

**BASED ON TRUE EVENTS  
THE STREET SCRIPTS THE SCREEN**

A T T DHAVAMANNI FILM  
**GURUSHETRAM**  
24 HOURS OF ANGER



# SYNOPSIS

From director T T Dhavamanni, “Gurushetram - 24 Hours of Anger” tells a sinuously provocative, edge-of-your-seat thriller about Prakash who is brought up in a particular segment of the working-class Indian society lined with the wreckage of broken families and dreams. Prakash, a seventeen-year old teenager, losing his family, seeks shelter with his uncle Vinod, the head of a drug ring, with his mentally challenged younger brother. The two teenagers emerge as pivotal accomplices in Vinod’s clandestine drug operations.

Unbeknownst to Vinod, an adamant narcotics police superintendent is hot on their heels after receiving a string of tips offs from an anonymous informant. An earnest social counsellor tries to reach out to Prakash and his brother but meets resistance from those within and outside the law. Both the law enforcers and Vinod want a piece of Prakash and his defenceless sibling in a world fraught with peril, double-crossings and deceptions. Prakash has no choice but play his final card to salvage the situation and protect his brother once and for all.







Blue River Pictures presents, in association with Singapore Film Commission, a Golden Village theatres' release, "Gurushetram - 24 Hours of Anger", starring Vishnu, Sivakumar, Mathialagan, Rajesh Kannan, Gunalan and many others. The film is produced by Blue River Pictures in collaboration with the Singapore Film Commission. The screenplay is by both T T Dhavamanni and Chong Tze Chien. T T Dhavamanni is also the executive producer while Manickam and Tinagaran (Malaysia) are the producers.

Behind the scenes, T T Dhavamanni collaborated with many of his long-time associates, including director of photography Lucas Jodogne, production designer Veeraraghavan, and editor Praveen. The original score is by Rafee.

Filming "Gurushetram - 24 Hours of Anger" was accomplished mainly on locations in and around Singapore and Ulu Tiram, Johor, Malaysia. "Gurushetram - 24 Hours of Anger" is distributed in Singapore by Golden Village Pictures Pte Ltd. The film will be rated accordingly and appropriately as advised by the Singapore Censorship Board.





# ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

*"... As human beings, our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the World, as in being able to remake ourselves. We must become the change we wish to see in the world..."*

*- Mahatma Gandhi*



The production of the movie, titled "Gurushetram - 24 Hours of Anger", attempts to focus on one neglected segment of the Indian community in Singapore questioning the general myths, attitudes and assumptions that ours is a problem-free community thriving in a prosperous nation. In the process of encountering the realities, we absorb new narratives and mental pictures that may encourage shifts in our traditional myths and assumptions, and this, in fact, is the thematic undercurrent of the film.

In short, the film, in the words of Nicole Rafter (2006), a film critic, "attempts to make sense of a society in which the street scripts the screen and the screen scripts the street".

Directed by T T Dhavamanni, "Gurushetram - 24 Hours of Anger" chronicles the trials and tribulations of Prakash and how he overcomes several obstacles in the mission to protect his mentally challenged brother.

In the film, Prakash as a character and his family background as a setting were something that inspired Dhavamanni to script the story.

Dhavamanni says, "What has been forgotten and sidelined needs brushing up and a little bit of dramatisation, and this I hope will add light to reality and instil urgency to re-examine what has been already accepted as a norm by the society" and he further adds "Prakash does not represent any one particular Tamil family or any one character element of the story. It takes on a broader meaning over the course of the film".

He adds on underlining the rationale for the birth of "Gurushetram - 24 Hours of Anger", "I had reached a certain stage in my life where normalcy [leading a protected and sheltered life] was the guiding principle; I wanted to progress on to the next stage of career as an innovator capturing my dreams in stills on a bigger platform; creating an Art for the world platform yet staying truthful to its existence; embarking on an artistic journey that encompasses my peers, fellow artistes, actors and my community. Well, some say it is a way to push the frontiers of our ability further while others count this as a qualifying test into the world of film genre. To me as long as it satisfies my craving for constant innovation, helped along by my past experiences and thoughts thrusting me into the future... I would have achieved my goal".



The award-winning director who cites that he is after-all a port-worker's son wants to inspire filmmakers who come from the minority sector of our cosmopolitan culture discussing issues close to the heart of the different communities in Singapore.

These sentiments are also reflected by **Vishnu** who stars in the role of Prakash. "This is an important story about a segment of the society that too few people know about", he states. "I cannot imagine such a journey taking place to someone who is from a politically stable, economically vibrant and socially well-arranged society. I am proud to have the opportunity to work on the film. And when you have the chance to work with and supported by Dhavamanni's abilities ... it is something like kurinjimalar [a flower that blooms once in twelve years]".

Similarly, Prakash's child-version artiste **Kishen**, a nine-year old boy from Montfort Junior, says it all when he outlines his experience on the set, "I feel like I have acquired both knowledge and an enlarged circle of adult friends who have common interests assembled under one roof by my uncle Dhava... something the school cannot give me. Occasionally, I behave and imagine a lot like Prakash now... the things he has gone through have strengthened me as a young person".

Dhavamanni notes, "This story takes place at a critical point in the life of Prakash. I think he demonstrated great courage and independence protecting his weak brother.

He knows he needs to protect him first in school from bullies and later in the outside world from manipulators – this was one thing foremost in his mind, perhaps the only thing."

Putting the story in perspective, **Veeraraghavan**, the art director of "Gurushetram - 24 Hours of Anger" explains, "What you have to understand is that the underbelly of the community needs to be exposed tastefully and a powerful medium to do that will be the film. I have acted in several social dramas both on stage and before camera, but nothing as powerful as this. Dhavamanni's brilliance in handling the subject matter at hand should be seen as a constructive and meaningful project, and I believe this could be transformed into a powerful instrument not only creating awareness but symbolising the division within the small community, division we may have in terms of status and approach towards life. Indeed this is a strong social message from a strong Singaporean director. Thus, my biggest task as a production designer was to create a backdrop that was universal - away from the typical clichés, a surrounding that compliments the director's vision that speaks at layers to the audience!"

**Lucas Jodogne SBC** the award winning cinematographer adds "Dhava and I worked together on tele-movies after he saw my cinematography on "The Maid". I was impressed with the way he directs his actors and puts together a story. He communicates his vision very clearly upon which I can complement him by translating that into visual language. Both of us seem to feel that we are mutually immersed in the creative process of moviemaking".





“For “Gurushetram – 24 Hours of Anger” we were trying to focus in as close as possible in defining a style for it and we had lengthy discussions of how to bring it to the screen in preproduction. Once on the set we had all the elements of our puzzle together; the colour scheme, the lighting and the individual photographic style of the different periods were addressed when appropriate. Dhava and me were telling the same story and this synergy was also felt by the actors. Thanks to my outstanding crew, with whom I have collaborated on many projects, there were very few distractions taking us away from the story and I hope you can witness that watching this movie.”

The third assistant director of the film “Gurushetram - 24 Hours of Anger”, **Manoj**, a student of Digital Filmmaking at the Nanyang Technological University, provides special insight to the working relationship between Dhavamanni and the director of photography, Lucas Jodogne. “The symbiotic relationship between the key personnel, especially when scenes were re-shot again and again, clearly underlined the similar passion they have in this field. Though Lucas handled the camera religiously and Dhava directed the artistes effortlessly, the interaction in the form of suggestions made and observations shared between them bridged the shortfalls adding to the brilliance of the film”.

**Kather**, the first assistant director, agrees with his counterpart.

“I have always maintained that the local Tamil film industry could not have imagined a better story and then what had happened in the life of Prakash; and, a crew who understands each other at almost all levels. I was fortunate enough to be the first assistant director to a wonderful group of men who were focused on the task, and we could not have asked for a better director”.

“Gurushetram - 24 Hours of Anger” is not a progression from book to screen. Rather, it is a product which took shape in the mind of Dhavamanni while he was filming the hit television series “Guru Paarvai” which won awards and went on for three seasons enjoying rapturous ratings on the Vasantham channel. “While creating the series, I had an opportunity to study and work with teenagers and at that developmental stage I understood as an observer how ideologies take shape governing these teenagers’ behaviour; a period of time where ambitions creep in governing their actions; a fearless period where they feel that they can conquer the world regardless of the numerous adversities; a period when they succumb to different types of influences – this is what sociologists term as the ‘secondary socialisation stage’; a period when 24 hours will appear too short and too fast; a period when rebellion becomes the order of the day ... a challenge faced by parents and guardians alike. Basically, a period of time which we all have gone through and experienced in our life.”

The screenplay for “Gurushetram - 24 Hours of Anger” was written both by the director and his close associate, writer-director Chong Tze Chien. Both writers managed to capture the considerable span of Prakash’s story for the screen in the time-frame of a full-length film.

*the finals*







**Chong Tze Chien** explains, "While the script was two years in the making, the genesis of the project started as far back as five years ago when Dhavamanni and I started working together professionally. A close associate of mine in the army, Dhavamanni and I got reacquainted by chance at the S11 food court outside the now demolished National Library; our respective career was in its infant stage then; he had just joined the MediaCorp as a TV director/writer and I was only in my first year as a full-time playwright in a theatre company. Four years later, Dhavamanni left MediaCorp to set up Blue River Pictures and I joined another company – The Finger Players -- as its Company Director. We met up frequently ever since to chat about our work/company, recent movies/plays we had seen and everything in between. Those dialogues naturally evolved into story ideas and very soon I was roped in to write some of his TV dramas. By then there was a natural chemistry between us; I attribute this to us being both writer and director in our respective fields; as such we understood each other perfectly, complementing each other with our strengths and constantly improving on each other's ideas. I thoroughly enjoyed myself in the two years of drafting and revising ideas for the film as the history of our friendship and professional partnership had rendered the writing process productive and organic. Prakash, Vinod and the other characters in "Gurushetram - 24 Hours of Anger" came alive right before our eyes even before casting and filming had begun. We knew we had a special and precious project in our hands!"

Taking it to the next step, Dhavamanni approached our home grown talent whose works have been showcased by the South Indian Tamil film industry in the recent years, **Rafee**, with whom he had worked before on television-dramas including the New York Festival acclaimed "Match'Stick – The Musical", about directing the original score.

"I jumped into it with both feet. I am grateful for the opportunity to work on a home-based production", Rafee states. "Though I have directed the music for mega-productions such as "Jaggubhai" in Chennai, to me this local production is close to my heart and I cherish the memory". He further adds, "It has been a good professional experience, with very committed and artistes who belief in what they do, allowing me complete freedom in expressing myself musically".

"Now the question was who is going to edit the film ... someone who has prior experience ... someone who has worked on a variety of genres ... someone who could align himself with the thoughts and visual interpretation of the director! We had no second thoughts. It has to be **Praveen KL** with fifteen years of film industry experience and who has edited big budget Kollywood movies such as "Kanthaswamy", "Goa", and small budget ones such as "Chennai 600028".

Dhavamanni sent the screenplay to Praveen, who immediately responded to the material. "The script blew me away; I thought with the right mixture of all the elements cut in, this movie has the great potential to transform into a superb film. The possibilities to showcase emotions and drama were imbibed within each and every line of the script." "Gurushetram - 24 Hours of Anger" marks Dhavamanni's sixth collaboration with Praveen, having previously worked on several award winning television programmes. Praveen observes, "We are very familiar with each other's style. It is an easy and complementary relationship, which is why we enjoy working together so much. I understand exactly what Dhava is looking for and how he would like to visualise and put materials together that will in the end, give us the best product".





The award-winning director remarks, “The entire project was like bees coming together – working hard on all aspects of production, from acting workshops, casting, identifying location, rehearsals, blocking, story boarding, production design, shooting, editing, sound design to the production of music. Everything flowed into the jar – a jar of honey which we hope will linger in the taste buds of the audience.” Oscar Wilde has once said that a “society exists only as a mental concept; in the real world there are only individuals”. On a final note, Dhavamanni adds with a tinge of optimism, “I hope that the individuals and the message portrayed in the film “Gurushetram – 24 Hours of Anger” stays with the community for many years to come ...”





## CAST

VISHNU	VICKNESWARI	GUNASEELAN
MATHIALAGAN	GUNALAN MORGAN	KARTHIK MOORTHY
SIVA KUMAR	NAGULAN	KATHIRAVAN
RAJESH KANNAN	MOHAN	KISHEN DURAIRAJOO
PRAKASH ARASU	MAAHES	DIVESHAN DURAIRAJOO

## CREW

WRITER   DIRECTOR   EXECUTIVE PRODUCER	T T DHAVAMANNI
PRODUCER	S MANICKAM
PRODUCER	TINAGARAN
CO WRITER	CHONG TZE CHIEN
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	LUCAS JODOGNE SBC (BELGIUM)
ORIGINAL MUSIC	RAFEE
SOUND DESIGN	NOH GHANI
PRODUCTION DESIGN	VEERARAGHAVAN
1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	ABDUL KATHER
2ND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	ARUNASALAM ERANIEN
3RD ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	MANOJ PRABHODA CHANDRAN
ASSISTANT PRODUCER	KARTHIK MOORTHY
ASSISTANT PRODUCER	THARMARAJ
IMAGE STYLIST	NOREHAN & TEAM
STUNT DIRECTOR	JIMMY LOW
DANCE CHOREOGRAPHER	SHERIF MOIDEEN (INDIA)

A FILM BY T T DHAVAMANNI

SINGAPORE | COLOUR | 123 MIN | HD | 2010 | TAMIL, ENGLISH

