



**Short Communication**

**Auteur theory and Director Pa. Ranjith: Deconstructing the Reality**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Film is one of the mediums which reflect the directors' ideology. A film director through her/his film conveys the opinion and ideology to the target audience. In comparison to other media, film has gained popularity throughout history and has evolved over time. Director is the pioneer for illustrating how films can deconstruct the reality of society in various fields. The director sets his/her plot to build and convey directors' own ideology in the natural setting. The researcher has used descriptive content analysis to analyze the selected films of director Pa. Ranjith to analyze the qualitative data. As the theoretical framework of this study, the researcher uses the Auteur Theory, which examines the control of the author over his/her media productions. This research mainly focuses on finding out how director Pa. Ranjith deconstructs the reality through his films based on auteur theory. The hypothesis of this research is that director Pa. Ranjith uses many strategies and techniques to convey his idea to the audience. Through directors' films, the audience can find out how the director brings the idea to the target audience using real issues like caste, religion, nationality, etc through Auteur theory. Pa. Ranjith's selection of theme, plot, characterization and language differentiates him from other Tamil directors. Auteur theory helps to discern Pa. Ranjith's ideology about issues he has chosen. Pa. Ranjith's films which reflect Tamil society and Tamil culture create awareness and expectation of reality for people who become victimized by the social structure, culture and tradition including the caste and class statutes, and challenges of so called lower caste people for survival in Tamil society.*

## 1. Introduction

Film is the one of the most powerful mediums for entertainment and providing information. The new technology has resulted in many developments in the film industry. Film conveys the information and medium in a short period of time with deep explanation about politics, culture, law, religion, history and society. Film addresses all through a common language. Film communicates the language that is at once universal and undeniably persuasive. Nowadays, watching films at the theater has become a culture; on the other hand, audiences watch films from different platforms such as the television, radio, computer, and smartphone. At present, film is one of the great art forms. Film provides entertainment, and allows for ideas and self-expression. The film leaps national, cultural, religious and political barriers and excite hearts and minds.

Manoj Jinadasa, (2016), investigates ethical, and moral factors and, and significance of the spectatorship of Bollywood and Tamil films in Sri Lanka. Bollywood and Tamil films have become central to mainstream social and cultural performance in Sri Lanka. The fundamental Indian spectatorship of these film customs has occupied the social and political psychology of Sri Lanka. Consequently, this local direction of the Indian film profoundly establishes the cultural, social and political highlights of Sri Lankan history.

Manjula Venkataraghavan (2015), analyzes Indian films and argues that they have been a mirror to the multidimensional nature of the subcontinent, be it in its portrayal of Indian culture, religion, society, classes, casts, politics, or language. The researcher presents an investigation of the film *New York, Anwar and Vishwaroopam*. Prevalently, up until now, the portrayal of this minority community in Indian film has stayed within the dominant discourse, even in its stereotyping.

P. Viduthalai, A. K. Divakar, Dr. V. Natarajan (2017), explain the arbitrary meanings of both Dalit and Non Dalit filmmakers' texts which reflect the contradiction with established meaning. A semiotics analysis of Dalit and non-Dalit films will be analysed in this study. Benson Rajan and Shreya Venkatraman (2017), talk about clothing which also represents a picture of a community in people's minds. This paper represents the politics of Dalit community with the help of costumes. The idea of Semiotics has been analyzed through clothing to reflect the identity of Dalit community.

Shiva Thrishul Punyamurthy (2016) explains how film is used to disseminate an ideology of the Dalit community. Various techniques such as photographic images, cultural symbols and Icon drawn from the 'equal-rights movements' represent the Dalit community. These films represent the necessity of education for the Dalit classes.

### 1.1 Director P. A. Ranjith

Pa. Ranjith is a film director and producer from Tamil Nadu, India. By 2018 he is credited for having directed four films. He began his journey in 2012 by directing 'Attakathi'. After that, he has directed 'Madras' (2014), 'Kabali' (2016), and 'Kaala' (2018). Director Pa.Ranjith is a well-known director and uses symbolism in his films to exhibit ongoing social, political, national, and religious problems.

Pa. Ranjith has established his film production under the banner "Neelam production". The "Neelam production" has produced not only the films of Pa.Ranjith but also several documentary films of other directors such as "Pariyerum Perumal" and "Irandam Ulakaporin kadaisi Gundu". Pa.Ranjith extended his career by doing other social activities. He formed "Neelam Panpattu Maiyam" (Neelam cultural Centre). Through this centre, an initiative was undertaken, in honour of the 100 years of Dalit (lower-caste) struggle.

Pa.Ranjith's films represent the inequality in the society. In his life journey he has faced a lot of problems and challenges due to inequality in society. Because of that he touches upon caste inequality in his films but he notes, "I don't want to be known as a Dalit film maker". He always wanted to be a Tamil film maker. Director Pa. Ranjith brings political and social realities of contemporary society in Tamil Nadu through his films. There are many Tamil directors in the film industry but Pa.Ranjith gets the in-depth place among the audience related to the social structure of Tamil people.

## **1.2 Theoretical framework**

### **1.2.1 Auteur theory**

The auteur theory reflects the directors' vision, ideology and opinion in his/her film. Director is the person who creates the film and conveys the ideas and opinions to the audience. Auteur theory creates a path of researching and looking at a film that explains or elaborates the director in the 'Author' of a film. A film directed by a film director including recognizable, recurring themes, plot, character and visuals explains to the audience, who the director is, what the ideology and opinion of the director is and creates an identical artistic pattern through the director's film.

### **1.2.2 Film as a directors' medium**

The director is the person who directs the film. Audiences watch the film through the directors' point of view. The director always decides where, when and how to shoot the scenes so that they can explain and illustrate the theme in the best way to the audience. The director is the artistic manager of the film.

Numerous pathways are available for a film director who commences their job in different ways as screenwriters, cinematographers, film editors, or actors. Directors utilize various methodologies and

approaches. Some draw a plot and let the actors develop dialogue; while other directors write everything and request that the actors and team members give directions decisively.

A few directors create the music score for their films. Directors create a vision through which a film eventually acknowledges. Understanding this vision incorporates administering the creative and specialized components of film creation, as well as directing shooting schedules and fulfilling time constraints. Arranging a film team is very essential to accomplish their vision of the film. It demands an aptitude of group leadership.

Moreover, it is essential to have an artistic eye to outline shots and to give precise criticism to project and crew, along these lines; incredible relational abilities are an absolute necessity.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

The content analysis on selected films of Director Pa.Ranjith is employed as prime methodology for the research. The investigation of data is carried out both quantitatively and qualitatively. Film analysis essentially manages - Auteur Theory, because the films are predominantly founded on the producer or director's consciousness, perception and process. Therefore, this study employed the auteur theory as its theoretical framework.

As per the needs and objectives of this research, the method of descriptive content analysis has been utilized by the researcher for assembling the information. This research is based on quantitative and qualitative methods. The researcher utilizes the illustrative technique for analyzing the films. Through this method, it is able to say something regarding whether the director gives more space for his point of view to expose the portrayal of societal events, and

which types of senses they have dealt with in his films. Subsequently, the researcher picked this method for this study.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Pa.Ranjith films depict lower caste people, especially the Dalit. Pa.Ranjith always stands for and provides a strong voice and support to lower caste people in Tamil Nadu. He always wants to establish a caste-free and equal society. Pa.Ranjith reconstructs the reality and represents social structure through screening, language, characterization, symbols and colour.

To discuss Pa.Ranjith's ideology and view in his film, the Auteur theory is used. Auteur theory helps to analyze Pa.Ranjith's view, ideology, concept and opinion by evaluating the theme of the films, characterization, plots, symbolic, social structure, colour and language.

#### 3.1 Theme

The theme illustrates what the story is truly about at its core. The theme is the idea, premise or purpose of a film. Director Pa. Ranjith chooses the theme mostly about the lower caste and class people in a society and the struggle of the working community.

*Attakathi* (2012) mainly portrays the struggle of the lower caste of North Chennai. The lifestyle and challenges of those people are portrayed vividly in this film. The people of North Chennai struggle financially. As they realize the importance for education, they struggle to complete their education despite many challenges. This film clearly brings out the culture and tradition of the people of North Chennai and their culture through folklore. Pa.Ranjith conveys many stories using Gana songs. Gana songs play a vital role in their life.

In *Madras* (2014), Pa. Ranjith represents the same group of people to express the message in a different way. This film gave the life structure of the people of North Chennai.

*Madras* visualizes the caste structure of the people, economic background of the people, residential pattern, and family life and how politicians misuse them. Pa. Ranjith narrates the story using two friends with different points of views. One friend has the idea that only political power can revive their community and another friend believes proper education can effect change. He reads Dr.Ambedkar's books and gives awareness to children by teaching them.

*Kabali* (2016) speaks about the Malaysian Tamil people. In Malaysia Tamil-speaking people face many problems and challenges. Pa. Ranjith explains the lifestyle of these people and how they are marginalized from the mainstream community. The hero fights to protect them and their culture. In *Kaala* (2018), director Pa.Ranjith explains how Dharavi Tamil people are fighting for their residential place and how the ruling party controls the ordinary people against a ruthless politician. Pa. Ranjith's films empower the various Dalit communities and stand for their identity in the community.

#### 3.2 Colour and caste identity

Blue is considered as the dominant colour in Pa. Ranjith's films. In his films *Attakathi*, *Madras*, *Kabali* and *Kaala* have at least one frame; he has used the color blue as the sign. This color is seen as an important paradigm in the explicit representation of Dalit empowerment in films. In *Attakathi*, the hero and heroine are introduced with blue shirt and dress. Dinakaran in *Attakathi* is a Gana song singer in his area and he explains about the power of blue. In *Madras* the Sports team wears blue T-shirts as their team colour. The politician belongs to the labor party. But he always wears a white-coloured dress while his team members wear blue. The hero is an educated man in that society, exhibiting the image of Dr.Ambedkar. He always reads Dr. Ambedkar's books. The hero leads his society telling the lifestyle of Dr.Ambedkar and how he overcomes the struggle by educating

himself. He forms a committee for educating the children and he explains to them the power of blue and that all human beings are equal. *Kabali* is a three-piece suit. Gandhi's loincloth is used as a symbol for sacrificing his position. The hero always wears black, saying that black is the colour of the working party people. His son is the team leader of gang and he wears a blue-coloured shirt. Hero's son says "blue is our identity". In *Kaala* also, the hero and heroine wear black suits. This approach to clothing is portrayed in *Attakathi*, *Kabali* and *Madras* as a mark of education and respect. Pa. Ranjith successfully depicts the undertones of this incident in *Attakathi*, *Madras*, *Kabali* and *Kaala*.

In *Attakathi*, the hero is introduced in a blue shirt, which indicates the rise of an educated youth from a lower caste. In *Madras*, Pa. Ranjith introduces his characters in blue coloured clothes. He is giving education to the students in their community.

In *Kabali* also, he has used a similar frame in which the uniform which was meant for adolescents with a criminal past is blue in colour. Blue is used by Dalit communities as a colour of empowerment.

### 3.3 Characterizations

In *Attakathi*, Dinakaran is seen as a man who loves the idea of being in love and changes his style of dressing according to the girl he is pursuing. Set around the lives of youngsters in rural areas around Chennai. Dinakaran (Dinesh) is a roadside Romeo. The adventures of a youth who falls in love with every girl he comes across and the rejections he faces have been narrated in a lighter vein.

Through this film the director explains the lifestyle of ordinary people in North Chennai, Tamil Nadu. In *Madras* a wall is a source of discontent between two political rivals. A party worker and friends get embroiled in this clash, which only becomes worse. Here

Pa. Ranjith explains how the young generation is misguided by politicians.

In *Kabali* and *Kaala*, the hero leads the community as well as his family, and protects all from enemies. Educated, he leads the Dalit communities with the ideology of Dr. Ambedkar. In *Kabali*, the hero is arrested and jailed as he fights for the lower caste people. After his release, he becomes a gang leader to continue a rivalry against his enemies. In *Kaala*, a resident of Dharavi stands against the injustices that happened to them against the ruthless politicians along with their hero. The names of characters in the film *Kabali* and *Kaala* symbolize freedom, liberation and transformation who have risen from the dalit community.

In *Kaala* the hero says to Villain: 'Yes we don't have anything, why is Tamil always a slave? If anyone becomes powerful and wears a good dress, you will not like it'. In both films the opening scenes portray the working class people who are subaltern people.

### 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Director Pa. Ranjith in his films speaks about the challenges faced by the lower caste people who are unable to survive their ordinary life. Pa. Ranjith deconstructs the realities of ordinary people through his visualization. He introduces the ideology of Dr. Ambedkar in order to empower the people towards sophisticated living conditions.

Pa. Ranjith's films have contributed to the empowerment of the lower caste people. They have been a resource for the establishment of the community's identity. In doing so, the director has often reinforced the notions and identity markers related to the Dalit and marginalized communities. Dress codes have been used by the upper caste and class to maintain their position in the hierarchy. This reinforcement stagnates their attempt to move beyond the established standards and markers of their own identity.

In Pa.Ranjith's films, clothing, colour, characters and visualizations have always played a significant role in prophesying the ideology of a community.

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