

Current Trends in Tamil Cinema and its Impact on Audience

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Abstract

The "CINEMA" is a mesmerizing word for the Tamil Audience and it is ruling the hearts and houses for more than 100 years. The larger than life images have played a major role in the socio, political and cultural lives of the people of Tamil Nadu. The images have participated in all emotion of the audience, when the nation was fighting for freedom, the images have spelled "Vanthe Matharam", during the festival the images have sung "Unnaikandu Naan Aada..."

Ullasam Pongum inba Deepavali", during the world war the images have narrated "Andhanal". When television was entered, the cinema has embarrassed and made television as supplement screen. When people had communal riot, the cinema presented "BOMBAY", at the time of water scarcity the screen offered "Thanneer Thanner", when we were at romantic mood it screened "16 Vayathinile", to empower the women and to criticize the male domination it showed "Pudhumai Pen", it punished the pannyar in Uthiri Pookkal, exposed the life of the innocent tribals in "Mullum Malarum" it brought the historical characters to proximity like "Veera Pandiya Kattabomman", "Raja Raja Cholan", It was created docu-fiction on the lives of ethnic groups as "Devar Magan", "Madhurai Veeran", "Chinna Gowndar" and "Kala".

Above all the cinema has provided five Chief Ministers to Tamil Nadu assembly. After the implementation of New Economic policy the cinema has faced many obstacles. The satellite television has offered more than 100 channels, the conventional cinema has changed from celluloid to digital, sports become as the core entertainment for the young ones, family audiences have moved away from theatre, ticket prices went up, Mobile brought the digital content to the palm of young audience in spite of all these challenges, the cinema multiplexes have increased, the film productions also have increased in numbers, new film makers are coming in and the Tamil film business have widened its wings to the international spear. The Tamil films are continued to be in the goodwill of Tamil People with the changing screen formats provided by the AMAZON PRIME and the NETFLIXS.

Keywords: Digital Convergence, Portable Media, Original Content

Introduction

Trend is a very common word which describes about the consuming pattern, literary preferences, fashion cycle, media watch and greeting culture. From the ancient period to the modern there was not much change in the life style of the people, they lived along with the seasonal changes of the nature, only the rainy and summer season have

influenced the changes in the food habits and dressing patterns. When the industrial society was emerging than after the mass production, distribution and consumption created a pattern in the lifestyle of the society. Denim was used to make uniforms for the factory workers because of its toughness, then it become a trendy trouser for the young ones. When a single attitude followed by the larger part of the society it become trend otherwise it is said as popular

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culture. The trend may start from one place and spread over other parts of the State, Nation or even worldwide. Denim is such kind of a wearing pattern started from the European continent and widespread all over the world. Cinema is also an entertainment technology experimented in the western world and standardized simultaneously during the third decade of the twentieth century. "Think Global and Act Local" is the business mantra of the multinational companies. Cinema is also one of the good example for having adopted such kind of a strategy i.e., the technology of cinema like the camera, celluloid film and projector are manufactured in the western part of the world and the cinema screens demonstrated the local content all over the world. This created the consumption pattern in the Indian entertainment industry.

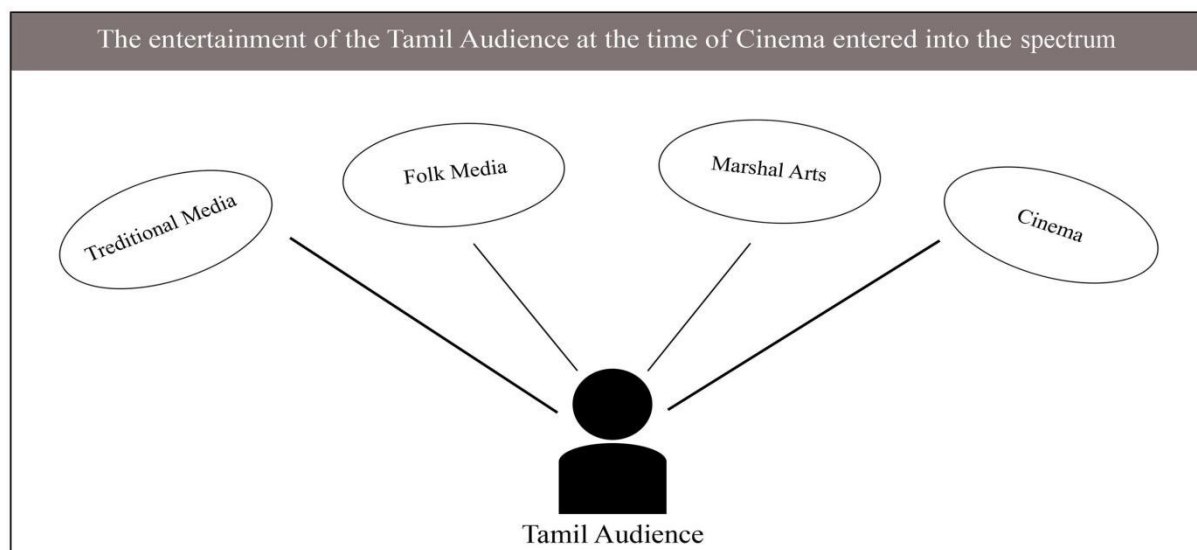


Fig. 1

The traditional and folk media were slowly replaced by the cinema. Till the arrival of television the cinema was remained as the monopoly in the technologically mediated audio visual entertainment. The television was also not to be considered as the competitor to cinema. The relaying time was very less, the quality of reception was not up to the mark. 1982 Asian Games disturbed the consuming pattern of the audience, the arrival of color television provided new experience to the audience. Hire purchase become popular among the middle class of the society and that helped the spread of television fast.

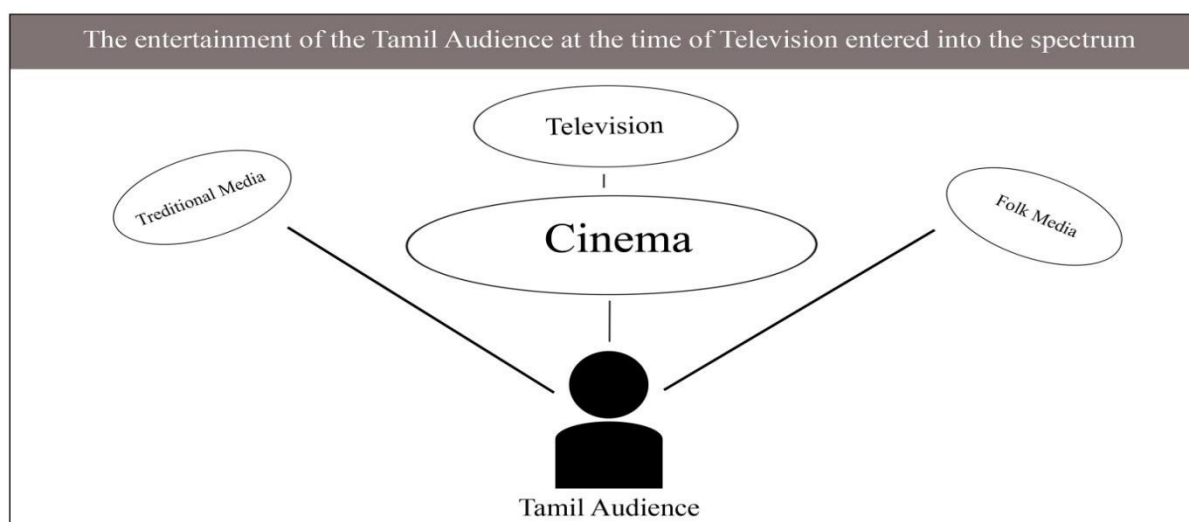


Fig. 2

But even after the arrival of color television there was not much difference with the Tamil audience they continued to be very loyal to cinema because the television was speaking the local language for a couple of hours in a day and rest will be telecasted from the Delhi. Most of the content was relayed in Hindi Language aiming at the national audience and that was not appealed to the regional audiences.

The Era of Globalisation

In the year 1990, the Indian government introduced the New Economy Policy, the process of privatization have started.

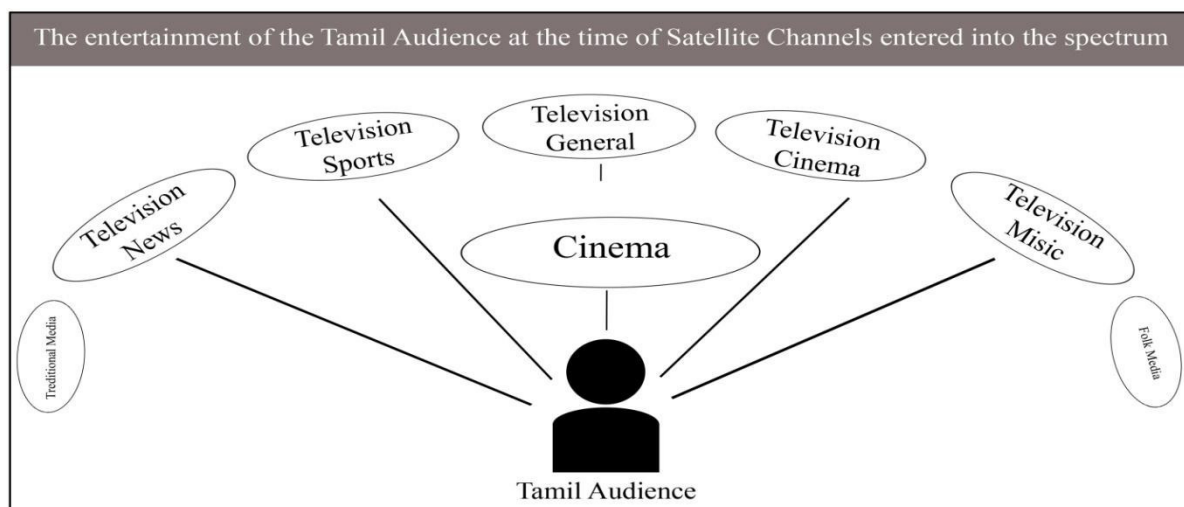


Fig. 3

The Indian market was opened for multinational companies, the free trade was adept all over the world. The information and communication technology was diffused in every corner of the world and connected every citizen of the global village. Suddenly the local audience becomes the global audience and start consuming the global content. Slowly the 2 hour telecast in the television becomes the 24 X 7. Single channel becomes 100 channels. The news becomes instant. But the big challenge to cinema was the arrival of smart mobile technology.

Digital and Convergence Technology

The mobile phone cannot provide the kind of experience which cinema gives to the audience, but the mobile phone offers many options in entertainment. The best advantage the mobile has that its portability which the cinema and television screens are not having, but the mobile shows the content of cinema and television through the internet. All that you need is a smart mobile with the unlimited data connection. "The world is in your palm". Smart mobile adopted all technological advancement happened to other devices. Camera, Film Screening, Television offline live programs, Sport live relay, All news channels, Newspaper PDF files, Magazine PDF, Gaming, Interactive Games, E-commerce, E-pay, web channels, online library, reference, GPS and Social media. All the possible ICT can be accessed through the mobile technology. The leisure time of an individual is segmented with more options.

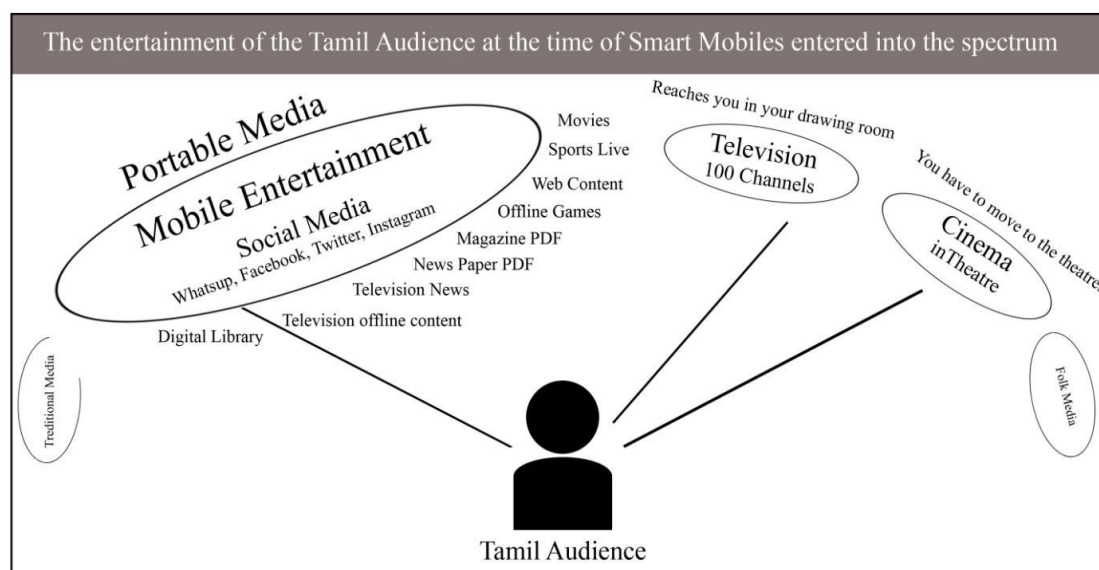


Fig. 4

The Current Trend in Audience Preferences and in Film Industry

The availability of multiple screens made the audience as the primary important in the media business. The variety of media content available within the screen is like overflowing the water in the bucket. The young audiences are more attached to the mobile entertainment and the matter of **timeliness** is not relevant to the fictional content. Though the Quiz, Game shows are classified as reality television content but such programs also recorded and edited program. The availability of the content after the relaying time reduced the curiosity among the audience. The joy of watching the film on the release date during the festival season shared with the film promotion discussions of the stars and crew in television.

The Challenges of the film business today

- Movie content are watched more in television, laptop, PC and mobile screens rather than theatre screen.
- Downloading movies through mobile phones at the free of cost (unlimited download schemes not charging categorically) are affecting the revenue of box office collection.
- The cost of ticketing is higher than any other media entertainment.
- Television rights are becoming cheaper than ever before.
- Only the star films are being paid higher price for television rights.
- Technological spread made the film production cheaper and that tremendously affected the quality of the product.

Audience consumption pattern of the film content

- **Young audiences** are preferred to watch films in television, laptop, PC and Mobile screens. As they depend on their parents for financial support very few films they watch in theatres.
- **Family audience** goes to theatre average twice in a year. Will not be possible to go to theatre frequently because of the high ticket pricing.
- **Fan clubs** become part-time activity. Once it was a fulltime work.
- **Earning youth** are the promising audience to theatrical film viewing. Mostly working in the IT industry.

Changing strategy of the film industry

- Films are released in maximum number of theatres. If a film runs for a week with houseful shows then that film will surely yield profit to the producers.
- The producers interested in investing more in the small budget films than of the high budget films. (*Joker, Aruvi, Visaranai* and *Aaram*).

- The **Teens** are targeted by the erotic content (*Iruttu araiyil murattu kuthu*).
- The **youth** are targeted by Vijay and Ajith films
- The **middle aged** are targeted by *Power Pandy, Kabali* and *Kala*.
- Adopting successful **cultural themes**.
- Adopting **social issues** · Creating **Identity cinema**.

Conclusion

Cinema is a great medium which incorporated all other art forms into it. Moving images, still images (for poster promotion) light art, set design, graphics, animation, stunt, choreography, music, script, story, acting, costume and audiography. Cinema has the capability to communicate across the globe (Ex. *Pirates of the Caribbean, Jurassic Park, Jungle Book, Bahubali, Muthu, Arunachalam and Kabali*). The audience and film makers are living in the same environment and the concepts which the film makers choose are well known concept to the audience and such kind of concept without the director's touch, or without the well-blended screenplay suffers to increase the curiosity of the audience. According the industry expert only 5 to 10% films are making profit and they believe the "original content" is the only component that can pull the audience to cinema theatres. Further they added the film industry is not an organized industry a decade back Reliance and TATA DoCoMo were collaborating with film business and they were not able to understand the structure of the business in Tamil Film Industry. But *Bahubali* was made with the loan borrowed from a bank. That is because of the systematic approach from the proposal to the film release was executed by Raja Mouli. But as long as the audience get the free access to the entertainment content, it is hard to gain profit in every film released. The smart audience views the film in the personal view either in laptop or in mobile and if the movie arise the level of satisfaction with the all new visual experience then they turn to theatres.

At present the film industry mainly depending on the Urban and sub urban audience, but the visual spectacle of the film is based on the budget. The numbers of audience who turn to the theatres are not sufficient to plan for the big budget films. The government also extending its support to increase the number of cities having highways connected to every corner of the state. That urbanization process will increase the number of multiplexes, mini theatres, and mall theatres but "the original content" is the only way to attract the audience to theatres. Even if theatres could not survive successfully but cinema will survive but it may change its formats as "**WEB CINEMA**".

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