CONCLUSION

Nearing 80 years of history, Tamil talkie cinema occupies an irreplaceable space in the lives of the Tamil people. In general, it makes frequent references to Tamil identity, Tamil culture, and Tamil society in its script. It is believed that the cultural components are being made, unmade, reinforced and reinvigorated by the content of cinema continually. Evaluating and commenting on the past and current scenario of Tamil cinema are insufficient for any serious follow-up action in relation to Tamil culture and Tamil society. In this context, the relationship of Tamil cinema to Tamil culture and Tamil society deserves a serious study towards future orientation. Acknowledging various contributions to the fields of culture, anthropology, history, mass communication, film studies, Futures Studies and related social sciences, the study of ‘recurrent cultural themes of Tamil cinema and their impacts on Tamil society’ in futuristic perspective leads towards this orientation.

People tend to use the metaphor of movie screen as cultural mirror. Whether this metaphor is right or wrong, in actuality, partaking in the stuff of cultural elements Tamil cinema remains as a cinematic index of Tamil culture. There may be differences of opinion on Tamil cinema in the way it partakes in Tamil culture and the mode and degree of indexing it. However, studying the treatment of Tamil cultural themes is one of the attempts to establish the relationship between Tamil cinema and Tamil culture.
Considering the vastness of Tamil culture and its rudiments, only some elements have been selected for in-depth study in relation to Tamil cinema. *Kaatham, Karpu, Maanam, Mozhi, Nilam, Samayam, Veeram* and *Virunthompaal* are some cultural elements, which are popularly and traditionally discussed in Tamil society. These eight elements respectively reflect gender, familial, psychosocial, literary-linguistic, material, religious, political and social spaces of Tamil culture. These spaces offer a platform to observe the relationship between Tamil cinema and culture. In fact, Tamil cinema has made references to these elements and treated them as cultural themes. Although these eight themes are not exhaustive, they present to some extent, a comprehensive picture of Tamil cultural themes treated in Tamil cinema. Each theme is constituted in unity by certain core components or sub-themes in order to confer its uniqueness. It is dynamic between the elements of binary continuums with hidden messages and some deep structures. It is vibrant and fluxes in each decade introducing some new elements with thematic significances and implying possible socio-political-cultural factors. The summary of thematic significances helps classifying cultural themes constantly and inconstantly recurring. Documentation of these constant themes and inconstant themes is one of the major contributions of this thesis. Each cultural element of *Kaatham, Karpu, Maanam, Mozhi, Nilam, Samayam, Veeram* and *Virunthompaal* documented based on constant themes and inconstant themes could be individually probed into for deeper analysis and insights in future.

In the analysis of overall pattern and dynamics of these cultural themes, a wide range of issues related to personality, community, sex, gender, status, casteism, feudalism, profession, production, ethnicity, clan, communication, God and religious structure are discussed. They comprise various spheres of life and
society. Each of these issues offers a variety of topics for further discussion. At the same time, all the cultural themes along with the wide range of issues ultimately converge towards three linking themes: Identity – Relationship – Status quo. The factors of caste and gender are prevalent in most of the cultural themes. As far as caste is concerned, it is generally marked as an alien element in Tamil culture. However, it is a reality in social space and a prevalent factor in Tamil cinema, particularly in cultural themes. In particular, the treatment of casteism is significant under the linking theme of status quo. In short, studying the dynamics and applications of the constant cultural themes, the various aspects of identity, relationship and status quo are linked to the broader terms of Kaathal, Karpu, Maanam, Mozhi, Nilam, Samayam, Veeram and Virunthompal.

The study of ‘recurrence’ is crucial to understand the pattern and dynamics of cultural themes. It throws light on the understanding of the processes of making, unmaking, and reinforcing certain cultural themes. The dynamics of recurrence takes place in the context of socio-political-cultural factors in every decade. In the dynamics of recurrence, it is observed that the triple modes of operation, Construction – Deconstruction - Reinforcement, decide the outcome. The overall dynamics of recurrence in relation to modes of operation result in constant themes, inconstant themes, and obsolete themes. For instance, constant reinforcement of constructed themes results in constant themes, deconstruction coupled with temporary reinforcement of certain themes results in inconstant themes, and no reinforcement of certain themes results in obsolete themes. Particularly, the inconstant themes are significant as they indicate the varying trends in Tamil cinema and have the potentials to disturb and modify the constant themes through deconstruction. The inconstant themes are vibrant with and imply
socio-political-cultural factors. Thus, the study on the dynamics of recurrence, mode of operation and results, contributes to the discussion of what is popularly termed as ‘stereotypes’ in the themes of Tamil cinema. The relationship between constant themes and inconstant themes and their mutual influence may be an exclusive area for research in future.

Scholars and historians have classified the history of Tamil cinema into various periods like mythical, social, familial, dramatic, melodramatic, semi-realistic, realistic, nationalistic, Dravidian, hero-centric and regional. In the study of recurrence, it is significant that constant themes are constant in all the decades irrespective of these classifications. What draws our attention is the sustainability of these constant themes for a longer period. Film critiques can use this documented constant cultural themes as a point of reference to check the claim of introducing new and innovative themes by some filmmakers. In other words, the question arises how or to what degree the new and innovative attempts of the filmmakers influence, disturb, modify and subvert the constant themes.

Inconstant themes are the results of implied socio-political-cultural factors in each decade and creative attempts of the filmmakers. For instance, in the discussion of inconstant themes, the fifth decade marking the period of 1976 to 1985 is noteworthy, as it witnesses the emergence of feminist movements and class/caste struggles and an array of new filmmakers attempting innovative and bold themes. Transgression from hero-oriented films and traditional understanding of Karpu, introducing the identity of feminism, questioning the stereotypes of Karpu, and ideologically attempting to subvert status quo are some characteristics of this period. The attempts of transgression and introduction of alternative themes
had the potential of deconstructing the constant cultural themes. However, these attempts remain as inconstant themes, for they were sufficiently resisted with constant themes in the same decade, not adequately reinforced in the following decades, and did not make an influencing wave. Irrelevant to implied socio-political-cultural climate and without any reinforcement, certain themes become obsolete in the course of time. For instance, Sankritized Tamil, which was popular in the first decade, becomes obsolete in the following decade due to emergence of Dravidian ideology in Tamil cinema, emphasizing Tamil linguistic identity.

The study on the impact of cultural themes on Tamil society facilitates the understanding about the relationship between Tamil cinema and Tamil society. Consumerism and loss of self-identity, formation of fan clubs and the culture of hero worship, playing significant role in Tamil Nadu politics, supplementing linguistic identity of Tamils, reinforcement of women oppression, and intensification of love affair and casteism are identified as the predominant impacts. The impact of cultural themes lies in constructing, or reinforcing or popularizing certain elements. In this process, ‘identity’ in terms of politics, language, fan, hero, woman and caste; ‘relationship’ in terms of hero and fan, woman and man, and castes; and ‘status quo’ in terms of gender and caste are highlighted. Thus, the linking themes – Identity – Relationship - Status quo, are undercurrent and dynamic between the cultural themes and their impacts. In other words, the impacts of cultural themes can be interpreted in terms of these three linking themes. For instance, an understanding can be arrived at how cultural themes of Tamil cinema make impact on identity, relationship and status quo of Tamil society. In turn, one can also monitor how identity, relationship and status quo of Tamil society are constructed, deconstructed, reinforced in Tamil cinema.
As the research limits itself with people in Tamil Nadu for its study, it is a matter of concern how other Tamil audiences who reside outside Tamil Nadu experience the impact and treatment of the linking themes.

Keeping in mind the background of cultural themes of Tamil cinema and their impacts on Tamil society, there is a task for Tamil society and filmmakers to proactively predict and decide the future direction of Tamil cinema, and explore appropriate and alternative action. This task will help one to check, monitor, evaluate and steer the direction of cultural themes and their impacts. Hence, focusing on the period of 2011 to 2020, the elements of the multiple futures in relation to cultural themes and impacts are presented.

Firstly, stable futures are predicted as probable futures continuing and sustaining elements of the present cultural themes and impacts. Sustainability of the content, success rate of old content in new form, stability in culture and taste of the people are the reasonable justifications for the stable futures. In such cases, the cultural themes and impacts of the recent times will probably continue. These predictions mostly rely on the data of the past and current scenarios. Secondly, differing from the notion of stable futures, changing possible futures are predicted. As one of the changing possible futures, pessimistic futures are predicted towards degrading direction. Cultural themes and impacts in pessimistic futures will be reflected in terms of commercial values dominating cultural values, realism dominating symbolism, caste identity dominating Tamil identity, relativism dominating universal ethics, and freedom dominating sensitivity. Although the elements of pessimistic futures are discouraging, they can be perceived as warning signals. As other changing possible futures, optimistic futures are predicted towards progressive direction. Cultural themes and impacts in optimistic futures
will be realized in terms of resisting super human heroes, declining political charisma, declining hero worship, and focused subgroup identity. Based on aspirations, dreams and hopes, finally, preferable futures are predicated as desirable futures. Cultural themes and impacts in preferable futures will be realized in terms of empowering subaltern people, gender sensitivity, peripheral space to *Kaathal*, reinterpretation of violence, transforming relationship between form and content, freedom of expression, media education and movement of parallel cinema.

Multiple futures are predicted on the understanding that futures can be explored and designed. Hence, there are various factors involved in steering these futures. Convergence of technologies, explosion of new media and television and declining number of economic cinema theatres are the factors linked to information technologies and their growth. There are socio-economic-political factors like globalization, post-modernism, and developments in post M.G.R. period in Tamil Nadu. There are cultural factors including stable culture in society, people’s felt need for change in the content of cinema, and search in focused group identity. The current wave in remaking, focusing on the innovative ‘form’ of cinema, genre of realism, genre of anti-hero, and guarantee in existing content indicate the rate of success implying commercial factors. There are attitudinal factors like social responsibility and sensitivity of the filmmakers, encouragement and welcoming mindset of the audience. Media education for people and movement of parallel cinema are the additional factors associated to education on cinema and alternative cinema. These are some predominantly expressed factors and are the implied agents to be monitored, or modified or replaced or activated towards our choice of futures.
Based on the explorations of multiple futures, related multiple future scenarios are presented in a nutshell. These future scenarios highlight the characteristic features of constant cultural themes, inconstant themes, role of implied agents, signals of implied agents, culture in Tamil society, and task for Tamil society. These characteristic features not only highlight the similarities and differences of various futures, but also point out the multidimensional factors to approach the futures. Though these future scenarios are not a complete package or an absolute blue print, these characteristics indicate the major signals and insights for the course of action towards our choice of future. Indeed, such future course of action involves the collective responsibility of the filmmakers and the people. Drawing inspiration from various futures, a culture of pro-active, innovative, and collective participation in the horizon of Tamil cinema, Tamil culture, and Tamil society can be initiated in view of further futures.