

Akkineni Nageswara Rao

Akkineni Nageswara Rao, also known as ANR, was born in Andhra Pradesh on September 20, 1924. His professional acting career spanned nearly seven decades.

Rao began his film career in 1941, and starred in more than 250 films. He started his career as a stage actor at age nine. In his early, pre-film years, it was customary for males to perform even female roles. ANR acted in a number of stage plays taking on a female role.



The first film he acted in was "Dharmapathni". In this 1941 Telugu movie he had a supporting role. But for Rao, stage was his first love. So he returned to the stage and resumed performing in plays. A chance encounter in a railway station with the film producer Ghantasala Balaramayya gave him an opportunity to play Lord Rama in the movie "Seeta Rama Janmam". The movie was produced by Balaramayya and was released in 1944.

With this movie's success, ANR became a sought after actor and went on to star in several memorable movies, including "Laila Majnu (1949)", "Devadasu (1953)", "Vipra Narayana (1954)", "Ardhangi (1955)", "Donga Ramudu (1955)", "Rojulu Marayi (1955)", "Mooga Manasulu (1964)", and a host of others.

ANR was also popular in Tamil films and acted in about 25 of them. They were both artistic as well as commercial successes.

ANR was instrumental in ensuring the Telugu Film Industry has its own home base. Originally, Telugu films were made in Chennai. But once the state of Andhra Pradesh was established in 1956, ANR decided to move to Hyderabad and built "Annapurna Studios". He insisted that all his movies should be made in Hyderabad. Soon, the rest of the Telugu film industry followed his example. Hyderabad thus became the Telugu language film making center.

During his brilliant career, ANR received many well deserved awards. Among those worth mentioning are the Padma Bhushan Award by the Government of India and the coveted Dada Saheb Phalke Award for his distinguished services to the film industry.

During Savithri's heyday, she and ANR formed a hit duo. In her first movie, "Samsaram (1950)," she was originally paired opposite ANR, but was too nervous to perform and was replaced by another actress. But in 1952, she costarred with him in "Shanthi". The very next year, she was in the movie masterpiece "Devadasu". The film gave both Savithri and ANR the names and honors that they cherished their entire lives.

The following are the movies in which ANR and Savithri acted together...

1. Samsaram (1950)
2. Shanthi (1952)
3. Brathuku Theruvu (1953)
4. Devadas (1953) (Tamil)
5. Devadasu (1953)
6. Parivarthana (1954)
7. Ardhangi (1955)
8. Donga Ramudu (1955)

9. Missamma (1955)
10. Missiamma (1955) (Tamil)
11. Santhana (1955)
12. Vadina (1955)
13. Bhale Ramudu (1956)
14. Charanadasi (1956)
15. Madarakula Manikkam (1956) (Tamil)
16. Engelveettu Mahalakshmi (1957) (Tamil)
17. Maya Bazaar (1957) (Tamil)
18. Maya Bazaar (1957)
19. Thodi Kodallu (1957)
20. Mangalya Balam (1959)
21. Manjal Mangimai (1959) (Tamil)
22. Abhimanam (1960)
23. Maa Babu (1960)
24. Nammina Bantu (1960)
25. Pattaliyan Vetri (1960) (Tamil)
26. Anbu Magan (1961) (Tamil)
27. Thooya Ullam (1961) (Tamil)
28. Velugu Needalu (1961)
29. Aradhana (1962)
30. Gundamma Katha (1962)
31. Manchi Manasulu (1962)
32. Siri Sampadalu (1962)
33. Chaduvukunna Ammayilu (1963)
34. Doctor Chakravarthy (1964)
35. Mooga Manasulu (1964)
36. Manushulu Mamathalu (1965)
37. Sumangali (1965)
38. Manase Mandiram (1966)
39. Navarathri (1966)
40. Prana Mithrulu (1967)
41. Maro Prapancham (1970)
42. Suputhrudu (1971)
43. Devadasu Malli Puttadu (1978)