

Impact Factor: 8.67

ISSN:0976-8165

The Criterion

THE CRITERION

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL IN ENGLISH

Bi-Monthly Peer-Reviewed eJournal

15 YEARS OF OPEN ACCESS

VOL. 15 ISSUE-6 DECEMBER 2024

Editor-In-Chief: **Dr. Vishwanath Bite**
Managing Editor: **Dr. Madhuri Bite**

www.the-criterion.com

AboutUs: <http://www.the-criterion.com/about/>

Archive: <http://www.the-criterion.com/archive/>

ContactUs: <http://www.the-criterion.com/contact/>

EditorialBoard: <http://www.the-criterion.com/editorial-board/>

Submission: <http://www.the-criterion.com/submission/>

FAQ: <http://www.the-criterion.com/fa/>



ISSN 2278-9529
Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal
www.galaxyimrj.com

Exploring the Threads of Agrarian Culture in India: A Socio-agrarian Study of *Kadaisi Vivasayi* (2022)

Priya Dubey

Assistant Professor,
Department of English,
Baiswara Degree College,
Raebareli, India.

&

Dr. Surya Prakash Verma

Assistant Professor,
Department of English,
Baiswara Degree College,
Raebareli, India.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14605800>

Article History: Submitted-01/12/2024, Revised-24/12/2024, Accepted-25/12/2024, Published-31/12/2024.

Abstract:

The present article intends to establish a correlation between organic farming and the organic way of life in the twenty-first century. The primary text for the present quest, *Kadaisi Vivasayi* [The Last Farmer] (2022), is a cinematic representation of a peasant in a village near *Usilampatti* town who follows the organic method of farming. Drawing on the proposition that farming cannot be reduced to a mere profession but is a way of life for the majority of people involved in it, the article will establish a parallel with *One Straw Revolution* (1975)— a book on the virtue of organic farming, written by Japanese farmer and agrarian thinker Masanobu Fukuoka (1913-2008). The film under discussion is set amidst an agrarian crisis. In this particular space, the soil is polluted, and the rain is irregular. Which leads most of the farmers into selling their lands and getting involved in other occupations. Mayandi, the protagonist of the film, remains intact with his profession and becomes the last hope to continue the rituals of farming in the village. The article also takes upon the task of comparing the situation of the agriculturists in the film to the agriculturists of contemporary India. Furthermore, the article tries to show how the process of farming is not only a physiological but also a psychological process for the people involved in it.

Keywords: Agrarian Crisis, Cinematic Representations of Farmers, Indian Cinema, Organic Farming, Peasants.

Introduction: The Agrarian Tapestry of India

India, a nation of diverse cultures and rich traditions, has experienced significant influence from its agricultural heritage. “Given that food production is a fundamental need, a matter of survival for any nation” (*Agricide* 5), India’s agrarian culture, originating from the Indus Valley Civilisation and fostered through thousands of years of agricultural progress, has significantly shaped the country’s social, economic, and political structure. The Indus Valley, one of the first urban civilisations in the world, was primarily dependent on agriculture as “the economy of Indus Valley civilization was based on animal husbandry, arable agriculture and growing cereals, pulses and other plants” (Naulakha 152). The Vedic culture placed great importance on an agricultural way of life, with a specific focus on cattle, ploughing, and seasonal rituals.

The agrarian lifestyle underwent significant changes in the mid-20th century due to industrialisation, urbanisation, and the Green Revolution: “India won its war against hunger with its combined arsenal of science, diplomacy, and political courage” (Menon). Following its independence, India implemented the Green Revolution, which aimed to modernise agriculture, boost productivity, and decrease reliance on food imports. These changes led to increased food production and economic growth. However, they also had negative consequences such as the disruption of traditional farming practices, ecological degradation, erosion of rural communities, and the alienation of farmers. “Since the time of the green revolution, there was reduced cultivation of indigenous varieties of rice, millets, lentils, etc. In turn, there was increased harvest of hybrid crops, which would grow faster” (Taylor, 2019). Not only are conventional agricultural methods such as crop rotation, organic farming, and water conservation techniques a remnant of the past, but they also serve as anecdotes of sustainable living passed down through generations. Organic farming is better for the environment, as Gregory A. Barton speaks in her book *The Global History of Organic Farming*, that, “A society weary from the horrors of a mechanized war from 1915-1918 yearned to return to a simpler rural life and desired to find space for personal and spiritual healing” (3). The organic and sustainable agricultural culture exerts a substantial influence on the formation of India’s social environment: “traditionally grown and consumed crops, such as millets, grow easily in arid and semi-arid conditions because they have low water requirements” (John).

The Indian agricultural lifestyle intricately connected to the notion of joint families and village communities, cultivating a strong sense of kinship and mutual support among individuals. But things have been changed since the modernisation of farming. Pankaj Kumar, in one of his articles entitled “Agriculture Diversification in India” explains that, “It has been transformed from traditional agriculture-based economy to high value agriculture. With the advent of the green revolution, India has transformed itself from a country of shortages to a land of surpluses” (Kumar 652).

Over time, individuals began to shift from farming to other forms of business owing to the financial crisis. “Old farmers in young country” chapter in the book *India’s Agricide* (2022) outlines how the country has a large number of youths hardly interested in the occupation of farming. India becomes a country where the average age of farmers is above 50 years old. Further, “only 1.2 per cent of 30,000 rural youth surveyed by non-profit Pratham for its 2017 ‘Annual Status of Education Report’ aspired to be farmers” (*Agricide*, 83). India has recorded a huge decline in the occupation of farming in the recent years. It is because of the accentuation in the unpredictability of the climate, continuously increasing numbers of marginal farmers, and the consumer-oriented policies of Indian Government.

When one talks about India, she/he generally begins with the statement *India is an agrarian country*. It is probably because half of this country’s population is employed in the field of agriculture. Unfortunately, this identity of India is not without question now. In India, an agriculturist has a very high risk and a very low profit. A data released by National Statistical Office (NSO) reveals that, in India, “per day income of farm households is only about ₹277, which is not much different from the minimum wage rate paid under the national employment guarantee scheme [₹223 per day]” (Narayanamoorthy 2021). The crisis multiplies over the years as the farm sizes decrease. For a household which includes five members on an average it “has declined from 0.725 hectare in 2003 to 0.592 hectare in 2013 and further to 0.512 hectare in 2019” (Vinaykumar 2022). Within this inexorable plight of agrarian distress, the youth of the country has lost their interest in becoming a farmer. They even prefer to work as labourers rather than engaging themselves in the vicious cycle of debt excess, and crop failures.

Cinema plays a crucial role in demonstrating the lives of farmers, the difficulties they face, and the impact of agriculture on the nation’s economy and culture. Indian cinema has evolved into an exceptional medium for representing social realities. Various films and documentaries promote the benefits of organic farming, emphasising its contribution to soil health, biodiversity, and the production of better food. They advocate for organic farming as an alternative to agriculture that relies heavily on chemicals. For example, *The Seeds of Vandana*

Shiva (2021), a documentary film, directed by Camilla Denton Becket and James Becket, demonstrates the significance of organic farming and seed sovereignty by sketching the detrimental effects of industrial agriculture. The documentary disapproves of excessively modernised agriculture as “for Shiva it refers to the importing of pesticide-based agriculture to the Third World, and, in her opinion, the mostly negative consequences thereafter” (Thompson). Another film *Mitti: Back to Roots* (2001), directed by Anshul Sinha, shows the difficulties encountered by farmers that embrace organic farming techniques, portraying the accomplishments and obstacles associated with the adoption of organic farming. The film *Kadvi Hawa* (2017), directed by Nila Madhab Panda and produced by Akshay Parija, examines the adverse impacts of climate change and unsustainable agricultural methods, thereby advocating for the adoption of more sustainable and organic farming techniques. *The Organic Life* (2013), the film directed by Casey Beck, demonstrates an attempt of the protagonist to become a professional organic farmer. Similarly, films like *Swadesh* (2004), *Kisaan* (2009), *Peepli Live* (2010), *Kisan Kanya* (1937), *Upkaar* (1967), *Mother India* (1957), *Do Bigha Zamin* (1953), and *Lagaan* (2001) have depicted the challenges faced by farmers, emphasising concerns such as land disputes, loans, and discrimination. These films effectively highlighted these concerns, increasing the public and policymakers’ understanding of the challenges faced by farmers.

The present article examines agrarian culture in India by analysing the film *Kadaisi Vivasayi* (2022). The film is produced and directed by M. Manikandan. He is a versatile individual in the Indian film industry, contributing as a director, writer, producer, and cinematographer, primarily in Tamil cinema. He started his professional journey with a brief cinematic creation named *Wind* in 2010, which instilled in him the motivation to continue producing. His significant achievement came in the form of the feature film *Kaaka Muttai* in 2015: “M. Manikandan rose to prominence for his celebrated films ‘Kaaka Muttai’ (The Crow’s Egg), which secured the Best Children’s Film award at the 62nd National Film Awards” (Sir, Forgive us!). The film’s narrative revolves around the destitution and aspirations of two underprivileged youngsters living in the slum area of Chennai. It is an exceptional film that focuses on children while employing ethical realism to effectively convey a powerful message against capitalism and social class disparities. In 2022, he made the film *Kadaisi Vivasayi*, which earned him the National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Tamil language. Tamil cinema has beautifully captured the essence of rural Tamil Nadu, depicting the lives of farmers with its captivating narratives, well-developed characters, and realistic portrayals. It has effectively brought attention to the complexities and hardships of agrarian life. In one of

the articles, “How Tamil Cinema Romanticises by Ignoring Issues of Caste and Gender,” Akchayaa Rajkumar quotes Stalin Rajangam, a well-known film critic and writer who specialises in Tamil cinema, saying, “Movies in the 90s encouraged people to take pride in their regional caste identities and the dominant caste man’s muscle power [in terms of wealth and physical prowess], which can be seen as extensions of agriculture itself” (Rajkumar).

Kadaisi Vivasayi is a 144-minute film that explores various approaches to solving problems at the grassroots level. Manikandan has produced films that focus on people deeply connected to their cultural origins who need greater recognition and support from their nation. India, a country heavily reliant on agriculture, is currently facing a profound crisis that is impacting farming and farmers. Tragically, an alarming number of over 3.2 lakh farmers have resorted to taking their own lives. The crisis is worsened by the deepening of ground waters, the rise of culinary chemicals, droughts, lower incomes, and increasing indebtedness, which are evident throughout the country. Manikandan has effectively represented these issues in the film under discussion. He has chosen an octogenarian, Mayandi, to play the main character.

Kadaisi Vivasayi: A Cosmos of Agrarian India

The film *Kadaisi Vivasayi* [The Last Farmer] is an examination of the surviving agricultural lifestyle, offering insights into the difficulties and perseverance of rural people. The film explores the complexities of rural culture, portraying the livelihoods of farmers whose survival is intimately connected to the land they cultivate. *Kadaisi Vivasayi* exposes the socio-economic relationships, cultural customs, and deep affinity between farmers and their natural surroundings through a compelling and comprehensive narrative. The film centres on Mayandi, an elderly farmer who embodies traditional agricultural beliefs and traditions amidst a rapidly changing social and economic landscape. This film aims to enhance understanding of India’s agrarian legacy and its contemporary significance by examining its portrayal of farmers’ challenges and determination. It is a film after all which “observes without interruption, captures without exaggeration” (Krishnakumar). The title, “The Last Farmer”, represents the diminishing existence of small-scale, traditional farmers amidst of industrial agriculture and urbanisation, and provides a compelling portrayal of the difficulties and tenacity of agrarian culture in India. Mayandi’s farming style is a form of opposition to the elimination of traditional agricultural methods caused by modernisation and globalisation. In India, a youthful population increasingly turns away from agriculture, leading to an aging workforce in a sector essential to the country’s economy and food security. This shift has created an unusual agrarian demography within rural India, where the average farmer is now over 50 years old, illustrating

a significant gap between generations in their willingness to farm. Despite India's rich agricultural legacy, younger generations perceive farming as a challenging and unstable profession, influenced largely by financial hardships and low profitability.

Economic disparities within the farming sector further deter young people, as agricultural labourers often earn more than farm owners themselves. This disparity presents an ironic twist in rural employment, where labourers, who traditionally worked under farm owners, now receive relatively higher and steadier incomes due to regular wages, whereas farmers face erratic income based on crop yields, market fluctuations, and the cost of agricultural inputs. For many young people, this situation makes labour more appealing than the uncertainties of farming, encouraging them to seek wage labour rather than pursue an independent farming livelihood. Additionally, the limited opportunities for agricultural value-addition exacerbate the issue. About three-fourths of rural youth live in regions where value-addition—such as turning raw produce into processed goods or engaging in direct marketing—is minimal, offering little chance to improve profitability through diversification or innovative farming practices. Together, these factors create a complex, discouraging landscape for young people considering agriculture as a career, weakening rural India's traditional farming ethos. The steady shift away from agriculture threatens the continuity of rural farming communities, leaving the future of Indian agriculture in a precarious position. As an older generation of farmers ages, the absence of interested young successors foreshadows potential challenges in maintaining agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods. Addressing this issue will require structural changes to make farming more financially rewarding and socially respected to attract and retain young people, ultimately preserving India's agricultural heritage and its role in the economy.

Farming encompasses a range of essential physical tasks that are necessary for sustaining life. It encompasses two aspects: physiological and psychological. *Kadaisi Vivasayi* demonstrates the multifaceted nature of farming—its physiological facets, as well as its profound psychological influence. This film depicts the everyday activities of Mayandi as “*Kadaisi Vivasayi* celebrates the joys of everyday life” (Krishnakumar). His occupation demands comprehension of the land, endurance, and strength. He embodies traditional agricultural methods that have been handed down through generations, planting seeds, and watering crops. Mayandi emphasises the importance of physical labour and the dedication needed in farming, demonstrating its vital role in supporting communities and highlighting the physical challenges inherent in the occupation. In India, farming comes with significant risks and yields minimal profits.

Kadaisi Vivasayi highlights the psychological aspects of farming, emphasising the protagonist's deep emotional and spiritual bond with his land. While Mayandi was in jail, he was psychologically engrossed in his fields. On the day of his trial, he could not resist the urge to visit his field. He visited his field without informing the police, "start the bike. Let's see who stops me from watering my field today" (KV 01:58:00). The film presents farming as a contemplative endeavour, emphasising the virtues of patience, perseverance, and belief, transforming it into a way of existence rather than merely a means of sustenance. In a village, near *Usilampatti* town, where agriculture has declined, the film depicts the psychological strain of farming through the perspective of the last farmer of the village, Mayandi. He experiences a sense of solitude and the psychological burden of protecting a fading tradition. This emphasises the intellectual difficulties that farmers encounter, such as feelings of isolation, unpredictability, and the burden of preserving a traditional lifestyle in the midst of modernisation and economic instability.

Agriculture encompasses not just the physical act of cultivating the land, but also the intellectual development of individuals. The film demonstrates profound impact of farming on personal identity and self-esteem, emphasising its psychological dimension as a catalyst for dignity and meaning. It portrays how farming moulds the identities of individuals and communities, fostering a deep sense of belonging and satisfaction. The film's storyline provides with a subtle yet impactful analysis of the socio-economic changes that are impacting rural India. *Kadaisi Vivasayi* adeptly manages the delicate relationship between the broader social concerns of 'art' cinema and the popular appeal of melodramatic narratives, reflecting the hybridised approach recognised in earlier scholarly works. The film's representation of the protagonist's perspectives on the repressive systems that control his life reflects the intricate and sometimes ambiguous portrayals seen in Indian feature films:

Without ever talking about farming as a noble profession, the film successfully manages to convey its message loud and clear – to change our general perception about farming. *Kadaisi Vivasayi* stands testimonial to the fact that even a simple story, when told with unparalleled sensitivity, can leave a lasting impact. (HT Entertainment)

The plot of the film unfolds as the community members are immersed in the idea of conducting a ritual to the local deity. The offering necessitates rice cultivation in the village, and Mayandi is the only farmer in the area. He willingly took on the responsibility of growing the paddy. But unfortunately, he found himself facing accusations of causing harm to a peacock that had been struck by lightning and fell into his field. Mayandi's innocence is put on a trial when he is unjustly accused of this crime, placing his village in a complicated position, as the

community depends on his yearly harvest for their festival. Mayandi has led a humble life, fully dedicating himself to his field and farming as if it were an extension of himself. It is heartbreaking when he stays in jail, but his mind is entirely immersed on his field. As M. Suganth has reviewed the film in *Times of India*, “Manikandan’s Mayaandi is someone for whom farming is a way of life; in fact, the only lifestyle he knows. He has managed to live unexposed to the changes in the world around him” (Suganth).

The protagonist’s predicament closely resembles that of the protagonist in *A Hidden Life* (2019), a film directed by an American filmmaker Terrence Malick. The film chronicles the true account of Franz Jägerstätter, an Austrian farmer. Jägerstätter, who was born and raised in the little community of St. Radegund, devotes himself to his farm when the war (WWII) begins. Married to Franziska (Fani), the couple holds significant roles within the close-knit rural community. Over the course of time, they lead a peaceful life but, in the meanwhile, Franz receives a call-up for basic military training and must spend months away from his farm. Even while he was at the ‘training’ centre, his thoughts were consumed by his home and the responsibilities of farming, tending to his calves, and ensuring a successful harvest, “gorgeous fields, scythes cutting through them, open spaces as far as the eye can see, land unspoiled but for animals scuttling about and a rustic, hand-built house” (McCarthy, *A Hidden Life: Film Review* | Cannes 2019). In the film, Franz becomes nostalgic and writes letter to Fani, “Remember the day when we first met? ... how simple life was then. It seemed no trouble could reach our valley. We lived above the clouds” (*A Hidden Life* 00:05:42- 06:37). Fani continues to provide Franz with extensive information about the farm, “The harvest comes nearer. We burned the bad weeds. I got some piglets from Mossbauer” (*A Hidden Life* 00:13:10). According to Todd McCarthy, Franz “has become an empty vessel” (The Hollywood Reporter). Franz experiences a profound sense of anguish and identity crisis when he is separated from his farming profession and sent to the military campaign.

Mayandi, just like Franz, is deeply engrossed in tending his crop, always mindful of its well-being and the potential harm that insects may inflict while on his trail. This demonstrates the profound psychological and emotional effects of losing touch with one’s own heritage and customs, highlighting the importance of labour, which is closely associated with individual identity and communal belonging. Mayandi has a strong affinity for nature and sees animals, fields, and crops as vibrant human beings. He thoroughly cares for his bulls, even tasting the cattle food before feeding them. When he was told he should not eat the cow’s food, he says, “I have to taste it, don’t it? I can’t just feed my cattle without testing it” (*KV* 00:11:49- 11:51). *Kadaisi Vivasayi* captures the tranquillity of his daily life, emphasising his profound

reverence for the land and the traditional values he upholds. Mayandi is strongly committed to natural farming and resides in a fully natural environment, avoiding electricity and worldly luxuries. During Mayandi's trial in court, he was held in police custody for 15 days. In the meantime, Karuppan was entrusted with taking care of his cattle, he visited the old man's residence, which left him pondering, "has the old man actually been living here without electricity? Screw you all, he doesn't need anything from you! (KV 01:18:25). Mayandi's ability to survive in environments without electricity displays his self-reliance, ingenuity, and a simple and subtle approach to living. Karuppan further says, "His is the right way to live" (KV 01:18:34). As Srinivasan Ramani offered a critique of the film, focusing specifically on Mayandi "... he sticks to his profession not just as a means of livelihood, but as his way of oneness with nature" (Ramani).

Mayandi's small-scale farming yields exceptional results, which not only supports his own livelihood but also contribute to the cultural and spiritual well-being of his village. Everyone else may choose to sell their land, but he remains steadfast in his decision to hold onto his. He says, "Give her a penny and she will turn it to a pound, dear one" (KV 01:13:10). This reflects the concept of turning a little and unimportant resource (a penny) into something more valuable and indispensable (a pound). He cherished the land and believed that it is akin to a nurturing mother. According to him, if you give it even a little, it will generously provide you with abundance. Manikandan exemplifies the remarkable ability of a farmer to make a lasting impact on his community through even a few resources and dedication. As Ranjani Krishnakumar says "M. Manikandan... writes it more like a poem of multiple verses than as a screenplay in three acts ... he takes his time to establish the period, landscape and the people making sure that the three are intertwined, packing every minute with meaning and emotion" (Krishnakumar).

Anatomy of Organic Farming: *Kadai Vivasayi* and *One Straw Revolution* (1975)

Bringing Masanobu Fukuoka (1913-2008) into the discussion is essential because his philosophy of natural farming provides a theoretical and practical foundation for understanding the significance of organic farming in *Kadai Vivasayi*. By introducing Fukuoka, the discussion broadens to include a global perspective on organic farming, highlighting how the principles of reverence for the land and resistance to modern industrial methods are universally relevant. This connection reinforces the idea that the preservation of these practices is not just a local necessity but a global imperative, aligning the film's narrative with a broader movement towards sustainable and ethical agriculture. *Kadai Vivasayi* and *One Straw Revolution* both

highlight the importance of traditional methods, simplicity, and a deep reverence for the natural and organic agriculture. Mayandi in film, and Fukuoka in book depict the art of farming with a scholarly approach, emphasising the importance of sustainable practices that reject synthetic chemicals and overbearing cultivation. Fukuoka avoids modern technology of farming:

Fukuoka dispenses with pesticides, fertilizers, chemicals and tractors, he even manages without tilling and weeding...his land is always covered with greenery, never allowed to be naked or exposed directly to the hot sun. It is always full of various living creatures from earthworms to termites to rats, each of whom play an important role in maintaining the natural ecology of the land. (Ananthu 118)

Fukuoka's philosophy is based on the idea that nature has its own balance and that human intervention can often be detrimental. As Fukuoka, "... aim[s] to arrive at a technology by means other than the intellect, i.e., by developing the mystic feeling of 'one-ness' with the universe" (Ananthu 117). He promotes a farming methodology that emphasises living in harmony with nature, motivating organic and ecological movements to embrace sustainable and environmentally responsible techniques instead of asserting control over the land. This strategy emulates Fukuoka's "'do-nothing' agricultural method" (*One Straw Revolution* 11), which reduces human involvement and enables nature to sustain a state of equilibrium.

Similarly, the film draws a sharp contrast between Mayandi's traditional farming methods and the modern practices of industrialised agriculture. During his imprisonment, Mayandi hears that some insects and worms are harming the crops at field. He asks for an organic method to replenish the crops, "To fix this, collect some cow's urine, soak neem leaves, lima bean leaves, rubber bush leaves, Malabar nut leaves and a few wild neem leaves. Mix it well altogether and sprinkle over crops using neem leaves" (KV 01:39:17). Despite a thorough search by Mayandi's relatives, they were unable to locate the wild neem leaves, as the villagers had felled the tree to meet fundamental requirements. Subsequently, Suresh, a relative of his, purchased a chemical-based neem pesticide and sprayed it on the crops, resulting into the complete destruction of the crop. The pesticide completely devastated the whole field. Mayandi was shocked to see his crops. The judge felt incredibly bad for him; she told everyone in the town and the police to help him sow the seeds again in the field.

Mayandi perceives crops not as dead entities, but rather as vibrant and alive as human beings. As he says, "money comes and goes. We sowed seed for our deity and they have already sprouted. They need to be watered. Are they not living thing?" (KV 01:10:27). When Mayandi was in police custody, his mind was solely focused on his crops and fields. He was concerned about irrigating his field while he was confined. He says, "by holding one life here, you are

killing a thousand lives” (KV 01:10:38). *Kadaisi Vivasayi* juxtaposes Mayandi’s humble yet efficient farming methods with the modernised approach to agriculture, emphasising the significance of honouring the natural world.

Kadaisi Vivasayi and *One Straw Revolution* both emphasise the importance of sustainable practices in agriculture, fostering a sense of community, and showing deep respect for the environment. Both Mayandi and Fukuoka’s works demonstrate their deep understanding and thoughtful approach, highlighting the importance of respecting the earth and all living beings. They emphasise the importance of traditional farming methods in the face of economic and social change, advocating for their preservation and resistance against industrialisation and detachment from nature. They advocate for the conservation and rejuvenation of traditional techniques as a means to ensure a sustainable future.

Cultivating Harmony: The Interwoven Path of Organic Farming and 21st Century Living

Modern urbanisation, industrialisation, and the fast-paced society of the 21st century often led to a separation between humans and Nature. Supermarkets are frequently the source of vegetables and food purchases without much consideration for its origins. This apathy can lead to a lack of understanding regarding the social and environmental consequences of industrial farming, including soil degradation and the loss of village farms. Mahatma Gandhi, an esteemed leader of India, warned about the negative consequences of contemporary technology and rejected it by saying “in strong terms such as “satanic”” (Ananthu 117). The rapid development of industrialism led to devastating outcomes in the environment, such as the destruction of ecosystems, climate change, and the loss of biodiversity. “But while having a relative abundance of food is a good thing compared to its opposite, it has tended to desensitize us to food issues, to make those of us with good access to food uncritical about how food comes to be” (Gliessman 40). These consequences serve as compelling evidence of its severe impact on life on earth.

By encouraging practices that work with natural ecosystems, and organic farming can make a big difference in protecting the environment. Organic farming embraces a holistic approach that emphasises the importance of coexisting with Nature, fostering a rich variety of life, nurturing fertile soil, and maintaining a delicate ecological equilibrium. It refrains from using synthetic chemicals, thereby promoting a healthier environment, supporting farmers, and benefiting consumers. It exemplifies a dedication to cultivating the land, safeguarding ancestral insight, and securing the prosperity of future generations through the earth’s abundance. “Organic farming provides an opportunity to foster sustainable relationships and re-establish a

connection with the land” (Shiva 78), as exemplified in *Kadai Vivasayi*. The film examines the juxtaposition of conventional organic agriculture and modern life, emphasising the lost wisdom and reverence for the natural world in the era of modernisation. It demonstrates the stark reflection of modern society: people are living in isolation from Nature, and this is destroying the environment and cultural heritage. The film, through its rural surrounding, promotes the idea of incorporating organic farming into modern society, highlighting the compatibility of these practices and their ability to foster a more sustainable and harmonious lifestyle. Manikandan has beautifully captured the necessity of protecting traditional agricultural practices, particularly in the realm of organic farming, in spite of the challenges posed by globalisation and urbanisation. Local farmers’ support, the preference for organic products, and their integration into urban environments can achieve this. He highlights the essence of mystical and moral dimensions of organic farming, emphasising reverence, nurturing, and mutual exchange with the earth, fostering a more conscious and interconnected way of life in the 21st century. Manikandan advocates for sustainable practices and the preservation of cultural heritage, ultimately reshaping our lifestyle and paving the way for a more harmonious future. In order to enhance the film’s authenticity, Manikandan chose to cast a real-life 75-year-old man. In an interview with Baradwaj Rangan, he states, “My tool is realism... we can only cast a real-life farmer. There’s a certain build, skin tone... other actors don’t have that” (Rangan).

Conclusion: Navigating Challenges and Resilience

Kadai Vivasayi, through Mayandi, represents the economic struggles faced by traditional agrarian communities in India, including rising material costs, unpredictable market prices, and limited loan access. The financial issues have caused farmers to transition from farming to other occupations. Moreover, urban migration among younger villagers is causing decline of farming communities, leading to the abandonment of long-standing farming practices. Environmental issues like unpredictable weather and soil unproductivity are also causing biodiversity loss. The film emphasises the rise of monoculture and chemical-prone farming techniques, highlighting the erosion of ancestral traditions and cultural heritage. It draws attention to the conflict between preserving traditional lifestyles and modernisation as younger generations distance themselves from agricultural practices, as well as the need for alternative methods to combat the harm caused by chemical-based pesticides.

Furthermore, the film proposes enhanced support systems for local farmers, such as accessible credit and environmentally-friendly farming methods, while also promoting

diversification of profits through farming tourism and rural entrepreneurship. Community-based conservation initiatives, like forest management and water conservation programs, support agriculture and the environment. The film emphasises preserving traditional practices and promoting cultural reunification through educational workshops, festivals, and rituals.

The rapid advancements in technology push humanity to think again about organic farming as an ideal method for living a healthy life, which would benefit future generations. Ramaiah, the police constable, despite appearing peculiar, finds peace in Nature's beauty and the melodic call of the peacock. He finds solace in Nature's embrace, "the two hours I spend here is the only time I'm peaceful" (KV 01:29:18). The film highlights the human attraction to urbanisation and materialism, emphasizing the need for natural surroundings and organic farming methods to protect the environment and preserve land, air, and plants. *Kadaiisi Vivasayi* explores the juxtaposition between rural existence and the economic demands of modern society. Furthermore, it serves as a contemplation on the decline of conventional rural norms and customs through the character, Mayandi. *Kadaiisi Vivasayi* effectively portrays farmers' hardships and socio-economic realities through powerful storytelling and striking rural scenery, promoting understanding, admiration, and empathy for agricultural preservation. Vandana Shiva says "When nature is a teacher, we cocreate with her" ("Vandana Shiva: Everything"). *Kadaiisi Vivasayi* evaluates the intricate dynamics of farming, throwing light on the delicate equilibrium between the physical and psychological aspects. The profession demands a combination of physical endurance and a resilient mind to confront challenges, adapt to changes, and foster a profound connection with the earth. With the decline of traditional practices, the film serves as a powerful reminder of the complex and contrasting aspects of a farmer's life.

Works Cited:

A Hidden Life. Directed by Terrence Malick, Elizabeth Bay Productions, 2019.

Ananthu, T. S. "Book Review: *The Ones Straw Revolution: An Introduction to Natural Farming* by Masanobu Fukuoka." *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1998, pp. 117-118.

Barton, Gregory A. *The Global History of Organic Farming*. Oxford University Press, 2018.
Down To Earth. India's Agricide: Transition from an agrarian to a non-agrarian economy. Introduction by M S Swaminathan. Centre for Science and Environment, 2022. Ebook.

Fukuoka, Masanobu. *The One Straw Revolution: An Introduction to Natural Farming*. NYRB Classics, 2009.

Gliessman, S.R. "Agroecology and the Agroecosystem Concept." *Agroecology: The Ecology of Sustainable Food Systems CRC Press eBooks*, 2014, pp. 40–53. <https://doi.org/10.1201/b17881-7>.

HT Entertainment. "Kadaisi Vivasayi review: M Manikandan's satire about the last farmer is moving." *Hindustan Times*, 11 Feb. 2022, www.hindustantimes.com/entertainment/tamil-cinema/kadaisi-vivasayi-review-m-manikandan-s-film-about-the-last-farmer-is-a-moving-satire-101644573015801.html.

John, Daisy A., and Giridhara R. Babu. "Lessons From the Aftermaths of Green Revolution on Food System and Health." *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*, vol. 5, Feb. 2021, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsufs.2021.644559>.

Kadaisi Vivasayi. Directed by M. Manikandan, Tribal Arts Production, 2022.

Krishnakumar, Ranjani. "Kadaisi Vivasayi Movie Review: M. Manikandan Effortlessly Mount A Terrific Film About the Everyperson." *The Film Companion*, February 11, 2022, www.filmcompanion.in/reviews/kadaisi-vivasayi-movie-review-m-manikandan-effortlessly-mounts-terrific-film-about-everyperson-vijay-sethupathi, Accessed on 8 August 2024.

Kumar, Pankaj. "Agriculture Diversification in India." *Indian Journal of Applied Research*, vol. 4, issue 8, 2014, pp. 648-652.

Menon, Vandana, et al. "Hungry India, a nawabi US President, 'Mexican blood' — The real story of Green Revolution." *The Print*, 19 Feb. 2022, theprint.in/past-forward/hungry-india-a-nawabi-us-president-mexican-blood-the-real-story-of-green-revolution/835649.

McCarthy, Todd. "A Hidden Life: Film Review Cannes 2019". *The Hollywood Reporter*, Valence Media, May 19, 2019.

Narayanamoorthy, A. 20 October, 2021. "Farm trouble. Why farm income in India is so low." *Businessline, The Hindu*. [newspaper article], <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/why-farm-income-in-india-is-so-low/article37075687.ece>

Naulakha, Jitendra Singh. "Agriculture In Harappan Civilization: An Observation." *Adhigam*. Vol. 18, pp. 152-160 <https://www.sieallahabad.org/hrt->

admin/book/book_file/759d77e6080b1828de2008f1a2b495a0.pdf Accessed on 28 August 2024.

Online, Et. “‘Sir, forgive us’: When thieves return medals of award-winning Tamil film director M Manikandan.” *The Economic Times*, 14 Feb. 2024, economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/new-updates/sir-forgive-us-when-thieves-return-medals-of-award-winning-tamil-film-director-m-manikandan/articleshow/107685193.cms?from=mdr.

Rajkumar, Akchayaa. “How Tamil Cinema Romanticises by Ignoring Issues of Caste and Gender”. *The News Minutes*, 22/08/2023, www.thenewsminute.com/tamil-nadu/how-tamil-cinema-romanticises-agriculture-ignoring-issues-caste-and-gender-181386 Accessed on 15 August 2024.

Ramani, Srinivasan. “‘Kadai Vivasayi’ movie review: M Manikandan’s poignant ode to the old-fashioned farmer.” *The Hindu*, February 8, 2022, www.thehindu.com/entertainment/movies/kadai-vivasayi-movie-review-m-manikandanspoignant-ode-to-the-old-fashioned-farmer/article38396547.ece. Accessed on 1 August 2024.

Ranagan, Baradwaj. “M. Manikandan Interview with Baradwaj Rangan.” *The Film Companion*, 10 February 2018, www.filmcompanion.in/interviews/m-manikandan-interview-baradwaj-rangan, Accessed on 8 August 2024.

Shiva, Vandana. *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace*. South End Press, 2005.

Shiva, Vandana. “Vandana Shiva: Everything I Need to Know I Learned in the Forest.” *Yes! Solutions Journalism*, May 3, 2019, www.yesmagazine.org/issue/nature/2019/05/03/vandana-shiva-seed-saving-forest-biodiversity, Accessed on 15 August 2024.

Suganth, M. “Kadai Vivasayi Movie Review: Kadai Vivasayi is a genteel drama on farming and spirituality”. *Times of India*, 10 February 2022, www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/tamil/movie-reviews/kadai-vivasayi/movie-review/89436949.cms Accessed on 16 August 2024.

Taylor, M. (2019). Hybrid realities: making a new Green Revolution for rice in south India. *J. Peasant Stud.* 47, 483–502. doi: 10.1080/03066150.2019.1568246

Thompson, Luke Y. “FILM REVIEW: THE SEEDS OF VANDANA SHIVA.” *CineGods*, 30 July 2023, cinegods.com/film-review-the-seeds-of-vandana-shiva. Accessed on 28 August 2024.

Rai, Vinaykumar. "Economic Survey: Average monthly income per agricultural household at Rs 10,218." *Business Today*. [newspaper article], January 31, 2022.
<https://www.businesstoday.in/latest/economy/story/economic-survey-average-monthly-income-per-agricultural-household-at-rs-10218-320921-2022-01-31>