

## Humorous Portrayal Of Unemployment: Analysis Of Popular Tamil Comedy Films Of The Late 80s And Early 90s

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### ABSTRACT:

Comedy is always excessive. Comic excess always occurs in relation to the social order, but the position that it takes relative to the social order can vary widely (McGowan, 2016). Culturally Tamil films have a specialty and that is the importance given to comedy in our films. Comedians have more opportunity and value in our films than any other language film in India. In our Tamil society, there are many people who watch movies as a celebration and not as works of art. It is natural that humor always plays an important role in celebrations. There are very few stars in the history of Tamil cinema that have a real sense of humor. And it is rare for artists to make children and adults laugh out loud on the same channel. And not to mention the great philosophers who are social activists, these films are a reflection of the modern average people in our society. It is usually possible to choose a level of humor that conveys a sense of humor rather than saying emotional things realistically. An example of this is the popular comedy films of the 1980s and 1990s. It is explored that these films are seen as a factor that distinguishes them from the spice films of the time, and that comedy films acted as a tool to save the Tamil film industry of the day.

**KEYWORDS:** Social order, Tamil films, Social activists, Comedy films, Comedians

### Introduction

Cinema has its humble origins in 1885 and India caught up soon to the cinematic development. The touring talkies a group of nomadic cinema screens entered Chennai at the end of the 19th century. They were set up places that already served as public spaces or usually on open grounds. In the year 1913 is when Madras got its first permanent cinema halls (Hughes, 2006). Empire cinema and Electric theatres. Later during the following years Gaiety (1914), Elphinstone (1915), and Wellington (1918) theatres were established. It was not uncommon for people to come into the city just to watch movies from the outside towns. On the other hand, India tops the world in the number of film they make each year, but sadly their grade is still considered to be poor (Chakravarty, 2007). When we look at cinema from a cultural standpoint, it has always been a unique media that united people from different backgrounds. The uniqueness of cinema lies in the fact that street plays and cinema were the only two forms of affordable entertainment that were available for the mass audience who were mostly illiterate. Though today's audience may be more literate than the previous audience still the cine fever has not gone down. Despite poor budgets and heavy losses, the Indian cinema industry churns out around 600 films per year, which is thrice that of the following country (USA-200). The statistical figures mean nothing because in India cinema is not mere entertainment, it's a religion and actors are not mere heroes, here they are Gods (Rajadhyaksha & Willemen, 2002).



It can also be a powerful means of communication. Like language, cinema is the material that carries and surrounds itself with the meaning of being human at a particular time and place. That is, it mediates our experience of the world, helps us to understand things, and in doing so, helps shape the world itself. There is a grammar to cinema that has evolved over time. And these rules, like any language, are repetitive, that is, they are repeated and evolved between each generation. Every evolution of the format is borrowed and structured from what came before, how filmmakers tell their stories and how we experience them. While we are amazed and delighted by the audience's reaction to the simple depiction of being dragged into a train station in 1896, imagine how the same audience would react to the last Avengers film presented in IMAX 3D (Sharman, 2008).

In 17th-century France, Moliere, one of the greatest comedians and satirists in the history of drama, combined classical influence with comedy del'Art in drama. This combination is also present in the plays of the Italian Carlo Goldoni. After a period of repression during the Puritan Revolution, the English comic drama Ethereal, Witchery, Congreve, and others reappeared with humorous, often entitled, emotionally artificial humor. However, by the end of the 17th century, such harsh reactions had set in against the pettiness and pettiness of the restoration stage, and English comedy became known as emotional comedy. The play, which sought to evoke tears rather than laughter, had its repercussions on the French comedy Lormontaye. In England in the late 18th century. A renaissance of satirical and humorous character jokes was seen in Sheridan's plays. After an almost complete failure from the beginning to the middle of the 19th century, good humor was brought back to the stage in the comedies of the ideas of Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw. In the late 1880s, the Great Russian playwright Anton Chekhov began writing subtle and subtle jokes about the dying Russian aristocracy (Cyrus Henry, 2023).

### Comedy and Tamil Cinema

Tamil Comedy film was followed by *Shivaji Ganesan's "Pale Pandya"*, another milestone comedy. Yet humor is not often tried as a genre. No time to fall in love, a cult comedy that actor *Nagesh* has been carrying effortlessly on his shoulders since 1964. The scene where "*Sellappa*" (Nagesh plays an aspiring film director) tells the story to his father still catches the rib. *Rajinikanth* used a similar scene in his comeback film "*Chandramukhi (2005)*". Later *Nagesh-K Balachander* comedy dramas like "*Server Sundaram (writer KP), Bama Vijayam*", *Opposite Swimming* and many more. Outside of these films the concept of 'comedy track' was still in practice with the help of *JP Chandrababu, Manorama, Cho* and other 'comedians'. *Galata Wedding* is a feather in its cap of the 60s with its fun prototype. Once again *Shivaji Ganesan* proved his mettle with comedy. And legendary directors like *KP, Bharathiraja* and *Mahendran* have given their best this decade. But what about comedy films? During this time, the species slipped from 'extinct' to 'extinct'. "*Thillu Mullu*" (remake), *Evergreen Comedy Predicted 1980s*. This gave a new dimension to *Rajinikanth*. With the support of a cast of actors who have played minor roles in *Thengai Srinivasan, Chaukar Janaki and Nagesh* and *Kamal Haasan*, the film has become a benchmark for genre. Due to a series of attempts by filmmakers and actors such as *K. Bhagyaraj "Indru Poi Nalai Vaa"*, *R. Pandirajan "Aan Pavam"* and *Visu "Dowry Kalyanam" (Dowry Wedding), "Manal Kaiuru" (Sand Rope)*, this genre continued to be relevant. In fact, comedy films gained traction in Kollywood during this period. Although many of these films were excellent comedies, the comedy of the decade was still a thorn in the side, which was released in 1981 (Hughes, 2010). The next eight years helped the species escape the scourge of 'extinction'.

### Comedy film personality in the history of Tamil cinema

Even though many popular movies are released, if there are movies that are talked about over time, it is definitely a comedy movie. In the history of Tamil cinema, comedy has been given prominence in all periods. When the quality of cinemas is in question Comedy films have been instrumental in sustaining its own language films. Comedy was featured in Tamil cinema scenes in the early 80s. But was mostly immersed in mythological and epic films. After the rise of the Dravidian movements, films with various story features began to emerge. It includes comedy or comedy films ("comedy films" or) "Laughter-movies") in popular parlance, they fully established themselves in the early 90's. Made on a very low budget and had relatively little known artists. But still, they are Achieved great successes.



In fact, for a short time, that is, in the early days in the 90s, films of this genre seemed to have completely taken over the Tamil film industry. Also comedy Tamil films made significant changes in the constitution. Comedy films have had an impact to the extent that directors who directed popular cinema have at least made sure to direct a full-length comedy film at least once. Challenged all methods such as story, plot structure, character and the moral plan (Gopalan, 1999). Unemployment was rampant in all states, including Tamil Nadu on 1980s and 1990s period. Several films have been released focusing on the problem of unemployment. But people were very critical of the fact that the movies reiterated the painful truth. It was during that period that some comedy films were released focusing on unemployment. Beyond criticism, it was through humor that such a tense situation was expressed and helped to create a kind of tolerance among the people. This research paper seeks to fill this gap by conducting a study of this phenomenon examining the following films that were most influential in development and Laughter development in Tamil Nadu:

1. Thillu Mullu (K. Balachandar, 1981).
2. Kadhanayagan (Muktha Srinivasan, 1988).
3. Anna Nagar Muthal Theru (Balu Anand, 1988).
4. Arangettravelai (Basil, 1990).
5. Nadigan (P. Vasu, 1990).

In this thesis, I would argue that comedy films served a specific cultural purpose. The late 80s were a very bad time for Tamil cinema. The condition of cinemas during the crisis period in India was very bad. The rule of the ruling Dravidian parties was dissolved and Tamil cinema was paralyzed by various problems such as language problems. It became a time when audiences began to decline, with dim stars and budgets declining, and it was moving towards an intensified crisis. The state-run television broadcasting and video sector had already reduced its audience. Film production companies collapsed, and the government intervened.

### Theoretical Framework

The Semantic Script-Based Theory of Humor is a theory that seeks to explain why certain things are funny by examining how they deviate from established scripts or expectations. This theory is often associated with Victor Raskin, who developed it in the late 1970s. The theory is based on idea that humor arises from violations of certain linguistic and cognitive norms or scripts. Script Opposition: Raskin identified several types of script oppositions that can lead to humor. The films analysis base on these elements.

- **Juxtaposition:** Two scripts are placed in close proximity, creating an unexpected and amusing connection between them.
- **Incongruity:** A situation or event deviates from the expected script, leading to surprise and humor.
- **Parody:** A script is deliberately exaggerated or distorted, often to the point of absurdity.
- **Absurdity:** The script violation is so extreme that it becomes absurd, generating laughter

### Data analysis

#### 1. Thillu Mullu (1981)

The beginning of the movie “Thillu Mullu” is a little different. The protagonist of the film starts the film by giving a preface on what the purpose of the film is. When making new attempts, it is a kind of tactic to prepare the mood of the audience for the film. The preface can be referred to as the first six of the film. For Rajini, who had hitherto been a whirlwind of action and aggression, this was a good opportunity for him to emerge as a comedian. A college middle class young man who has just finished college, his passions is that of his youthful tastes, games, celebrations. The young moon is coming in the first step of life looking for a job season. It's safe to lay a little and buy a job. The fashionable young man Chandran goes for an interview disguised as an incarnation of Gandhi and Nehru praying for work. The family friend, the doctor, prepares Moon for the interview. Interview with “Thillu Mullu” is definitely one of the classic comedy scenes in Tamil cinema. The social life structure of the youth of that period would have been thinly veiled, rather than just standing with humor in the scene.



"We sowed Nehru's policy... he will sell the dress too" - there are political bombshells scattered like this. The moon gets the job done by laying the foundation for the lies, and then lays more and more lies to sustain that job. Each of those lies is interesting. At one-point Moon is trapped in a ring of lies and claims to have a brother. The brother's story he tells of escaping from his boss challenges him. The first great price the moon paid for that lie was the mustache he wished to grow. Until then, the mustache has been the symbol of action heroes in Tamil cinema. At least for all the action heroes a pencil coda must be drawn for sure. The Guru and the disciple were shaking the grammar in the trill. The screenwriter had brought a beautiful knot in the screenplay with the three-inch snout under that nose called the mustache. "Will the country forget the mustache even if the country forgets "Vaa Osi", "Maa poshi", "Te kesi" (Tamil Freedom Soldiers) etc.?" This is also the verse that comes in the picture. Until then, the Tamil screen had never seen Rajini without a mustache. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Rajini, wearing a black shirt with buttoned buttons on the screen after shaving her mustache, is wearing a pair of glasses with a chain in her hand.

The verse that the doctor said, "Even if the unpaid boss tells you not to come underwear," will apply to all times. "Whether you litter or not. I can see the verse that came out of his mouth as "Balachander's blessing given to Rajini". Coconut Srinivasan's flashback to his front class server saying 'Sir... Brandy' is "I am Gandhida" and the manager who says "Sir his name is Lakshmi Narasimhan.. Short name is Lucky Sir", "Your name is also Bakri Sami Pillai... Call Pakki?" by the way, when *Chaukar* says that he and his sister are twins, suddenly says, "What is twin birth, is it your hereditary disease? He throws all the actors in the comedy and leaves the beep. That timing will be very beautiful for *Rajini* and *Thangai Srinivasan* in the movie *Thillu Mullu*. Mainly in the scenes where *Rajini* becomes *Indran*, the reactions on the face of the *Thangai Srinivasan* will give a different color to *Rajini's* performance.

## 2. Kadhanayagan (1988)

The protagonist for the remake of the Malayalam movie can be seen at any time removing a great deal of pressure. 'Crazy' Mohan is in excellent form, his dialogues are apt and humorous with *Pandiyarajan*, *SV Sekar*, *Neelu*, new manager *Kallapatti Singaram*, *Gaja*, *Malaysia Vasudevan*, *SS Chandran*, *'Payilvan' Ranganathan* and his partner. Some special scenes: *Neelu's* reaction to being questioned about his late arrival, *Kazha's* help with the journey, the trainee running every time he finds CIDs, MV's invaluable reaction when he opens his suitcase, and his choice of weapons to fight and die with the tall villain.

The film is a comedy and drama about two friends, *Mani* and *Ramani* (*Pandiyarajan* and *SV Sekar*), both B. Com and SSLC graduates respectively. There is difficulty in getting a job that suits their qualifications. Even if they get a job, they will not be able to stay in the job for long due to their attitude. They have jokingly screened how Indian youth go astray when they are out of work. The pace of the screenplay goes as the bank cheats and gets the money and then runs away stealthily without being able to repay it. By this time, we would have known the news of taking money from the bank and fleeing abroad without returning it. They would have pointed this out that day. Because of their innocence, *Mani* and *Ramani* often deceive people. A man sells a cow to them, which gives them several liters of milk a day, but the cow does not give them milk. After such unsuccessful attempts, they meet with an agent who promises to take them to Dubai and work there. They give their money to the agent, who tells them to board a boat. But instead they are deceived by the boat going to Kerala. In Kerala, drug trafficking gangs mistakenly think of them as CIT officers because of some hilarious misconceptions and funny incidents.

He comes to an unknown city due to some circumstances and suggests that it is important to take advantage of the situation and succeed in life. Unemployment was high during the 1985 period when a state of emergency was declared. Young people in search of work protested against the government in search of work. Various films released during that period spoke eloquently about the state of the country. The main movie "*Kathanayagan*" is one of the few films that have made us patiently believe that if we fight without going the wrong way, we will definitely get a good job.







## 3. Anna Nagar Muthal Theru (1988)

Sathiyaraj is looking for a friend in Chennai from Bombay without getting any job. *Janakaraj* sees his friend looking for him and runs to shake his head. The reason why he did so would have been pointed out in the previous scene. *Janakaraj* is driven by the struggle of middle class life as a person renting a house in Chennai, the cost of a budget. *Madhavan's Janakaraj's* headache is the fear of coming home and staying because he is unemployed. During that time they would have displayed that they would be humiliated if the relative went home without work. And the humiliation of Sathiyaraj wandering for work is reflected in many in the community. Many scenes in the film reflected the rising prices in the country and the suffering of the people. In this movie too, the hero chooses some shortcut for work. He changes his identity as a Tamil and pretends to be a Northern (Gorkha) speaker, deceiving the colonists and making Gorkha work. *Janakaraj* helps with that. He hides his birthright for work and works in all the houses in the colony.

The hero is in a lot of trouble because he can't find a job suitable for his studies. But the thief could not be caught anywhere. So "*Janakaraj*" will pretend to be a thief and get caught by Sathiyaraj because he will have to suffer in extreme poverty if he quits his job. Incidents within the colony often represent a community. Colonial way of life is a reflection of a whole society of people from different backgrounds, human rivalries, economic inequality, repression and power-centric events. They justify joining a job by lying, without trying to commit suicide, without resorting to a small lie, as in the verse: It is noteworthy that when the film was released, there was unemployment in many parts of the country.

## 4. Arangettravelai (1990)

Three unemployed men - two men and a woman - find the answer to their money problems when they receive a call from a kidnapper through a cross link. On the surface it is an average story. But the essence of the story is that it does not work. Three people living in poverty without work are trying to deceive each other. But at one point the three get together and plan to make money by cheating a gang. After getting the money they lose faith in each other and betray each other and finally go to jail. The need for money causes one to deceive the other. The film sets the stage for a "tragedy" those points to the plight of the community.

If you are looking for clean jokes that can be enjoyed with your family, without clowns or jokes like *Vadivelu*, stage work is a good answer. Overall, this is very common in the movement, but it is above average that *Revathi*, *Prabhu* and *V.K. Ramasamy*, in the main characters, has a funny relationship and chemistry between them. Yes, *Prabhu* must have buttoned his shirt in the second half of the film, and *V.K. Ramaswamy* may have diminished his voice at times, but overall, they make an easy-to-match trio that they like.

A lot of the jokes in the first half come from the rivalry between *Prabhu* and *Revathi* (*Prabhu* hates each other due to misunderstanding regarding the theft of *Revathi's* wallet) and it is really fun. The story is about *Prabhu* moving to a new town and getting a job for his deceased father. He struggles and stays at *VK's* house. *Ramasamy's* character - in the same house where *Revathi* lives. The first half of the film is about *Prabhu* trying to get a job and fighting with *Revathi* at home. In the second half they get involved in a project where they can get the money they need to get their lives on the right track - of course, not everything went as planned.

## 5. Nadigan (1990)

The *Raja's* mother had to undergo a major operation. However, due to poverty, *Raja* decides to look for a job in Ooty. While traveling by train with his mother to Ooty, he meets *Thevaraja*, who actually travels to the Ooty Island Estate with a music teacher who carries with him a letter of recommendation with a contact address. On landing, suitcases like *Raja* and *Devaraj* alternate with each other. So the king mistakenly carries the suitcase. Upon reaching their room, he found the letter, and because of his mother's critical situation, he decided to take the job. The protagonist is subjected to the situation of snatching the work of the next due to the status and poverty of the mother. But the





main reason for this situation is the prevailing unemployment in the country. A few verses point out the opposition to the various forms of oppression in the country.

*Sathiyaraj*, who had snatched the next man's job due to circumstances, changes his aging look for it. So the bearded, white-haired old man first transforms himself and goes to work. There, he finds Baby Mom, the guardian of two young women and two children. He is placed to see them as a guardian and teacher. The comedy that ensues is seen as the film's main hit. The way in which the oppression of women in the family is visualized would explain the atrocities of feminism in sociology. *Gowndermani* and *Sathiyaraj* both excelled in satirizing politics, both during the release period and in the context of unemployment and politics. *Sathiyaraj*, who had joined the work at the crossroads, was intimidated in various ways and carried out actions in his favor.

The director would have teased the subject of "Thosam" even though the character of Manorama, who lives unmarried by "Sevvai thosham", laughs as she falls in love with the old *Sathiyaraj*. It also highlights the fact that it is a closed faith. The main scene in the movie "Nadigan" is talking about *Sathiyaraj* giving food ready to Countess. "Why Biryani? Fermented," *Gowndermani* asks. To tell *Sathiyaraj* that it is "Pulisadam". *Gowndermani* will lament, "Are you fooled by this too?" He would say this as an overview of political practices.

## Conclusions

The Tamil film industry often falls within the parameters of Western cinemas that do not yet exist. World - Dances, Songs, Comedy Scenes and Other Products However, most Indian cinemas start with "Non-Realist". It expressed uniqueness towards social realism from the very beginning through feudal connections, mainly myths and legends. It's a close connection to Tamil cinema and literature that produced it. The growing consumer culture in Tamil Nadu in the 80s was harsh. Unemployment among men and women. Despite migration to the Gulf, the economy of Tamil Nadu and the stagnant agricultural sector have been equally maintained, leading to a sharp rise in non-productive industrial unemployment.

Unemployment was high in Tamil Nadu. This is definitely due to cultural reasons. The importance given to education in Tamil Nadu is seen by the younger generation. No wonder there is a large number of unemployed in Tamil Nadu who are educated; many are graduates and postgraduates. Great However, the paradox is found among the illiterate unemployed, coconut pickers (climbers), construction workers and especially agricultural workers. Unemployment is high here. Operate in conjunction with the widely reported "shortage" of workers. Such unemployment was a major blow to both dominance and both. It is possible to know that there are common themes in all these films (Prakash, 1994).

The protagonists of the story are all unemployed graduates. The film sets the stage for a direct critique of India's biggest problem, unemployment. Tamil films of the time jokingly told the story of the change of youth in the society due to unemployment. It also teaches self-confidence that one can make progress in life by making alternatives to work. And without talking about the great philosophers as social activists, these films are a reflection of the contemporary average people in our society. It is usually possible to choose a dose of humor that hints at a sense of humor rather than saying emotional things as reality. An example of this is the popular comedy films of the 1980s and 1990s. Although women were united in many political arenas, there was always the freedom struggle or the communist movement about issues such as pre-existing organizations, caste and nationality. Many of these struggles did not take place. The more you invested in women, the sooner that hostility would return to them.

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