

# Aayirathil Oruvan gets digitally enhanced

49 years after its release, MGR-Jayalalitha starrer to return with re-recorded background score

Karthik Subramanian

**CHENNAI:** Soon, one will get to hear the evergreen anthem of MGR — “Atho antha paravai pola vaazha vendum” — in digital surround sound at multiplexes across the state.

Nearly five decades after the release of the movie, featuring former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and iconic actor M.G. Ramachandran and current Chief Minister Jayalalitha in lead roles, ‘Aayirathil Oruvan’ directed by B.R. Panthulu is getting ready for a digitally enhanced theatrical re-release in January.

Divya Films, which re-released the Sivaji Ganesan epic ‘Karnan’ in digital format in 2012 to a good response, is working on the finishing touches to the digital version of ‘Aayirathil Oruvan’ at the Prasad EFX studio in the city.

The digitally restored film will also feature a completely re-recorded background music (BGM) played out by an assistant of veteran film director M.S. Viswanathan. It



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has been recorded in digital surround sound. The technicians at Prasad EFX who had previously done the restoration for ‘Karnan’ and ‘Paasa Malar’ are working on technical aspects of the restoration, including preparing the ‘digital intermediates’ (DI) and scope conversion for converting the 35 mm film to digital scope.

G. Chockalingam of Divya

Films says he has been working on restoring ‘Aayirathil Oruvan’ ever since he completed the release of digital ‘Karnan’. “The film negatives were in a more damaged stage than those of ‘Karnan’. So, we had to painstakingly apply the digital restoration and corrections to every frame of the 18 reels. With ‘Karnan,’ just three reels needed extra care. But here, the entire

length of 2 hours and 45 minutes has been digitally enhanced and that is why it has taken this long to be restored,” he said.

Mr. Chockalingam plans to unveil the marketing strategy for the re-release on December 24, coinciding with M.G. Ramachandran’s death anniversary. The film has been slated for a January release.

Though the Tamil film in-

dent loss of several classics.

“At least those films that deserve to be showcased in the arena of World Cinema need saving,” says national award-winning film maker Balu Mahendra. “I have already lost my own films including ‘Moonram Pirai’ and even ‘Marupadiyum’ that made as late as 1993. I would really love to see classics like ‘Ratha Kaneer’ (starring M.R. Radha made in 1954) in digital format. But where can I go,” he asks.

The issue of preserving and archiving film negatives has been a contentious issue that every one passes the buck around. Though producers are the rightful owners of film negatives, there have not been concerted efforts to establish archival centres either by the Film Producers’ Council or by any other collectives.

Depending on the condition of the film, and the wear and tear, digital restoration of a full-length feature could cost anything between Rs.20 lakhs to Rs. 1 crore.