

= Karnan (film) =

Karnan is a 1964 Indian Tamil @-@ language epic historical drama film produced and directed by B. R. Panthulu . It features Sivaji Ganesan leading an ensemble cast consisting of N. T. Rama Rao , S. A. Ashokan , R. Muthuraman , Devika , Savitri and M. V. Rajamma . The film is based on the story of Karna , a character from the Hindu epic Mahabharata . He is born to an unmarried mother Kunti who abandons him in the Ganges to avoid embarrassment . The child is discovered and adopted by a charioteer . Karnan does not want to follow his foster father 's profession , and instead , becomes a warrior . He then befriends Duryodhana , the Kaurava prince , eventually setting the initial grounds of the Kurukshetra War , where he will join Duryodhana to fight against his own half @-@ brothers , the Pandavas .

Karnan , which was officially launched in 1963 , was the first Tamil film to be shot in the palaces of Jaipur and the war sequences were filmed in Kurukshetra , which featured several soldiers from the Indian Army . The film 's original soundtrack was composed by M. S. Viswanathan and T. K. Ramamoorthy , while the lyrics were written by Kannadasan . The dialogues were written by Sakthi T. K. Krishnasamy , and the screenplay by A. S. Nagarajan . Karnan was considered a milestone in Tamil cinema as it brought together the then leading actors of South Indian cinema , Ganesan and Rama Rao .

The film was dubbed in Telugu as Karna , and also in Hindi as Dhaan Veer Karna . Karnan was released on 14 January 1964 , during the festival occasion of Pongal , and received critical acclaim , with Ganesan and Rama Rao 's performances being widely lauded . Despite this , it became a commercial failure , but ran for over 100 days in some theatres . The film also won the Certificate of Merit for the Third Best Feature Film at the 11th National Film Awards . A digitised version of Karnan was released in March 2012 to critical and commercial success , eventually establishing a trend of re @-@ releasing digitised versions of old films in Tamil cinema .

= = Plot = =

Unmarried princess Kunti is blessed by the Sun god with a baby boy , which she abandons in the Ganges to avoid embarrassment . The boy is rescued and adopted by charioteer Athirathan , and is named Karnan . Years later , the now @-@ grown up Karnan realises that Athirathan is only his adoptive father and feels heartbroken . He does not want to become a charioteer like Athirathan , and instead chooses to become a warrior . He masters archery and challenges the Pandava prince Arjuna in a contest . Karnan is insulted on account of his lowly birth , but the Kaurava prince and cousin of the Pandavas , Duryodhana , saves his pride , and gives him the kingdom of Anga . Karnan thus becomes the close friend of Duryodhana and his wife Bhanumati .

One day , Indra , the king of the Devas (celestial deities) , disguised as a Brahmin , approaches Karnan and asks for his armour and ear rings in donation to weaken and stop him from overpowering Arjuna . Aware of Indra 's intention , Karnan yet donates both the items he was born with and which would make him invincible . Pleased with Karnan 's generosity , Indra gives him a powerful weapon , Nagashtra , but states that he can use it only once . Karnan , disguised as a Brahmin , becomes the student of the sage Parasurama to acquire the Brahmastra ; one day , however , Parasurama realises that Karnan is a Kshatriya , a tribe he opposes . Enraged , he renders Karnan incapable of using the Brahmastra when most needed , and banishes him .

Karnan later saves princess Subhangi from an uncontrolled chariot , and they fall in love . Subhangi 's parents initially disapprove of their romance , but eventually they accept , and the couple get married . A few years later , Krishna , a supporter of the Pandavas , learns about Karnan 's true background . He tells Kunti that Karnan is her first son whom she abandoned . Karnan gets to know about his birth later . Kunti meets Karnan and gets two wishes from him , one that he will not attack any of her sons (the Pandavas) except Arjuna during the impending Kurukshetra War , and that he will attack Arjuna with the Nagashtra weapon only once . Karnan refuses to join his brothers , the Pandavas and remains the friend of their enemy Duryodhana .

Before the start of the Kurukshetra war , Duryodhana 's ministry assembles to appoint the

generals of the army . Bhishma is appointed the Commander and he starts nominating generals for different battalions . Karnan is insulted on account of his lowly birth and given the command of a low rank infantry . The war begins and in the early days , Bhishma retires and Karnan replaces him . The following day , Karnan goes to war accompanied by his son Vrishasena who fights bravely , but is killed by Arjuna afterwards .

The next day , the vengeful Karnan uses the Nagastra to try killing Arjuna , but Krishna saves Arjuna by preventing the arrow from hurting him . Since Karnan cannot use the Nagastra more than once , he is unable to kill Arjuna . A wheel of his chariot gets stuck in a big hole , and he steps down to relieve it . At that time , Arjuna , under the direction of Krishna , shoots many arrows at Karnan that severely wound him . Krishna tells Arjuna that the Dharma (noble charity) that Karnan performed during his lifetime was protecting his life . Krishna disguises as a Brahmin , goes to Karnan and asks him his virtues as donation . Out of generosity , Karnan donates all his virtues to the " Brahmin " . At this juncture , Arjuna shoots a few more arrows at Karnan that kill him . The Pandavas , who realise that Karnan was their eldest brother mourn his death . His mother Kunti also mourns his death , while Subhangi dies due to the trauma of her husband 's death in the war . Arjuna remorsees killing Karnan , until Krishna reveals that the curses by Indra and Parasurama were also responsible for his death . The film ends with Karnan meeting his father ? the Sun in the other world .

= = Cast = =

Main cast

Sivaji Ganesan as Karnan , the elder half @-@ brother of the five Pandavas

N. T. Rama Rao as Krishna , an avatar of Hindu god Vishnu , who favours the Pandavas and opposes Karnan during the Kurukshetra war

Savithri as Bhanumati , Duryodhana 's wife and the princess of Chitrangandha

Devika as Subhangi , a princess rescued by Karnan , who later gets married to him

M. V. Rajamma as Kunti , the mother of Karnan and the Pandavas

K. V. Saroja as Young Kunti

S. A. Ashokan as Duryodhana , Karnan 's best friend and the eldest of the Kauravas

R. Muthuraman as Arjuna , the third of the five Pandavas and Karnan 's direct enemy in the Kurukshetra war

Supporting cast

Master Sridhar as Meghanathan

V. S. Raghavan as Vidhuran

Shanmugasundaram as Salliya Chakravarthy

O. A. K. Thevar as Kanagan

Javar Seetharaman as Bhishma

T. S. Muthaiah as Sakuni

K. Natarajan as Athirathan

Mustafa as Kripacharya

R. Balasubramaniam as Parasurama

Veerasamy as Dronacharya

S. V. Ramadoss as Indra

S. A. G. Samy as Dhritarashtra

Kannan as Sanjayan

Prem Kumar as Dharmar

Thangaraj as Nagulan

Chinnaya as Sahadevan

K. V. Srinivasan as Munivar

Master Suresh as Vrishasena

Master Babu as Young Vrishasena

Prabhakar Reddy as the Sun god

Sobhan Babu as the Moon god
Stunt Somu as Ghatotkatch
Sandhya as Kanagan 's wife
Rukmini as Radha
Jayanthi as Draupadi

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

Karnan is based on the life of the character Karna from the Hindu epic Mahabharata , and was officially launched in 1963 at Vijaya Studios in Chennai . B. R. Panthulu , who directed and produced the film under the banner Padmini Pictures , had " based his screen play on traditional sources " and collected most of his information from scholars Kripananda Variar and Anantarama Dikshitar .

The film 's art work , one of the major highlights of the film , was led by Ganga , and the cinematography was handled by V. Ramamurthy . Sakthi T. K. Krishnasamy wrote the dialogues , and A. S. Nagarajan wrote the screenplay . R. Devarajan was the editor .

= = = Casting = = =

Sivaji Ganesan was cast in the title role , Telugu actor N. T. Rama Rao as Krishna , and R. Muthuraman as Arjuna . Actresses Devika and Savitri were cast in the female lead roles , and S. A. Ashokan as Karna 's friend Duryodhana .

The role of Karna 's mother was portrayed by M. V. Rajamma , and actress Sandhya played Karna 's mother @-@ in @-@ law . Other supporting cast members included actor Shanmugasundaram as the charioteer Salliya Chakravarthy , V. S. Raghavan as Vidhuran , actresses Kalpana and Jayanthi , and the then six @-@ year @-@ old Master Sridhar as Meghanathan , an orphan who meets Karnan after being accused of setting fire to a school . Sridhar finished his long scene in one take , and was paid ? 1000 (valued at about US \$ 210 in 1964) for the performance . Actor K. V. Srinivasan played a minor role as the sage who christens the lead character as Karnan . He also dubbed for the voice of Rama Rao , after Ganesan 's insistence with Panthulu .

= = = Filming = = =

Karnan was filmed with an estimated budget of ? 4 million (valued at about US \$ 840 000 @.@ 84 in 1964) . The high cost of the film was attributed to the transportation costs incurred to move chariots from Chennai to Kurukshetra , where the war sequences were filmed . Permission from the government was sought , cavalry and infantry from the Indian Army were brought to the locations at Kurukshetra and the first rows of the charging armies on horses and elephants had soldiers from the Indian Army . The battle scenes were shot with troupes of the 61 Cavalry Regiment , using 80 elephants , 400 horses and three cameras . Other scenes were shot at palaces in Jaipur . Shooting for Karnan also took place at the Bangalore Palace in the Cantonment area , making it the first film to be shot there .

In 2012 , Panthulu 's son Ravishankar revealed that a few shots involving Ganesan and Rama Rao took as many as four days to shoot , because of the large number of personnel involved . After the release of Karnan , all the chariots specially made for the war sequences in Kurukshetra , were donated to the Brihadeeswarar Temple in Thanjavur .

= = Soundtrack = =

Viswanathan ? Ramamoorthy (a duo consisting of M. S. Viswanathan and T. K. Ramamoorthy)

composed the music of Karnan , while the lyrics were written by Kannadasan . The soundtrack was released under the label of Saregama . Notable instruments used for recording the songs include Sarangi , Santoor , Shehnai , Dilruba and other such instruments that were rarely used in Tamil films . The entire soundtrack was completed in a span of three days . The songs " En Uyir Thozhi " , " Maharajan " , " Kangal Engey " and " Iravum Nilavum " are based on the Hamir Kalyani , Kharaharapriya , Suddha Dhanyasi and Hamsanadam ragas respectively . The soundtrack was very successful , with the critic Malathi Rangarajan of The Hindu stating that " Musically , Karnan is of a calibre that few have surpassed " and that the " Panthulu @-@ Mellisai Mannar [M. S. Viswanathan] combo resulted in songs that will live on forever " .

= = = Reception = = =

The soundtrack received generally positive reviews from critics . Baradwaj Rangan of The Hindu said , " My interest in Karnan (apart from the critic 's mandate that I see everything) was primarily the songs " , but noted that Sirkazhi Govindarajan 's " liquid diction and brass @-@ throated conviction makes today 's male singers sound like tentative little boys in a parent 's day recital " . Meera Srinivasan , another critic from The Hindu praised the film for the " music score and songs by the inimitable Viswanathan @-@ Ramamoorthy duo with Kannadasan 's striking lyrics " . Malathi Rangarajan said , " The illustrious composing duo of Viswanathan and Ramamurthy has worked magic with music " . M. Suganth of The Times of India stated " The songs are one too many (but what songs they are !) " . K. N. Vijayan of The New Straits Times said , " Instead of trooping out , the audience sat through the 14 songs composed by the Viswanathan @-@ Ramamoorthy pair . They are that famous and many can sing along to the lyrics as the songs have been heard countless times on the radio " .

= = Release = =

Karnan , which was released in 38 screens , was the most expected film during the festival occasion of Pongal on 14 January 1964 , and Shanthi theatre in Chennai , which released the film , had a 60 feet (18 m) tall banner of a chariot to attract the audience . Ganesan promoted the film by distributing sakarai pongal (sweetened rice) to those who came to Shanthi to attend the film 's first screening . Karnan was the first of a " mythology series " of films that made a comeback during the 1960s . It was also a trendsetter for mythological films in a period when films with social messages were popular . Karnan was also considered a milestone in Tamil cinema as it brought together the then leading actors of South Indian cinema , Sivaji Ganesan and N. T. Rama Rao . The film was dubbed in Telugu as Karna , and also in Hindi as Dhaan Veer Karna .

= = = Box office = = =

In its theatrical run , Karnan completed 100 days in four theatres , including Madurai Thangam (noted as the second largest theatre in Asia during 1964) , and also completed 105 days at Ganesan 's family @-@ owned Shanthi theatre . In spite of a successful run after completing 80 days , the film was removed from twelve theatres to allow the release of Pachai Vilakku , another Sivaji Ganesan film . At Madurai Thangam , Karnan earned totally ? 186 @,@ 805 @.@ 62 after its 14 @-@ week run there . Since most films of the time in the Tamil film industry did not have box office reports , the film 's exact collections are unknown , although critics like Baradwaj Rangan and M. Suganth state that the film was a box office failure during its release .

= = = Critical reception = = =

Reviews for Karnan have been mostly positive . Ayngaran International called the film " One of the all time great Indian classics with a fantastic star cast and great acting " . Meera Srinivasan of The Hindu stated , " Karnan , directed by B.R. Panthulu in 1964 , is considered a classic for many

reasons , including the stunning performances of Sivaji as Karnan and N.T. Rama Rao as Lord Krishna " , while highlighting " the powerful battlefield sequences and the music score " . M. Suganth of The Times of India gave the film 4 @. @ 5 out of 5 stars , saying " The pacing is uneven , the complexities of the plot are overtly simplified , " and added that " the narrative isn 't tightly structured " but praised Ganesan 's performance as a " pitch @-@ perfect larger @-@ than @-@ life performance " and Rama Rao 's portrayal of Krishna as " the definitive portrayal of the Lord on screen " , calling it " one of the delights of the film " . Malathi Rangarajan of The Hindu called the film 's artwork " an exercise in aesthetic splendour " and added , " If the technical crew is brilliant , so is the cast that has Sivaji Ganesan at the helm . " Film historian Firoze Rangoonwalla , in his book 75 years of Indian cinema , called the film a " spectacular mythological " .

Rediff.com called it " one of the most significant films in Sivaji Ganesan 's career " . K. N. Vijayan of The New Straits Times said , " The actions of certain characters , like Indra and Krishna may appear perplexing to some . Some reading on the internet is needed to understand their reasons " . He however praised the film 's dialogues by Sakthi Krishnasamy as " classical " and concluded , " Such [a] mythological film is important for the younger generation " . Anupama Subramanian of Deccan Chronicle called it " the timeless Mahabharath [sic] classic of thespian Sivaji Ganesan " . G. Dhananjayan , in his book The Best of Tamil Cinema : 1931 to 1976 , praised the film for being " the only Tamil film which portrayed the mythological character Karnan in a grand manner . "

The film also received mixed reviews from other critics . Ananda Vikatan said , " Though this effort to improve the quality of Tamil cinema must be appreciated , we do not see the dignity of the epic and only see the dominance of the extravaganza . " In 2012 , Baradwaj Rangan called the film " a historical epic with little so @-@ called relevance to contemporary life (unless you want to acknowledge the Duryodhana @-@ Karna storyline as the granddaddy of today 's bromances) " and stated that Ganesan 's performance " isn 't as all @-@ consuming as his performance in , say , [Thiruvilaiyadal] ; The Mahabharata , after all , is a tale with an ensemble cast , unlike The Ramayana with its solo hero " , while calling Rama Rao 's performance a " sly , campy take on Krishna " .

Dhananjayan opined that Ganesan 's performance was influenced by Veerapandiya Kattabomman (1959) and that his excessive emotions in several scenes were not well received by the audience . Nevertheless , at the 11th National Film Awards in 1964 , the film won the Certificate of Merit for the Third Best Feature Film .

= = = Home media = = =

Karnan was released on DVD by Raj Video Vision . A " 5 @. @ 1 Channel EDS Sound " enhanced version was also released by the same company , featuring English subtitles . Karnan is also included alongside various Sivaji Ganesan @-@ starrers in the compilation DVD 8 Ulaga Adhisayam Sivaji , which was released in May 2012 .

= = Legacy = =

Actor Y. G. Mahendra said , " Karnan can never be remade . Nobody can replace any of the actors of the 1964 classic , and it would amount to mockery if it is done . " Actor Rana Daggubati , in an interview with Sangeetha Devi Dundoo of The Hindu , said that Ganesan 's performances as Kattabomman and Karna served as inspirations for his role in Baahubali : The Beginning (2015) .

= = = Re @-@ release = = =

A digitally restored version of Karnan was released on 16 March 2012 , to commemorate the birth centenary of Panthulu . It is the first Tamil film to be fully digitally restored , costing ? 4 million (US \$ 59 @, @ 000) and consuming an effort of three years . The effort was undertaken by film distributor Shanthi Chokkalingam , who stated , " The sound negative was totally gone and the five to six reels from the picture negative were damaged to a great extent " . The digital restoration of Karnan took

place at Sangeetha Sound Studios in Chennai , after a failed attempt with the Mumbai @-@ based Famous Studios , who earlier restored the 1960 Hindi film Mughal @-@ e @-@ Azam . Visual improvements and audio restoration were excessively worked upon , with Shanthi stating that the " biggest challenge was to restore the background score " . DVDs were also used to get the sound and music in its original form . To create awareness about the restoration of Karnan , a teaser trailer was launched on 21 February 2012 , which received a positive response .

The restored version of Karnan which utilised DTS 5 @.@ 1 surround sound , was released in 72 screens across Tamil Nadu , and was released by Shanthi 's Divya Films . It was well received upon release , although The Times of India 's critic M. Suganth called the restoration process " far from perfect " , and critic Baradwaj Rangan quoted , " The print occasionally judders , leaving the impression of watching the movie on a screen mounted behind the driver 's seat in an auto rickshaw " . Taking a big opening , the film collected roughly ? 20 million (US \$ 300 @,@ 000) in Chennai within the first few weeks , and was later reported to have collected a total of ? 50 million (US \$ 740 @,@ 000) . Becoming the first Tamil film to have a theatrical run of over 100 days in its re @-@ release , and having surpassed what it originally managed to collect in its entire 105 day run at Shanthi theatre , the film was officially declared a commercial success . It 's success soon established a trend of digitising and re @-@ releasing films in Tamil cinema .