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The Evolving Dynamics of Tamil Cinema: Insights into Audience Reception and Engagement

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Abstract - *Motion pictures is a significant medium for spreading information and promoting positive values in society. Across the world, it has been used to highpoint ancient societies and traditions that emphasize environmentally sustainable practices. In moment's digital age, fast-moving development frequently overlooks environmental impact, contributing to problems like deforestation and pollution. This study examines how Tamil cinema represents ecological issues, fastening on the film Kadaisi Vivasayi by M. Manikandan. Using a mixed- styles approach, including content analysis and a study in Ramanathapuram District, the study explores spectators views and the film's environmental communication. A pilot study helped upgrade the exploration. Findings show that Kadaisi Vivasayi raises attention about sustainable husbandry and the environmental struggles of pastoral communities. It fosters a deeper appreciation for traditional ecological knowledge and aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) similar as SDG 2(Zero Hunger), SDG 11(Sustainable metropolises and Communities), and SDG 15(Life on Land). The study concludes that Tamil cinema, through movie like Kadaisi Vivasayi, can significantly impact youth attention, postures, and actions toward environmental conservation. As a medium, cinema holds possible for eco-intervention by encouraging public engagement in sustainable living and environmental protection. Therefore, Tamil cinema can be a vital tool for promoting ecological knowledge and social change.*

Key Words: Tamil Cinema, Ecosystem, SDG, Audience perception, Traditional framing, Eco-System, Deforestation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Cinema is mass medium accumulates information about education and entertainment (Anderson, 2018) recently we saw the commercial film dominated to all the class and create mass responses through the collection so film makers familiarly concentrate this platform. Incase cinema plays vital role in shaping public perception through the story telling because the real human character their dialog, emotion through gestures attract audience emotionally sometimes instilling social values and given awareness about social issues, cinema is important tool reinforce the cultural heritage, social realities and advocate the for change, nowadays world going to transform from urbanization to industrialization this changes gives the immediate reflects from the environmental change and challenges, cinema had developed potential medium to address ecological issues and promote sustainability (Gupta, 2023).

Tamil cinema has big tradition of engaging with social political themes often reflecting the struggles of layman problems and environmental concerns (Vasudevan, 2016). Cinema have capacity to bridge the gap between entertainment and awareness easily influence audience perceptions and behaviors. As environmental issues become escalated, the role of cinema in fostering ecological mindfulness gains importance. Portraying impact of human actives on the environmental issues and advocating for sustainable practices, cinema involving to shaping the public discourse on conservation and responsible living (Rajadhyaksha & Willemen, 2022).

The study explores how the Tamil cinema represents ecosystems and environmental sustainability, keenly focused on the critically praised film Kadaisi Vivasayi, directed by M.Manikandan through an analysis of the film narrative and survey based audience study in Ramanathapuram District this research examines how Tamil cinema influences youth perceptions and behaviors concerning ecological disputes. The film's themes with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this study highlights the potential of cinema as a reagent for environmental awareness and advocacy.

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

2.1. Media role in awareness

Environmental deprivation has become holding global issues such as deforestation, pollution and climate change bullying ecosystems and biodiversity. Urbanization and industrialization have considerably underwritten to ecological crises

correspond to the destruction and resource depletion therefore educating awareness about environmental sustainability is crucial development responsible behavior among the public, media is powerful mass tool to shape the public opinion and influencing behaviors toward environmental issues ("Media frames influence...", Science Policy, 2017). Film can provide narrative that highlights ecological concerns, inspire and advocate for sustainable practices especially traditional story telling methods, characters and visual representation of real world environmental changes incorporating ecological themes, films can act a catalysts for social change and encouraging discussion on conservation, sustainability for responsible living(Rock & Art, 2025).

Tamil cinema have already experience with commitment with social and political themes and represents addressing environmental concerns movies like as Kadaisi Vivasayi bring attention to the struggles of farmers, sustainable agriculture and the vital of ecological preservation, however which films influence audience and crate awareness, discussion among youth remains an area that requires further exploration.

2.2. Lack of studies on perception of ecology

Today, growing of environmental issues in Tamil cinema, there is a important gap in academic research inspecting how these films shape youth perception of ecological and suitability. Youth represent a crucial demographic as they are the future decision makers and influencer of environmental practices, indulgent how Tamil cinema influencer their attitudes behavior and awareness regarding ecological concerns is important for assessing the role of films in environmental advocacy (Saranya, 2022). Most studies on media and environmental awareness focus on the news coverage, documentaries or western cinema, leaving Tamil films underexplored in this context, there is need for comprehensive study that examines Tamil representation ecosystem an how the audience especially you the respond the these portrayals (Jai Bhim & Sustainability, 2022). Addressing this research gaps this study aims to analyses the Tamil cinema's role in shaping youth perceptions of ecology, with a particular focus on *Kadaisi Vivasayi*. In this content analysis and audience survey in the Ramanthapuram district, because this district based on the agriculture and blue economy. They only related to the Vaigai river, Pond and rain sources of agriculture farming grain like paddy is the main source of production so the study assess the impact of Tamil films in fostering environmental awareness, contributing broader discourse on film role in sustainability among the youth perception.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyse the representation of ecosystems in Kadaisi Vivasayi
- To examine youth perception of environmental sustainability in Tamil cinema
- To assess the film's alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- To explore the socio-cultural factors influencing audience reception
- To provide recommendations for enhancing environmental messaging in cinema

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Cinema plays important part produce mindfulness about films like Media and Environmental mindfulness related recent studies address the issues Kethan and Basha(2022) examined the impact of Indian cinema on youth life and behaviour patterns, emphasizing that films can initiate changes in study processes and promote artistic transformation. Their study suggests that cinema acts as a medium for buttressing awareness and impacting public converse on environmental sustainability, Tamil cinema has prolong history of addressing socio- political themes, but its engagement with environmental concerns is a more recent miracle. A study published in SAGE Journals (2023) analysed Tamil films from 2010 to 2020, focusing on how they depict science and technology. The exploration indicates a growing trend in incorporating environmental themes into mainstream Tamil cinema, demonstrating its potential as a vehicle for ecological awareness. Several contemporary Tamil films have addressed environmental issues either directly or through metaphorical liar. Murthy (2021) discusses films like Eliya Thiramai(2023) and Aranya(2021), which portray human- wildlife conflict and conservation efforts. These films highlight deforestation, the relegation of indigenous communities, and the need for sustainable development. Murthy's research suggests that Tamil filmmakers are increasingly incorporating visual realism and character- driven narratives to make ecological concerns relatable to the audience.

One of the most momentous offerings to environmental cinema in Tamil Nadu is Kadaisi Vivasayi (2021), directed by M. Manikandan. Shankar and Devi (2022) examined the film's impact on followership comprehensions of sustainable husbandry and environmental conservation. Their study found that the film effectively portrays the struggles of a lone planter who continues traditional husbandry practices despite modernization and land acquisition threats. The research highlights that the film aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) similar as SDG 2(Zero Hunger), SDG 11(Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 15(Life on Land).

This study contributes to the growing converse on media and environmental knowledge, emphasizing how cinema can act as a catalyst for social change. Also, Ravi and Kumar(2021) explored how Tamil films incorporate environmental themes to raise mindfulness among the pastoral and civic followership. They argue that visual liar in cinema islands the gap between entertainment and education, effectively shaping audience behaviour toward sustainable practices.

Likewise, Meena(2023) anatomized multiple Tamil flicks addressing ecological issues and set up that narratives rooted in traditional husbandry, water conservation, and deforestation reverberate more deeply with Tamil cult due to their artistic and indigenous significance. This reinforces the part of cinema as a important medium for advocacy and mindfulness in addressing environmental concerns.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research method focused in mixed segment integrating the content analysis of Kadaisi Vivasayi Film and survey method to assess the audience perception study. The combination of qualitative and quantitative method confirms a comprehensive understanding of how Tamil cinema influences youth perception of ecosystem sustainability.

Theoretical frame work: The study is based on the following theories such as Eco-Criticism theory and Semiotic analysis utilized to analysis in content analysis
Cultivation Theory- to decode the symbolic meanings in the film especially visual storytelling,
Semiotic Analysis: to examine the symbolic meaning of film such songs, music and cinematography
Data collection method

Content analysis evaluate the narrative elements, Mise-en-scene and symbolic representation of ecological issues and categorization of visual aesthetics, dialogue and character portrayals related to sustainability and secondly a structured questionnaires with Likert scale question to measure audience perception with descriptive analysis with finding. The pilot study conducted with 30 respondents via Google forms, aim to refine survey questions the respondents are exclusively 18-35 year old participants in Ramanathapuram District.

6. CONTENT ANALYSIS

6.1. Traditional Farming vs Modern Agriculture

Through the lens of eco-crisis theory, an old farmer went to the market to purchase some items. He visited a shop and inquired about tomato seeds. While there, he tasted some cattle fodder. The merchant asked, "Why are you eating this?" The old man replied, "I need to taste it to ensure its worthiness for my animals."

When he inquired about tomato seeds, the merchant recommended hybrid seeds costing Rs. 600, suggesting they would yield higher production and profit. However, the merchant admitted that he currently had no stock. The old man rejected the idea of hybrid seeds, saying, "The owner of the hybrid seed company has a son with an impotence disorder. Hybrid seeds are unhealthy for human life." Thus, the old man emphasized that only organic seeds can provide a healthy life for humans.

6.2. A Reflection on Agricultural Awareness

In court, an old former farmer was accused in the case of a peacock being killed. The old man requested permission to cultivate paddy for a deity's ritual. Some people stated that he was the only person who could perform this ritual well. The judge eagerly listened to the difficulties and agreed to cover the expenses. However, the old man argued that paddy plants have life and should not be harmed, as he valued them like human life. Understanding this, the judge instructed the constable to take over the old farmer's duties on the land. However, since the constable had no knowledge of agriculture, he struggled significantly. The visual representation highlights how many people today are unaware of traditional farming practices.

6.3. The Wisdom of Farming

In jail, a young man discussed agriculture with an old farmer and inquired about its procedures. The old man explained, "Two days before sowing the grains, you must plough the fields. Then, soak the seeds. On the third day, sow the seeds. After 20–25 days, you must till the soil. After 30–35 days, you need to transplant the saplings. Three and a half months after planting, you can harvest the crops." The young man carefully noted everything on paper and said, "After my release, no one is willing to give me a job. However, my grandfather gave me five acres of land, so I will live happily and independently by farming, without being at anyone's mercy."

The same old farmer then instructed him to take a box, fill it with soil, pour a little water, and place it under sunlight. After a few days, a small plant sprouted in the box. The old man asked, "How did it grow?" The young man replied, and the farmer said, "The Lord has given us thousands of seeds. When it rains, a plant is born. You have a neem tree plant, and you asked what farming is? Sow the seeds of your choice in your land, give them water, and your crops will grow."

6.4. Finding Peace in Farming

A young man asked the old farmer about his relationship with a policeman and said, "Have you started herding cattle too? "The policeman replied, "You can't wake up early to irrigate the field. Why are you here?"
The young man responded, "I did, sir. But I will take care of my grandfather's land. I will irrigate it." He repeatedly said, "The two hours I spend here are the only time I feel peaceful. Please don't ask me to go back to the police station. "The visual representation shows the police constable enjoying his time in the fields, symbolizing how agriculture provides a peaceful mind-set and a stress-free life, allowing people to connect with nature.

6.5. Semiotic Analysis

The film's introduction scenes depict mountains, trees, and human dwellings in a massive representation, creating immense pressure on viewers. Cinematography played vital role convey the eco spectacles create gigantic perception of nature. Old farmer introduction starts with agriculture culture related visuals represents fabulously to the viewers

6.6. Environment vs spirituality

The village activities are depicted through Lord Murugan in the song sung by T.M. Soundararajan, 'Karpanai Endralum.' This five-minute song plays alongside visuals of village people engaged in their daily routines. Since the region is a mountain-based agricultural area, the people depend on cattle and farming. Lord Murugan is constantly connected to their daily lives. According to Tamil Sangam literature, mountains and related landscapes are classified as 'Kurinji,' with Lord Murugan as the primary deity. Thus, each scene is deeply connected to spirituality.

The movies depicted theme to pay duty of deity rituals such as so fresh paddy farming seeds need to deposit in rituals but no one ready to farming paddy so the old farmer only person ready pay dirty rituals it is playing important role

6.7. Land for sale

Some real estate agents exerted pressure on the landowner, enticing him with financial gains to sell his husbandry land. One such incident is depicted in this film. A village bigshot visited an agricultural landowner. One person said, 'We sold our 15-acre farmland due to poverty, so I bought an elephant to support our family. 'Some land brokers from real estate by approaching elderly farmers to make profit but declined by him This scene is represented through symbolic traditions using visuals, music, and vernacular songs.

6.8. Tamil Cinema as an Eco-Intervention Tool

Eco-criticism and semiotic analysis conclude that *Kadaisi Vivasayi* advocates traditional agricultural practices as environmentally friendly compared to modern methods. The film highlights the destruction of rural landscapes caused by land exploitation and urbanization, which negatively impact living beings. Through symbolic storytelling, it emphasizes the sacred connection between humans and nature.

Furthermore, content analysis aligns the film's themes with sustainable development goals such as Zero Hunger (SDG 2), Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11), and Life on Land (SDG 15).This theoretical analysis highlights how *Kadaisi Vivasayi* can serve as a powerful medium for environmental awareness and public discourse.

7. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The quantitative research were conducted in survey method random sampling gathered from the 30 youngster in Ramanathapuram. In this pilot study sampling question are formed from the research objectives such as Representation of ecosystem in Kadaisi Vivasayi, Socio- Cultural Factors Influencing Audience Reception, Film's Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Recommendations for Enhancing Environmental Messaging in Cinema.

7.1. Finding and Discussions

In this survey, a total of 30 responses were received, with both boys and girls participating. Among the participants, 73.3% were male, and 26.7 % were female. The majority of participants were young individuals aged 15 – 20, making up 52.2% of the total, while only 17.2 % of participants were between the ages of 26 – 30. Regarding education levels, 70% of the participants were undergraduates, while 16.7% were postgraduates. All participants were educated individuals who were well aware of societal issues. In terms of geographic background, 60 % of the respondents were from rural areas, while 24% were from semi-urban regions. The demographic distribution was received positively, as Ramanathapuram is an urban district with a significant number of rural areas, including villages and panchayats. Most of the participants were from rural areas and eagerly contributed their responses to this research.

The question were formed five categories like representation of ecosystems in Kadaisi Vivasayi, youth perception of environmental sustainability, film's alignment with Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs), socio-cultural factors influencing audience reception and finally recommendations for enhancing environmental messaging in cinema total seventeen question were framed for this pilot study. Questionnaires framed in the Likert scale pattern, in this first section represent the eco system in this film.

7.2. The representation of ecosystems

The survey measured respondents' perceptions of the environmental and ecological themes depicted in the film Kadaisi Vivasayi. The results are epitomized as follows 61.1% of respondents strongly agreed that the film effectively portrays the environmental and ecological challenges faced by rural communities. 69% of respondents strongly agreed that the representation of traditional husbandry practices in the film was accurate and realistic. 51% of respondents strongly agreed that the film increased their awareness of sustainable husbandry and the importance of ecological conservation. 48.3 % of respondents agreed, and 31% strongly agreed, that Kadaisi Vivasayi helped them understand the environmental impact of modern agricultural practices compared to traditional styles.

This analysis highlights the film's significant part in raising awareness about ecological and environmental issues among its audience.

7.3. Youth Perception of Eco- Sustainability & Cultural influence

The survey explored how youth perceive environmental sustainability in Tamil cinema, particularly in relation to cultural influences and particular actions. Key findings include

• 41.4% agreed, and 34.5 % strongly agreed, that their cultural background plays a significant role in shaping their perception of environmental themes in Tamil cinema.
• 62.1% strongly agreed, and 24.1% agreed, that the film's environmental communication aligns with the traditional values of Tamil society.
• 55.2% strongly agreed, and 37.9% agreed, that after watching Kadaisi Vivasayi, they feel more inclined to adopt environmentally friendly practices in diurnal life.
These perceptivity indicate that Tamil cinema, particularly Kadaisi Vivasayi, effectively reinforces traditional environmental values and inspires sustainable actions among youth.

7.4. Film's alignment with Sustainable Development Goals

The check assessed the impact of Kadaisi Vivasayi and Tamil cinema on environmental awareness and sustainability. Key findings include

• 48.3% agreed, and 34.5% strongly agreed, that the film inspired them to learn more about sustainable husbandry and environmental conservation.
• 51.7% strongly agreed, and 27.6 % agreed, that Tamil cinema has the potential to impact public attitudes toward environmental sustainability.
• 51.7% agreed that the film effectively aligns with SDG 2(Zero Hunger), SDG 11(Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 15(Life on Land) by promoting sustainable husbandry and ecological awareness.
These results highlight Kadaisi Vivasayi as a powerful medium for environmental education and advocacy through Tamil cinema.

7.5. Recommendations for enhancing environmental messaging in cinema

The survey explored opinions on the part of Tamil cinema in promoting environmental awareness. Key findings include

• 42.9% strongly agreed, and 39.3% agreed, that Tamil filmmakers should include more environmental themes in their movies.
• 62.1% strongly agreed that the government and film industry should encourage the production of eco-conscious films.
• 79.3% strongly agreed that schools and colleges should screen environmental films like Kadaisi Vivasayi to educate scholars.
These perceptivity punctuate a strong demand for environmental liar in Tamil cinema and the need for institutional support to promote Eco-conscious filmmaking

8. CONCLUSION

The exploration of Kadaisi Vivasayi through eco-criticism and semiotic frameworks emphasize its influence in promoting traditional husbandry practices and ecological mindfulness. The movie fully addresses environmental issues, fastening the sustainability of organic husbandry with the dangerous goods of ultramodern agrarian processes. In this movie indicates artistic and spiritual rudiments, the narrative corroborates the profound connection between nature and Tamil society, and instructs for the preservation of traditional intellect and environmental sustainability. The quantitative study supports these results, virtually that the film has significantly touched off followership comprehensions of environmental sustainability. Big number of repliers agreed that Kadaisi Vivasayi effectively portrays pastoral ecological challenges, enhances mindfulness of sustainable husbandry, and aligns with Sustainable Development Goals similar as Zero Hunger (SDG 2), Sustainable metropolises and Communities (SDG 11), and Life on Land (SDG 15). Also, the film resonates with artistic values, buttressing the significance of eco-conscious liars in Tamil cinema. Besides, the study unveiled a strong recommendation for environmental messaging in flicks, with actors championing for lesser governmental and institutional support for eco-conscious cinema. The findings bring out the eventuality of Tamil cinema as an influential tool for environmental education and public converse, inspiring both individual and collaborative action toward sustainable living. In conclusion, Kadaisi Vivasayi is not simply a cinematic experience but a critical intervention in environmental converse. It serves as an educational and artistic artifact that encourages cult to reflect on their relationship with nature, promoting a shift toward sustainability in both mind-set and practice. Future exploration could expand on these perceptivity by exploring the long- term impact of similar flicks on environmental behaviour and policy- making within Tamil society and beyond.

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