

= Server Sundaram =

Server Sundaram is a 1964 Indian Tamil @-@ language comedy @-@ drama film directed by Krishnan @-@ Panju and produced by A. V. Meiyappan . The film stars Nagesh as the title character . R. Muthuraman and K. R. Vijaya play the other lead roles while S. N. Lakshmi and Major Sundarrajan play supporting roles . The story focuses on the life of a hotel waiter and how he strives to reach greater heights after he becomes an actor to attain the love of his restaurateur 's daughter .

The film was adapted from a play of the same name written by K. Balachander , with the play also featuring Nagesh himself in the title role along with Major Sundarrajan and S. N. Lakshmi who reprised their roles in the film . Balachander also wrote the screenplay and dialogues for the film . Viswanathan ? Ramamoorthy composed the film 's soundtrack and background music , while Kannadasan and Vaali wrote the lyrics for the soundtrack 's songs .

Released on 11 December 1964 , Server Sundaram earned positive critical feedback and went on to become a commercial success . At the 12th National Film Awards , it won the National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Tamil under the Certificate of Merit category , and the Filmfare Award for Best Tamil Film .

Server Sundaram earned Nagesh and Balachander their breakthrough in Tamil cinema and led to many successful collaborations between the two . It became the first Tamil film to show numerous behind @-@ the @-@ scenes looks at various processes involved in film @-@ making such as the studio interiors and song recording . It was remade into Hindi as Main Sunder Hoon (1971) with Mehmood Ali and Kannada as Server Somanna (1993) with Jaggesh .

= = Plot = =

Sundaram (Nagesh) , a poor man , comes to Madras with aspirations of becoming a film actor . However , he ends up getting a job in a restaurant called Greenlands Hotel as a waiter . While catering for a group of people who go on an excursion to Mahabalipuram , he meets Radha (K. R. Vijaya) , the daughter of his restaurateur , Chakravarthy (Major Sundarrajan) . He misinterprets her friendly nature as love and falls in love with her . In the meantime , Sundaram happens to meet his friend Raghavan (R. Muthuraman) , an influential businessman , in the restaurant . During their subsequent meetings , Sundaram tells Raghavan about his ambition to become an actor as well as about his love for Radha , without mentioning her name . Raghavan genuinely believes that the girl reciprocates Sundaram 's feelings and motivates Sundaram to express his love .

When Raghavan is about to leave his house for a marriage proposal , Sundaram comes there and describes the girl he was talking about to Raghavan . Raghavan realises that Radha , whom he intends to marry , is the same girl Sundaram is in love with . Raghavan , believing that Radha loves Sundaram , decides to help Sundaram attain his love and get a chance to act in films , which he does successfully . Sundaram becomes a star after his debut film Appavi Kanavan (English : Innocent Husband) becomes a success and believes that his stardom and popularity will help him in attaining his love . When Radha comes to Sundaram 's house to congratulate him , he introduces her to Raghavan , who is present at that time . As Sundaram goes to prepare snacks for the two , Radha asks Raghavan why he did not show up for the marriage proposal . Raghavan states that he thought Radha loved Sundaram . Shocked , Radha informs Raghavan that she likes Sundaram for his innocence , although she does not love him . Raghavan is pleasantly surprised , but to ensure that Sundaram 's film career does not suffer from discovering the truth , he asks Radha to keep it a secret .

Sundaram 's mother (S. N. Lakshmi) is pleased with her son 's popularity but misses his presence due to Sundaram 's busy acting career . She expresses to Sundaram her desire that she should die in his arms . When Raghavan believes that Sundaram will gradually forget Radha so that he and Radha can get married , he discovers that Sundaram 's love for Radha has grown stronger . Raghavan then informs Radha that she should marry Sundaram , as Raghavan does not want to backstab his friend . Radha instead decides to personally express her feelings to Sundaram . When

Sundaram expresses his love to Radha , she tells him that she never imagined that he would assume her friendly affection towards him as love and that Raghavan is her fiancé . Sundaram , shattered on losing his love , is also happy on hearing that Raghavan would marry her and congratulates Raghavan .

While Sundaram is busy shooting for the climax scene of a film , his mother falls down the footsteps of her home and is badly wounded . Sundaram 's manager , Manickam (S. Ramarao) tries to convey the news to Sundaram , but is blocked by the studio authorities who inform him that the director has instructed them not to allow anyone into the studio . After finishing his shot , Sundaram hears of the news about his mother and rushes home to learn that she is dead . At last realising the happiness he enjoyed as a waiter , Sundaram dons his hotel uniform again . He explains to Raghavan that the waiter 's job is permanent , while the actor 's was only temporary .

= = Cast = =

Male actors

Nagesh as Sundaram , a hotel waiter @-@ turned actor

R. Muthuraman as Raghavan , Sundaram 's friend

S. Ramarao as Manickam

S. V. Ranga Rao (Guest appearance)

Major Sundarrajan as Chakravarthy , the hotel owner

T. M. Soundararajan (Guest appearance in the song " Avalukenna ")

Female actors

K. R. Vijaya as Radha , Chakravarthy 's daughter

S. N. Lakshmi as Sundaram 's mother

Manorama (Guest appearance)

= = Production = =

Server Sundaram was based on a 1960s comedy @-@ drama play of the same name that was written by K. Balachander , then a playwright . Balachander stated that he wrote the story of Server Sundaram for Nagesh after watching his performance in Naanum Oru Penn (1963) . Director duo Krishnan @-@ Panju had earlier made Nallathambi (1949) , which featured comedian N. S. Krishnan in the lead role , and wanted to make another film with a comedian as the protagonist . Hence they chose Nagesh for the job by informing him of their wish while travelling with the actor from Salem to Tiruppur . After returning from Tiruppur , Krishnan @-@ Panju and Nagesh met Balachander and the trio asked Balachander to write a stage play for Nagesh . Balachander agreed . Krishnan @-@ Panju also offered to produce a film adaptation of the play if it became a success .

The play had Nagesh himself in the title role , along with Major Sundarrajan and S. N. Lakshmi who reprised their roles in the film . Balachander recalled in 2009 that when he wrote Server Sundaram with Nagesh in mind , he suffered anxious moments : " I was convinced of the story , but there was a risk in promoting Nagesh , but I pulled it off " .

A. V. Meiyappan acquired the rights to the play and also shared Krishnan @-@ Panju 's wish to make a film based on it . Balachander was recruited as the film 's screenplay and dialogue writer . Krishnan @-@ Panju directed the film , although Balachander had shown a keen interest in directing it himself . Meiyappan accepted the inclusion of Nagesh in the film after watching the latter 's performance in the play . Nagesh , who in turn was impressed with S. N. Lakshmi 's performance in the play , asked Balachander to have Meiyappan include her in the film . K. R. Vijaya was cast as Sundaram 's love interest Radha , and R. Muthuraman was cast as his friend Raghavan . Singer T. M. Soundararajan made a guest appearance in the song " Avalukkena " , as did poet Vaali 's wife Ramani Thilagam .

Server Sundaram was the first Tamil film to show numerous behind @-@ the @-@ scenes looks at the various processes involved in film @-@ making such as the studio interiors , song recording , horse riding scenes and rain scenes . It was also notable for not featuring an antagonist . In one

sequence , S. V. Ranga Rao and Manorama are seen as actors performing a scene for a film , using the concept of film within a film . The bond between mother and son , which according to historian S. Theodore Baskaran was " a persistent theme in Tamil cinema " , was shown in the film . He also compared it to *City Lights* (1931) because in both films , a poor man " pin [s] for the attention of the woman he fancies " . Server Sundaram was also considered a biography of Nagesh 's own life . Nagesh was not convinced about having " Avalukkenna " immediately after the film 's intermission . Krishnan @-@ Panju insisted and shot the song . Nagesh did not co @-@ operate much during the song 's filming . However , after seeing the positive feedback the song received , Nagesh admitted his mistake to Krishnan @-@ Panju . Panju edited the film under the pseudonym " Panjabi " , with R. Vittal as co @-@ editor . Server Sundaram was publicised with a still of Nagesh holding many cups and saucers , but the film initially had no such scene . After Meiyappan finished watching the final cut , upon his request it was added to the film . The final length of the film was 4 @,@ 535 m (14 @,@ 879 ft) .

= = Music = =

The film 's soundtrack was composed by the duo Viswanathan ? Ramamoorthy , with lyrics written by Kannadasan and Vaali . The soundtrack was released under the label of Saregama .

Philips , an autodidact guitarist , performed the guitar portions for " Avalukkenna " . The music troupe for the song consisted of Noel Grant (drums) , Mangalamurthy (accordion) , Nanjappa (flute) , Fobes (violin) , Henry Daniel and Joseph Krishna . Violinist T. Samuel Joseph , popularly known as Shyam , also took part in the recording of the song . Balan , a member of the troupe , claims that Viswanathan came up with the tune for " Avalukkenna " in ten minutes , while Anand Venkateswaran of *The Wire* believes that Viswanathan set the song to tune in 15 minutes , and it took T. M. Soundararajan the rest of the day to record it . According to Gopal Krishnan , in his book , *Chords & Raaga* , " Avalukkenna " involved a " complicated arrangement of mambo and bossa nova . " Soundarajan was not convinced about whether " Avalukkenna " should be shot with Nagesh , feeling that the audience would not sit and watch a comedian singing . The producers took it as a challenge and came up with the idea of showing how a song is recorded and shot with " Avalukkenna " being played in the backdrop . Krishnan @-@ Panju liked the idea and made use of it . Soundarajan admitted his mistake after the film 's release and seeing the impact the song created . Live versions of " Avalukkenna " have been performed by various Indian singers including Karthik , Haricharan , Shweta Mohan and Rahul Nambiar . The song " Mayanadhi " from *Kabali* (2016) was described by *India Today* as being reminiscent of " Avalukkenna " .

The soundtrack received positive reviews , with " Avalukkenna " being particularly well received . Pradeep Madhavan of *The Hindu* states that " Avalukkenna " brought out Nagesh 's dancing potential onscreen . A reviewer from *Radio Mirchi* wrote that " Avalukkenna " provided a new concept to Tamil cinema in terms of lyrics , music and dance . Balachander commented on that song , " Songs like ' Avalukkenna .. [...] Listen to them today , and they will seem so fresh and amazing . [Viswanathan 's] music is the kind that will challenge directors to come up with impressive visualisation . " Baradwaj Rangan , writing for *The Hindu* , said , " Listen to the lazy drawl with which certain words taper off in ? Avalukkenna , ? an antidote to the rock ? n ? roll bounce in the rest of the song . " *Poga Poga Theriyum* " was later included in *Old is Gold* , an album compiling hit songs from films featuring Muthuraman , and was rated by *The Times of India* as one of the album 's " hot picks " .

Tracklist

= = Release = =

Server Sundaram was released on 11 December 1964 . The film became commercial success and completed a theatrical run of 100 days . It was also dubbed in Telugu under the same title . *Server Sundaram* was remade in Hindi as *Main Sunder Hoon* (1971) with Mehmood Ali , and in Kannada as *Server Somanna* (1993) with Jaggesh .

On 18 April 2010 , the film was screened at the South Indian Film Chamber Theatre for the Dignity Film Festival held in Chennai ; other films also screened included Madhumati (1958) , Kadhalikka Neramillai , Anbe Vaa (1966) and Thillana Mohanambal (1968) .

= = = Critical response = = =

The film received critical acclaim , with positive comments directed mainly at Nagesh 's performance as Sundaram and Balachander 's screenplay and dialogues . S. Theodore Baskaran , Ashish Rajadhyaksha and Paul Willemen , and Baradwaj Rangan noted similarities between Nagesh and Charlie Chaplin .

Tamil magazine Ananda Vikatan , in its original review of the film dated 20 December 1964 , mentioned that the highlight of the film was Nagesh 's acting and the film gave the experience of conversing and enjoying with friends in a car journey without living much impact . Tamil Canadian journalist D. B. S. Jeyaraj stated that Nagesh " played the " server " (waiter) role to perfection " , that the film gave him " another dimension as an actor who could evoke tears from the audience through his emotional performance " and that Server Sundaram was one film in which he " provided stellar displays of his histrionic talents " .

On the scene where Nagesh auditions in front of the film producers introduced to him by Muthuraman , Baradwaj Rangan , writing for The New Indian Express , said , " Audiences that grew up with Nagesh will cotton on to the slyness of this apparently ungrateful gesture as the most identifiably Nagesh @-@ like among everything that 's transpired during these five minutes of Server Sundaram " , whilst also stating the actor 's comedy potential to be " his great arsenal " . In 2014 , at the fiftieth @-@ year celebrations of the film , Pradeep Madhavan of The Hindu called the film a " trendsetter " in Tamil cinema for showcasing scenes involved in filmmaking and believed that Nagesh " lived the role of Sundaram " . In its review of the film 's DVD , The Times of India gave a rating of 3 @.@ 5 out of 5 , calling it a " tour de force for Nagesh fans " and a " classic in every sense " . Film music historian Vamanan stated , " Nagesh could effortlessly bring pathos into play as in [...] Server Sundaram . This was possible because of his poignant real life experiences . " He also noted that despite Manorama 's role being a cameo , she held " her own in the presence of the talented Nagesh and S V Ranga Rao . "

= = = Awards = = =

= = Legacy = =

Server Sundaram attained cult status in Tamil cinema , and is believed by many critics to be Nagesh 's breakthrough role as an actor and Balachander 's first success in Tamil cinema . Actor Kamal Haasan compared his 2015 film Uttama Villain (which also starred Balachander) to Server Sundaram , finding it to be " both emotional and humorous " like the latter . The success of Server Sundaram led to many collaborations between Nagesh and Balachander , notable of which include Neerkumizhi (1965) , Major Chandrakanth (1966) , Ethir Neechal (1968) and Apoorva Raagangal (1975) . Film historian Mohan V. Raman noted , " By casting [Nagesh] in Server Sundaram , ... [Balachander] made the comedian a serious actor . " The film also became noted for introducing the anti @-@ hero to Tamil cinema as well as the style of delivering short and fast @-@ paced dialogues . A dialogue spoken by Nagesh 's character , " Long , long ago ... so long ago , nobody knows how long ago " became popular . Balachander mentions the dialogue in Uttama Villain as a build @-@ up to the film his character directs . Actor Appukutty worked in several hotels and restaurants as a cleaner and server before making his debut as the lead actor with Azhagarsamiyin Kuthirai (2011) which won him the National Film Award for Best Supporting Actor ; Kumar Chellappan of Daily News and Analysis compared this to the plot of Server Sundaram . Bharatiya Janata Party member L. Ganesan considered Server Sundaram to be an example " of good Tamil cinema globally . " Following Nagesh 's death in 2009 , Sify ranked Server Sundaram

fourth in its list , " 10 Best Films of late Nagesh " , commenting , " A hotel waiter becomes a superstar and the transformation is shown brilliantly by the actor . " Sri Lankan historian Sachi Sri Kantha included Server Sundaram in his list compiling " the ten landmark Tamil movies , spanning all genres , which delighted the multitude of fans immensely " .

Director Radha Mohan expressed a desire to remake the film but decided against it : " If there is one film I want to remake , [Server Sundaram] will be the one , but I know I will not , because I believe classics should be left alone . " Director and choreographer Prabhu Deva ranked Server Sundaram among his favourite films . A restaurant named " Hotel Server Sundaram " is located in the Thuraipakkam area of Chennai . In December 2014 , G. Babu Jayakumar of The New Indian Express included the film in his list of Balachander 's noted films . Clips from Server Sundaram were screened along with clips from other films such as Iru Kodugal (1969) , Arangetram (1973) , Aval Oru Thodar Kathai (1974) , Avargal (1977) and Azhagan (1991) at a function held in Balachander 's honour at Tiruchirappalli in January 2015 , a month after his death . Server Sundaram is also used as the title of an upcoming film starring Santhanam and Nagesh 's grandson Bijesh , with its producer Selva having bought the title rights from AVM Productions . On why that title was chosen , Selva said , " Santhanam plays a chef in the film and we felt that Server Sundaram , in which Nagesh played the role of a server , would be apt for this film , too . It is amazing how well the title suited the concept of our film , which is why we went right ahead with our decision . " S. Jegathiswaran , writing for Daily News Sri Lanka , noted , " In [Server] Sundaram , [Nagesh] showed that after having gained the social status one shouldn 't forget one 's past . "