Analysing The Role of Social Media in Promoting Tamil Feature Films: A Special Reference To AI, Simulation And Hyperreality

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Abstract

This Paper focuses on the opportunities and challenges of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the film industry. The prime use of Artificial Intelligence(AI) focuses on automated tasks and inspecting various errors. However, Artificial Intelligence(AI) plays a peculiar role in simulation and Hyperreality. Ceaselessly, Artificial Intelligence(AI) is proving its competency, excellence and finesse. In the newer era of AI, human beings could easily use AI tools for film production. It can automate script analysis, CGI generation and mimic various accents, tones and even virtualise humans by automating facial recognition. The employment of AI in Tamil cinema is widely recognised by the audience and being appreciated by them. As Social Marketing theory suggests that advertising is one of the best ways to promote, AI virtualises an ordinary human being with only their facial database and clips a specific scene and replaces faces of the audience in order to capture the audience's attention. This new attempt enabled massive support from the audience who were enticed by it. The audience's admiration for the concept of making themselves a part of the scenarios of movies provides an engagement and makes them cherish their moment. This representation of Hyperreality, their act of impersonation is also believed to be the reason for box-office success. After using the face-swap feature, they are more interested in the story plot which paves the way to promotions and Public Relations(PR) goals. This paper critically analyses the wide use of AI tools in Tamil film Industry and how it is perceived by the society through Social cultivation theory and Social marketing theory.

Key Words: social media marketing, hyperreality, Tamil cinema, Artificial Intelligence.

1. INTRODUCTION

For the past two centuries, cinema has been reigning in the minds of the audience. The filmmakers have tried their best to renew the audience's minds and to kindle their interests which have paved the way for the prolonged delight of the audience. Specifically analysing the Tamil cinema audience, they lost interest in movies with similar plotlines. So, the promotions team used social media's marketing to gain far-fetched reach. Social media such as Instagram, YouTube and Twitter enhanced the acknowledgement of innovative content of the filmmakers through its gatekeepers in social media. Recent Tamil feature films such as The Greatest of All Time, 2024 and Kanguva, 2024 introduced a new avant-garde novelty. These movies used AI tools to create face-swapping videos and gained the attention of the audience. It was praised and welcomed by many other filmmakers in Tamil cinema because of their innovative movie marketing techniques using AI tools.

Social Engagement theory was propounded by Paul M. Di Gangi and Molly Mclure Wasko which states that the future profits of businesses, film productions or any other fields with consumers need social interactions to captivate the audience. This ensures that without social media advertising, promoting a content to a greater extent would be speculatively difficult. Hence, this theory proves the importance of user engagement and social interactions through social media. Since technology is far more developing, AI tools enhance the social interactions to an elevated level so that the audience would not easily become jaded.

2. Research Objectives

1. The Objectives of this study are:
2. To evaluate how social media engagement supports in promoting the films and gaining a wider audience.
3. To analyse the perspectives and points of view of Tamil cinema audiences.
4. To comprehend the extent of employment of AI tools such as automating facial recognition.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Out of all the promotion tools with technological advancements, face swapping has gained more momentum in recent years. According to Ke Xu, Hollywood makes it easy with face swapping technology of Artificial Intelligence (AI) which showed its success in Star Wars, Game of Thrones and Avengers (Ke Xu, 2024). This article, yet, explains the face swapping feature as a part of the movie production. However the Tamil movies, The Greatest of All Time, 2024 and Kanguva, 2024 did not essentially use face-swapping for the film but used it to create an interaction between the

movie and the audience. Ke Xu also states that collaborating movies with AI technologies enables a harmonious integration of Artificial Intelligence in the film productions without affecting human creativity. Hence, this new step of promoting Tamil cinema ensures that the filmmakers efforts are not sidelined by the usage of AI technology.

Artificial Intelligence is the avant-garde movement in Film promotions and public relations which is analysed by Cavus and Yilmaz. "The importance and dimensions of artificial intelligence and artificial intelligence studies are increasing day by day". According to Cavus and Yilmaz, In the modern consumer society, one of the most important tools to influence people is unsurprisingly "advertising and advertising practices" through technology (Cavus & Yilmaz, 2024). This retaliates that Artificial Intelligence is the sole contributor of recent avant-garde films in this post-modern society.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social Engagement theory propounded by Paul M. Di Gangi and Molly Mclure Wasko in their article "Social Media Engagement Theory" published in Journal of Organizational and User Computing posits that, in recent years, cinema productions are in desperate need of UGC (User-Generated Content) to gain consumers. These people who post User-Generated Contents in social media surpass the traditional gatekeepers and have a strong connection with the target audience. In this article, Paul Di Gangi and Molly Mclure Wasko foregrounds their theory on Nollywood and specifically analysed the filmmakers in Benin City. From this study, they emphasise that Nollywood must prioritise the integration of digital marketing services including their other marketing strategies. Analysing this criterion involves the invincibility of technological developments in this new era. So, this proves that the desperate need of social media is because of technological advancements such as Artificial Intelligence, user-engagement websites and social media applications such as Instagram, YouTube and Twitter. "The filmmakers of Benin City have fully immersed themselves in the world of social media, recognizing its immense power as a tool for marketing and promotion." (Gangi & Wasko, 2016). This denotes that social media is an immensely powerful tool. Hence, similar to Gangi and Wasko's view, though the Tamil films, The Greatest of All Time, 2024 and Kanguva, 2024 features talented popular artists of Kollywood 'Vijay' and 'Surya' respectively, the production companies immersed themselves in the act of marketing campaigns.

Marketing Mix theory introduced by E. Jerome Mccarthy in Basic Marketing: A Global-managerial Approach. In this book, he devolved the four P(s) of marketing. The four P(s) denote the right 'Place' and the right 'Promotion' of a right 'Product' makes a right 'Price'. The 'Product' here refers to the Tamil feature film, the 'Place' refers to the target audience whereas the 'Promotion' denotes the Public Relations(PR) and the 'Price' determines the value of the product (i.e., the movie is a success or not). "Three broad Promotion objectives are useful- to inform, persuade and remind target customers about the company and its marketing mix"(McCarthy et al., 2008). This emphasises that the film production must inform, persuade and remind target

audiences about the film so that they could be benefited. In this twenty-first century, this promotion, the information, persuasion and the reminding are all done through the social media marketing tools.

5.**METHODOLOGY**

Content analysis is used in this research paper. Content analysis is the analysis and the evaluation of certain themes and concepts that are replicable, reliable and intertextual. Various articles related to social media marketing, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Public Relations (PR) are analysed. The research tool used to gather data for content analysis is Google Analytics and Google Search Console. Some similar articles and research papers were compared and some lacking journals and articles were contrasted. Content Analysis is a part of Qualitative Research. Qualitative research encompasses a wide range of processes such as gathering thematic information, interpreting the data, comprehending the data better with the context and comparing with the chosen field of research. In order to evaluate how society engages with social media, various social media sites such as YouTube, X(widely known as Twitter), and Instagram. From these sites, the views and interests of the society are analysed from the content provided by the gatekeepers and the content provided by the Influencers and commenters. In order to analyse the mindset of the diverse set of audiences of Tamil cinema, various articles were reviewed and scrutinised. The employment of AI tools is studied with the variety of contents available online which uses technological tools such as facial recognition, demorphing and deaging. This is a Qualitative research because the data is collected from the books, articles and journals related to the use of Social Media Marketing for film productions and then created an evolved sense on Social Media Marketing and Engagement.

6. **DISCUSSION**

Film productions began together with the inventions of motion picture cameras and projectors. In the late 19th century, public screenings were the first form of film consumption. The Roundhay Garden Scene, 1888 is the first surviving Film. In Kollywood, Keechaka Vadham, directed by R.Nataraja Mudaliar in 1918 is the first ever featured film. From the origin of film productions to till this day, the consumers of film production are enormous and forever growing. With respect to Tamil cinema, the audiences are widespread into different sets of audiences who take delight in specific films. These wide sets of audiences also have a closer connection with the actors and create fan bases and biases. Hence, the artists starring and casting for the films are in great numbers.

It is evidently believed that the Tamil cinema audience supported talented artists and not artists of nepotism. So, for a very long time, the filmmakers employed these talented artists with ease and there were box-office successes because of the casting of actors with a major fan-base. These actors like Rajini, Vijay, and Ajith were chosen mainly for their stardom. Hence, the media

marketing had nothing much to contribute to the profits instead they employed the well-known talented artists and actors. But in recent years, the audience started questioning the significance of the plotline despite having their favourite actors on screen.

Filmmakers realised that the audiences are tired of the cyclic nature of stories where one movie's plotline is similar to the other movie's plot line in one or the other way when compared and this is because of the intertextual nature of movies. Since, their interests were reduced, the expectations of the audience led to the plummeting of spectators. Hence, the production companies and directors kindled the interest of the audience by social media marketing.

Social Media has its origin with the prevalent presence of technological excellence. Electronic devices like computers, during the 1940s, are the stepping stones to the birth of Social Media. Modern computing era, which includes the Internet, begins with the use of Social Media. The marking of the Internet in the 1990s led to the revolutionised computing, communication and entertainment in this era through smartphones. Through this technological advancement, communication is made much easier worldwide. Hence, this led to an easy access to commoners on the basis of advertising and marketing. Demographics states that in the most recent year 2024, approximately 4.7 billion people use social media globally which is estimated to be 59 percent of the world's population. This shows that Technology is far more widespread and hence advertising and marketing is much easier through social media than any other medium of communication like newspapers, televisions, journals and magazines. This denotes that social media is an immensely powerful tool. Similarly, in Tamil Cinema, The Greatest of All Time, 2024 and Kanguva, 2024, produced by Studio Green production company and AGS Entertainment production company respectively, was in collaboration with 'Heyareweare Technologies', a business service which widely collaborates with Augmented Reality(AR) and Virtual Reality (VR). This business service has delivered an AI face swap campaign online to kindle the anticipation of the audience. "Mass media messages flow mainly to opinion leaders who react to these messages and then relay them to the people with whom they interact" (Mccarthy, 2008). This ideology of Mass media proves that opinion leaders act as gatekeepers who majorly influence the audience. If these opinion leaders show a negative attitude, the movie would become a failure. But on the contrary, by the use of AI face-swapping, the audience have individual experiences and no opinion leaders are required.

"The commercialisation of the Internet brought about a new breed of virtual business engaged in a variety of commercial online activities usually referred to as E-Commerce" (Constantinides, 2006). This statement by Constantinides was made in the 2000s which is referring to the online websites or online platforms to buy products. This is similar to 21st century marketing because the consumers of products often have a personal relationship with online marketing rather than traditional marketing. "The quality of the personal relationship between seller and customer and successful customer retention are becoming basic ingredients of commercial performance in all online markets"(Constantinides, 2006). Since this quality of personal relationship is easily maintained through social media, Social media is influencing people

on a daily basis without their acknowledgement. Many influences make user-generated content for their popularity and gain which also helps the spectators individually as a two-way process. This user-generated content is being engaged by the users of content through memes, blogs, videos and infographics. These contents are showcased through social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram and X(once known as 'Twitter'). One of the significant usages of Social media is Influencer Marketing. Influencer Marketing is a type of social commerce which enables users to purchase or buy products from advertisements showcased on websites. Influencer Marketing enables commoners to engage in purchasing items or following the ideology promoted by the influencers. Integration of content can influence users to become more involved. "Integration increases the ease with which users can access content from different entry points and limits the development of barriers that could detract from feelings of user engagement"(Gangi & Wasko, 2016). This proves that the personal relationship with the consumers is built by the influencers who are also the gatekeepers and opinion leaders.

Social Media is undoubtedly one of the powerful marketing tools. With the use of technology to reach specific audiences, social media advertises to people based on their interest, location and et cetera. To advertise the movies, it again focuses on the specific audiences who could benefit the filmmakers by consuming. For instance, the employment of face-swap technology is widely advertised to specific audiences on Instagram who are teenagers. This ensured that everyone anticipated the feature films that were about to be released. Also, it undergoes paid promotions to get the desired reach. Similarly, in Tamil Cinema, The Greatest of All Time, 2024 and Kanguva, 2024, produced by Studio Green production company and AGS Entertainment production company respectively, was in collaboration with 'Heyareweare Technologies', a business service which widely collaborates with Augmented Reality(AR) and Virtual Reality (VR). This business service has delivered an AI face swap campaign online to kindle the anticipation of the audience. In this instance, 'Heyareweare Technologies' is a paid promoter. These paid promotions ensure virality and amplify their message or news in an instant way.

Artificial Intelligence(AI) reached several milestones from 1940s and it is prevalently known in the 2020s. In the 1940s, the Turing Test, which showcased channels based on interest algorithms, was the first milestone that led to the birth of Artificial Intelligence. Machine learning in the 2000s and the introduction of Voice assistant Siri in Apple in 2011, paved the way for Artificial Intelligence. During the 2010s, the information produced was limited. Now, Artificial Intelligence is flourishing where it generates content from all the information it has on the topic and related to the topic. This "digital transformation in the film industry has brought forth an era of innovation and creative possibilities"(Xu, 2024). Unlike the traditional methods of movie marketing and film promotions, Artificial Intelligence and other technological tools made it easier, more accessible, more sustainable and comparatively cost-efficient.

Emergence of Generative Pre-trained Transformers (GPT) and other large language models capable of creating human-like text, images, music, and more. It is believed that Artificial Intelligence(AI) is the backbone of Modern Social Media. Simulation, Hyperreality, Virtual

Reality(VR) and Augmented Reality(AR) are in integration with Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the latter years of technological development.

"Few companies used AI and played a major role in the entire filmmaking spectrum in recent years. This technology helps filmmakers to understand what kind of movies the audience prefers to watch that would enable them to get returns exactly. Thus, industries are going to be interconnected in that way. Hence, the study reveals that the film world is slowly implementing AI technologies in script development, settings, filming and has the power to forecast whether a movie will be a hit or a flop"(Datta & Goswami, 2020).

The fusion of AI, VR and Simulation led to the creation of 'Metaverse', the virtual world. This virtual world replicates the real world and hence, it is a Hyperreality. Before 2023, Metaverse needed manual labour for its excellence but in recent years, it is more manageable with AI. Artificial Intelligence is surpassing Human Intelligence in many ways where human support is least expected. For Instance, the act of photoshop done manually requires a step-by-step process and more time for precision and also it has limited access to manual labour, whereas Artificial Intelligence does these works as a quick process, requiring minimal resources and also no manual skills required. This proves that Artificial Intelligence plays a crucial role in this competitive world. Hence, face-swapping technology employed by Artificial Intelligence (AI) in The Greatest of All Time, 2024 and Kanguva, 2024 uses the 'Deep face' feature and gives results instantly without the need of human assistance.

Films are considered to be the modern form of Literature. Therefore, like literature, the plotline of the movies are intertextual, cyclic and reliable because each movie is elaborating on the human perceptions and emotions of life. Since the motive of the plotline is the same, the stories are similar in one or the other way which exhausts that audience. To make it more interesting, in every decade, people could find two or three films that go beyond the normalcy and come up with innovations in the productions. Some of the avant-garde films of Tamil Cinema include Super Deluxe, 2019 & Vaanam, 2011 and Tamizh Padam, 2010. In Super Deluxe, 2019 & Vaanam, 2011 unlike the other movie's, the narrative doesn't have a single protagonist and marks the society's vice nature. In Tamizh Padam, 2010, it uses mockery to criticise the stereotypical scenes of Tamil Cinema. Like how these films focused their innovation on plotline, The Greatest of All Time, 2024 and Kanguva, 2024 focuses their innovation on production and marketing. This innovation is stabilised through Artificial Intelligence and Social media and hence, has a farthest reach.

7.**CONCLUSION**

This paper has evaluated the need of social media, Artificial Intelligence and technology in order to help in promoting, marketing and advertising the films. The anticipation of the audience is easily kindled by advertising through social media which leads to grand success of the film productions. Many innovations were brought in Tamil cinema through the feature films and marked the avant-garde novelty. This paper, however, analysed how the employment of Artificial

Intelligence and use of Hyperreality and face recognition technology created a new avant-garde novelty in the recent films, The Greatest of All Time, 2024 and Kanguva, 2024. This paper critically enables the readers to comprehend the extent of Social media marketing and promotions using Public Relations(PR).

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