

INVOKING JUSTICE

A film by Deepa Dhanraj



In Southern India, family disputes are settled by Jamaats – all male bodies which apply Islamic Sharia law to cases, without allowing women to be present, even to defend themselves. Recognizing this fundamental inequity, a group of women in 2004 established a women’s Jamaat, which soon became a network of 12,000 members spread over 12 districts. Despite enormous resistance, they have been able to settle more than 8,000 cases to date, ranging from divorce to wife beating and brutal murders.

Award-winning filmmaker Deepa Dhanraj (SOMETHING LIKE A WAR) follows several cases, shining a light on how the women’s Jamaat has acquired power through both communal education and the leaders’ persistent, tenacious and compassionate investigation of the crimes.

In astonishing scenes we watch the Jamaat meetings, where women often shout over each other about the most difficult facets of their personal lives. Above all, the women’s Jamaat exists to hold their male counterparts and local police to account, and to reform a profoundly corrupt system which allows men to take refuge in the most extreme interpretation of the Qur’an to justify violence towards women.



India, 2011, 85 minutes, Color, Subtitled (Tamil)

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