

Cinematic Discourse for Social Change: Mari Selvaraj's *Karnan* and the Cinematic Resistance against Caste Violence in Tamil Nadu

Dr. Vinothini M, Assistant Professor of English, & Dr. Benzigar M, HoD - Department of Arts & Humanities, CAIAS, Bangalore

In: *Book of Abstract REVA University*. edited by DR. C Chamundeshwari Associate Professor, Dept of English, REVA University, Bengaluru, India. ISBN 978-93-341-7423-6.

Literature serves as a mirror, reflecting the societal and cultural transformations that occur over time. When it primarily represents the perspectives of the dominant and upper classes, it raises questions of authenticity. Such portrayals often amplify the voices of the dominant, while the struggles of the oppressed are left unheard. As a result, dominant narratives frequently fail to convey the realities of marginalized communities, leading to the stereotyping of minorities. Although counter-narratives are beginning to emerge, they often struggle to reach the general public. Cinema, however, stands out as a noteworthy exception, effectively engaging audiences across the social spectrum. Caste is deeply entrenched in India, and caste-related violence has persisted throughout history. Tamil cinema, with its expansive reach, serves as a powerful tool for social change. This paper explores Mari Selvaraj's 2021 film *Karnan* as a significant example of cinematic resistance against caste-based oppression in Tamil Nadu. Through an in-depth analysis of the film's discourse, this research seeks to illuminate the socio-political context and how *Karnan* disrupts dominant caste narratives, enabling audiences to understand the struggles faced by marginalized individuals. Emerging creators emphasize that counter-narratives possess the potential to unravel the entrenched belief systems within society.

Keywords: Stereotypes, Cinematic Resistance, Caste, Counter Narratives