

Media Representation of Minorities in Recent South Indian Films

(Maamannan/Jana Gana Mana)

Project Report

Submitted by

Nourin. S (SB21CE023)

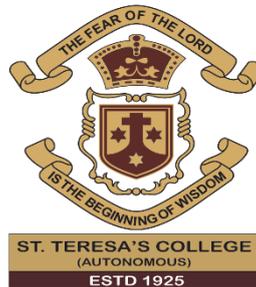
Under the guidance of

Shahanaz. M. H

In partial fulfilment of requirements for award of the degree

Of Bachelor of Arts

St. Teresa's College (Autonomous), Ernakulam



College With Potential for

Excellence Accredited by NAAC with 'A++'

Grade

Affiliated to

Mahatma Gandhi University

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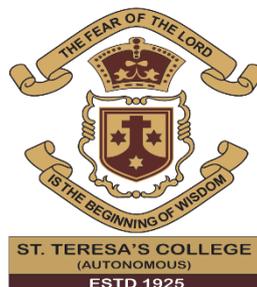
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Declaration

I do affirm that the project “Media Representation of Minorities in Recent South Indian films” submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature and Communication Studies has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship or any other similar title or recognition.

Ernakulam

Nourin. S

22/03/2024

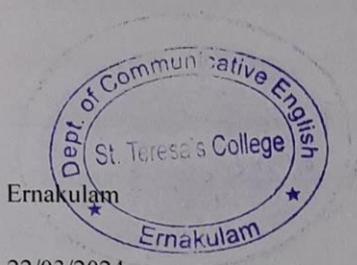
SB21CE023

B.A. English Literature and Communication Studies

St. Teresa’s College (Autonomous)

Certificate

I hereby certify that this project entitled Media Representation of Minorities in Recent South Indian Film by Nourin. S is a record of bonafide work carried out by her under my supervision and guidance.



Ernakulam

22/03/2024

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shahanaz M.H." with a flourish at the end.

Shahanaz M.H

Department of Communicative English

St. Teresa's College (Autonomous)

Acknowledgement

I take this opportunity to offer my humble prayers and thanks to God Almighty for His mercy and blessings for the completion of this project.

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Bibliography

Chapter 1: Introduction

“The smallest minority on earth is the individual. Those who deny individual rights cannot claim to be defenders of minorities”. – Ayn Rand

The representation of minorities in the media has been a longstanding issue that has gained increasing attention and scrutiny in recent years. Media, including television, film, advertising, and other forms of popular culture, play a significant role in shaping societal perceptions and attitudes toward minority groups.

The concept of minority representation in cinema refers to the portrayal of individuals or groups who are typically underrepresented or marginalized in society. This includes but is not limited to racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Representation of minorities includes:

Representing people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, highlighting their experiences, cultures, and perspectives. Ensuring a balanced and nuanced portrayal of men and women, breaking away from stereotypes and showcasing a variety of experiences. Including characters with disabilities and portraying their lives, challenges, and triumphs respectfully and accurately. Reflecting the diversity of religious beliefs and practices, avoiding stereotypes, and promoting understanding. Depicting characters from various socioeconomic backgrounds to reflect the economic diversity within societies.

The significance of minority representation in Indian cinema cannot be overstated. Cinema is a powerful medium that can shape societal perceptions and attitudes towards minority groups.

By featuring diverse characters and storylines, Indian cinema can help break down stereotypes and promote empathy and understanding among communities.

Minority representation in Indian cinema can also provide a platform for underrepresented groups to share their stories and perspectives with a wider audience. This can create a sense of validation and empowerment, as well as inspire others to speak out and advocate for social change.

Moreover, minority representation in Indian cinema can help to challenge and dismantle systemic inequalities and discrimination. By highlighting the experiences and struggles of marginalized communities, Indian cinema can raise awareness about issues such as casteism, racism, sexism, and homophobia, and encourage viewers to take action towards creating a more just and equitable society.

South Indian movies, like movies from any region, vary widely in their representation of minority communities. The term "minority" can encompass various groups, including religious, linguistic, ethnic, and other marginalized communities. South India is culturally diverse, with several states and languages, each with unique traditions and demographics.

The movie I chose for this topic is *Jana Gana Mana* directed by Dijo Jose Antony and *Maamannan* directed by Mari Selvaraj. *Jana Gana Mana* is a Malayalam movie that shows how the media represents minorities diversely. This movie shows how the media represents the death of a college professor whose body was burnt after rape. The media hardly makes it easy for them to proceed with the investigation as the media portrays the murder scene so drastically. *Maamannan* is a Tamil movie about the life and career of the titular character, a Dalit man portrayed by Vadivelu, and his son Athiveeran (Udhayanidhi), who guides him to overcome his oppressed mindset and reclaim his rights in social and political realms. This movie talks about

exploring the significant issue of caste in politics. The director of the movie employs the act of one Dalit being asked to sit while another is not as a narrative device to investigate whether elected Dalit representatives receive equal treatment from caste Hindu peers and leaders.

The current scenario of minority representation in Malayalam cinema is gradually improving. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of films that focus on the experiences and perspectives of minority communities. For example, movies like "Thondimuthalum Driksakshiyum" and "Kumbalangi Nights" are known for their nuanced portrayal of minority characters and their struggles. These movies have been widely appreciated by audiences and critics alike for their realistic depiction of social issues. However, there is still a long way to go, as many movies still rely on stereotypes and caricatures to represent minority communities. There is a need for more diverse representation, not just in terms of casting but also in terms of storytelling. It is important for filmmakers to take responsibility for the representation of minority communities and to make a conscious effort to break down stereotypes and promote understanding. As viewers, it is also our responsibility to support movies that promote diversity and to demand better representation in the movies we watch. Talking about the current statistics and trends in Malayalam movie's top 100 grossing Malayalam movies between the years 2007 to 2018, only 21.4% of lead or co-lead actors were from minority communities. However, there has been a positive trend in recent years, with an increase in the number of movies that focus on minority communities and their experiences. This includes movies like "Thondimuthalum Driksakshiyum" and "Kumbalangi Nights", which have been widely appreciated for their nuanced portrayal of minority characters.

The research questions and objectives of my project;

The depiction of Challenging caste norms and Anti-Caste Discourse in the movie *Maamannan*.
The showcasing of the key aspects of the movie *Jana Gana Mana*. Explaining the content analysis,
critical discourse analysis, interviews of both the movies. Describing the film analysis, character
coding, audience reception analysis of the movies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Research on minority representation in Indian cinema, particularly in the context of Malayalam cinema, has gained significant attention in recent years. While the topic remains multifaceted and evolving, existing scholarship offers valuable insights into various aspects of minority representation, including gender, caste, religion, and ethnic diversity.

In terms of gender representation scholars have examined the portrayal of women in Malayalam cinema, noting both progress and persistent stereotypes. While there has been an increase in nuanced and empowered female characters, there is still a prevalence of traditional gender roles and objectification in certain films. Studies highlight the work of female filmmakers and actors who challenge stereotypes and contribute to a more diverse representation of women on screen.

Caste representation in Malayalam cinema has been a subject of analysis, with researchers exploring how caste identities are depicted and negotiated in film narratives. Some studies have pointed out the perpetuation of caste-based stereotypes and discrimination in certain films, while others acknowledge attempts to address caste issues sensitively and critically.

The representation of religious minorities, particularly Muslims and Christians, has been explored in the context of Malayalam cinema. Researchers have examined how these communities are depicted, often highlighting both positive and negative stereotypes. There is a growing interest in studying films that offer nuanced portrayals of religious minorities, challenging mainstream stereotypes and promoting interfaith understanding. Malayalam cinema reflects the cultural and ethnic diversity of Kerala, with researchers examining the representation of various ethnic communities, including migrants and indigenous groups. Studies have analyzed the portrayal of

marginalized ethnic communities and the challenges they face in terms of representation and inclusion in mainstream cinema.

Queer representation in Malayalam cinema has garnered attention, especially with the emergence of films that explore LGBTQ+ themes and characters. Researchers have examined the evolution of queer representation, from tokenistic portrayals to more authentic and inclusive narratives.

There is ongoing debate regarding the authenticity and sensitivity of queer representation, with calls for greater involvement of LGBTQ+ voices in the filmmaking process. Scholars have also investigated audience responses to minority representation in Malayalam cinema, exploring how different communities perceive and interpret on-screen portrayals.

Various theoretical frameworks and methodologies are used in minority representation in Malayalam movies Intersectionality, Postcolonial Theory, Critical Race Theory, Feminist Film Theory, Ethnographic Methods.

Intersectionality is the framework, popularized by Kimberlé Crenshaw, that acknowledges the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality. In Malayalam movies, intersectionality can help analyze how representations of minority groups intersect with other aspects of identity and power dynamics

Postcolonial Theory is the given Kerala's history of colonialism and its diverse cultural landscape, postcolonial theory offers insights into how colonial legacies continue to shape representations of minority groups in Malayalam cinema. It explores themes of cultural hybridity, identity politics, and resistance within the context of colonial and postcolonial power structures.

Critical Race Theory examines how race and racism intersect with systems of power and privilege. Applied to Malayalam cinema, CRT can illuminate how representations of minority groups reflect and perpetuate racial hierarchies, stereotypes, and biases within Indian society.

Feminist film theory offers tools for analyzing gender dynamics and representations of women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other marginalized groups in Malayalam cinema. It explores how notions of femininity, masculinity, and sexuality intersect with broader discourses of power and representation.

Ethnographic research methods, such as participant observation and qualitative interviews, can provide insights into the lived experiences and perspectives of minority communities represented in Malayalam movies. By engaging directly with community members, researchers can uncover nuances, contradictions, and critiques of cinematic portrayals.

Minority representation in Malayalam cinema has been a subject of debate and discussion, reflecting broader societal concerns and dynamics. One of the primary debates is about the underrepresentation of minority communities, including Muslims and Christians, in Malayalam cinema. Critics argue that the industry predominantly focuses on narratives and characters from the majority Hindu community, thereby marginalizing minority voices and experiences. Another significant discussion revolves around the stereotypical portrayal of minority characters in Malayalam cinema. Minorities are often depicted in limited and clichéd roles, reinforcing existing stereotypes and perpetuating misconceptions about their communities. This includes portraying Muslims primarily as either conservative or extremist and Christians as overly traditional or lacking agency.

Despite the presence of talented individuals from minority communities, they often face systemic barriers in accessing significant roles, leading to a lack of diverse representation both in front of and behind the camera. There's a discussion about the difference between token representation and authentic representation. While some films may include minority characters or themes as token gestures to appear inclusive, there's a call for more authentic and nuanced portrayals that reflect the complexities and diversity within minority communities. The emergence of social movements advocating for greater representation and diversity in media has influenced discussions within the Malayalam cinema industry as well. Activists and advocacy groups have been vocal about the need for more inclusive storytelling and equitable opportunities for minority talents. Filmmakers and industry stakeholders are urged to engage in meaningful consultation with representatives from minority groups to ensure accurate and respectful depictions that avoid harmful stereotypes.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Maamannan, directed by Mari Selvaraj and released on June 29, 2023, is a poignant exploration of myriad themes deeply entrenched within the fabric of society. At its core, the film delves into the intricate dynamics between a father and son, navigating their relationship amidst a backdrop rich with societal complexities. Through their journey, the narrative deftly navigates themes of caste and politics, unraveling the deep-rooted disparities and power struggles that permeate every aspect of life. As the characters grapple with their own legacies and the influence they wield, the film transcends mere familial drama to become a potent commentary on broader societal structures. Moreover, *Maamannan* intricately weaves in motifs of animals and symbols, imbuing the narrative with layers of allegorical significance, while also touching upon the transformative power of love and the importance of education in challenging prevailing norms. Yet, amidst the complexities of life, the film also confronts the harsh realities of violence and the deafening silence that often accompanies it, compelling audiences to confront uncomfortable truths about the world we inhabit. In its exploration of these multifaceted themes, *Maamannan* emerges as a thought-provoking cinematic experience that resonates long after the credits roll, inviting introspection and dialogue about the pressing issues that continue to shape our collective existence. Through its symbolism and profound political context, the film challenges the prevailing paradigm of Tamil Nadu's social justice politics, often characterized by dominant caste hegemony.

At its core, *Maamannan* amplifies the aspirations of the Scheduled Caste, historically positioned at the bottom of Tamil society. Drawing parallels with Isabel Wilkerson's concept of the 'permanent bottom' in her book "Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents," the movie underscores the need for transformative change within the existing social framework. Unlike

conventional Indian cinema, which often portrays romanticized or radical solutions, *Maamannan* offers a nuanced exploration of resolving societal conflicts within the constitutional framework.

Historically, the social justice movement in Tamil Nadu was spearheaded by the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) against Brahmin dominance, albeit with limited attention to Dalit concerns. However, the landscape has shifted, with a burgeoning Dalit middle class asserting its presence. This evolution presents a challenge for some OBCs, who must reconcile with relinquishing their privileged positions to accommodate the emerging social force. The film underscores the necessity for political entities like the DMK to adapt to this changing dynamic, signaling a potential deepening of democracy within the state.

In essence, *Maamannan* transcends the realm of entertainment to offer a thought-provoking commentary on the intricacies of power, privilege, and social justice in Tamil Nadu. By navigating the complexities of caste politics and advocating for inclusive governance, the film ignites conversations about fostering a more equitable and democratic society.

Jana Gana Mana, released in 2022, emerges as a potent cinematic exploration of multifaceted themes entrenched within the socio-political landscape of contemporary India. At its core, the film unravels a hidden political narrative underlying the atrocities pervasive in the current political milieu. Through its critique of mob justice and ingrained prejudices, it endeavors to restore the eroded faith of the populace in the due process of law, shedding light on the complexities of navigating justice in a society rife with systemic biases.

Drawing inspiration from real-life incidents such as the 2016 suicide of Rohith Vemula, the 2018 murder of a tribal man in Kerala, the 2019 Hyderabad gang rape case, and the 2019 suicide of Fathima Latheef, *Jana Gana Mana* mirrors the harsh realities of extrajudicial killings

and systemic injustices plaguing the nation. By weaving these narratives into its fabric, the film serves as a poignant reminder of the urgent need for reform within the judicial and political systems.

Moreover, *Jana Gana Mana* delves into the intricate interplay between law, justice, and politics, posing probing questions about the inherent biases and power dynamics that shape societal norms. Through the oscillating journey of its characters in pursuit of justice, the movie navigates the murky waters of political intrigue and moral ambiguity, offering a compelling commentary on the challenges of upholding righteousness in a world fraught with corruption and vested interests.

In addition, the film critiques the sensationalized media landscape, highlighting the detrimental impact of sensationalism on public discourse and perception. By exposing the manipulation and distortion of truth for sensational headlines, *Jana Gana Mana* underscores the importance of responsible journalism in shaping a more informed and enlightened citizenry.

Furthermore, *Jana Gana Mana* engages with subaltern theory and power politics, unpacking the complexities of marginalized voices and their struggle for representation and recognition within the larger socio-political framework. Through its nuanced portrayal of power dynamics and resistance, the film offers a lens into the intricacies of subaltern agency and the relentless pursuit of empowerment amidst systemic oppression.

In essence, *Jana Gana Mana* transcends the boundaries of conventional cinema to emerge as a thought-provoking discourse on the intersecting realms of law, justice, politics, media, and subalternity. By confronting uncomfortable truths and provoking introspection, the film ignites conversations about the imperative of social change and the collective responsibility towards building a more equitable and just society.

Jana Gana Mana is a Malayalam political thriller film directed by Dijo Jose Antony and starring Prithviraj Sukumaran, Suraj Venjaramoodu, and Mamta Mohandas. The film revolves around an advocate who fights for justice for a student who is accused of being a Naxalite. The film was released in theaters on April 28, 2022 and is currently streaming on Netflix.

The film has been praised for its political commentary and its performances, particularly from Prithviraj Sukumaran. However, some critics have found the film to be preachy and heavy-handed.

One of the main themes of the film is the dangers of fascism. The film shows how fascism can rise in a democracy and how it can be used to suppress dissent. The film also explores the role of the media in promoting fascism.

Another important theme of the film is the importance of justice. The film shows how the justice system can be used to protect the powerful and oppress the weak. The film also shows how the fight for justice can be a lonely and difficult one.

Jana Gana Mana is a powerful and thought-provoking film that raises important questions about the state of our democracy. The film is a must-watch for anyone who is concerned about the rise of fascism and the erosion of justice.

Talking about the film analysis of the movie *Maamannan*, in the realm of political thrillers, Mari Selvaraj's latest offering ventures into the gritty terrain of oppression, reservation, and social injustice with unyielding fervor. However, while his previous works have garnered acclaim for their incisive exploration of societal issues, *Maamannan* falls short in comparison. The film indeed possesses flashes of Selvaraj's directorial brilliance, with certain scenes standing out as testament to his narrative prowess. Yet, these moments are few and far between, failing to weave a consistent

tapestry of excellence throughout the film's runtime. Despite its thematic weight and potential for impactful storytelling, *Maamannan* ultimately struggles to maintain the momentum and depth characteristic of Selvaraj's earlier endeavors, leaving audiences craving for the cohesive brilliance they've come to expect from the acclaimed director.

In *Jana Gana Mana*, the director adeptly harnesses the star power at his disposal to craft a compelling narrative that seamlessly blends entertainment with a thought-provoking message. By leveraging the established stars, the film not only benefits from their charisma but also utilizes their talents to their fullest potential. The result is a gripping thriller that doesn't shy away from addressing important societal issues while still catering to the mass audience. Throughout the film, there's a delicate balance struck between moments of high-octane action and unexpected plot twists, ensuring that viewers remain engaged from start to finish. Furthermore, the incorporation of a strong message adds depth to the storyline, elevating it beyond mere entertainment and prompting audiences to contemplate the underlying themes long after the credits roll. Overall, "Jana Gana Mana" stands as a testament to the director's skill in creating a cinematic experience that is both entertaining and meaningful, showcasing the power of storytelling when coupled with talented performances and a compelling message.

Chapter 4: Analysis

Maamannan

In the film *Maamannan*, directed by Mari Selvaraj, the representation of the **Arunthathiyar community**, a Dalit tribal group, is central to the narrative.

Depiction of caste and political power in this movie includes: *Maamannan*, the protagonist, hails from the Arunthathiyar community. His journey from a subservient position to becoming the speaker of the legislative assembly challenges traditional caste hierarchies. The movie delves into the intersection of caste and political influence, illustrating how *Maamannan's* ascent represents a change in societal structure, where an individual from a marginalized background gains power within the political sphere.

Response to “Thevar Magan”: Mari Selvaraj has made it clear that his film *Maamannan* serves as a direct response to the widely acclaimed 1992 movie "Thevar Magan." While "Thevar Magan" celebrated caste pride specifically within the Thevar community, *Maamannan* takes a contrasting approach. It endeavors to present an alternative viewpoint and actively confront the tendency of cinema to glorify caste identities. By doing so, Selvaraj's film seeks to challenge entrenched societal norms and provoke critical reflection on the portrayal of caste dynamics in popular media. In essence, *Maamannan* emerges as a deliberate departure from the narrative trajectory set by "Thevar Magan," aiming to offer a more nuanced and socially conscious exploration of caste issues in cinema.

About Anti-Caste Discourse: The film utilizes the character of *Maamannan* as a pivotal element in its contribution to the discourse against caste discrimination. It intricately illuminates the various

forms of prejudice encountered by Dalits both in the broader societal context and within the realm of politics. Through *Maamannan's* narrative arc, the movie effectively underscores the imperative for equitable representation and the restoration of dignity for marginalized communities. By delving into *Maamannan's* journey, the film not only highlights the systemic barriers faced by Dalits but also advocates for systemic change to rectify these injustices. In doing so, it amplifies the call for a more inclusive and equitable society, where all individuals are afforded equal opportunities and respect regardless of their caste background.

Complexity and Controversy: Upon its release, *Maamannan* ignited fervent discussions surrounding caste dynamics and representation within the realm of Tamil cinema. While the film garnered widespread critical acclaim for its bold exploration of caste issues, it was not immune to controversy. Its deliberate engagement with the complexities of caste, as well as its direct response to the themes depicted in "Thevar Magan," stirred contentious debates among audiences and critics alike. Despite the accolades it received, *Maamannan* found itself embroiled in controversy due to its unflinching examination of caste dynamics and its challenge to the traditional narratives glorifying caste identity in cinema. Nonetheless, the film's ability to provoke such discourse underscores its significance in pushing the boundaries of cinematic representation and advocating for a more inclusive and socially conscious approach to storytelling.

In the film *Jana Gana Mana*, directed by Dijo Jose Antony, the representation of the tribal community is a significant aspect.

Pan-Indian Reach and Relatability: Dijo Jose Antony expressed his contentment with the film's attainment of the pan-Indian reach they had envisioned from the outset. The movie was meticulously crafted to resonate with audiences throughout the country, prioritizing themes of relatability and universality in its storytelling. Antony's satisfaction stemmed from the film's

success in transcending regional boundaries and striking a chord with viewers from diverse cultural backgrounds. This deliberate approach to creating a narrative that could resonate across India underscores the filmmakers' commitment to fostering a sense of inclusivity and connection among audiences.

Characterization and Influences: Sajjan, portrayed by Suraj Venjaramoodu, holds significant prominence within the narrative of the film. Dijo Jose Antony, the director, carefully crafted Sajjan's character, drawing inspiration from notable cinematic figures such as Ayushmann Khurrana's role in "Article 15" and Aamir Khan's character in "Talaash." These influential films served as touchstones for Dijo, guiding his endeavor to fashion a character with depth and authenticity. By amalgamating elements from these impactful portrayals, Dijo aimed to fashion Sajjan into a multi-faceted and genuine representation of a tribal police officer. Through this meticulous process of character development, the director sought to imbue Sajjan with layers of complexity and nuance, ensuring that his portrayal resonated with audiences and contributed meaningfully to the film's overarching narrative.

Emotional Journey Through Multiple Characters: *Jana Gana Mana* transcends the narrative focus on any single individual; rather, it embraces a collective belonging to the entire nation. The film intricately navigates through a plethora of characters, each encapsulating their unique emotions and experiences. This multifaceted approach to storytelling enables the audience to delve into a diverse range of perspectives within the tribal community. By intricately weaving together the lives of various characters, the film offers a rich tapestry of human experiences, allowing viewers to connect with different facets of the tribal community's journey. Through this expansive portrayal of interconnected lives and emotions, *Jana Gana Mana* invites audiences to empathize with the

intricacies and complexities inherent in the tribal experience, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for their collective story.

Commercial Success and Critical Reception: *Jana Gana Mana* garnered predominantly favorable reviews from critics and audiences alike, ultimately proving to be a commercial triumph. Suraj Venjaramoodu's portrayal of Sajjan, along with the overarching narrative, served as conduits for shedding light on pressing tribal issues, advocating for social justice, and delving into the intricate challenges confronted by marginalized communities. The film's success in both critical and commercial realms underscores its significance as a platform for addressing pertinent societal issues. Through the lens of Sajjan's character and the broader thematic exploration, "Jana Gana Mana" effectively illuminates the complexities inherent in the lives of marginalized groups, prompting viewers to contemplate and engage with these issues on a deeper level. In doing so, the film not only entertains but also catalyzes meaningful dialogue and introspection on matters of social equity and inclusion.

In the film *Maamannan*, the portrayal of the Arunthathiyar community offers a profound exploration of their cultural heritage, traditions, and socio-economic circumstances. Delving into the historical context, the movie reveals that the roots of the Arunthathiyar community in Tamil Nadu stretch back beyond the Nayaka rule, challenging misconceptions about their origins and societal contributions. Contrary to popular beliefs, the involvement of Arunthathiyars in sanitary work emerged relatively recently, possibly as a consequence of colonial industrialization and the dwindling of traditional livelihood options. Through the lens of social memories and folklore, *Maamannan* unveils the rich oral traditions and narratives embedded within the Arunthathiyar community, such as the Muthuppattan Kathai, Maduraiveeran Kathai, and Ondiveeran Kathai, which illuminate their past roles in local governance and politics. The film also sheds light on the

occupational diversity within the community, historically engaged in leatherworking and cobbling, yet relegated to low social status within the Hindu caste hierarchy. Many Arunthathiyars continue to face socio-economic challenges, with a significant portion working as landless agricultural laborers or trapped in bonded labor arrangements. Through its portrayal of the struggles faced by the Arunthathiyar community, *Maamannan* underscores the pervasive discrimination and social inequalities they confront, while also highlighting their resilience, aspirations, and quest for political and social representation. Overall, the film serves as a poignant reminder of the complexities of caste dynamics in Indian society and the imperative of challenging stereotypes to foster greater awareness and inclusivity.

The power dynamics between the minority community and dominant society

Dominant Group Defined: The dominant group in society is a privileged segment that enjoys advantages in terms of wealth, power (including economic, political, social, and coercive influence), and social status. They typically receive preferential treatment from various institutions such as social, economic, political, and educational systems.

Minority groups: Minority groups experience limited access to wealth, power, and social status in comparison to dominant groups. These groups can include racial/ethnic, gender/sex, age, religious, disabled, economic, and educational minorities. Minority status can intersect across multiple categories, and it is determined by the dominant group within society.

Describing Social Reality: The dominant group influences the social landscape experienced by minority communities by setting standards, beliefs, and stories.

Resource Allocation: Dominant groups regulate the distribution of resources, chances, and the processes for making choices.

Institutional Impact: Institutions tend to support the dominant group, sustaining their authority and advantage.

Regulating Society: Dominant groups frequently enforce authority over minority communities through regulations, rules, and cultural standards.

Analyzing the film's use of language, visuals, and narrative to portray the minority community. *Maamannan* effectively utilizes language, visuals, and narrative to depict the Arunthathiyar community, a Dalit tribal group, within the socio-political context of Tamil Nadu. The film predominantly employs the Tamil language, reflecting the cultural identity of its characters and their socio-cultural background. Through authentic dialogues, it captures the everyday struggles and aspirations of the Arunthathiyar community. The cinematography by Theni Eswar enhances the realism and authenticity of the visuals, portraying the rawness of rural Tamil Nadu and highlighting the living conditions and social interactions of the community. Symbolism in the visuals, such as the contrast between *Maamannan's* standing posture and others sitting, underscores caste-based power dynamics and traditional norms. The narrative follows character arcs that reflect the community's fight for representation and empowerment, with conflicts and resolutions illustrating the tension between the dominant community and the Arunthathiyar community. Social justice themes permeate the film, exploring caste struggles, discrimination, and the demand for political representation, while also showcasing the resilience and agency of the Arunthathiyar community. Overall, *Maamannan* skillfully portrays the Arunthathiyar community's struggles, aspirations, and quest for dignity within the complex socio-political landscape of Tamil Nadu.

Jana Gana Mana

In the movie *Jana Gana Mana*, directed by Dijo Jose Antony, the depiction of the Dalit community holds particular importance.

Context and genre: *Jana Gana Mana* is categorized as a legal thriller, a genre that offers a platform to delve into socio-political themes. Within this framework, the film intricately integrates the experiences of the Dalit community, highlighting their challenges and dreams.

Characterization:

Sajjan, portrayed by Suraj Venjaramoodu, serves as the central figure in the movie, embodying the role of a tribal police officer. The character is meticulously crafted to portray authenticity and depth, portraying the intricate challenges encountered by Dalit individuals in positions of power. Through Sajjan's experiences and struggles, the film offers valuable insights into the socio-economic realities faced by the Dalit community.

Social Injustice and Atrocities: The movie tackles the pervasive social injustices endured by young girls, exposing the daily atrocities they confront. Viewers gain insight into the challenges, discrimination, and remarkable resilience of the Dalit community through Sajjan's perspective. The narrative underscores the imperative for justice and equality, underscoring the community's relentless battle against oppression.

Power Dynamics and Agency: As a police officer, Sajjan occupies a pivotal position within the complex web of power dynamics. His role becomes indispensable in the pursuit of justice for marginalized communities. The film delves into his journey as he grapples with systemic obstacles while remaining committed to his duty.

Visuals and Symbolism: The cinematography skillfully portrays the rustic scenery and daily experiences of the Dalit community, providing a vivid backdrop to the narrative. Through visual

cues like Sajjan's interactions with fellow characters, the film effectively communicates underlying power dynamics and societal conventions. Furthermore, the courtroom scenes serve as powerful symbols of the ongoing battle for justice and the community's relentless pursuit of acknowledgment and fairness.

Positive Reception: *Jana Gana Mana* garnered praise from critics and audiences alike, achieving commercial success. Its portrayal of the Dalit community struck a chord with viewers, highlighting their strength and determination in the face of adversity. The film resonated with audiences, emphasizing the agency and resilience of the Dalit community.

Discussion and Conclusion

While the study of minority representation in South Indian movies offers valuable insights, it also faces several limitations. Firstly, the focus on mainstream cinema may overlook the contributions of independent and regional films, which often provide more authentic portrayals of minority communities. Additionally, the analysis may be limited by subjective interpretations of representation, as what constitutes accurate or positive portrayal can vary depending on individual perspectives and experiences. Moreover, the research may not adequately address intersectionality, wherein individuals may belong to multiple marginalized groups simultaneously, thus necessitating a more nuanced analysis. Furthermore, the study may overlook the perspectives and voices of minority communities themselves, failing to incorporate their insights into the analysis. To address these limitations and further enrich the study of minority representation in South Indian cinema, future research could explore the role of independent and regional films in providing more diverse and authentic portrayals of minority communities. Additionally, adopting interdisciplinary approaches, such as incorporating sociological and cultural studies perspectives, could provide deeper insights into the complexities of representation. Moreover, research could focus on the reception and impact of minority representations on audiences, including how they shape perceptions, attitudes, and social norms. Lastly, fostering collaboration with minority communities themselves through participatory research methods could ensure their voices are central to the analysis and contribute to more empowering and accurate representations in cinema.

My research on minority representation in South Indian movies holds significant importance in several ways. Firstly, it sheds light on portraying marginalized communities within a cultural and entertainment context that reaches a vast audience. By analyzing how minority groups are depicted in these films, my research contributes to understanding societal perceptions

and attitudes towards these communities. Additionally, my findings can highlight both positive representations that promote inclusivity and negative stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination. This research also serves as a platform for advocating for more authentic and nuanced portrayals of minority groups, fostering greater empathy, understanding, and social cohesion. Ultimately, by critically examining minority representation in South Indian cinema, my research has the potential to influence both filmmakers and audiences, leading to more diverse and inclusive narratives that reflect the realities of society.

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