphlets and life-size posters projected imagery which by implication promised good and clean government. One booklet in colour consisted of mythological and historical roles which NTR had played. In between the portraits were brief write-ups, characterizing those roles. The pictures are those of NTR in the roles of Krishna, Karna, Bhishma, Veera Brahmendra Swamy, Sri Krishna Devaraya, Sri Rama and Brahma Nayudu - in that order. It can be seen that all India mythological figures, together with more recent and local saints and rulers are depicted in those pictures. Each of these figures stand for certain ideals like political shrewdness, bhakti, valour, sacrifice, secular attitude and social reform respectively.³⁰ Although the appeal is to the Primordial sentiment, the images and symbols recall the composite culture of India. In this respect the Telugu Desam movement is very different from the Dravidian movement in Tamil Nadu which was more fundamentally a breakaway movement. In both these cases, there is an appeal to the primordial sentiments of people. The film medium was effectively used to convey message in Tamil Nadu where as the image was effectively exploited in Andhra Pradesh. Even in Tamilnadu in later years of the movement, film-stars were employed for political mobilization.

Now we turn to a more detailed study of Dravidian movement and the impact of film medium on Tamil politics. This should give us a broader understanding of the role of film and film personalities in politics.

A Comparison with Tamil Nadu

Dravidian movement in Tamil Nadu was started for the upliftment of non-Brahmins of South India. While organizing Dravida Kazhagam in 1944, E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker sought to extend his movement for social reform and uplift to the demand for a separate and independent state, Dravidistan. In 1945, the object of DK was proclaimed to be the achievement of a sovereign Independent Dravidian Republic, which would be federal in nature with four units corresponding to the linguistic divisions, each having residuary powers and autonomy of administration. Later the character of the movement had entirely changed. Hardgrave, who studied the movement put it: "The movement has been transformed under the impact of social mobilization and accommodation by government, from a secessionist movement, based on the glories of a resurrected past and a vague and impossible hope for the future, to a political party, representing an increasing specificity of interests and a germinal acceptance of basic democratic, electoral and parliamentary values and principles."³¹

The Dravidian movement could bring the people of Tamilnadu an awareness of itself as a community. The movement was able to achieve this through an expression of primordial identification. The base of the movement comprised urban, semi-urban, unemployed middle class youth. The DMK as a catalyst for social mobilization, has effectively exploited the identity anxiety of the transitional individual in his movement from a primordially determined universe of family, caste and village to an urban environment. The widening of the base of the movement took place later. To quote Hardgrave again: "Through its appeal to basic language nationality consciousness, the party has gained increasing support as the identity horizon of Tamil people expanded under the impact of concomitant forces of communication, urbanization and industrialization."³²

The film has been a major vehicle of Dravidian movement, and its effect and penetration may be measured in the rise of DMK and its victory in 1967 elections. Early Tamil films were largely mythologicals but with the first social films in 1936 came an infusion of politics. The Congress sought to use the motion picture for nationalist propaganda. While the Congress in Tamil Nadu made early use of film, it was only the party of Tamil nationalism, the DMK, that took film seriously as a vehicle of political mobilization. The leaders of the DMK regarded film as the

most important art form because it was the most popular. Writers and actors who had matured in the touring dramatic companies associated with E.V.R's self-respect movement came to dominate the Tamil screen. From the 'guerrilla theatre' of Tamil nationalism, they brought anti-northern, anti-brahmin themes. Their Tamil was purged of sanskritic elements in assertion of Dravidian self-respect. The golden age of the Tamil kingdoms was resurrected on celluloid. Brahmins were portrayed as sinister and foolish.³³

The Dravida Kazhagam, in spite of the appeal to the masses, remained a quasi - military organization and basically elitist in character. Seeking democratic party organization and electoral involvement in the newly independent India, a dissident faction broke with E.V.R. in 1949 and founded the DMK. Among those joining C.N. Annadurai, its founder, were a number of Tamil stars, including K.R. Ramaswamy, S.S. Rajendran, and Shivaji Ganesan, and later M.G. Ramachandran.

Early DMK films, like 'parasakti' were basically oriented to social reform. But as the 1957 elections neared, the party chose less obtrusive themes with more of specifically political flavour. The demand for a separate state of Dravidasthan used to be couched in 'folklore' films in which hereo (MGR) would struggle against the evil despot. Dialogues used to refer obliquely to contemporary politics and gradually phrases introduced to refer to party, a reference to the rising sun, symbol of the party, or Anna, Annadurai. Here we refer to some of the

films to get an idea of how film medium was used to propagate party ideals. In the folklore film 'Nadodi Mannan' (Vagaband king) 1958, there were numerous references in song and dialogue to 'Dravida'. In the film, an adaption of "The Prisoner of Zenda", MGR, crowned King, issues a decree that could have easily passed for the DMK election manifesto. In 'Adimai Penn', Jayalalitha points to the rising sun and tells MGR, 'That is our God. Pray'. 'Nam Nadu' is perhaps the ultimate in this series. The film, remake of an earlier Telugu hit, exposes administrative corruption and social evil and is given a particular DMK flare. MGR makes his appearance wearing the party colours - a red shirt and a black trouser. Throughout the film, the red and black combination appears. Annadurai's portrait hangs on the wall in almost every scene, accompanied by pictures of Gandhi. When MGR, the sacrificing government clerk turns politician in the cause of the poor and seeks election, his posters are in the red and black form as that of DMK. With MGR's election victory, a song Proclaims, 'The Sun is rising, history is changing, and now everything will be alright.' The film concluded with a self-respect marriage under a statue of Gandhi. 34

Thus, there was a conscious attempt on the part of DMK leaders, to use film medium for the propagation of party ideals. Karunanidhi, writer of the film 'Parasakit (1952) said: 'My

intention was to introduce the ideas and policies of social reform and justice in the films and bring up the status of Tamil language as they were called for in DMK policies.' He also said, 'We say that art should be for propaganda - for the people and for society.'³⁵ Thus the films of both C.N. Annadurai and Karunanidhi were vehicles of Social reform and party propaganda. Their themes were widow remarriage, untouchability, the self-respect marriage, zamindari abolition, prohibition and religious hypocrisy. DMK leaders have recognized the fact that cinema is the only form of entertainment for common man. They have made use of it for social reform. In every story they introduced amusement with instruction and ideology wherever possible.

The two star politicians of Tamil Nadu were also initially groomed in the Dravidian movement. Later Shivaji Ganesan joined in Congress and MGR founded his own party, Anna DMK and became the chief minister of Tamil Nadu in 1977. The relationship between the party and these heroes ~~ex~~ were mutually reinforcing. Their popularity was due to their association with Dravidian movement and the parties they represented also benefited by their star appeal. Their film and political careers are, thus, closely linked to each other.

In 1949, Ganesan appeared in a play 'Chandra Mohan', written by C.N. Annadurai, which depicted the triumph of Maratha hero Shivaji over the Brahmins. Shivaji was one of the founding members of the DMK, when it broke with Periyar in 1949. Soon afterwards Shivaji appeared in a leading role in the

film 'Prasakthi' (1952) for which the screenplay and dialogues were written by Karunanidhi. The film attacked injustice and inequalities of society. The scene for which the film is famous shows a priest molesting a girl inside the temple precincts. In the following years, Shivaji acted in many films, a third with a critical hundred- day run, a mark of success. His films were both historicals and socials with considerably varied roles which won him more than a dozen president's awards. In 1960, for his role in 'Veera Pandya Kattabomman ' Shivaji received the best actor award at the Afro-Asian film festival held in Cairo. In 1966 president of India conferred 'Padmasree' in recognition of his contribution to the stage and screen of South India and of his charitable and national activities.

When he was in DMK, Shivaji was never really involved in party activities even though he was associated with it. In 1961, he extended his support to the new Tamil Nationalist party, a split from DMK. When the party was dissolved and its leader, E.V.K. Sampath, joined Congress, Shivaji followed. Now he is with Congress (I) and was made a Rajya Sabha member in 1982, following the death of Nargis Dutt.

Shivaji's generosity is an important element of his fan image. He contributed one lakh rupees to the mid-day meal programme to the school children and also food and money for the relief of Madras food victims in 1962, He used to

maintain a dramatic troupe of hundred members and regularly held benefit programmes for schools, hospitals and charitable institutions. He also made substantial public contribution of gold to the Prime Minister's Defence Fund and also staged benefit programmes for it.³⁷

M. Gopala Ramachandram, popularly known as MGR, is a Malayalee, born in Kandy, Sri Lanka. Poverty stricken, their family moved to Tamil Nadu. At the age of six, MGR entered the Madurai Original Boys Company, a dramatic troupe and learned dancing, acting and sword fighting, which later served him well in his film career. In 1954, Karunanidhi offered him a leading role in Malai Kallan (Dacoit of the mountain). It was a great success which brought fame to MGR and he soon joined the DMK.

The typical MGR film is a morality play filled with purity and integrity reminiscent of the classic American western in which good inevitably triumphs over evil. The villain is portrayed as embodiment of evil, save the love he holds for his beautiful daughter. The hero is all virtuous. In love scenes with heroine, he is invariably the pursued rather than the persuer. The hero is a goody-goody man and the heroine, a saintly creature. The incidents can be changed a little, but the basic characters are always the same. The climax brings the defeat of villainy, uplift of the poor, and fulfilled romance in a self-respect marriage. The

films are filled with references which blur the role and actor into one which made MGR a projection of his screen image. In 'Enga Vittu Pillai (The Son of Our Home) he signs: "If you follow me, the poor will never suffer. First Christ came and preached, then Gandhi came and preached (but the people have forgotten). Now I will get things right.' In 'NamNadu', about which already mention is made, the hero is introduced in a series of short episodes. He helps/an old woman to walk across the street; captures, saves small children from eating unclean sweets. Later in the film, he captures a ration-shop dealer selling goods illegally. Like Shivaji's MGR's image has also a lot to do with his generosity which is well publicised and is an important element of his fame. After torrential rains, he gave raincoats to 6,000 rickshaw pullers in Madras. When fires had destroyed some Madras hutments, he gave a lakh of rupees for relief.

In 1967, the DMK won elections in Tamil Nadu and MGR also became a member of state legislature. Just a few months before elections, he was shot at by M.R. Radha, who acts as a typical villain in Tamil films, over some dispute, arising out of personal and political conflict. MGR conducted his campaign from his hospital bed. Later he was made the party treasurer. With the death of C.N. Annadurai in February 1969, Karunanidhi became chief minister. In 1972, MGR broke with Karunanidhi and formed Anna DMK, named in honour of late C.N. Annadurai. MGR accused DMK of rampant corruption and of betrayal of Annadurai's principles." 38

In 1977 Lok Sabha elections, AIADMK formed 'Progressive Front' with Congress and CPI. It bagged 35 of the 90 seats it contested and polled 58 per cent of the votes. The opposition parties, DMK, Congress(0) and CPI(M) won together only four out of theirty-nine seats they contested. It is to be noted that Karunanidhi's government was suspended one year before the elections. In the assembly elections held in the same year AIADMK-CPI(M) front won 142 of the 234 seats contested, whereas DMK, going alone, secured only 48 seats. AIADMK assumed office on 30 June 1977 with M.G.Ramachandran as Chief Minister.

MGR's rise in political career owes no less to his screen image as he could become chief-minister of a language and nationality conscious Tamil-Nadu despite being a Malayalee by birth. As already mentioned his image and party influence were mutually reinforcing. In one of the surveys conducted in 1969 by Hardgrave and Anthony C. Neidhart, the relationship between star-preference and party-affiliation is explored.³⁹ Among MGR fans 81 per cent voted for DMK in 1967 elections in urban areas, whereas ~~73 per cent voted for DMK in 1967 elections in urban areas~~, whereas 73 per cent in rural areas. In 1962 elections the corresponding figures were 75 and 58. The results thus confirm close relationship between favour for MGR and support for the DMK. They say that Star preference

has the highest predictive value of any variable in determining party vote. However, they caution us that it is not to establish a causal relationship. Hardgrave and Neidhart wrote: "It is highly probable that the dominance of MGR in the Tamil films, as well as involvement of both Annadurai and Karunanidhi as film writer and producers, was a vital ingredient in the DMK's rise to power and a powerful testament to the influence of film on society."⁴⁰

What are the similarities and dissimilarities in the influence of movies on politics of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu? In Tamil Nadu there was a conscious attempt by the Dravidian movement to use the film medium effectively for political purposes. They conveyed their ideas and programmes through film effectively and star image of actors was also an important element in political mobilization. The building of larger-than-life image was also aided by clever publicity, apart from acting in films. In the case of Andhra Pradesh, this worked retrospectively. There was no conscious attempt to mix politics with cinema, rather they tried to be away from it. Unlike MGR and Shivaji, NTR was not directly associated with any political party or movement. At the time of joining in politics, his legitimacy was only being a top actor with impeccable reputation for sincerity and hardwork. He revealed that his intention to join politics was ^{to} express his gratitude and repay debt to his fellow-Telugu men for honouring him as an artiste,

at a time when their identity and self respect is in danger. While his star-image gave him an initial boost, clever campaigning convinced the electorate of his mission of restoring self-respect of Telugu people. While number of factors helped in the triumph of Telugu Desam, NTR's good and godly image is no unimportant one. It gave him the chance to speak on behalf of all Telugu people and represent their grievances against Congress rule. In both Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, the language-nationality factor played a dominant role and the leaders have effectively exploited this primordial sentiment.

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- 4 Weber, Economy and Society (New York: Bedminister, 1968), p. 241.
- 5 See H.A. Gerth and C.W.Mills, From Max Weber : Essays in Sociology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952), pp. 245-50.
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- 10 Parsons, op. cit., p. 669.
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- 14 For all the details regarding NTR's film career see S. Venkat Narayan, NTR: A Biography (New Delhi: Vikas publishing House, 1984.).
- 15 The data is given in Bio-data sheet of NTRama Rao dated 15 October 1977.
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- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Quoted in ibid.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 See Sunday, 8th Febreury, 1981.
- 22 See S.Venkat Narayan, op. cit.
- 23 Cited in ibid.
- 24 N.T.R. published a pamphlet after forming a party titled in Telugu as 'Na Manoratham' (My Mission) explaining his decision to join politics.
- 25 Look at the leading magazines like Sunday, India Today and Illustrated Weekly of India, during elections.

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- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 R.L. Hardgrave, The Dravidian Movement (Bombay: Popular, 1965), p. 30.
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- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Refer to a study conducted by C. Neidhart and R.L. Hardgrave, "Film and Political Consciousness in Tamil Nadu", EPW, 10, 11 January 1975, pp. 27-35.
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CONCLUSION

An attempt is made in the foregoing chapters to analyse and understand the impact of film medium on society. To understand the impact of any medium it is also necessary to examine its nature and content, for the nature of the impact is determined by them. The study was mainly concerned with, what may be termed as, the phenomenon of NTR. It started with the assumption that he could be successful not irrespective of being a popular film hero, but also because of it. It is not to deny other significant social and political factors, but to examine the role of a particular element, given the presence of other factors. It is a significant development in Indian Politics, for a second time in India ~~first being the case of PN~~, a film-hero became a chief Minister. It is also of some interest to note that others who wanted to emulate him in different states and at national level, could not be as successful as N.T.R. Surely, there should be equally good reasons for this. When in a society established political leadership tails and a vacuum is created, those who have a good image in the non-political fields stand a good chance of being elected as political leaders. This is what was exemplified in the case of N.T.R. When the ruling party and opposition fail to win the confidence of people, a non-political alternative is found. This will depend on other factors like political culture of a particular society. It is in this framework that an attempt was made to analyse the impact of film medium on society.

The important characteristic of film is that it is suited to create and serve fantasies. The appeal lies in its creation of illusion of reality. Still photography, from which the film developed, records the reality as it is. The two conflicting tendencies are round in film medium from its inception. While Lumiere brothers used it for the second purpose, Melies for the first. It is in narrative film that the two tendencies exist side by side. The photographic realism is combine with dramatic illusion. The audience reaction is also examined in the second, chapter, where it is said that film serves the conscious fantasies of the people. It is more akin to day-dreaming than a dream.

It is in the nature of film medium that it creates "Stars". They acquire a particular kind of image which transcends each of the film in which they appear. They also stand in a particular relationship with audience. It is not peculiar to only Hollywood cinema. Their popularity will depend upon the culture of a particular society. In India, film is the only form of entertainment for many people. It has replaced traditional forms of entertainment and acquired the status of 'popular culture' in society. Popular culture is the answer the demands of a society in transition. It fills the gap between 'folk' and 'elite' culture. In every society a gap exists between them, more so in India. Changing social conditions will bring new demands which are catered to by popular culture. Films in India have acquired the role of 'cultural leadership' by setting trends in various fields.

Content of the films is also an important factor to examine in this context. The audience reaction will depend on and also is determined by it. The various influences on Indian Cinema Shaped its content. The dominant external influence is Hollywood film and internal influences are many such as the literary and epic traditions. Cinema being a replacement of 'folk entertainment' has also incorporated some of its elements. The popularity of film is also because of certain social conditions like low economic development, high rate of illiteracy and erosion of traditional forms of entertainment. The result of the two factors, nature of film medium and content of popular Indian cinema, is the immense popularity of film-heroes to a great extent and others associated with it to a lesser extent.

Political culture in India is largely of non-participative nature. The mode of evaluation in different field like political, economic and cultural is not deeply internalized. In advanced societies where the division is clearly made, the popularity in one field may not be generalized to other spheres. But in India, the social and cultural conditions enabled a popular film hero like N.T.R. to become successful in political field. As repeatedly made clear, it is not to deny the importance of other factors like political and social. Here the problem is analysed, only from a particular point of view.

Film has a tremendous potential to be used in politics in a society like India. It is only in Tamil Nadu that this was successfully exploited. Here the film carried the political

message and helped in the rise of DMK to power. Even in Tamil Nadu, film-heroes played no unimportant role. They were the drawing-cards for masses. The popularity of Shivaji and MGR as well as the DMK was mutually reinforcing. MGR could successfully become Chief Minister in 1977, after splitting from DMK and forming his own AIADMK. It is significant to note that in both states, that is Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, the drive was against the centre and congress party. In both the states there is assertion of regional identity. The nationality question also played an important role. The assertion of the people in both states as belonging to a particular region and linguistic group was strong. This also underscored the importance of primordial factors in Indian politics. N.T.R. could successfully rouse the sentiment of Telugu people because of he being a popular film-hero in Andhra Pradesh and having acquired a particular kind of image, and not irrespective of them. The role of this factor was exemplified in the type of campaign he carried out. While all political leaders try to acquire a good-image among people by clever publicity, this was fulfilled in the case of N.T.R. before joining politics itself. Perhaps because of the lack of the corresponding social and political conditions that others could not be as successful as N.T.R. This factor is more in the nature of dependent variable than an independent one. However, film proved to be an important medium to be effectively used.

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