

= Mouna Ragam =

Mouna Ragam (English : Silent Symphony , also spelt Mouna Raagam) is a 1986 Indian Tamil @-@ language romantic @-@ drama film written and directed by Mani Ratnam , and produced by G. Venkateswaran . The film narrates the life of Divya Chandramouli (Revathi) , who is robbed of her carefree existence when she reluctantly marries Chandrakumar (Mohan) . Divya does not wish to be married as she is still grieving over the shooting death of her former lover Manohar (Karthik) . The rest of the story follows Divya 's inner conflict between holding on to her past or coming to terms with the present and making a life with Chandrakumar .

Mouna Ragam 's development began when Ratnam wrote a short story titled " Divya " , while he was making his debut film Pallavi Anu Pallavi (1983) . As the script developed he renamed it . He did not plan to film the story until he finished writing it , but he could not start actual production on it until after his fourth film , Idaya Kovil (1985) , was released . Mouna Ragam was filmed mainly in Chennai ; additional filming took place in Delhi and Agra . The soundtrack album and background score were composed by Ilaiyaraaja with lyrics by Vaali ; cinematography was handled by P. C. Sreeram , and the art director was Thotta Tharani . The film was jointly edited by B. Lenin and V. T. Vijayan .

Mouna Ragam was released on 15 August 1986 , India 's Independence Day . Despite opening to modest audiences , it became a box office success , running for over 175 days in theatres . The film was critically acclaimed and won the National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Tamil , while Ratnam won the Filmfare Award for Best Tamil Director . Mouna Ragam was dubbed in Telugu under the same title and was released on 14 February 1987 ; this version was also a commercial success . The film was remade in Hindi in 1992 as Kasak , with Rishi Kapoor and Neelam Kothari in the lead roles .

= = Plot = =

Divya Chandramouli (Revathi) is a free @-@ spirited college student from a conservative family whose father , Chandramouli (Ra . Sankaran) , works for the government and is very strict about her conduct . Divya learns that her parents are eagerly awaiting a marriage proposal for her . Unwilling to get married , and hoping the groom 's family will reject her , she deliberately arrives home late only to find that the groom , Chandrakumar (Mohan) , and his family are patiently waiting for her . She talks arrogantly to Chandrakumar in an attempt to make him dislike her , but he is undeterred , says that he likes her , and agrees to the marriage . Divya refuses initially , but when her father suffers a heart attack , the family pleads with her to accept the proposal so as not to hinder his recovery . Succumbing to family pressure , Divya marries Chandrakumar .

After their marriage , Chandrakumar takes Divya to Delhi . She is unable to accept him as her husband and constantly snubs him . When Chandrakumar asks Divya what she wants as a wedding gift , she asks him for a divorce . Startled , Chandrakumar asks her the reason for wanting a divorce . In a flashback , Divya remembers when she was in love with a man named Manohar (Karthik Muthuraman) , whom she met during her college days . Manohar and his gang assault the son of an MP named Thamizhmani and steal his money . Divya reports Manohar to the police who arrest him . She later learns that Thamizhmani 's son had run over a poor girl with his car and Manohar had stolen the money to pay for the girl 's medical treatment . Divya feels guilty and bails him out of the police station .

Manohar falls in love with Divya and tries to win her love . Divya rejects him initially but eventually reciprocates his feelings . Manohar is a member of a revolutionary group planning to hold an illegal rally . Divya does not approve of his participation in such activities and asks him not to attend the rally . Manohar agrees to her request on the condition that she marry him . On their wedding day Manohar is falsely charged with participating in the rally and is arrested by police . He escapes and , pursued by police , runs to the marriage registrar 's office where Divya is waiting for him . A policeman shoots Manohar and he dies in front of Divya , leaving her distraught .

Chandrakumar is ready to overlook Divya 's past , but she is unable to accept another man in her

life . Seeking a divorce , the pair approach a lawyer (Kanchana) , who tells them that according to the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 , since they are newly married , they must wait for at least one year before they can file for divorce . The couple are forced to live with each other for a year .

Later , Chandrakumar is attacked by his company 's labourers because he had earlier suspended their union leader . Divya takes him to a nearby hospital , where he survives after getting proper treatment . After his discharge from the hospital , Divya takes care of him and realises that she has fallen in love with him . She tries to show it by wearing the anklets he gave her just after their marriage . Irritated by Divya 's immature acts , Chandrakumar asks her to return to her parent 's home and books tickets for her travel . At the railway station , Chandrakumar gives Divya the divorce papers that she had earlier requested as a wedding gift . Divya breaks down and admits to Chandrakumar that she loves him . Chandrakumar comes to terms with his repressed feelings and finally unites with Divya .

= = Cast = =

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

When the last schedule for Mani Ratnam 's debut film Pallavi Anu Pallavi (1983) was extended to a year , he began working on a script titled " Divya " , which eventually became his fifth film Mouna Ragam . Ratnam said he first wrote " Divya " as a short story about the " first night " between the female lead and her husband . He did not originally plan to film it , but after writing the story he realised that he could base a film on it . Ratnam took a month 's break between the schedules of Pallavi Anu Pallavi and wrote the script for Divya . Ratnam said Mouna Ragam 's script took five years to write .

The inspiration for the title Mouna Ragam came from the song " Naan Paadum Mouna Ragam " from Ratnam 's film Idaya Kovil (1985) . Although Ratnam began working on the script while making Pallavi Anu Pallavi , Mouna Ragam did not go into production until after Idaya Kovil 's release . Ratnam stated that due to budgetary constraints , it would have been easier for him to send the female lead to Bangalore instead of Delhi , but he wanted to ensure that she could not easily return to her parents because of her inability to adjust to her husband .

Mouna Ragam was Ratnam 's first film with P. C. Sreeram as cinematographer . It was produced by G. Venkateswaran under his banner Sujatha Films (later renamed GV Films) , and was jointly edited by B. Lenin and V. T. Vijayan . The film 's art director was Thota Tharani .

= = = Casting = = =

Ratnam cast Mohan , whom he had previously worked with in Idaya Kovil , as the male lead . Revathi , the female lead , had previously collaborated with Ratnam in Pagal Nilavu (1984) . Ratnam initially had " someone like Anant Nag and Supriya Pathak " in mind when he finished writing Mouna Ragam . Between finishing the story and making the film , he decided to include Revathi because he was impressed with her performance in Mann Vasanai (1983) . Nadhiya was also considered for the role before Revathi , but she declined the offer because of prior commitments . Ra . Sankaran was cast as Divya 's father Chandramouli , Kanchana as the lawyer , and V. K. Ramasamy as Chandrakumar 's boss . Vani plays Divya 's mother and Bhaskar plays Divya 's brother , while actresses Kalaiselvi and " Baby " Sonia play Divya 's sisters . Prabhu Deva , who later went on to become a successful choreographer in Indian cinema , made his acting debut with this film with a special appearance in the song " Panivizhum Iravu " .

According to Ratnam , the only difference between Divya and Mouna Ragam was the inclusion of the portion featuring Karthik , which was not part of the earlier screenplay . Divya was the story

about a young woman settling into an arranged marriage and did not mention her life before her marriage . Ratnam realised that the story needed to satisfy a wider audience , and decided to give them something that would make them accept the character as a plot point , preventing the audience from questioning Divya 's actions . The story became a film dealing with an arranged marriage ? two strangers suddenly thrown together ? and how they adjust . At first , Ratnam resisted this point , but he reconsidered because the suddenness of it provided a clear reason for the heroine 's resistance to the arranged marriage . Karthik said he was a " last @-@ minute addition " to the cast , and that his scenes were shot in a week . He also said his role was " but a cameo " .

= = = Filming = = =

Since the film was set mostly indoors in Delhi , both Ratnam and Sreeram wanted the indoor scenes to look as lively as those that were shot outdoors . As the cast was relatively small , Ratnam did not want the film to look like a play . The concept of backlighting inside a house was used . For this , Thotta Tharani found a house in Chennai that let in a lot of sunlight , making it different and convincing enough to have a setting similar to houses in Delhi . Mouna Ragam was Ratnam 's first film to make extensive use of staccato dialogues , which became his trademark style in his later films . In a bid to reduce the production costs , food for the film 's production unit was cooked at the producer 's home .

While filming the introductory scene of Karthik 's character Manohar , Sreeram had to lie on a bedsheet to film the sequence . The rest of the crew pulled the sheet along with Sreeram and the camera . Sreeram used frontal and profile close @-@ ups set against long shots with out @-@ of @-@ focus foregrounds extensively . The scene in which Manohar plays a prank on Divya 's father Chandramouli at a coffee shop , which later became known popularly as the " Mr. Chandramouli " scene , was shot at Nungambakkam . Filming also took place at Presidency College , Chennai , and the Schmidt Memorial on Edward Elliot 's Beach .

The crew filmed in Delhi for two days ; the portions set in Agra were shot in one day . The song " Panivizhum Iravu " was filmed at the Taj Mahal , while scenes from " Mandram Vandha " were shot at the India Gate and in Sikandra . The scenes involving Karthik were the last portions of the principal photography . In the post @-@ production phase , Mohan 's voice was dubbed by S. N. Surendar . The film 's final cut was 3 @, @ 987 @. @ 50 metres (13 @, @ 082 @. @ 3 ft) long .

= = Themes and influences = =

Mouna Ragam is based on the management concept of transactional analysis , which describes the ego state theory of personality . In his book The Best of Tamil Cinema , G. Dhananjayan compares the relationship between Chandrakumar and Divya , at the beginning of the film , to a parent @-@ child relationship ; he says the relationship then changes to one of " parent @-@ adult " and finally to " adult @-@ adult " . Film critic Baradwaj Rangan compared Mouna Ragam to J. Mahendran 's Nenjathai Killathe (1980) , which is also based on a woman torn between the man she loves and the man she marries . He also compared the film to Antha Ezhu Naatkal (1981) and its Hindi remake Woh Saat Din (1983) for the same reason .

Manohar was part of a group that was involved in anti @-@ government activities . Rangan drew similarities between the character 's motives and those of characters in the Italian film The Night of the Shooting Stars (1982) and Ratnam 's Malayalam film Unaru (1984) . Mouna Ragam 's introductory credits feature photographs of Revathi from her childhood through her teenage years which , according to rapper Blaaze , helps viewers " understand the girl , the character , her nature " . According to Rangan , the scene in which Divya is at the hospital looking after Chandrakumar reflects the traditional quality that surfaces when she cares for her husband and fears for his life , and shows that , despite her strengths , she is humane and vulnerable . Divya 's mischievous nature is shown in a scene in which she deliberately teaches a Sardar to say offensive Tamil phrases , which he uses on V. K. Ramasamy 's character .

According to Rangan , Mouna Ragam 's background score was found by critics to be synonymous

with its scenes and themes . According to the 2003 book *The Cultural Study of Music : A Critical Introduction* by Martin Clayton , Trevor Herbert and Richard Middleton , the picturisation of the song " Oho Megam Vandhadho " resembled the Broadway and MTV @-@ style of singing and dancing , while the main songs combine American music with Indian vocals provided by S. Janaki . The South Asian musical instruments Sarangi and Nadaswaram are used in the music accompanying the wedding scene with Chandrakumar and Divya . In the sequences showing the couple sightseeing in Delhi , light synth @-@ based music is used to depict them as modern tourists in their own country . The restaurant scene featuring Manohar and Divya includes sitar music being played awkwardly , indicating the couple 's emotions . Spanish music is used for the fight sequence when Manohar attacks the MP 's son .

The concept of the heroine moving to a strange place where she does not know the local language is a theme replicated in Mani Ratnam 's later films *Roja* (1992) and *Bombay* (1995) . The theme shows the heroine with a dilemma . Because she does not know the language in Delhi , she can barely socialise with local people , and she is in conflict with the only person with whom she can relate . According to Rangan , the restaurant scene with Manohar and Divya is notable for being the first occasion in Tamil cinema that a man invites a woman for a cup of coffee . He compared it to *Oru Thalai Ragam* (1980) , in which the protagonists hardly spoke . Ratnam said he was inspired by the bands The Doors and The Beatles , and though it was not uncommon to invite a woman for a cup of coffee , it was not reflected in Tamil cinema at that time .

= = Music = =

The soundtrack album of *Mouna Ragam* consists of five songs composed by Ilaiyaraaja , with lyrics written by Vaali , sung by S. Janaki and S. P. Balasubrahmanyam . It was released on the record label Echo Audio Company . According to *The Cultural Study of Music : A Critical Introduction* , the song " Oho Megam Vandhadho " , depicting Divya dancing with several teenage girls , is a reworking of Gene Kelly 's version of " Singin ' in the Rain " . " Nilaavae Vaa " is included as the second track on both sides of the film 's original LP record . " Mandram Vandha " is based on the Keeravani raga , and Natabhairavi notes . It was later adapted by Ilaiyaraaja and used twice in the 2007 Hindi film *Cheeni Kum* ? as the film 's title track , and its melancholic version " Sooni Sooni " . Music director K stated that the theme music he composed for *Yuddham Sei* (2011) had a " tinge " of *Mouna Ragam* . The album cover depicts Revathi in her costume from the song " Chinna Chinna Vanna Kuyil " .

The soundtrack received positive critical reception . Filmmaker Poongkothai Chandrahasan praised the cinematography of " Nilaave Vaa " and said , " Ilaiyaraaja 's music is such that even when you listen to it ten years later , you still remember the song " . Actress Kushboo described " Chinna Chinna Vanna Kuyil " as an " unforgettable song " , adding , " My Valentine ? s Day is incomplete without listening to it at least once " . Writing for *Mint* , Nandini Ramnath said , " *Bombay* ? s director , Mani Ratnam , can ? t make a movie without including a shower from the heavens or a splash in some kind of water body . His best rain song is ' Oho Megham Vanthatho ' " . Srinivasa Ramanujam of *The Hindu* also reacted positively to " Oho Megam Vandhadho " .

S. Saraswathi of *Rediff* described " Nilaave Vaa " as a " timeless classic that you never tire of " . Sruthi Radhakrishnan of *The Hindu* described " Mandram Vandha " as a " song that drives fans crazy " , and that " Chinna Chinna Vanna Kuyil " had " showcased Janaki ? s vocals with such astounding effect " . On " *Panivizhum Iravu* " , she said , " It ? s one of those only @-@ 80s songs that served as a stand @-@ in for sexual tension , where you ? d have two people looking intensely at each other . And it ? s a brilliant composition too . The percussion gets you hooked and the chorus is almost eerie . " Writing for *Firstpost* , Apoorva Sripathi said , " The film traces a couple 's marital discord ? the heroine is torn between the man she loved and the man she finally marries ? and the soundtrack beautifully mimics it . " She described " Mandram Vandha " as a " masterpiece , sung soulfully by SP Balasubramaniam . "

= = Release and reception = =

Mouna Ragam was publicised with a shot of Revathi clinging to a lamppost singing , which Ratnam confirmed was inspired by " Singin ' in the Rain " . Before the film was released , a member of the Central Board of Film Certification wanted it to be given an " A " (adults only) certificate because the female lead character asks for a divorce . However the film was eventually given a " U " certificate . The film was released on 15 August 1986 , India 's Independence Day . Despite opening to sparse audiences , positive critical reviews , and favourable word of mouth , led to its viewership increasing after two weeks . The film fared well at the box office , running for over 175 days in theatres , and becoming a silver jubilee film . Ratnam also called it his " first hit " . The film was lauded for its realistic portrayal of urban Tamil people , and for its realistic portrayal , without any melodrama or long dialogues , of marital conflicts . A version dubbed in Telugu was released with the same title ; this was also a commercial success .

The film was screened at the 11th International Film Festival of India and was the only Tamil film entrant . It has also been screened at many other film festivals , including Mani Ratnam 's Love Films at London 's National Film Theatre in 2002 , A Retrospective of Mani Ratnam 's Films at the 2002 Calcutta Film Festival , and the 2002 Locarno Film Festival . An enhanced 5 @.@ 1 Digital Dolby sound version was released in May 2008 by the label Bayshore Records .

= = = Critical response = = =

On 31 August 1986 , the Tamil magazine Ananda Vikatan said , " [Revathi] has done an outstanding job in the film ... Mohan played the role with maturity ; ... The film does not have any commercial masalas , yet it creates an impact due to the camera work and music " . The magazine gave the film 43 marks out of 100 . Kaviya Shetty of India Today noted in 1994 , " [Mouna Ragam] found the perfect formula of a strong storyline and great music , presented in a fresh visual style that caught the audience by surprise " . Karan Bali of Upperstall.com said , " Mouna Ragam is looked at as Mani Ratnam 's breakthrough film and though somewhat dated in places in terms of both content and style , the film has some of his finest moments " . He criticised the " smaller comedy tracks " in the film by saying that they " don 't really add anything to the film " and also called the film " too simplistic " , but concluded that the film , " is well , well worth a watch even today " .

Gautaman Bhaskaran , writing for The Hindu , said the film was " simple and shorn of pretensions " . Pavithra Srinivasan of Rediff said , " It took a Mani Ratnam to move away from cliched romantic dialogues and capture subtle nuances that add so much richness to the story , introduce proper , three dimensional characters that lived breathed and sorrowed like everyone else " .

= = = Accolades = = =

At the 34th National Film Awards , Mouna Ragam won the National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Tamil . At the 36th Filmfare Awards South , Ratnam won the Award for Best Tamil Director .

= = Legacy = =

Mouna Ragam became an important milestone in Tamil cinema and was Mani Ratnam 's breakthrough film . It inaugurated the love story genre set outside the state of Tamil Nadu . As part of its legacy , the film has been acclaimed for being a box @-@ office success while containing the elements of an art film .

The use of filming techniques such as soft @-@ focus shots , flare filters , and backlit sequences became popular after their introduction to Tamil cinema through this film . Ratnam continued using these techniques in his later films , notably Nayakan (1987) and Agni Natchathiram (1988) . Mouna Ragam catapulted Karthik to stardom despite his role being a cameo , and his " Mr. Chandramouli " dialogue became popular . Mouna Ragam became a trendsetter and inspired several later films with similar themes of romance and drama ? including Alaipayuthey (2000) , which was also directed by Ratnam , and Priyasakhi (2005) . Mouna Ragam was remade in Hindi

as Kasak in 1992 , and starred Rishi Kapoor and Neelam Kothari .

Rediff.com , in its article , " The most memorable Mani movies " , said , " This was arguably the film that announced Mani Ratnam to the Tamil film industry as a talent to watch out for . An excellent script by Ratnam himself , cinematography [sic] by PC Sriram and a lilting score by [Ilaiyaraaja] made it a hit with both critics and moviegoers " . Deccan Chronicle listed Karthik and Revathi on its " Top 10 Jodis " of Tamil cinema , and wrote that they " made a fresh pair and were adored by the youth , especially the college students . Their awesome on @-@ screen chemistry in Mouna Ragam was a talking point back then " . On the centenary of Indian cinema in April 2013 , Forbes India included Revathi 's performance in the film on its list , " 25 Greatest Acting Performances of Indian Cinema " . The film was included in a poll conducted by CNN @-@ IBN to determine " the most popular romantic film of all time " .

Art director Sabu Cyril ranked Mouna Ragam fourth on his list of " India 's best films " , praising its story , narration , and screenplay . Poongkothai Chandrahasan told The Hindu , " Mani Ratnam had the guts to make a film that interesting with a different storyline . Also the way P. C. Sriram shot the film was so beautiful " . Kushboo called Mouna Ragam her favourite " film with a strong woman character . " Mouna Ragam is also the name of a Tamil orchestra , alternatively known as Murali 's Mouna Ragam .

= = In popular culture = =

A scene in Mouna Ragam in which Manohar tries to declare his love for Divya through the college intercom , in response to her challenge , was parodied in Thamizh Padam (2010) , with Shiva and Disha Pandey imitating Manohar and Divya 's mannerisms . A Telugu film , also titled Mouna Ragam , was released in 2010 but had no connection with Ratnam 's film . Baradwaj Rangan compared Mouna Ragam to the Hindi film Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam (1999) because in both films , " the disengaged wife was tempted , at several points , to snap free of matrimony , but what held her back , eventually , was the innate decency of the man she married " . Vallamai Tharayo (2008) was compared by critics to Mouna Ragam because it also features a woman (Chaya Singh) reluctantly married to a man (R. Parthiepan) she does not love ; it was critically panned , with Pavithra Srinivasan of Rediff.com calling it " a dull reworking " of Mouna Ragam . Neelima Menon of The New Indian Express called Yathrakarude Sradhakku (2002) a " watered @-@ down version " of Mouna Ragam . Singer Krish stated that his acting debut Puriyadha Anandam Puthithaga Arambam (2015) was titled after a line from " Chinna Chinna Vanna Kuyil " . Actress Sri Divya called Revathi 's character her " all @-@ time favorite role " , and stated that she played a similar role in Mallela Theeram Lo Sirimalle Puvvu (2013) . Actor Karthi stated that the character he plays in Naan Mahaan Alla (2010) was similar to the " moody yet jovial " characterisation of Karthik 's character in Mouna Ragam . Nandini Ramnath of Mint compared Tanu Weds Manu (2011) to Mouna Ragam because of the similar relationship between its male and female leads .

Raja Rani (2013) was compared to Mouna Ragam as they shared the similar theme of marital issues ; however in the former film , both the male (Arya) and the female (Nayanthara) lead characters have past lovers . The restaurant scene with Manohar and Divya was recreated by Prasanna and Lekha Washington in Kalyana Samayal Saadham (2013) . Vaibhav Reddy compared the character he plays in Kappal (2014) to Manohar in Mouna Ragam , because of his character 's effervescent nature . In one scene , which Reddy compared to the " Mr. Chandramouli " scene , Reddy 's character pesters the heroine to fall in love with him . M. Suganth of The Times of India called the Malayalam film Bangalore Days (2014) " a sort @-@ of Mouna Ragam with the roles reversed " because it featured a man who is unable to forget his past love and accept his wife . Malini Mannath of The New Indian Express compared Maalai Naerathu Mayakkam (2016) written by Selvaraghavan to Mouna Ragam because its female lead is unhappily married to the male lead ; Baradwaj Rangan called it " Mouna Raagam , Selvaraghavan style " . Director B. V. Nandini Reddy stated that the concept of a bride being unhappy with her suitor in Mouna Ragam inspired her to make Kalyana Vaibhogame (2016) where neither the bride nor the bridegroom are interested in marriage .

= = Explanatory notes = =