



TELUGU FILMS AND THE GREAT MAN THEORY: REVEALING HEROIC LEADERSHIP IN FILM SCRIPTS

KVLN Pavan Kumar, Asst. Professor in Management Science, VNR Vignana Jyothi Institute of Engineering and Technology, Hyderabad, Telangana-500090, Email: pavankumar_kvln@vnrvjiet.in

Dr. Aruna Kumari Nuthanapati, Asst. Professor in Management Science, VNR Vignana Jyothi Institute of Engineering and Technology, Hyderabad, Telangana-500090, Email: arunakumari_n@vnrvjiet.in

Dr. P. Krishna Murthy, Senior Asst. Professor, Sri Venkateswara Engineering College Suryapet, Telangana, India, Email: saipalkrishna@gmail.com

Abstract:

Tollywood, another name for Telugu cinema is an ever growing film industry producing movies in Regional Telugu Language. Telugu cinema is rich with sound producers, handsome heroes, exquisite sets and appealing storylines. The Telugu Film Industry has lengthy history of creating films reflecting ideals of great man leadership. In all Telugu movies, Hero is projected as a chief protector, problem solver and path pointer. This article is a small attempt to explore some movie scripts which reflects great man theory of leadership and the way hero is portrayed and highlighted as above.

Key words:

Telugu Films, Telugu heroes, Leadership in Telugu cinema, Telugu film scripts

I. Introduction:

According to Great Man Leadership, Leadership is innate, leaders are born and they are not made. Carlyle put forth the idea that World history is nothing but the collection of biographies of some important people. Carlyle and some of his contemporaries came to the limelight to put forth their notions of that era. Evidenced by Encyclopedia Britannica which published its eleventh edition in 1911. Thomas Carlyle's theory became popular and widely debated across the region in the 19th century. Ever since portraying the Heroes as leaders and several other allied attributes became a recurring theme in Telugu Industry.

The Telugu movie industry is one of the biggest film industries in India with a turnover of more than INR 2500 Crores. Telugu Cinema has a lengthy history of portraying heroes with superior qualities and great leadership. They are the sole refugees who come to the rescue of their followers and act as their protectors driving away all evil forces around them for their welfare and bright future. The following examples can be cited as justification for the above.

II. Review of Literature:

“Pathala Bhairavi” was released in 1951 with Senior NTR as a star hero. This is classical evidence of the Great Man Theory of Leadership. He is a sagacious and charismatic hero who guides innocent villagers against the atrocities of a cruel king and his army.

The Character of Abhimanyu portrayed by Nageswara Rao in “Mayabazara” which was released in 1957 is clear evidence of the best example of the Great Man Theory of Leadership. Abhimanyu who belonged to Pandavas’ dynasty was very bold and steadfast and led a group of warriors to fight against the evil demon.

In 1979 a movie named “Vijay” was released in which Shoban Babu was the star hero who played the role of a successful businessman exhibiting intelligence and strategic thinking to face and overcome many challenges and come out successful.

The Character played by JV Somayajulu in “Shankarabharanam” in 1980 is an extraordinary orthodox Brahmin who is a classical musician who rebels against commercialized and corrupt music practices and strives to bring awareness among the public and preserve the sanctity of Indian music.



In 1982 “Eenadu”, a movie was released by Veteran Krishna as a star hero. The character is an actual revolutionary leader who fights with the corruption of politicians in society. Krishna’s character in the movie is portrayed as a charismatic leader to motivates and guides his followers to fight against a corrupt minister and illicit liquor distillery.

In 1988, a beautiful movie titled “Shiva” was released in which popular hero Nagarjuna acted as Hero. He displayed an extraordinary caliber in preventing gangsters and rowdies in the city who were creating bad practices by meddling with students’ affairs and spoiling students’ future.

In 1992 “Gang Leader” movie was shot with Chiranjeevi as the Central Hero with a character by name Raja. He was depicted as a fighter and opposed corrupt politicians and his henchmen. His steadfastness and fearlessness for the cause of good and his commitment to standing for his ideals are beautifully pasteurized

In the recent past, a movie with Mahesh Babu as a star hero was released with the name “Spider”. He was a modest software engineer but became alert and took the initiative to put an end to a serial killer. Hero is described as a wonderful strategist who uses his extraordinary talent to outsmart the killer and save many innocent lives.

The character of Pratap Ravi represented by Vivek Oberoi in the movie titled “Raktha Charitra” almost a decade back was another evidence of true leadership. Hero was shown as a fighter who played well against a corrupt political system and continued to seek justice for his father’s murder.

“Bahubali”, the movie released in 2015 was a Box office Sensation in which hero Prabhas acted as a larger-than-life hero who leads his followers to overpower an evil king and his army. Hero’s character is elevated as an extraordinary gentleman with perfect human values befitting of a dynamic leader

In the movie “Pushpa” the character of Allu Arjun portrayed as a small daily laborer becomes the leader of a smuggling cartel which reflects the charismatic leadership.

“RRR” was a movie of recent sensation in which heroes Ram Charan and Junior NTR acted, each one leading his followers in a different way to fight against the inhuman practices of some Cruel British Officers. Heroes after a long tough struggle were able to fulfill the promises they made for their followers.

III. Elevation of Great Man Theory of Leadership in Telugu Film Scripts:

The Great Man Theory of leadership advocates that Leaders have some innate capabilities that enable them to elevate themselves to rise. Telugu cinema depicts these qualities in different ways. A few attributes of the Great Man Theory of leadership in Telugu movies are as under Charismatic Personality: The heroes in Telugu movies are often depicted as charismatic personalities who can inspire and motivate their followers. They possess a certain charm and confidence that makes people believe in them and their cause.

Fascinating Personality: Heroes in Telugu movies are often portrayed as captivating personalities having the ability to inspire and motivate their subjects.

Courage and Bravery: Heroes in Telugu movies are often shown as courageous individuals of extraordinary caliber who are willing to take risks to fight against injustice. They are frequently trapped in the attention of powerful enemies and after a strong struggle, they are shown as becoming victorious.

Intelligence and prudent thinking: Telugu Heroes besides possessing physical valour possess an extraordinary ability to think and plan their moves in their struggle. They are shown as playing mind games on their enemies to overcome their challenges and finally emerge victorious.

Strong Moral Values: Telugu Heroes are often shown as posing strong moral values with a set of ideals to support the cause of good and they may risk their lives sometimes and go out of law also.

Much attention is shown on framing dialogues, key contributors to elevating the hero character. In every respect they are designed to reflect the great man theory even though the hero is a common man with an insignificant background. To cite some dialogues which reiterate this spirit are such as Leadership is in my blood, spirit of fighting and success are natural plays for me, my birth and blood



are different and if you meddle with my affairs you will stand nowhere on earth are some of the specimens of exalted characterization and exaggeration to captivate the audience

IV. Conclusion:

Great Man Theory of Leader Ship has been projected as a Prime Theme in the Telugu Cinema Industry. Both the audience and fan base perceive that the hero is depicted as a charismatic and central character which is the backbone of the movie. The essential characteristics of effective leadership like charisma, courage, intelligence, and strong values are attributed to the hero role in a grand fashion. Besides the criticism of the Great Man Theory of Leadership, Telugu Cinema conceives that individuals with certain innate qualities rise as exceptional leaders. The central idea of the majority of movies and titles reflects and strengthens the same ideology of the Theory of Great man Leadership. But in actuality, Leadership is a broad concept and effective leaders mold their way by improving their way by learning and experience. The importance of Growth and Leadership is overlooked in the Great Man Theory of Leadership. Great man Theory is inclined to reinforce that Leaders often are heroic with unchallenged authority. But this is a narrow portrayal of a Leader those mismatches with the diverse nature of leaders found in the real world. After all, movies are to be treated as a means of entertainment rather than depicting actual leadership characteristics. In reality, leadership is beyond innate qualities and it is context-dependent or circumstances-driven and shaped by various other factors.

Great Man Theory of Leadership has had a prominent influence on movies in their portrayal of Leadership but in reality, it is to be recognized that leadership is a complex and evolving concept. Movies can't be taken as a medium to perceive leadership but they should be taken as a means of entertainment. Effective Leadership involves a combination of inborn qualities gained knowledge or skills and adaptability to different situations.

References:

1. On Heroes, Hero-Worship, & the Heroic in History by Thomas Carlyle
2. Organizational behavior by Ashwathappa, Himalaya Publishing House.
3. Leadership Theories Corey S. Halaychik, in Lessons in Library Leadership, 2016
4. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/jobs/c-suite/the-evolution-of-leadership-theories-from-great-man-to-situational-leadership/articleshow/104758595.cms>
5. Some Findings Relevant to the Great Man Theory of Leadership, Edgar F. Borgatta, Robert F. Bales and Arthur S. Couch, *American Sociological Review* [Vol. 19, No. 6 \(Dec., 1954\)](#), pp. 755-759 (5 pages)
6. Antonakis J (2012) Transformational and charismatic leadership. In: Day D, Antonakis J (eds) *The Nature of Leadership*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 256–288.
7. Conger JA, Kanungo RN (1987) Toward a behavioral theory of charismatic leadership in organizational settings. *Academy of Management Review* 12: 637–647.
8. Charismatic Leadership and Power: Using the Power of Charisma for Better Leadership in the Enterprises by Prof. Krume Nikoloski, (JPMNT) *Journal of Process Management – New Technologies, International* Vol. 3, No.2, 2015.
9. House, R.J. and Howell, J.M. (1992). Personality and charismatic leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 3(2), 81-108.
10. Aaltio-Marjosola, I. & Takala, T. (2000). Charismatic Leadership, Manipulation and the Complexity of Organizational Life. *Journal of Workplace Learning*. Vol. 12. Issue 4.