

= Andha Naal =

Andha Naal (English : That Day) is a 1954 Indian Tamil @-@ language mystery @-@ thriller film produced by A. V. Meiyappan and directed by Sundaram Balachander . It is the first film noir in Tamil cinema , and the first Tamil film to be made without songs , dance and stunt scenes . The story , which is set in the milieu of World War II , is about the murder of a radio engineer Rajan (Sivaji Ganesan) . The suspects are Rajan 's wife Usha (Pandari Bai) , the neighbour Chinnaiah Pillai (P. D. Sambandam) , Rajan 's brother Pattabi (T. K. Balachandran) , Rajan 's sister @-@ in @-@ law Hema (Menaka) , and Rajan 's mistress Ambujam (Suryakala) . Each one 's account of the incident points to a new suspect .

Before the casting of Ganesan , S. V. Sahasranamam and N. Viswanathan were chosen for the lead role but were later dismissed because they were unconvincing to the filmmakers . The story and dialogue were written by Javar Seetharaman , who also played a prominent role as an investigation officer in the film . Cinematography was handled by S. Maruti Rao and the background score was composed by AVM Productions ' own music troupe , " Saraswathy Stores Orchestra " . The film 's length of 12 @,@ 500 feet (3 @,@ 800 m) was shorter than most contemporaneous Tamil films .

Andha Naal was released on 13 April 1954 , a Puthandu (Tamil New Year) release . It was critically acclaimed and was awarded the " Best Film Award " by the Madras Filmfans ' Association and a Certificate of Merit for Second Best Feature Film in Tamil at the 2nd National Film Awards in 1955 . Despite being a commercial failure during its release , the film has acquired a cult status over the years and is regarded as a milestone in Tamil cinema . In 2013 , Andha Naal was included in CNN @-@ News18 's list of the " 100 greatest Indian films of all time " .

= = Plot = =

On the night of 11 October 1943 , the Japanese bomb the Indian city of Madras (now Chennai) . The next morning in Triplicane , Rajan , a radio engineer and communications researcher , is found murdered with his own hand gun . His neighbour Chinnaiah Pillai hears the gunshot and makes a complaint to the police . Purushothaman Naidu , a local police inspector , arrives at Rajan 's house and starts investigating the murder . In the meantime , Crime Investigation Department (C.I.D.) officer Sivanandam joins Naidu to help the investigation . Naidu suggests that the killer could be a thief who must have killed Rajan for the money found at the crime scene . However , Sivanandam is unconvinced with Naidu 's idea because the sum of money present matches the withdrawal entry in the bank passbook found in the same room . Rajan was about leave Madras in anticipation of the bombings .

The two policemen question five people in and around Rajan 's house , most of whom are family members or friends of Rajan . The first person to be questioned is Rajan 's wife Usha , who is unable to speak due to grief . Sivanandam and Naidu feel embarrassed and are reluctant to question her further . They begin interrogating Pillai , who reported the murder . Pillai proposes that the killer is probably Pattabi , Rajan 's younger brother , and recalls a confrontation between Pattabi and Rajan . Pattabi asked for his share of the family property to be apportioned and given to him . Rajan refused to give Pattabi his share , feeling that he and his wife would squander it . Pillai concludes that this may have prompted Pattabi to kill Rajan .

Sivanandam and Naidu decide to interrogate Pattabi , who feels remorse for Rajan 's death and states that he did not treat his brother well and failed to understand his good intentions . He recounts an incident in which his wife Hema had fought with Rajan for not apportioning the property . Pattabi states that Hema could have killed Rajan for the money as she loses sanity when overpowered by anger . Sivanandam briefly leaves Naidu to interrogate Hema . She is initially impudent and refuses to give a statement about the crime , but she later yields when threatened that her husband will be arrested . She reveals Rajan 's extramarital affair with a dancer named Ambujam , who is pregnant with Rajan 's child . As Rajan treated the news with a reckless attitude , Hema proposes that Ambujam could have killed Rajan . When questioned , Ambujam accuses Pillai

of the murder , saying that he was her foster father who wanted her to stay away from Rajan , after the three met during a picnic . As their relationship continued , Pillai became infuriated and wanted to end the affair .

Sivanandam inquires Usha , who tells him how she and Rajan fell in love . Sivanandam tricks Usha using a leaky fountain pen to collect her fingerprints . That evening , Sivanandam meets all the suspects along with Naidu at Rajan 's house and carries out an exercise in which the suspects ? including Usha ? must shoot Sivanandam as though he is Rajan using revolvers loaded with fake bullets . All the suspects shoot , but Usha bursts into tears and fails to shoot . Sivanandam then orders an apparent arrest of Pattabi and Hema . Unable to bear the torture , Usha reveals the truth : Rajan was a radio engineer who wanted to sell radios to the poor at an affordable price . Unable to get any support from the government , he went to Japan where his work was appreciated . He became a spy working for Japan , selling India 's military secrets to the Japanese . Usha learnt about this and tried to reform him . But , Rajan does not mind betraying India . Usha could not stop Rajan and tries to shoot him . She changes her decision but pulls the trigger accidentally , killing Rajan . After revealing the truth , Usha commits suicide .

= = Cast = =

Sivaji Ganesan as Rajan , a radio engineer
Pandari Bai as Usha , Rajan 's wife
Javar Seetharaman as C.I.D. Officer Sivanandam
P. D. Sambandam as Chinniah Pillai
T. K. Balachandran as Pattabi , Rajan 's younger brother
Menaka as Hema , Rajan 's sister @-@ in @-@ law
Suryakala as Ambujam , Rajan 's mistress

= = Production = =

Sundaram Balachander , a " multi @-@ faceted " film personality entered films as an actor in 1934 and apprenticed under director Krishna Gopal for the film Idhu Nijama (1948) , a supernatural thriller . Following the success of Idhu Nijama , Balachander directed En Kanavar (1948) and Kaithi (1951) , both made on similar themes . After acting in a few more films , he decided to make a film based on his own story . Balachander wrote a play in in the narrative style of Akira Kurosawa 's Japanese film Rashomon (1950) , and showed it to Koothapiran of All India Radio , who rejected it . Balachander then approached AVM Productions founder A. V. Meiyappan and told him the story ; the latter agreed to adapt the story into a film . When Balachander told Meiyappan that he wanted no scenes featuring songs or stunts , the latter was opposed ; he wanted to include at least one song . However , Balachander responded by saying that even a solitary song in the film would " ruin the tempo " . Meiyappan eventually agreed to finance the film because he liked the story , and had trust in Balachander 's talent . Andha Naal thus became the first Tamil film that did not have any songs or dance sequences , and remained AVM Productions ' only film directed by Balachander .

The lead role of the radio engineer Rajan was initially offered to S. V. Sahasranamam , who was removed after some days of shooting because Balachander and Meiyappan were not satisfied with his performance and felt he looked " too old " to play the role . The filmmakers then engaged newcomer N. Viswanathan , a Tamil professor from Calcutta . After some footage featuring him was shot , the makers were again unconvinced with Viswanathan 's work ; they dismissed him and replaced him with Sivaji Ganesan . Meiyappan had introduced Ganesan in Parasakthi (1952) , and was very keen to have him play the lead role . Balachander was initially hesitant to approach Ganesan because he was unsure whether the latter would accept a negative role . In his autobiography , Ganesan stated that the film was almost completed before he was approached . He agreed to be a part of the film because he found the story interesting and thought portraying a variety of characters would interest the audience . Ganesan initially charged ? 40 @,@ 000 (equivalent to ? 2 @.@ 8 million or US \$ 42 @,@ 000 in 2016) which Meiyappan could not afford to

pay . He offered Ganesan ₹ 25 @, @ 000 (equivalent to ₹ 1 @. @ 8 million or US \$ 26 @, @ 000 in 2016) , but Ganesan refused . Balachander , however , told Ganesan that Meiyappan would pay him ₹ 1 @, @ 000 (equivalent to ₹ 71 @, @ 000 or US \$ 1 @, @ 100 in 2016) for every day they shot the film , and Ganesan obliged , believing the film would take long to complete . To his dismay , Balachander completed the shoot in 17 days . Andha Naal was one of the earliest films in which Ganesan portrays an antihero . The screenplay and dialogue were written by Javar Seetharaman , who also appeared in the film as a C.I.D. officer , and gave a voiceover in the beginning of the film in the scene before Rajan is shot dead . Pandari Bai was selected to play Rajan 's wife . Malayalam actor T. K. Balachandran , actresses Suryakala and Menaka , and P. D. Sambandam formed the rest of the cast .

Muktha Srinivasan , who would later become one of Tamil cinema 's established directors , assisted Balachander with this film . Cinematography was handled by S. Maruti Rao , and the editor was S. Surya . The background score was performed by Saraswathy Stores Orchestra , AVM Productions ' music troupe . No credit to the story is given in the introduction credits . The photography of the film was markedly different from most earlier films in Tamil cinema . Rao used the " painting with light " technique , which captures the shadow of the actors to reflect their " mood and character " . Meiyappan was initially dissatisfied with Ganesan 's performance and wanted the scenes to be reshot . When Balachander refused , Meiyappan demanded that the footage cannot be burnt , but Balachander again refused , and instead reshot Ganesan 's scenes . The film 's final cut was less than 12 @, @ 500 feet (3 @, @ 800 m) ? shorter than most contemporaneous Tamil films .

= = Themes and influences = =

Regarded as the first film noir in Tamil cinema , Andha Naal is set in the milieu of South @-@ East Asian theatre of World War II where the Japanese bombed the Indian city of Madras in 1943 . Residents of the city moved to nearby hill stations to protect themselves from further bombings and invasions . Though various sources , including Ganesan , have stated that the film was inspired by Rashomon , film historian Randor Guy notes that this notion is erroneous , that Andha Naal was actually adapted from the 1950 British film *The Woman in Question* directed by Anthony Asquith , and that there was only a " thematic resemblance " between Andha Naal and Rashomon . According to Jason P. Vest , in his book *Spike Lee : Finding the Story and Forcing the Issue* , the three films follow a nonlinear narrative by presenting diverging accounts of the same incident . In his 2015 book *Madras Studios* , film historian Swarnavel Eswaran Pillai notes that Andha Naal has nothing to do with Rashomon except for its whodunit plot , where the murder is explored in various angles . He also notes that Andha Naal ends with the mystery being solved , unlike Rashomon . According to B. Vijayakumar of *The Hindu* , Andha Naal is " probably " the first spy film in South India .

The main theme of Andha Naal is patriotism . It tells how unemployment and desolation of youngsters will lead to them becoming traitors . If a country does not appreciate talented young men for their efforts , they could turn against the nation . Ganesan 's character Rajan turns into a traitor by selling military secrets to Japan because his idea was rejected by the Indian government . This role was influenced from T. S. Balaiah 's character in the 1946 Tamil film *Chitra* . Pillai compared Pandari Bai 's character Usha in Andha Naal to her character in *Parasakthi* (1952) because in both films she is ideologically driven , but in the former , " it is the idea of the Indian nation that she pledges her allegiance to . " The *Times of India* compared Andha Naal to *Citizen Kane* (1941) for its similar lighting and camera angles .

The film uses a Tamil saying " Kolaiyum Seival patthini " (a virtuous wife may even kill her own husband) as a clue to the identity of the culprit . The story of the blind men and an elephant is referenced in the narrative , when Sivanandam notes how each suspects ' account of Rajan 's death contradicts that of the others . Usha is depicted as a virtuous wife and a patriot who loves her country . When she discovers that her husband has betrayed India , she does not hesitate to kill him . The Directorate of Film Festivals describes Naidu as a conscientious officer , and Sivanandam as a " brilliant , eccentric but not so serious " man .

= = Release and reception = =

Andha Naal was released on 13 April 1954 , a Puthandu (Tamil New Year) release , to critical acclaim , but did not succeed commercially because the audience were not impressed with a film without songs . The film was considered " revolutionary " for taking this move . In theatres , the viewers were disappointed after the first scene in which Ganesan is shot dead , and many even walked out . The theatre owners had to persuade them to watch the entire film . Its commercial failure led Meiyappan to avoid making any more films without song sequences . The film was later re-released after the announcement of the 2nd National Film Awards and became a box office success . Moser Baer and AP International have released the film on home video .

Andha Naal won critical praise , in spite of its poor performance at the box office . At the 2nd National Film Awards , the film won a Certificate of Merit for the Second Best Feature Film in Tamil , and a " Best Film " Award from the Madras Filmfans ' Association in 1955 . Contemporary critics lauded Meiyappan and Balachander for the experimental film . Ganesan 's role as an antihero won critical acclaim ; many critics said that Pandari Bai 's role as his patriotic wife " overshadowed " Ganesan 's performance . Many contemporary critics expected the film to be a " trendsetter " but it failed to inspire many thematically similar films in Tamil . Several years later , Balachander 's wife Shanta recalled that he was not affected by the film 's failure as he was " delighted that he pulled it off " , with the performances of Ganesan , Pandari Bai and the other actors being praised .

In a review dated 1 May 1954 , the magazine Kumudam praised Meiyappan 's courage in trusting the potential of " young talents like S. Balachandar and Javert Seetharaman who are redefining Tamil cinema " . It noted that if AVM had publicised the film as a thriller , " the warning that there are no songs or dances in the film would not have been so terrifying " . The magazine gave the verdict , " Success of art ; failure of narrative " . In the same month , a meeting was organised by the " Film Fans Association " in Madras to congratulate Meiyappan , Balachander , the actors and other crew members of the film . V. C. Gopalaratnam , the president of the association , said that Meiyappan " had displayed his pioneering spirit and zeal in producing a novel type of Tamil picture , without either songs or dances , relying for its success purely on the story and the portrayal of characters " . The magazine Gundooosi encouraged fans to see Andha Naal if they " really want Tamil cinema to progress " . In June 2008 , The Times of India gave the film a rating of four out of five , stating that it had a " timeless feel both in terms of story telling and presentation . " The reviewer praised the performances of Ganesan and Pandari Bai , and concluded , " Javar Seetharaman 's brilliant screenplay coupled with S Balachander 's subtle direction make this one of Tamil cinema 's finest offering so far . " Writing for Deccan Chronicle , Logesh Balachandran said , " [Pandari Bai 's] role as a patriotic woman in Andha Naal ... will always be memorable . "

= = Legacy = =

Andha Naal has been described by French film historian Yves Thoraval as a revolution in Tamil cinema for the absence of songs and dances . Though largely ignored during its release , it has since attained cult status in Tamil cinema , and in addition to becoming a trendsetter for Tamil films without songs , it set the benchmark in Tamil cinema for its noir style lighting in some of its dramatic sequences . In 2001 , journalist S. Muthiah called Andha Naal the " best film " produced by Meiyappan . He noted that it " proved that a song and danceless film could also be a hit . " In July 2007 , S. R. Ashok Kumar of The Hindu asked eight Tamil film directors to list their all-time favourite Tamil films ; three of them ? K. Balachander , Mani Ratnam and Ameer ? named Andha Naal . Malaysian author Devika Bai , writing for New Straits Times , described Andha Naal as Balachander 's magnum opus , and Balachander as " Tamil cinema 's Father of Film Noir " .

The film is regarded by many critics as Balachander 's best work . Encouraged by the film 's critical success , Balachander went on to direct and act in several more films of the same genre ? Avana Ivan (1962) , Bommai (1964) and Nadu Iravil (1965) . Andha Naal inspired several later whodunit films ? including Puthiya Paravai (1964) , Kalangarai Vilakkam (1965) , Sigappu Rojakkal (1978)

, Moodu Pani (1980) and Pulan Visaranai (1990) , and several songless Tamil films such as Unnaipol Oruvan (1965) , Kudisai (1979) , Veedu (1988) and Uchi Veyil (1990) . Researcher and ethnographer Preeti Mudliar compared Ratha Kanneer (1954) to Andha Naal because in both films , " the sin of foreignness is [neutralised] by a chaste Tamil woman , the virtuous wife " . Director Chimbu Deven acknowledged Andha Naal as an influence on his 2014 film Oru Kanniyum Moonu Kalavaanikalum in its end credits .

The film was screened in the " Tamil Retrospective Section " of the 14th International Film Festival of India in 1991 . In 2008 , Randor Guy praised Andha Naal for " being the first Tamil film which had no dance , song or stunt sequence and for Balachandar ' s impressive direction and fine performances by Sivaji Ganesan and Pandari Bai " . In March 2012 , film historian Mohan V. Raman told The Times of India that Andha Naal , being the first film noir in Tamil cinema , was " among the significant black and white films of yore " , along with Mayabazar (1957) and Uthama Puthiran (1940) . In a 2013 interview with the Tamil magazine Ananda Vikatan , Malayalam filmmaker Adoor Gopalakrishnan listed Andha Naal as one of his earliest favourites in Tamil cinema . In April 2013 , Andha Naal was included in CNN @-@ News18 's list of " 100 greatest Indian films of all time " . In mid @-@ April 2014 , the film was screened at the Russian Cultural Centre , Chennai , to mark its diamond jubilee anniversary .

Film Heritage Foundation announced in March 2015 that they would be restoring Andha Naal along with a few other Indian films from 1931 to 1965 as a part of their restoration projects carried out in India and abroad in accordance to international parameters . The foundation , however , stated that they would not colourise any of the films as they " believe in the original repair as the way the master or the creator had seen it . " Filmmaker Shivendra Singh Dungarpur also believes that the film requires restoration on a " priority basis " . A 30 @-@ minute play adaptation of the film was staged in April 2016 and was directed by Balachander 's son Raman . In the same month , Balachander 's daughter @-@ in @-@ law Dharma Raman wrote for The Hindu , " The few films he produced , directed , acted , sang and composed music for , stand the test of time and are worth celebrating . "