

A Comparative Study On Folk Songs and Western Songs in the Contemporary Tamil Cinema

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Abstract: The aim of the research work is to compare the folk songs and western songs in the recent Tamil cinema. Also, this research examines memory and lyrical content of songs in recent Tamil films. In this experimental research, an experiment was carried out to find out the stress factors, memory level of words, and content relevance. A comparative study between the folk songs and western songs was conducted among the viewers of the film audience. The members divided into three groups. Those group members were shown different film songs for thirty minutes. The standardized NSAD stress questionnaire used to study the stress level among the members. The folk songs which are being used in this experimental study are, Naatupurapaatu, Kilakku Seemaiyele, and Enthiran. These film songs are categorized into traditional folk songs, (traditional instruments), modernized folk songs, (fusion of classical and modern instruments), and western songs (computerized instruments). These film's songs show the differences in lyrics, instruments, fusion and modernized music. This experimental research clearly shows the differences in memory of the lyrics and musical beats. This research shows that there is a development exists in the short-term memory among the viewers. The traditional folk songs play a vital role in the communication process and memory. It helps to convey the story during the film and improve the memory in remembering the story and contents of the film. This research shows that the reduced stress level among the film watchers. The presence of folk media enhances the communication process. This research can be extended to other medium of communication.

Keywords— Folk Songs, Western Songs, Tamil Films, Stress, Short-Term Memory, Computerised Instrumental Music

I. INTRODUCTION

The Tamil Nadu has more than two thousand of year's history in the practiced art forms such as music, dance, and other performing arts. The performing arts are an integral part of Tamil culture, society, life, and tradition. Both the classical Karnatic and folk music has developed in this Tamil land. Much literature evidence is available for the Ragam, Thalam and musical instruments of the Tamil peoples. In 'Silappathigaram' many traditional instruments and Ragams' names are written. From birth to death the Tamil people use these art forms for many purposes. The western music and instruments are introduced by the British people in the 18th century.

The famous Tamil music directors like MS Viswanathan, KV Mahadevan, and Ramanathan have used Karnatic music oriented songs in Tamil films. From the first film onwards Ilayaraja used folk, western, mixed music, and songs. In the film Naatupurapaatu, the variety of folk songs were listed and its' related occasions were also listed. AR Rahman used many western instruments and modern computerized

musical instruments and songs of different forms. He used folk songs in his film "Kilakku Seemaiyele" to cater to the need of the film genre.

This type of developments, transformations, and changes in the film industry developed the gap between traditional artists and films. The new media and e media further developed the gap between the traditional media and film.

This research work is organized into 6 sections. The research problem is discussed in the introduction section. The reviews of related works are discussed in section 2. The research methodology, research findings, and the limitations of the research are written in section 3, 4, and 5. Part 6 helps to write the conclusions from the research work.

Importance of this study

The traditional folk media and traditional folk artists are facing many problems due to the digital revolution and commercialization. And also, the Tamil cinema industry uses more westernized songs and music than the traditional song and music. This research gets importance in order to develop the traditional folk media and to develop the folk artists.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Pandiyan kingdom was based in Madurai which developed a Sangham for the development of Tamil language [1]. It had three forms for practice namely Iyal, Isai and Natakam.

The Tamil language has much well-written grammar and Elakkiyam, so the song lyrics are very easier to write the poets. There is much evidence are available about the practiced folk songs in many parts of the Tamil Nadu. It has the well-defined structure [2].

The folk media has many forms in Tamil Nadu. It has formats like folk songs, folk dance, drama, and folk music. [3]. According to Thoraval Indian films have utilized other art forms and traditional media to reach the typical Indian filmgoers. Halliwell's book "the filmgoer's companion" discusses the contents of the films and the importance of sound and music [4].

According to Shanmuga Sundaram, the district like Tirunelveli, Madurai, and Kanyakumari has different tales for the folklore and the folk songs [5].

The writer Charles found out the folk songs and its roots related to Dravidians. He thoroughly discussed the religious links and exploitation of the folk songs related to Tirunelveli [6]. The writer Vaanamamali discussed the various forms of Tamil folk songs and its roots. He mentioned the stories related to Tamil people's culture. Also, he discussed the folk songs and its inner and hidden messages. He mentioned stories such as Kallalagar, Muthupattan, Sinnathambi, Nallathangal, and Sinnanadan [7]. The author Kalai Ilakiya discussed the oppari forms of folk songs of Tamil Nadu in his book named 'Oppari padalgal'. He mentioned the current position of Oppari padalgal in the Tamil people's society. Also, he documented the Oppari songs [8]. Kasbekar and Asha studied the pop culture, lifestyle and its effects due to the cinema. In their book named "Pop culture India, media art and lifestyle" they identified the importance of songs in Tamil industry [9]. The author Velayutham Selvaraj discussed the political, social and class divisions present in Tamil cinema. He mentioned the music and its roots in his book [10].

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, recent Tamil films were compared based on their use of folk songs and music. The films **Naatupurapaatu, Kilakku Seemaiyele, and Enthiran** were selected to study the changes taken place during the past 15 years. The experimental research was conducted to study the stress level and memory of the film audience.

An experiment was conducted with the set of 15 Natupurapaattu film's song viewers, 15 Kilakku Seemaiyele film's song viewers, and 15 Enthiran film's song viewers.

3.1Hypothesis:

1. Those who have viewed the songs of Nattupurapaattu films had a better recollection of the words, stories, and meanings.
2. Those who have viewed the songs of Enthiran film had a low recollection of the words, stories, and meanings.
3. Those who have viewed the songs of Kilakku seemaiyele had a better recollection of the words, stories, and meanings.
4. When compared to Nattupurapaattu songs and Kilakku seemaiyele songs the Enthiran Songs showed the low level in the recollection ability among the viewers. (Lyrics words, story, & meaning).

3.2Hypothesis methodology:

The research was conducted among the three types of song viewers by following the way like pre-test (NSAD-Stress questionnaire), questionnaire design, sampling and post-test memory test (to study the word's, lyrics and story).

3.3Sampling:

The research sample was 45 film song viewers from a University.

The age group of the sample ranged from 20 to 25 years. The Pre-test was conducted before the commencement of the research among the viewers to record their stress level.

The Post-test was conducted after the viewing session. The Pre-test and the Post-test were conducted by objective type questions.

Case 1: Naatupurapaatu: The film music composer and director Ilaiyaraja had used the traditional musical instruments and folk songs to reach the film audience. Many folk artists and musicians were performed in that film. The film budget was very low when compared to Kilakku Seemaiyele and Enthiran. That film gave benefit to the traditional artists more than the other two films.

Case 2: Kilakku Seemaiyele: The film music composer and director AR Rahman used the fusion of classical and traditional musical instruments and folk songs to reach the film audience. Folk song artists performed in that film. The film budget was low when compared to Enthiran. The benefit to the traditional artists was more than the film 'Enthiran'.

Case 3: Enthiran: The film music composer and director AR Rahman used the computerized music to reach the film audience. Folk song and artists had no participation in that film. The film budget was higher when compared to the other two films. There were no benefits to the traditional folk song artists and traditional music.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The use of folk songs and mettukkal helps to develop the short-term memory among the film audience. There is a difference exist between the groups on remembering the lyrics. The Tamil films like Naatuppurapaatu, Kilakku seemaiyele, and Enthiran shows the slow transformation to modernized music. The lyrics are more memorable when the story utilizes the traditional instruments of the land. The song of Naatupurapaatu and Kilakku seemaiyele shows the memory and developments. Also, the results show that there is a significant level of stress difference developed due to the film media.

V. CONCLUSION

This changing film song's trend clearly shows the musical difference and changing transformation of folk songs and folk musical instruments in the recent Tamil film industry. The folk songs used in those days develops the memory level. Now the lyrics are easily fading due to westernized music and songs. From this research, it is observed that film songs have many transformations during the past twenty years. It shows the importance of folk songs to convey the story. Even though those selected films got commercial hits, the folk songs artist's participation drastically reduced in other words there was no role for them to showcase their talents. In the earlier stage the Tamil film industry, it utilizes the folk artists, folk songs and folk media to reach the level, but now the trend is changing towards the westernized music. Folk songs enhances the memory level because of its simplicity and contents.

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