

= Veerapandiya Kattabomman (film) =

Veerapandiya Kattabomman (English : Kattabomman , the Brave Warrior) is a 1959 Indian Tamil @-@ language biographical film directed by B. R. Panthulu . The film 's screenplay was written by Ma . Po . Sivagnanam while its story and dialogue were written by Sakthi T. K. Krishnasamy . The film features Sivaji Ganesan , Gemini Ganesan , Padmini , S. Varalakshmi , and Ragini in the lead roles , with V. K. Ramasamy and Javar Seetharaman in pivotal supporting parts .

Produced and distributed by Panthulu under his banner , Padmini Pictures , Veerapandiya Kattabomman is loosely based on the story of the 18th century South Indian chieftain of the same name , who rose in rebellion against the East India Company . The film was an adaptation of the play Kattabomman , performed by Sivaji Ganesan 's troupe . Most of the film was shot in Jaipur . Veerapandiya Kattabomman is notable for being the first Tamil film to be shot in Technicolor .

Veerapandiya Kattabomman 's premiere was held in London on 10 May 1959 , and it was released in Tamil Nadu six days later . It became a critical and commercial success and had a theatrical run of 175 days . It was dubbed and released in Telugu as Veerapandiya Kattabrahmanna in 1959 and in Hindi as Amar Shaheed in 1960 . In addition to winning the National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Tamil under the " Certificate of Merit " section , it was also the first Tamil film to receive international awards for Best Film , Best Actor , and Best Music Director at the 1960 Afro @-@ Asian Film Festival in Cairo . A digitally restored version of the film was released on 21 August 2015 .

= = Plot = =

Veerapandiya Kattabomman (Sivaji Ganesan) , the king of Panchalankurichi , is a brave fighter and a devotee of his family deity , Lord Murugan of Tiruchendur . On receiving the news of a robbery in his territory , Kattabomman and his retinue set out incognito to capture the robbers . When the robbers are captured , they confess that they had been hired by the British to create unrest in Kattabomman 's domain . They also tell him that the British had enticed the neighbouring chieftain , Ettappan (V. K. Ramasamy) , to help them in their endeavour to annexe Panchalankurichi . Ettappan was promised that an additional two villages would be added to his land by the British , as a price for his betrayal . Ettappan , in disguise , goes to Kattabomman 's court and tries to frighten him by extolling the omnipotence of the British . Kattabomman is indignant and tears off Ettappan 's fake beard , but spares him because he had come to his court as an ambassador .

At Chayalkudi , a village near Panchalankurichi , lives Vellaiyammal (Padmini) , who vows to marry the man who tames her pet bull . She takes her bull to participate in a Jallikattu game held at Panchalankurichi under Kattabomman 's patronage . All those who attempt to tame the bull fail . At Kattabomman 's call , his Commander @-@ in @-@ chief , Vellaiyathevan (Gemini Ganesan) , subdues the bull and wins Vellaiyammal 's love . Later , Kattabomman comes to know of their love and gets them married .

Kattabomman receives a message from Lord W. C. Jackson (C. R. Parthiban) , collector of Tirunelveli , who demands a meeting with Kattabomman at Ramanathapuram to discuss the payment of Kattabomman 's tribute . Captain Davison (S. A. Kannan) , Kattabomman 's British friend , advises him to go and see Jackson . Jackson , finding that Kattabomman has come to see him with his troops , demands to meet him alone . At the meeting , Jackson insults him and orders his arrest . Though surrounded by the British troops , Kattabomman fights his way out , but during his escape his Minister , Thanapathi Sivasubramaniam Pillai (M. R. Santhanam) , is captured by the British .

Some time later , Pillai is released . He brings news that Jackson has been transferred back to England on Davison 's recommendation . At Kattabomman 's court , a British messenger sent by Colonel Ooshington , Tirunelveli 's new collector , reports that Pillai and his men have looted their granaries and killed their men at Srivaikuntam . Pillai justifies his act , saying that he instructed his men to do it due to the famine conditions prevalent in their kingdom . Ashamed of Pillai 's act ,

Kattabomman accuses him of injustice . Pillai apologises and offers himself as a prisoner to the British , but Kattabomman refuses to hand Pillai over ; instead he offers money to the British as compensation for the looted rice . Ooshington does not agree and , with Major Bannerman 's (Javar Seetharaman) and Ettappan 's help , instigates the neighbouring rulers to attack Kattabomman . Bannerman is placed in charge of the British troops . He and Ettappan plan to attack Panchalankurichi when the people are away attending a festival in Tiruchendur . Kattabomman 's spy Sunderalingam (A. Karunanidhi) , overhears this and informs Kattabomman , who prepares for battle .

On the day of the battle , Vellaiyammal pleads Vellaiyathevan not to go because the previous night she had a nightmare , which was full of evil omens . Ignoring her entreaties , Vellaiyathevan sets out , and is killed in the ensuing battle . Vellaiyammal , on learning of his death , kills the man who killed him , avenging her husband 's death . She finds Vellaiyathevan 's corpse and , out of grief , falls dead on it . Bannerman 's troops attack Panchalankurichi with heavy artillery and Kattabomman 's army suffers badly . Kattabomman is wounded in the neck , but is saved by his brother , Oomaithurai (O. A. K. Thevar) . Sensing that the fort cannot survive another cannon barrage , Kattabomman and Oomaithurai flee to the adjoining kingdom of Kovilpatti . Pillai , disguising himself as Kattabomman , misleads the British soldiers who are on the trail of Kattabomman . From Kovilpatti , Kattabomman and Oomaithurai then flee to Pudukkottai . Thondaimaan , the king of Pudukkottai , is ordered by the British to capture Kattabomman and Oomaithurai . In fear of the British , Thondaimaan captures the two and hands them over . While Oomaithurai is jailed , Kattabomman faces a summary trial by the British and is hanged from a Tamarind tree at Kayatharu .

= = Cast = =

Lead actors

Sivaji Ganesan as Veerapandiya Kattabomman

Gemini Ganesan as Vellaiyathevan

Padmini as Vellaiyammal

S. Varalakshmi as Jakkamma

Ragini as Sundaravadivu

Supporting actors

V. K. Ramasamy as Ettappan

Javar Seetharaman as Major Bannerman

O. A. K. Thevar as Oomaithurai

M. R. Santhanam as Thanapathi Sivasubramaniam Pillai

A. Karunanidhi as Sunderalingam

S. A. Kannan as Captain Davison

C. R. Parthiban as Jackson Durai (Lord W. C. Jackson)

Baby Kanchana as Meena

= = History = =

= = = Background = = =

The idea to make a film adaptation on the life of Veerapandiya Kattabomman occurred to many producers in the late 1940s , just after India 's freedom from the British Raj . In 1947 , soon after the British left India , a production company announced its intention to produce Kattabommu (named after the rebel 's real name) , a " mammoth production " which was to star P. U. Chinnappa ; this production did not materialise . Another attempt was initiated in 1953 by producer S. S. Vasan . A promotional poster announcing the project was released in Ananda Vikatan on 5 November 1953 . On 8 November 1953 , a notice was issued at Vasan 's production company , Gemini Studios ,

through Ananda Vikatan stating that anyone who had any useful information regarding Kattabomman and his exploits can send them to the studios ' storyboard department .

The concept of Veerapandiya Kattabomman began when Sivaji Ganesan and Sakthi T. K. Krishnasamy were travelling through Kayatharu , where Kattabomman was hanged . While there , Ganesan expressed a desire of doing a play based on Kattabomman 's life , to which Krishnasamy immediately agreed , and started to write the play . Coincidentally , Ganesan 's first exposure to the field of acting was when he saw a street play on Kattabomman 's life titled Kambalaththaar Kooththu . Krishnasamy completed writing the script for the play in a month 's time . The play was launched in Salem on 29 August 1957 . Ganesan had invested close to ? 50 @,@ 000 for the play 's sets and costumes .

On seeing the play , B. R. Panthulu decided to adapt it into a feature film and hired Krishnasamy to write the screenplay . G. Dharmarajan , who was the play 's set designer , was selected to do the same for the film . For the purpose of making the popular play into a film , a " History @-@ Film Format Research Group " was formed under the leadership of Ma . Po . Sivagnanam , with Krishnasamy , Panthulu , Ganesan , P. A. Kumar , K. Singamuthu , and S. Krishnaswamy as members .

= = = Production = = =

The Singapore @-@ based Indian Movie News stated in 1957 that when Ganesan heard of Vasan 's attempt to make a film adaptation on Kattabomman , he personally requested Vasan to abandon the project , adding that Vasan even lent Ganesan important research materials on Kattabomman . Film historian Randor Guy contradicted this in his 1997 book Starlight , Starbright : The Early Tamil Cinema by stating that writers like Kothamangalam Subbu and Veppathur Kittoo were employed by Vasan to conduct an extensive research on Kattabomman 's life , but the only eligible choice to play Kattabomman was Ganesan , who by then had become popular after Parasakthi (1952) . Guy noted that Ganesan was hesitant to play the role under Vasan 's direction as he was earlier rejected by Vasan for the role of a bodyguard in Chandralekha (1948) , which led to Vasan dropping the project . But later on , Ganesan acted in Irumbu Thirai (1960) , which was produced and directed by Vasan , and Motor Sundaram Pillai (1966) , which was produced by Vasan .

Ganesan originally offered the role of Vellaiyathevan to S. S. Rajendran , who declined it due to his commitment to the film Sivagangai Seemai (1959) . He later requested actress Savitri to ask her husband Gemini Ganesan to play the role , which she agreed to do despite being pregnant at that time . Gemini Ganesan was initially reluctant to accept the role , but eventually agreed . Padmini , O. A. K. Thevar , and V. K. Ramasamy were chosen to play Vellaiyammal , Oomaithurai and Ettappan respectively . S. Varalakshmi played Kattabomman 's wife , Jakkamma , and also worked as a playback singer . C. R. Parthiban played the role of Lord W. C. Jackson , and M. R. Santhanam played the minister , Thanapathi Sivasubramaniam Pillai . Kattabomman 's daughter in the film , Meena , was a fictional character created by Krishnasamy . The character was based on Krishnasamy 's own daughter , Mynavathi , who died when she was five years old . Krishnasamy initially refused to include the scene involving Meena 's death as it reminded him of his daughter , but finally did so reluctantly . The character was played by Baby Kanchana .

Principal photography began in October 1957 with a puja . Most of the film 's shooting took place at Jaipur . With help from Janakaraja , the man in charge of the cavalry division , the production unit of Veerapandiya Kattabomman managed to hire junior artistes to portray the cavalry soldiers for shooting the war scenes . When the film was being shot at Bharani Studios in 1958 , Adoor Gopalakrishnan , who witnessed the shooting that afternoon , recalled that after every take , the actors would rush out due to the intense heat on the set . He also stated , " The speed of the film was so low those days that one needed many , many lights for correct exposure . " Veerapandiya Kattabomman is notable for being the first Tamil film to be shot in Technicolor . Panthulu adopted American director Cecil B. DeMille 's tactic of personally introducing the film on camera . The final length of the film was 5 @,@ 512 metres (18 @,@ 084 ft) .

= = Music = =

Veerapandiya Kattabomman 's original soundtrack album was composed by G. Ramanathan , with lyrics by Ku . Ma . Balasubramaniam . The soundtrack album was released on 1 December 1959 under the label of Saregama . The album became a major breakthrough for P. B. Srinivas , then a struggling playback singer . He was recruited by Ramanathan to sing the track " Inbam Pongum Vennila " , which was picturised on Gemini Ganesan and Padmini , with P. Susheela . The song " Pogaathe Pogaathe " is based on the Mukhari raga , " Manam Kaninthal " is based on the Kurinji raga , and " Singara Kanne " is based on the Brindavanasaranga raga . Theatre actor K. B. Chellamuthu was the violinist for the songs . A remix version of " Inbam Pongum Vennila " was done by Hiphop Tamizha for the film , Aambala (2015) .

According to S. R. Ashok Kumar of The Hindu , " Manam Kaninthal " and " Singara Kanne " , both of which were sung by Varalakshmi , " remained all time favourites . " On the song , " Pogaathe Pogaathe " , singer Charulatha Mani said that it was " a meandering , melancholic Mukhari . " She also labelled Ratnamala 's rendition of the song as " expressive " . Film critic Baradwaj Rangan of The Hindu , in his review of the film 's digital re @-@ release , said that Ramanathan 's music " is still superb , spanning the range from folksy to light to classical " .

Tracklist

All lyrics written by Ku . Ma . Balasubramaniam .

= = Release = =

Veerapandiya Kattabomman 's premiere was held in London on 10 May 1959 , and it was released in Tamil Nadu on 16 May 1959 . The film was a commercial success and achieved cult status in Tamil cinema , becoming a silver jubilee film . The film was dubbed and released in Telugu and Hindi as Veerapandiya Kattabrahman in 1959 , and Amar Shaheed in 1960 .

= = = Critical reception = = =

Veerapandiya Kattabomman received positive reviews upon release . Ananda Vikatan , in its original review dated 24 May 1959 , wrote , " [Veerapandiya] Kattabomman will not leave the hearts of the people who have seen it ... Sivaji Ganesan has acted so well . This film adds pride to every person born as a Tamilian " . Baradwaj Rangan praised Ganesan 's performance , stating that " To watch Veerapandiya Kattabomman is to marvel at the shades and nuances an actor can infuse into oratory . " India Today stated in 2001 , " One doesn 't have to be well @-@ versed in Tamil to feel the fire in Veerapandiya Kattabomman . " Sri Lankan Canadian journalist D. B. S. Jeyaraj stated , " The first Tamil film which impacted on me greatly during childhood was [Veerapandiya Kattabomman] ... The magic of the movie to me at that time was the portrayal of Kattabomman by the doyen of Tamil actors , Sivaji Ganesan . The highlight of that performance was the powerful delivery of fiery dialogue by the film hero Kattabomman played by Sivaji . " N Sathya Moorthy wrote for Rediff.com in 2001 , " [Ganesan 's] portrayal of Lord Shiva in [Thiruvilaiyadal] and of freedom @-@ fighters Veerapandia Kattabomman and Kappalottia Thamizhan V O Chidambaram have become symbolic of the very characters in the average Tamil mind across the world . "

Guy labelled Ganesan 's performance as " breathtaking " . Janani Karthik of The Times of India wrote , " Watch this [film] for the legendary actor 's performance , something that old @-@ timers remember even today " . Another review from the same newspaper stated , " This digitally restored version is far from perfect ? there are instances when in the same scene , the colours seem to have been leached of the frames . The sound , too , feels a bit contemporary . And the casting of Indian actors to play the British characters feels dated and even amusing . But set these niggles aside and the film still retains its dramatic force . " L. K. Advani , currently one of the senior leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party , said , " I have seen the Tamil movie of Veerapandia Kattabomman [sic] , acted by [Sivaji] Ganesan , many times . It is fresh in my memory . "

== Accolades ==

Sivaji Ganesan 's performance as Kattabomman earned him an international award as the Best Actor at the 1960 Afro @-@ Asian Film Festival , held from 29 February to 11 March . The award was presented to him by Gamal Abdel Nasser , then the President of Egypt . It was Ganesan 's first award in his film career . It also made him the first Indian actor to receive an international award . On hearing of Ganesan 's return from Cairo after winning the Afro @-@ Asian Film Festival award for the Best Actor category in 1960 , fellow actor M. G. Ramachandran , who also served as the president of the South Indian Actors Guild organised a huge reception in Chennai to welcome him .

In his autobiography , Ganesan recalled that during the Afro @-@ Asian film festival , " I was called on stage and I went up a diminutive , five foot nothing , looking boyish with my build , whereas they had expected me to be a colossus , on seeing [Veerapandiya] Kattabomman , at least seven or eight feet tall ! Irrespective of this they gave me a standing ovation for five minutes . "

== Historical inaccuracies ==

Veerapandiya Kattabomman has often been criticised because of its historical inaccuracies . Randor Guy stated in 2015 that a Tamil weekly even went to the extent of saying , " [...] a new face called Kattabomman acted brilliantly as Sivaji Ganesan ! ? Poet Kannadasan said , " Kattabomman was not a real freedom fighter ; he was a Telugu and a robber . " He also stated that the Maruthu Pandiyars were the real freedom fighters and wrote a script about them , which was adapted into the film , Sivagangai Seemai . The film was released in the same month as Veerapandiya Kattabomman , but failed at the box office . Kannadasan 's statement was supported by writer Lena Tamizhvanan , who denounced Kattabomman 's glorification .

In Starlight , Starbright : The Early Tamil Cinema , Guy noted that according to East India Company records , Kattabomman was of Telugu ancestry , and that he was a strong and silent man , not of dash and daring as depicted in the film . Guy also noted that Ganesan portrayed Kattabomman as a " larger @-@ than @-@ life @-@ character , haranguing audiences in a high @-@ flown Tamil replete with literary flourishes " , as opposed to the real Kattabomman , who was not fluent in Tamil . Encyclopedia of Indian Cinema by Ashish Rajadhyaksha and Paul Willemen states , " A love interest has been added as well " , implying that the character of Vellaiyammal was fictional . Film historian S. Krishnaswamy , writing for The Hindu in 2001 , noted that the film was " historically far from accurate " and that it was " more like a costume drama or a mythological . "

In their 2010 book , Cinemas of South India : Culture , Resistance , Ideology , Sowmya Dechamma C. C. and Elavarthi Sathya Prakash state that Kattabomman 's Telugu identity is used in such a way that " while National historiography tries to elevate him , some versions of Tamil history seem to downgrade him . " In 2011 , S. Theodore Baskaran said , " Tamil films have scant regard for history . Almost always , they confuse between history and folklore , " and added , " Kattabomman was not even a king . His arsenal had just about three to four guns . " In 2014 , Ramu Manivannan , the HOD of politics and public administration at University of Madras , told The Times of India , " The popular images of [historical] characters have been constructed from oral descriptions and accounts . In some cases , the popular image overtakes the historical one as in the case of Sivaji Ganesan 's portrayal of Kattabomman on the screen " .

== Legacy ==

Veerapandiya Kattabomman took Ganesan 's career to a higher level , so much so that Tamil people identified Kattabomman with him . The film also became a trendsetter for presenting freedom fighters in a heroic manner , thus creating a new perception of the value of independence . The film 's success encouraged many in Tamil cinema to make films based on freedom fighters and historical figures , notable of which include Kappalottiya Thamizhan (1961) and Bharathi (2000) . Veerapandiya Kattabomman was re @-@ released in 1984 during Ramachandran 's tenure as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu . The film was granted tax exemption by the state government and was

commercially successful at that time as well .

In 1970 , eleven years after the film 's release , Ganesan established a statue of Kattabomman at Kayatharu , where the rebel was hanged . A special postal cover designed by film historian and actor Mohan V. Raman was released on 16 May 2009 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the film 's release . The cover was jointly released by the Sivaji ? Prabhu Charities trust and the Indo @-@ Russian Cultural and Friendship Society .

A. V. Ashok wrote for The Hindu , " It is no exaggeration to say that Sivaji 's heroic outpouring as Veerapandiya Kattabomman is an integral part of the Tamil cultural psyche . " Actor Sivakumar stated , " You can ? t reproduce movies like Parasakthi , Pasamalar , Devadas , Veerapandiya Kattabomman or Ratha Kanneer [...] By remaking such films , you are lowering yourself , while it enhances the original artists ? image . " Suhasini Maniratnam listed Veerapandiya Kattabomman alongside Kappalottiya Thamizhan , Aayirathil Oruvan (1965) and Iruvar (1997) , as her favourite period films in Tamil . The Times of India included Veerapandiya Kattabomman in its list of " Top 5 Sivaji Ganesan films on his birthday " . An elephant that Ganesan presented to the Punnainallur Mariamman temple in 1960 was named " Vellaiyammal " , after the character from the film . It was later donated to the Brihadeeswarar Temple in 1980 .

In Outlook 's issue dated 20 October 2008 , Ganesan 's line , " Vari , vatti , kisthi ... Yaarai ketkirai vari ... Etharkku ketkirai vari . Vaanam polikirathu , bhumi vilaigirathu , unakken katta vendum vari " , (Roughly translated in English as " Tributes , Tax , Loan , Interest . The rains pour from the sky , the land blossoms , why should I offer you money ? ") which he speaks in the scene featuring him and C. R. Parthiban , was ranked at number 8 in the magazine 's list of the " 13 cheesiest , chalkiest lines in Indian cinema " . Dhananjayan noted the line also became a text book example of dialogue delivery for aspiring actors .

In April 2012 , Rediff included the film in its list " The A to Z of Tamil Cinema " . In a January 2015 interview with The Times of India , playwright Y. G. Mahendra said , " most character artists today lack variety [...] Show me one actor in India currently who can do a Kattabomman , a VOC , a Vietnam Veedu , a Galatta Kalyanam and a Thiruvilayadal . " Actor Rana Daggubati , in an interview with Sangeetha Devi Dundoo of The Hindu , said that Ganesan 's performances as Kattabomman and Karna (in the 1964 film Karnan) served as inspirations for his role in Baahubali (2015) .

= = Re @-@ release = =

In 2012 , Raj Television Network announced that they would re @-@ release Veerapandiya Kattabomman in 3D in early 2013 , but that did not materialise . However , in March 2015 , Raj Television Network announced that they would release a digital 5 @.@ 1 surround sound version of the film in collaboration with Sai Ganesh Films , on an unspecified date in April , though it was eventually released on 21 August 2015 . The trailer of the digitised version was released on 20 March 2015 . Murali B. V. , coordinator of the production company , Sai Ganesh Films , which helped in the restoration and digitisation of the film 's original prints , told The New Indian Express that nine months were taken to clean the film prints and completely restore them for digitisation from the original 35 mm film prints with mono sound . The film collected ? 553 @,@ 000 in its opening weekend from 39 shows in Chennai .