

DISABILITY REPRESENTATION IN TAMIL CINEMA: BETWEEN SPECTACLE AND AUTHENTICITY

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Received: 25 Jun 2026

Accepted: 28 Jun 2026

Published: 30 Jun 2026

ABSTRACT

*Tamil cinema's portrayal of disability has evolved from moralistic melodrama to nuanced explorations of identity and communication. This paper examines landmark films, *Gnaana Oli* (1972), *Raja Paarvai* (1981), *Mozhi* (2007), and *Deiva Thirumagal* (2011), through the lens of disability studies theorists Rosemarie Garland-Thomson and Lennard J. Davis. It interrogates casting politics, audience reception, and cultural frameworks that shape representation. The study argues for a paradigm shift from disability as a narrative device to disability as lived experience, emphasizing authentic casting and inclusive storytelling within Tamil cinema's socio-cultural matrix*

KEYWORDS: *Disability Studies; Tamil Cinema; Representation Politics; Authentic Casting; Visual Culture; Rosemarie Garland-Thomson; Lennard J. Davis; Cultural Narratives; Inclusion; Spectacle.*