

PARASAKTHI (1952): AN IDIOGRAPHIC CRAFT OF DRAVIDIAN STOCK

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Abstract:

Cinema, the scientific arrangement of storytelling, is a social realism that reflects our joys, struggles, and complications. Through cinema, we witness stories that resonate with our own experiences, making us feel connected and understood (Sharon Awino,2023). When cinema became an effective tool for social change, it was used to build nationalism and as a resistance device for cultural sets around the world during the 1950s. The narrative styles transformed from traditional to modern. Especially, revolutionary narrators used 'Semiotics Codes' as Indexical Signs, Symbolic Code, Enigma, etc...



The Tamil film Parasakthi (1952) was adapted from a successful stage play 'Kalyani' written by the Self-Respect Movement's activist writer Balasundaram, based on a real-life incident that happened to his close relative during the 1940s (Kalaignaanam, 2024). The Self-Respect movement activist and producer of the Parasakthi (1952) P. A. Perumal Mudaliar chose a 25-year-old youth M Karunanidhi who worked as a journalist in the Tamil newspaper 'Kudiyarasu' run by EVR Periyar (the founder of Self-Respect Movement/Draavidian Movement) to write Screenplay and Dialogues for the film. In free India during the 1950s, when the ruling Congress government was trying to make Hindi cinema a national cinema, the Draavidian cinema, particularly Anna and Kalaingar M Karunanidhi's narrations, were met with fierce opposition from the Congress party. A strong protest by the ruling Congress party had been made against their narrations and it was strictly scrutinized by censorship. The government used the Censor Board as a means of economic repression of the Draavidian filmmakers. Due to this, the Draavidian intellectuals used 'Semiotics Codes' for their narrations to survive censorship. Ten days after Parashakti's release in 1952, it received various comments from the public. Protests erupted here and there. Common people enjoyed the film, but those who could think a little deeper strongly opposed the ideas in the film and put forward different opinions. "Dinamani Kadir (Tamil Weekly) was strong in its views on the Censor Board. It rather stridently commented, "What did the censors see in the film? Did they see again and again only which woman wore sari of what length and blouse of how many inches? Did nothing else appear to their eyes, fall in their ears? Were they specifically chosen from the blind and deaf school as censors for this film"(MSS Pandian, 1991). Thus, the then

Chief Minister of Madras Province Rajaji, appealed to the central government to send intelligence officers to Madras to watch the film. Accordingly, they came and watched the film and submitted their decoding report about the film to the government. The core of the report was "Though there are some 'objectionable' features in the film, the substance of the story by itself is not at all objectionable. The plot is interesting and the story has a powerful moral appeal".

As the content of the film is still debated among film scholars, this content analysis focuses on the powerful narration of Kalaingar M Karunanidhi with a structuralistic spectacle, and the characters were phenomenologically observed to decode their existence. The events were analyzed with Gilles Deleuze's thoughts on movement-image and time-image.

Introduction:

Cinema was an entertainment medium after World War I and a truth-telling art form after World War II. It has now metamorphosed and is used to build nationalism, sustain the culture of an ethnic group, and be an explicator for an individual. In India, films were made not only for entertainment, but also to promote nationalism, and to protect the rights of ethnic groups. In 1929, even before World War II and the arrival of talkies in India, EVR Periyar, demanded that cinema should be used for social change and must reflect "Self-Respect thoughts". After his demand, the Dravidian intellectuals produced films (Dravidian Cinema) for social change. Parasakthi (1952) is one of the most iconic films in Tamil Cinema narrated by Kalaingar M Karunanidhi. At the beginning of the movie, the title card describes that it is the suffering of the Tamil people during World War II in the year 1942. But M.S.S.Pandian (1999, Life and Times of a DMK Film) argues that Parasakthi is a film of DMK since the dialogue of the film begins with the word 'Our Arignar' and it indicates Anna as a symbol of the narration.

"(Note: 'Arignar'. which means 'a learned one' in the Tamil language, is an honorific title of C N Annadurai, the founder of the DMK.) Thus, at the very beginning itself, Parasakthi dramatically informs the audience about its politics.

With the expressions of M.S.S.Pandian, this study analyzes the verses and visuals of Parasakthi (1952) based on structuralism in the perspective of Gilles Deleuze's Time-Image and tries to understand whether the film emphasizes Anna or describes the hardships faced by the Tamil people or it upholds the principles of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam.

Key Words: Parasakthi, Dravidian Cinema, Tamil Society, Self-Respect Movement, Periyar, Anna, Kalaingar M Karunanidhi.

2 Background Of The Study

The world's first film educational institution Moscow Film School, established in 1919 used cinema as a tool for social change and produced notable works after six-year of its establishment. But Periyar (E V Ramasamy the founder of the Self-Respect

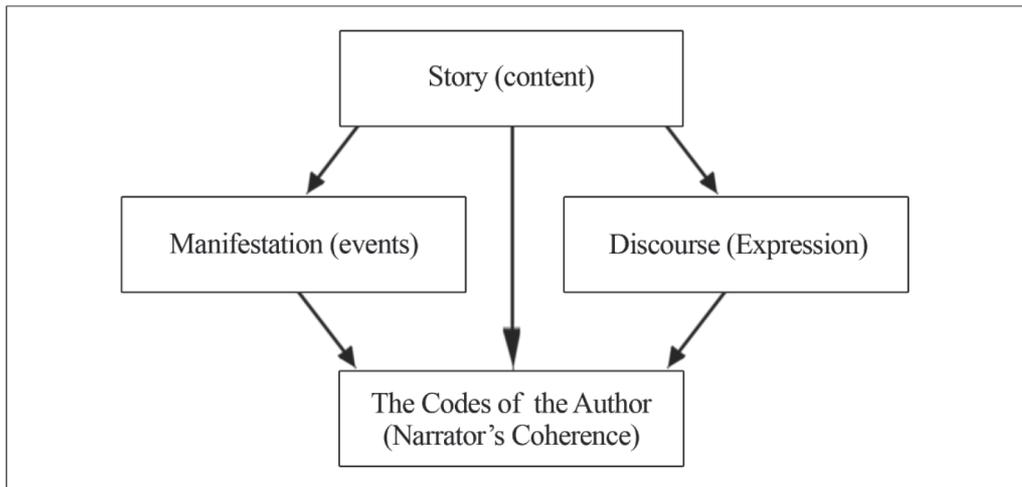


Figure 1. Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film (Seymour Chatman 1978)

Movement) demanded cinema for social change in the fourth year of the foundation of the Self-Respect Movement. The American USC School of Cinematic Arts (1929), Italy 'Center for Experimental Cinematography' (1935), and German 'Film Academy Babelsberg' (1938) which were started after Moscow, only taught the techniques of producing cinema. With this it can be established that Periyar was the first to sow the idea of using cinema for social change in colonized India and second after Russia.

In colonial India, At the beginning of the talkie's era, while the Hindi cinema paid attention to commercialization and Bengali, artistic expression, Periyar's demand was rooted

in the genealogical connection of the international perspective of 'using cinema for political consciousness'. Prof. Robert Stam (2003) analyzed that the concept of Political Cinema from the perspective of the theorist Espinosa and stated that,

'where the process of communication was more important than the product, where political values were more important than "production values" (Stam, 2003).

In this perspective, the expression of Prof. Wimal Dissanayake provides support to conduct this research and focus on the narration of Dravidian ideologist cinema.

'...the well-known politicians C.N. Annadurai and M. Karunanidhi, the script-writers succeeded in injecting their politics into cinema'. (Dissanayake-2003)

Anna (C.N. Annadurai) in his early films created stories that included contemporary social issues. But Kalaingar M Karunanidhi's narrative style incorporates history with the present situation. At the beginning of the Parashakti (1952), the title card displays the troubles of the Tamil people during 1942 (10 years before the film's release). It refers to the hardships faced by the people of Tamil Nadu in the past. Therefore, this study perceives the expressions of "the process of

communication” and the “political value” (Stam,2003), and the “political injection” of the script-writer (Dissanayake,2003) on the narration.

3. Methodology

For Visual Analysis: This scientific Qualitative Content analysis is adopted by the Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film (Seymour Chatman 1978). The narration is analyzed as Story (content), Discourse (Expression), Manifestation (events), and the codes of the author (narrator’s coherence) The events are analyzed with Gilles Deleuze’s complementary and interdependent thoughts of Movement Image and Time Image.

For Discourse Analysis: Structuralist interpretative analysis of decontextualization and recontextualization (Ayres and et.al, 2003) are adopted in the areas of the Beginning,

Development, and End of the Discourse of the plot to enhance by reintegrating, organizing, and reducing the data by focusing on the central content theme and its relationships.

4. Synopsis Of Parasakthi (1952)

The three brothers from Madurai, Chandrasekaran (eldest), Gnanasekaran, and Gunasekaran (youngest), who migrated to Burma are educated and well-settled. Their married elder brother decides to come back for their younger sister Kalyani’s marriage. However, due to World War - II, the government permitted only one person per

family. So they decided to send the youngest. The ship gets delayed by the war climate, and he is unable to attend the wedding. Manickampillai (father) who expected his three sons, pawned his house and goes forward with the marriage without them.

After a while, Kalyani becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son. Unfortunately, on the day of the birth, her husband dies in an accident and Manickampillai too passes away due to the shock from hearing about the death. The widowed, orphaned, and homeless Kalyani begins to sell idly in order to take care of herself and her newborn son. Meanwhile, Gunasekaran reaches Madras after several months of delay. As soon as he arrives, he is tricked and robbed, leading him to become a beggar. As the public reject him to help, he acts as insane and reach Madurai by walk. He finally reaches Madurai and comes to know about his father’s death and his sister’s destitute condition, yet he continues to act insane. He doesn’t reveal his true identity to her because of his poverty but stay close by. Kalyani, on the other hand is being harassed by a local goon. Gunasekaran saves her, but scared for her life, Kalyani leaves Madurai and travels to Trichy.

She works as a maid for a businessman. He also tries to molest her, but she is saved by his wife. While Gunasekaran searches for his sister, he meets Vimala and shares his story with her. She takes him to her house, but he quietly slips away. Back in Burma, the other two brothers decide to return to India. On the way, Gnanasekaran gets lost in his hike and

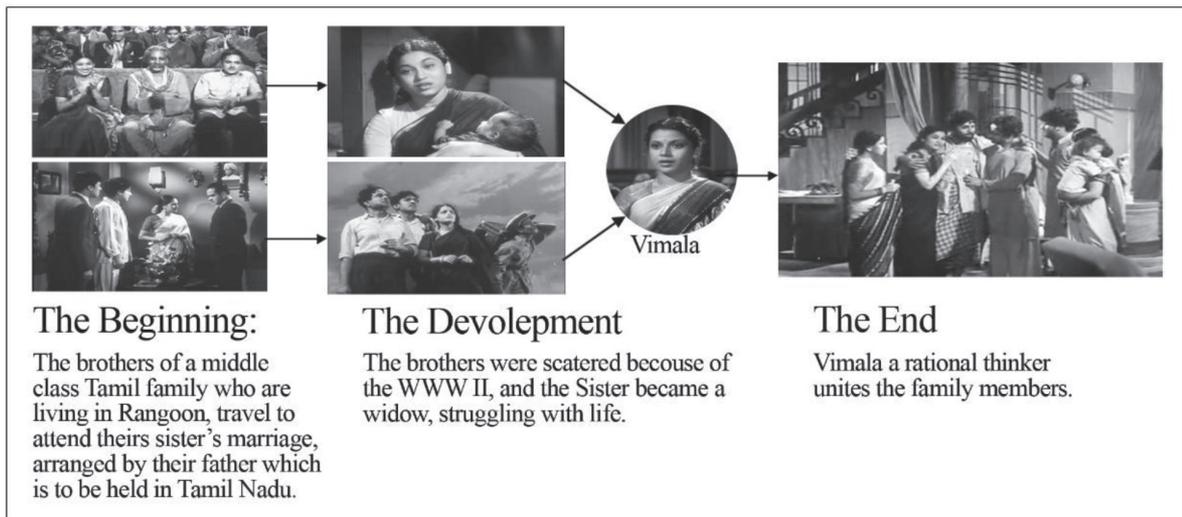


Figure 2. Narrative Structure - I (The Content): From Textual to Visual

ends up losing his leg in the Japanese shelling of Burma. After reaching Madras as a beggar, he is ill-treated by others. Gnanasekaran forms an association for beggars and tries to reform their conditions. Chandrasekaran safely reaches Trichy and lives a better life after becoming a senior judge.

Kalyani goes through several struggles, as everyone tries to abuse her. Finally, she goes to a temple seeking help but the pujari also tries to molest her in the sanctum. She escapes and now with no means to feed her child, she throws her child into the river and tries to commit suicide. But she gets arrested for her attempt at murder and is brought to court for trial with her brother being the judge, who does not recognize her.

After this, Gunasekaran comes to know about everything that happened to his sister. Enraged, he goes to the temple and tries to kill the priest in the same sanctum. He is brought to trial for this violent act. He justifies himself and his actions by telling the court the misfortunes that have befallen him

and his family. As it proceeds, Vimala brings Kalyani's son to the court, revealing that he had not drowned but had instead fallen into her boat. Kalyani and Gunasekaran are both pardoned and acquitted. They reunite with Chandrasekaran and Gnanasekaran

5. Analysis And Interpretation: **The Structure Of The Narration**

The narration of Parasakthi (1952) has a twofold structure: the story world (content) and the narrator's intentional semiotics of political communication (ideological Codes). In short, it contains Narrative structure-I and Narrative structure-II. An ordinary spectator can enjoy the story but cannot understand the political value hidden within the narration.

“The dialogues for the story written by Sri M Karunanithi, however, is full of subtle satire....the political message of the film was sufficiently veiled not to be deciphered by the 'casual filmgoer'. (Report (1952) by the intelligence officers of Govt. of India (MSS Pandian))

5.1. Narrative Structure-I: (The Content): From Textual to Visual

The narration begins with Bharatha naatiyam and with the song of the lingering poem written by the great Tamil poet Bharathidasan 'Vaazhga Vaazhgave Vaazgave, Valamaai Emadhu Dravida Naadu'. At the end of the song, the description of the song is given, and Kalyani's marriage and her family background are announced by the bridegroom.

The brothers leave Rangoon for their sister's wedding in Tamil Nadu and are scattered due to World War II. The elder brother Chandrasekhar, who is a judge in the government service, is languishing in solitude after being separated from his siblings. The second brother, Gnanasekaran, was orphaned by a war accident, lost his leg, and was reduced to a beggar. The third brother, Gunasekar, undergoes various anti-social crises and becomes a deluded wanderer calling himself a madman. After her marriage, Kalyani's father and husband die, and she is struggling for life with her infant child. A rationalist woman named Vimala befriends Gunasekar who is a thief.

She gives him a reason and makes him clear. Vimala is the reason for the reunion of the family.

5.1 (a). The Desolated, Disoriented, And Displaced Brothers

Chandrasekaran: The elder brother Chandrasekhar, who is a judge in the government service, is languishing in solitude after being separated from his siblings. He reaches Trichy and lives a better life after becoming a senior judge.

Gunasekaran: The third brother, Gunasekaran, undergoes various anti-social crises and becomes a deluded wanderer calling himself mad.

Gnanasekaran: After reaching Madras as a beggar, he is ill-treated in the refugee camp. Gnanasekaran forms an association for beggars and tries to reform their conditions.

5.1.(b) The wretched sister After marriage, her father and husband die, and she is struggling for life with her infant child. The wretched Kalyani opens a tiffin stall (Iddli Kadai) for her living. She gets molested by a local vagabond. Then being a housemaid, again she gets molested by her Master. She asks for milk for her child at a house, begging for biscuits from a rich man, but he refuses.

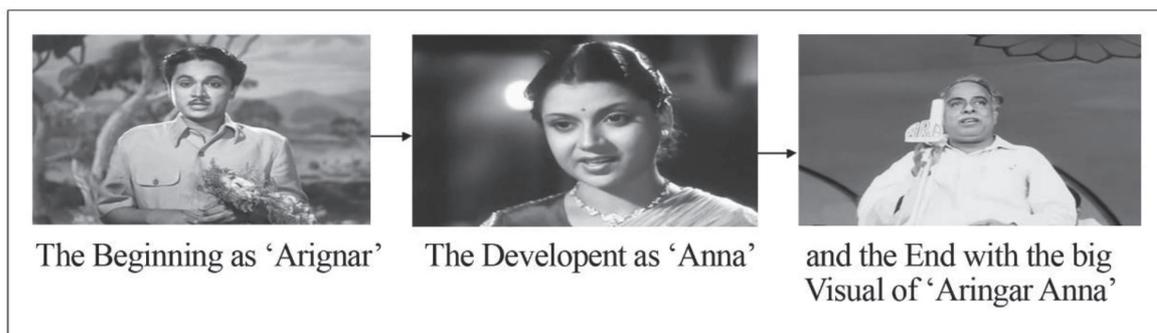


Figure 3. Narrative Structure - II (The Author Ideological Codes): From Discourse to Visuals



Figure 4. *The Ideological Code of the Justice Party*

Finally, she reaches the Chandrasekaran judge's (they can't recognize her) home at the time of a dinner party and again she gets disregarded. Weary and hopeless, Kalyani ends up seeking help in a temple. The priest also tries to abuse her. She decides to kill her child and commit suicide. When she throws her child in the river, she gets arrested by the police and is brought to the magistrate.

5.1.(c) The rationalist Vimala

Event-1: One day, she comes from the railway station carrying her luggage. Gunasekaran offers to carry them but runs away with it. He ends up sharing the food with the birds sitting right in front of the house of the lady from whom he stole the food.

Event-2: He worries about his sister as he drinks water by the riverside. Vimala sees some good in him and invites him to her house. She asks him his story and he narrates it to her. She advises him and unites his family members.

5.2. Narrative Structure-Ii: (Author's Codes) From Discourse To Visual

The performed song is about a nation and its children and Kalyani's family is introduced in that context. Tamil people scattered across neighboring countries are invited to

come together under one umbrella while welcoming relations for the wedding ceremony. So, it begins as a story of a family and a story of a nation.

Discourse: You heard the magnitude of our Tamil motherland with delightful dance, but our people suffer in our neighboring countries. One thing that comes to my thought when I think about this, that a saying of our Aringar, "The water of the ocean is saline; because of the tears of our Tamil people who suffer from Malaya, Ceylon, and Africa". Our people should return to our motherland.

Kalyani's brothers Chandrasekaran, Gnanasekharan, and Gunasekaran are in Rangoon reflecting the time under British rule. When the brothers are introduced and discuss Kalyani's marriage, Chandrasekhar's wife garlands her father's picture and looks back. Chandrasekhar, who progressed through education, remembers his father-in-law who helped him progress in life.

Chandrasekaran wife: Why are you sad?

Chandrasekaran: Your father was there for our wedding. But it is sad to think that he is not there for Kalyani's wedding.

Chandrasekaran wife: If he is not there, your father is enough.

Chandrasekaran: However, it was your father who made a decadent family so prosperous.



Figure 5. The codes of the author on Gunasekaran: Challenges of the younger generation.

All the family members stand and remember Chandrasekaran's father-in-law. Thinking of Chandrasekaran's father-in-law under the portrait of Pitty Thiagarayar who was one of the leaders behind the formation of the Justice Party is set in the pre-independence period under British rule. This is a reflection of the existence of the Justice Party, which made higher education available to the common people. Through the contribution of the Justice party, Chandrasekhar is leading a prosperous life with his siblings.

“The conspicuous achievement of the Justice party was regarding the growth of higher education. In addition to the approval of the activities of Madras University, it laid

the foundation stones for Andhra University in 1929 and Annamalai University in 1926. Today they are flourishing well in South India”. Thamarai Manalan, (2018)

The narrative structure-II moves as ‘Author’s code’ with the Justice Party’s contribution to the wellness of the Dravidian Society and develops in connection with Vimala who is a daughter of ‘Periyar’ and sister of ‘Anna’.

5.2. a) The Author’s codes on the Brothers and Vimala (Events&Expressions)

Gunasekaran: When Gunasekaran arrives in Chennai, a strange, cultured



Figure 6. Vimala the daughter of Periyar and sister of Anna

girl robs all his possessions. He became a miserable. When he walks around a street, he takes a banana from the street fruit seller's basket for hunger and eats it, leaving the skin in the basket without throwing it out. He takes the fruit for hunger but does not want to hide it, so he keeps the skin in the basket. But the fruit seller doesn't understand him and hurts him. Due to the unsympathetic circumstances of society, he pretends to be mad and vagrant on order to fulfil his starvation. As society does not understand him properly, he isolates himself from it.

Event-1: Gunasekaran arrives in Chennai, and some beggars swarm him. A strange, cultured girl robs all his possessions. **Event-2: a)** To travel to Madurai from Madras, he tries to pawn his new pants for Rs. 50. But the shopkeeper offers only 50 paise. **b)** He walks past people sleeping on the pavements in the streets and bull carts being pulled by

humans. This is the townscape. **c)** He rests on the front porch of a house (Thinnai in Tamil). At dawn break, the resident in the house pours water over him and chases him away. **d)** The next night, he sleeps on the pavement. A policeman wakes him up and interrogates him. Dialogue: "Is a human inferior to a cow?" "Man is a beast in Madras. Man is being used to pull cargo carts and horse carts instead of animals. He sleeps along the pavements like a dog. I'm talking about the man who is forced to behave like a four-legged animal. Madras is a holy city. But man is a beast here." The policeman replies, "When you become the mayor, turn these beasts into human beings" **Event-3:** He meets a lady selling fruits. Without asking, he takes two bananas for her, the woman beats him up. A beggar comes next and takes a bunch of bananas. The public is frightened by this, and they do nothing. Dialogue: "I stole not to buy clothes or to build a house but to fill my



Figure 7. The transformation of Self-Respect thoughts (the Socio-Cultural Changes), The acceptance of the leadership of Anna (the Soio-Political Changes)



Figure 8. Gunasekaran: need for the Dravidian political in Tamil Nadu.

hunger. I was beaten up for this. This madman has taken a whole bunch, and the people are scared of him.” **Event-4:** He pretends like mad and vagrant to fulfil his starving. Of the consequences of the above four events, Gunasekaran became a detached person who lives a life of anguish due to social, cultural, economic, and political depression forced onto him.

Vimala: Gunasekaran is sitting outside a railway station when Vimala comes out of the railway station. He approaches her to carry her luggage and runs away, but after going some distance, he takes only the food packet, drops the luggage, and runs away and to share the food with birds. Vimala observes this from afar and gets to know his good qualities. So, she meets him alone and invites him to her house, and asking what is his problem.

The public misconstrues Gunasekar, but Vimala rationally observes his behavior and advises him to make him realize his mistake.

Gunasekaran: *This society is a beggar’s monastery, a madman’s inn, and a thieves’ cave. Why should I feel for society? Why should I do welfare for it? I’m a poor man. All I want is for my sister to have a good life.*

Vimala: *Yes, society is a beggar’s monastery, but you don’t have a vessel to beg with. Yes, it is a madman’s inn, but you*

don’t know how to throw a stone. And it is a thieves’ cave, yet you don’t know how to wield a stick. Unbeknownst to yourself, you have become a fool in this society. There are so many such Kalyani’s in this land, but you care only about your sister. There are so many sisters in pain, yet you don’t feel sorrowful for them (The Self-Respect Thoughts - the Socio-Cultural Changes, Figure 7. left). You see the rough edges in society, yet you don’t come forward to smoothen them out. You were made a poor man to understand their pain. If you want to revolutionize the country, you shouldn’t become one with the insane. Rather you should question it.

Gunasekaran surprised by her advice, asks from where did she learn all these profound things?

Vimala: *All from my ‘Anna’. Yes, I have a brother. Discourse of Vimala: My family is very different. My father doesn’t care about political power but is concerned the society (Periyar). But my brother (Anna) is a modern thinker (Acceptance of the leadership of Anna - the Socio-Political Changes-Figure 7. right). I am his sister.*

Gnanasekaran: The character of Gnanasekaran is associated with intense Dravidian politics. His statement signifies the injustice faced by the Tamil people in their motherland who live a nomadic lifestyle. The character revolts against social ignorance

by assembling all the nomads to raise their voices for basic rights. The events happening to Gnanasekaran embody the suppression by the newly formed central power and his forceful attitude is a resistance to the prolonged domination of Brahminism.

Gnanasekaran: “There is no place for one born in a land that welcomes all. As long as there are heartless people like you, there is no place for humanity, no place for conscience, no place for love and virtue in this country”.

The discourse of Gnanasekaran: We should raise our voices and get our rights to vote. His voice for social justice in the refugee camp is an announcement of a new government that will be formed in the future. The refugee camp indicates the central power and the ‘Santha Nayagi’ Care Home that opened at the end of the narration is the Author’s code of the future Government under the Dravidian ideology that upholds social justice. Gnanasekar, who goes to collect funds from the public for the conference of beggars, insists on gaining political power as soon as possible. When he comes to meet the judge to get funds, he meets Vimala and says that the time is near for the beggar to become a minister.

Gnanasekar: Tell sir that we are going to conduct the beggar conference. I have asked for donations for it. Vimala: Laughs. Gnanasekar: Why are you laughing? You laugh to yourself, wondering if all the beggars are going to hold a conference together. As it is now, in a few days the beggar will become a minister.

Gnanasekaran serves as a representation of the nomadic people who strive and struggle for basic rights in their motherland and the people who are yearning for political changes in the state of Tamil Nadu.

5.2. B) The Author’s codes on Kalyani: Event-1:

Kalyani requests her father to change her marriage date for the presence of her brothers. The discourse of her father: “No. It was fixed by Iyar (Brahmin Priest)”. This expression shows that this family has a strong bondage to the Brahmin system. After marriage, her father and husband die, and she struggles for life with her infant child. The following structure of the narration emphasizes the hardship of a woman in the patriarchy-centered world and the current status of women in society.

Event:2 The wretched Kalyani opens a tiffin stall (Idli Kadai) for her living. When a North Indian money lender is forced to reimburse the money that was borrowed by Kalyani, a young man helps her debt and later he tries to abuse Kalyani. Dialogue: “Is it the right thing to behave like this to a bereft woman?”

Event-3: Being a housemaid, again she gets molested by her Master. Dialogue: “Q. Master, you are an elite man?” A. “that is why I behave like this”.

Event-4: She asks for milk for her child at a house, begging for biscuits from a rich man, but she gets refused. Finally, she reaches the judge’s home at the time of a dinner party again she gets disregarded. Dialogue: Oh elites...you love the affluent people, instead

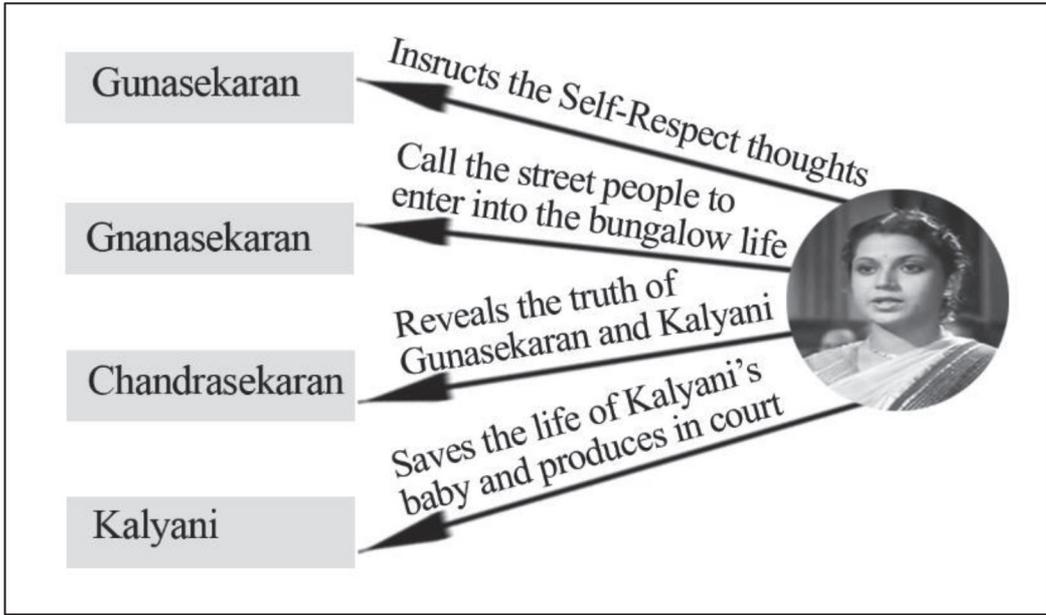


Figure 9. Vimala is the plot point of the narration

of the indigent, oh... cherished who preach about Hell and heaven! If there is Hell, it is the right place for you!!

Event-5: Weary and hopeless, Kalyani ends up seeking help in a temple. The priest also tries to abuse her. She decides to kill her child and commit suicide. When she throws her child in the river, she gets arrested by the police and is brought to the magistrate.

Gunasekaran reaches his hometown and hears the news of his sister being widowed and decides to sit in front of her idly shop on a stone.

Event-1 He sleeps under the shade of the stone and promises to himself to protect his sister like the way the stone protects him. Dialogue: "This supportive stone is my house; I will be shade for my sister".

Event-2: Gunasekar saves Kalyani from her misery after hearing her cries coming from her house. Unable to bear the humiliation of

Kalyani, she leaves the house where she was staying and goes for another job.

Event-3: After hearing the public gossip that Kalyani is liaising with Gunasekar, he runs towards Kalyani's house to tell her, "I am your brother". He is stunned to not find her of the house and tries to search for her. **Event:4** Gunasekaran comes to know about everything that happened to his sister. Enraged, he goes to the temple and tries to kill the priest.

When society deprived Kalyani and pushed her to end her life, she ran for help and faced continuous rejection from all sides. But, when she attempts to kill the life of her child first to carry on with her suicide, she is questioned by the government. Chandrasekaran the judge states that she has no right to take the life of her child, this makes her revolt against the judge questioning him back asking what right does the society have to force her to death by

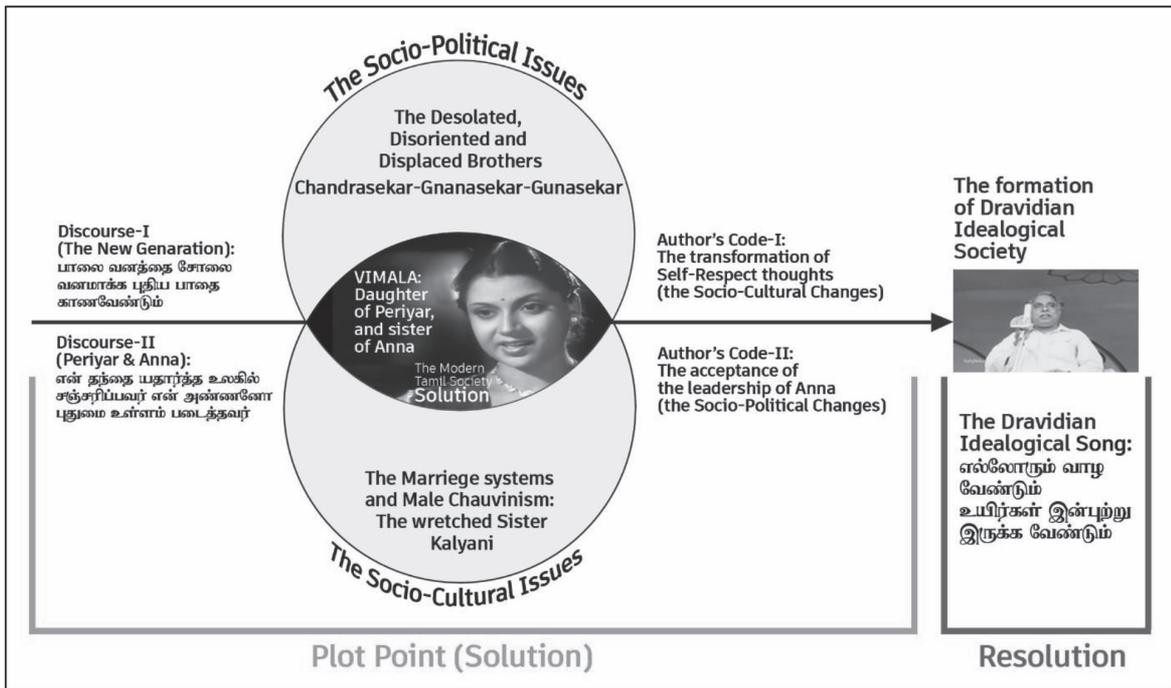


Figure 10. Vimala (the modern Tamil society) is the solution to the resolution

denying help. The characters reveal the social rejection and the ignorance that has made them face social and economic depression.

5.3. A). The Socio-Political Tragedies Of The Brothers, The Socio-Cultural Forces Of The Sister, And The Transformation By The Self-Respect Stimulation

The daughter of Periyar and sister of Anna, Vimala is the plot point of the narration and a symbol of modern Tamil society with the richness of Self-Respect thoughts. All the characters in the narration are connected with Vimala.

Gunasekar's deception by a fashionable young woman and his younger sister's sufferings are created by society's incapacities to support women. Gunasekar is only worried about his younger sister's life. But he has no regrets about the situation

of so many sisters in the country. Sharing in the suffering of others and liberating the oppressed are Dravidian principles. Vimala's advice is to become socially conscious according to the Dravidian principle. Kalyani requested her father to change the date of her marriage, he replied that 'it is the date set by Iyer and cannot be changed'. She could not live comfortably in a social system created by male dominance. The character Gunasekaran, experienced social depression due to the selfish attitude of society, whereas his sister Kalyani faced gender depression due to the chauvinist society. Here, it can be said that the conjoined depiction of Gunasekaran and Kalayani demands the need for social justice. Vimala's argument with Gunasekaran is the deliverance from the scio-cultural forces and to be rational thinkers. Vimala is also indirectly connected with Kalyani through Gunasekaran. The narrative structure connects when Kalyani is

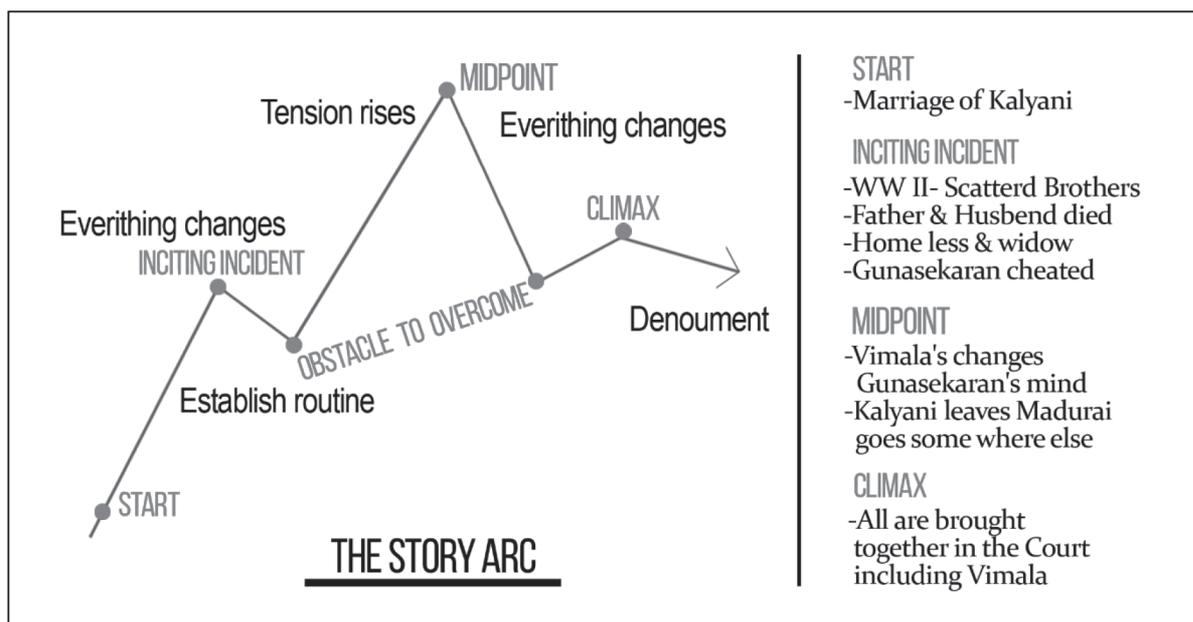


Figure 11. The script Parasakthi (1952) in the three-act structure (F.C.Malby, 2014)

distraught and throws her child into the river, Vimala saves the child and helps her at the right time in the court.

According to the narrative structure of this film, Vimala goes to the court and helps Gunasekar and Kalyani uncover the truth, and then she meets Chandrasekar to show the child along with their family members. Vimala is a solution in this narration as well as she insists that Tamil society should transform based on the Self-Respect thoughts and accept the leadership of Anna. Every word Vimala says to the family members is imbued with the essence of the Self-Respect movement. socio-political effects and socio-cultural effects have robbed this family. Therefore, their family needs self-respect movement principles, and a new path should be set for social change. Vimala says to Gunasekaran

“பாலைவனத்தை சோலைவனம் ஆக்க புதிய பாதை காணவேண்டும்.

The narrator intends to connect Vimala, the daughter of Periyar and the sister of Anna to all the members of the family. Gnanasekar represents the oppression from the central government in his motherland. Having a strong political inclination has been a symbol of the Tamil people who have been fighting for social justice for a long time. When the family is reunited with the well-settled elder brother, Gnanasekaran who was affected by the external and internal political forces and lived on the streets, wanted to go back into street life. Vimala tells him that instead of going to the street bringing the street people to the bungalow is real progress. He went out to call the underprivileged people to the bungalow.

5.3. b). The substances of the plot points and songs The plot point is a technical term behind the process of screenwriting to create attention in the mind of a reader/spectator and to segment the

plot into three parts known as a Three-Act Structure. It was popularized by Syd Field in 1979. “The three-act screenplay structure is a storytelling method that goes back to Aristotle's dramatic theory as outlined in Poetics. It is loosely defined as a narrative with a beginning, middle, and end. We can also think of the three-act structure as the Setup, the Confrontation, and the Resolution” (Arcstudiopro, 2024). Though these modern terms are practiced in present academia, the research tries to connect the script of Parasakthi (1952) to fit into this theoretical frame.

Start (establish routine): The plot starts with the marriage of Kalyani

Plot Point-I: Inciting incidents (everything changes): The brothers were scattered during World War II. Returning to his motherland, Gunasekaran is deceived by the deceit of a fashionable woman. After Kalyani's marriage, her husband and father die. Manikam Pillai's house is seized after selling the house, making Kalyani's wedding a luxury. Kalyani is widowed with her infant and orphaned without a home.

Midpoint (tension rises): Vimala's friendship changes Gunasekaran's mind, but Kalyani leaves Madurai due to the insults she has suffered.

Plot Point-II: The obstacle to overcome (everything changes): Unable to bear the humiliation, Kalyani throws the baby into the river tries to commit suicide and is arrested. Gunasekaran attacks the temple priest who is responsible for Kalyani's plight.

Climax: Kalyani, who was arrested for murder, and Gunasekaran, who was arrested for assaulting the temple priest, are

produced in the court. Judge Chandrasekaran is conducting the trial. Vimala goes to the court with the child to tell them that the child is alive and that Kalyani and Gunasekar are not criminals. All are brought together while Gnanasekaran, who unites the beggar-affected crowd and fights for their rights, comes to the judge's house to seek donations for their conference. All, the Chandrasekaran family including Vimala come together.

Denouement (Resolution):

Chandrasekaran and the siblings talk about Gunasekaran's marriage once they are united as a family. When Vimala wanted to go back to her home Gunasekaran, in a playful manner, ties his coat and Vimala's saree with a big rope, unbeknownst to her. This causes her to stumble. Gunasekar's brother sees this and makes fun of them.

Gunasekaran's sister-in-law: “Why brother? Why is the rope so big? Just a small rope is enough for her neck, and apply some turmeric on it...”

Gunasekaran: All that is not necessary, two garlands and one orator are enough, and the marriage will go well.

There are deeper meanings behind this because Manikam Pillai sold his house to have Kalyani's wedding lavishly. When Kalyani asked him to change the marriage date after seeing the delay in the arrival of her brothers from Rangoon, he said that it was appointed by Iyer and we could not change it. From this, it is clear that Manikam Pillai's family followed Brahminical ritual systems.

Secondly, the narrator has coded the background of the woman who cheated

Gunasekaran at Madras. He has constructed that the woman was from a Brahmin background with some contemporary ideas. In the hotel room, when Gunasekar says that he is going to the cinema, she criticizes the cinema harshly saying “I do not like cinema at all and that if there is a society to opposes it, I will be the leader of it. But I love Bharatnatyam and music which are necessary for our nation's needs”. She shows her belief in music, dance, and cinema. She tricks Gunasekaran by saying that there is a concert this evening and you can come with me to attend it. Being a thief, it is not necessary to tell her belief in art and cinema. But the narrator wants here through the character to indicate who is responsible for all the suffering that has been going on for a long time in Tamil people.

The discourse of the woman has incorporated Rajaji's opinion on cinema. During the 1940s while Brahmin filmmakers made cinema for commercial profits followed by Bombay, Anna instigated Tamil dialogues in cinema to the extent of converting cinema sheds into classrooms. Even the illiterate people spoke beautiful Tamil because of Anna's luminous dialogues. When the Dravidian intellectuals became filmmakers in the same era, Rajaji explained his views to Kalki Krishnamurthy ‘There are three things you should avoid on the advertisement pages of your magazine Cigarettes, Cinema, and liquor’ (Dinamani, 1998, Deepavali special issue). Rajaji believes that cinema is associated with cigarettes and alcohol. But for the Dravidian ideologists cinema for social change (V.M.S.Subagunarajan,2009). Periyar put forward a request in 1929 at the

Chengalpattu conference that self-respect thoughts should be expressed in cinema (Rathinagiri, 1997, pp45).

Early Tamil cinemas spoke the Aryan-tinged Tamil language. Hindu mythological stories were taken up for commercial purposes. The Brahmin-run press praised cinema a lot. Also, Aryan ideas were mixed into Tamil literature and films were made. In the 1940s when Brahmin dominance began to rear its head in cinema,

Periyar wrote “*The ‘visual systems’ of cinema and drama which is worse than music, detrimental to the Tamil people*”, and “*it would be better if both were eradicated from Tamil Nadu*”. “*Can bhajan songs and God’s lascivious scenes be the solution for this country and its people who are so deficient and disgraceful*”? (Periyar, 1944).

Periyar wanted film stories and songs to be uplifting for the weak and an art form for the poor. He wrote about Thyagaraja Bhagavathar (Tamil film superstar in the the1940s) that

“*Although poets like Bharathiyar, Bharathidasan, and Muthuthandavar gave great Poems, Bhagavathar has the unique honor of singing in such a way that common people can easily understand the meaning. He entertained the people of our country who were working hard from morning to evening and lying in their huts in great distress with broken bones and hungry feelings. And he made them sing even for a short time in their huts with his sweet voice*” (Periyar,1945 Kudiyarasu).

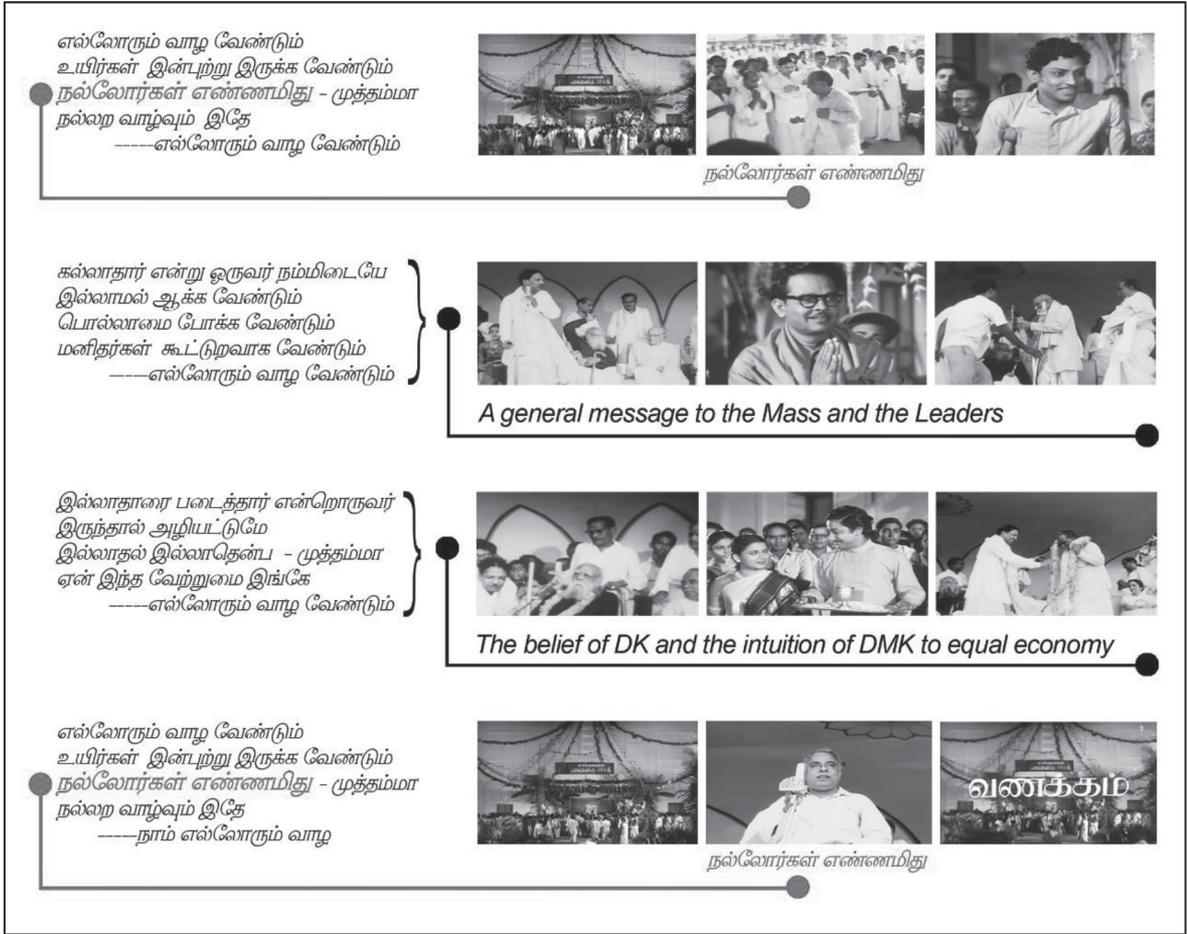


Figure 12. The assemblage system (beginning to end) emphasizes Anna as a denouement.

The Dravidian movement wanted to use cinema to help with the progress of the poor. The woman who cheated Gunasekaran is loathing cinema but revelry uses the art. In the concert, the lyrics of the song start with “O Rasikkum Seemane” (oh tasting rich man...) just to explain how the wealthy use music and dance for their luxuries and to earn money. The narrator has cleverly constructed the plot point-I, the place where the tragedy happens where the art is used for the luxuries of the rich rather than for the masses. So Gunasekar's misfortune refers to the economic and social manipulations of the Aryans. Gunasekaran's marriage is an answer to two kinds of scams. The stolen possessions of Gunasekaran and his disappointment

have long been a sign of the mendacity on the Tamil people by the Aryans, but Vimala makes him a rationalist with her forward thinking and the Self-Respect marriage takes place in the house of Manikam Pillai, who was occupied Brahmanical system.

Finally, Gnanasekar, who wants political change for the downtrodden of society, leaves the house saying that this luxurious mansion life does not suit him and he prefers to be with the street beggars. Vimala mentions that bungalow men should not become mendicants, Rather, they should become bungalow men. Gnanasekaran goes out saying that he is going to invite all the mendicants to the bungalow. The

event of the conversion of mendicants into bungalows culminates in the inauguration of the 'Shantanayaki Orphanage' where all the contemporary leaders of the 1950s appear. The film ends with the big close-up face of Anna. It is presented as a decision for political change. The 'Santhanayagi Orphanage' is a dream place of the Dravidian Political Power for the people of the motherland.

The film starts with the song 'Vaazhga Vaazhgate... namm Dravidanadu' (Long Life Dravidian Country) and ends with the Dravidian ideologic song 'Ellorum Vaazhavendum' (everyone should live). In the beginning, the bridegroom invites those who are scattered in the neighboring countries to return to their motherland. Chandrasekaran's family scattered by the socio-political tragedies and socio-cultural forces is a symbol of the Tamil people scattered around the world and the people who resist the domination of the Central power and the cultural domination of Brahminism within their motherland should live a peaceful life with Self-Respect thoughts in their motherland.

The song 'Everyone Should Live' is a dream song for the state based on the Dravidian movement. Each line of the song is chosen to be a vision for political change. The song scene is a hybrid form of the aesthetic objects (film footage) and the real-world events taken from the public. It was created by the Assemblage editing system, giving an elegant meaning.

"Assemblage is a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms that establish liaisons, and relations between them" (Deleuze and Parnet, 1987).

The Lyrics of the song:

- Everyone should live - Life should be enjoyable - This is what the will of good people - This is the good state of lifeEveryone should live.

- Illiterate should be removed - Evil deeds should be removed - Humans need to be cooperativeEveryone should live.

- If there is one who created the indigent, let him perish - In this land, there should be no indigent people - Then, why do these differences exist?Everyone should live.

- Everyone should live - Life should be enjoyable - This is what the will of good people - This is the good state of lifeEveryone should live.

Whenever Anna appears on screen the lyric line 'Nallorgal Ennamidhe' is synchronize. At the beginning of the song when Anna enters, and at the end of the song when Anna's big image is shown the same line is synchronized. The second stanza presents common ideas and emphasizes the fundamental need for social progress. It is a message from the Dravidian political stand to the public and political leaders. In the final stanza, while explaining the principle of DK, the principle of atheism is discussed and the image of Periyar

is shown. At the same time, Vimala and Gunasekaran looking at each other while listening to Periyar's speech illustrates their acceptance of Dravidian movement ideas. In the next line of the same stanza, 'In this land, there should be no indigent people' is synched with Ann and Kalaignar M Karunanidhi appearing.

At the end of the song, the film closes with a big close-up shot of Anna as the final solution for everything.

6. Conclusion

In the beginning of the movie, it is shown the tragic events faced by the Tamil people during the Second World War. But the tragedy that Gunasekaran, Kalyani and Gnanasekaran are going through is not only due to war, it is the struggle of the people of Tamil Nadu for a long time. Rather than talking about world politics, the political environment of the new India and the anarchies against women that have been perpetrated for a long time are the main ones. The portrayal of the three sons, the daughter, and the character Vimala who proclaims to be a forward-thinking woman, stands as a tool for representing various issues of Tamil people in Tamil Nadu. Kalyani is shown as a problem faced by women of Tamil Nadu who are bonded culturally. Gunasekaran acts as a miserable person who lives a life of anguish due to social, cultural, economic, and political depression forced onto him. Gnanasekaran's dialogues are a longing for the Dravidian ideological political power for people who are struggling for basic rights in the motherland. Chandrasekar portrays the life of well-settled and highly positioned people who wish to help their families but are tied up by the government to stick only with people of their range. Vimala the daughter of Periyar and sister of Anna a character who acts as an exposure of Self-Respect inheritance is an element that brings together all the family members through her forward-thinking ideologies.

The character emphasized the insignia of the modern Tamil society enriched by Self-Respect in the newly formed India. The dialogues of Vimala with Gunasekaran in the midpoint (in her house) are the craft with a careful consciousness of Periyar and Anna.

“எங்கள் குடும்பமே வேடிக்கையானது...
என் தந்தை ராமன் ஆண்டால் என்ன
இராவணன் ஆண்டால்
என்ன என்ற யதார்த்த உலகில்
சஞ்சரிப்பவர் என் அண்ணனோ
புதுமை உள்ளம் படைத்தவர், அவருடைய
தங்கை நான்”

This expression of Vimala is only on the political stand of DK and DMK. While there is a difference in opinion to be a political party, there is a strong genealogical bond toward the Self-Respect movement. The expression of Kalaignar M Karunanidhi in 1971, after the achievement of DMK is interlinked with the dialogues of Parasakthi(1952) which became a reality.

‘Periyar and Anna are the only two who... made us regain our self-respect, made us Tamilians and made us walk once again as men’- (M Karunanidhi, Murosoli, February 25, 1971)

The character Gnanasekaran resists socio-political tragedies and the characters Kalyani and Gunasekaran are oppressed by Socio-cultural forces. The dialogues used by the characters show that the film is a means revolutionary for social justice, but the elements undertaken to establish the revolutionary act and ideology have the aspects of the theory of Anna “DMK would be the same as that of the DK. “Thikavum Thimukavum Irattai Kuzhal Thuppakki” (The DK and DMK are double-barrels of a gun)”. The powerful dialogues used by the narrator are distinguished rifles of DK & DMK to inject political consciousness.

“The DK priority was the re-structuring of society through socio-cultural reform. The DMK also espoused these goals but the emphasis was more on reform through

political means” (D.B.S.Jeyaraj, *Daily mirror-2024*).

The dream of Dravidanadu (the opening song of the film) is realized with the establishment of ‘Santhanayagi Orphanage’ (the Dravidian political power in Tamil Nadu) in Parasakthi (1952). The closing song indicates peace and equality for all under the Dravidian political power and the changed situation was achieved in 1967.

“*The plain-speaking Periyaar was the first to acknowledge the changed situation. When asked “What constitutes Dravida Nadu now?” by the press, Periyaar replied bluntly “Whatever that remains of the old Madras State is the new Dravida Nadu now”* (D.B.S.Jeyaraj, *Daily mirror-2024*).

This quote of Periyar can be applied to the political stands of the people of Tamil Nadu ever within the newly formed India and the idea of the ‘Santhanayagi Orphanage’ (the Dravidian political power in Tamil Nadu) which was narrated in Parasakthi (1952).

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