Rajinikanth

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

[Jump to navigation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#mw-head)[Jump to search](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#searchInput)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Rajinikanth** | |
| [Rajinikanth at the Inauguration of MGR Statue.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rajinikanth_at_the_Inauguration_of_MGR_Statue.jpg)  Rajinikanth in 2018 | |
| **Born** | Shivaji Rao Gaekwad  12 December 1950 (age 71)[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-shivaji-1)  [Bangalore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangalore), [Mysore State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mysore_State) (now [Karnataka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karnataka)), India |
| **Other names** | * Rajni * Rajini * Thalaivar (lit. 'Leader') * Super Star * Style Mannan (lit. 'King of Style') |
| **Occupation** | * Actor * film producer |
| **Years active** | 1975–present |
| **Spouse(s)** | [Latha Rajinikanth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latha_Rajinikanth)    ​  (m. 1981)​ |
| **Children** | * [Aishwarya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aishwarya_R._Dhanush) * [Soundarya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soundarya_Rajinikanth) |
| **Relatives** | see [Rajinikanth family](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_South_Indian_film_families" \l "Rajinikanth_family" \o "List of South Indian film families) |
| **Awards** | [Dadasaheb Phalke Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dadasaheb_Phalke_Award) (2020)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-DS-2) [Padma Vibhushan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padma_Vibhushan) (2016)[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-pv-3) [NTR National Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NTR_National_Award) (2016) [Padma Bhushan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padma_Bhushan) (2000) [Kalaimamani](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalaimamani) (1984) ([See full list](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_awards_and_nominations_received_by_Rajinikanth)) |

**Rajinikanth**[[a]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth" \l "cite_note-5) (born **Shivaji Rao Gaekwad**;[[b]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth" \l "cite_note-6) 12 December 1950) is an Indian actor, producer and screenwriter who works predominantly in [Tamil cinema](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_cinema). He has won many awards, including four [Tamil Nadu State Film Best Actor Awards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_Nadu_State_Film_Award_for_Best_Actor) and a [Filmfare Best Tamil Actor Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filmfare_Award_for_Best_Actor_%E2%80%93_Tamil" \o "Filmfare Award for Best Actor – Tamil). The [Government of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_of_India) has honoured him with the [Padma Bhushan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padma_Bhushan) (2000) and the [Padma Vibhushan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padma_Vibhushan) (2016). He received the [Chevalier Sivaji Ganesan Award for Excellence in Indian Cinema](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chevalier_Sivaji_Ganesan_Award_for_Excellence_in_Indian_Cinema) at the [4th Vijay Awards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4th_Vijay_Awards).[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-:1-7) At the 45th [International Film Festival of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Film_Festival_of_India) (2014), he was conferred with the "Centenary Award for Indian Film Personality of the Year". At the 50th edition of the [International Film Festival of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Film_Festival_of_India) (2019), he was honoured with the Icon of Global Jubilee award.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-8) He is the second-highest grossing actor in Tamil cinema history, behind [M. G. Ramachandran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M._G._Ramachandran).[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-9) At the [67th National Film Awards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/67th_National_Film_Awards), he was awarded India's highest award in the field of cinema, [Dadasaheb Phalke Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dadasaheb_Phalke_Award" \o "Dadasaheb Phalke Award).

Following his debut in [K. Balachander](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K._Balachander)'s 1975 Tamil drama *[Apoorva Raagangal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apoorva_Raagangal" \o "Apoorva Raagangal)*, Rajinikanth's acting career commenced with a brief phase of portraying antagonistic characters in Tamil films. The Suresh Krissna-directed *[Baashha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baashha" \o "Baashha)* (1995) in which Rajinikanth played a [crime boss](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crime_boss), was a major commercial success in his career and earned him a 'god-like' status in [Tamil Nadu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_Nadu).[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-IE2-10) [*Sivaji*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sivaji_(film)) (2007) was the third Indian film to enter the [100 Crore Club](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/100_Crore_Club). He played dual roles, as a scientist and an [andro-humanoid robot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Android_(robot)" \o "Android (robot)), in the [science fiction film](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Science_fiction_film) *[Enthiran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enthiran" \o "Enthiran)* (2010) and its sequel [*2.0*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2.0_(film)) (2018), both being [India's most expensive production at the time of their release](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_most_expensive_Indian_films), and among the [one of highest-grossing Indian films of all time](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_highest-grossing_Indian_films).[[c]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-12)

Rajinikanth is widely regarded as one of the most popular actors in the history of Indian cinema. His popularity has been attributed to his uniquely styled dialogues and idiosyncrasies in films, as well as his political statements and philanthropy. A philanthropist, he undertook a day-long fast in 2002 to protest the [Government of Karnataka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_of_Karnataka)'s [decision to not release Kaveri River water into Tamil Nadu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaveri_River_water_dispute), and donated ₹10 million (US$130,000) toward a plan to interlink Indian rivers. Rajinikanth is the only Indian actor to be featured in the [Central Board of Secondary Education](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Board_of_Secondary_Education) (CBSE) syllabus, in a lesson titled *From Bus Conductor to Superstar*. In 2015, a film about his fandom, [*For the Love of a Man*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/For_the_Love_of_a_Man), premiered at the [71st Venice International Film Festival](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/71st_Venice_International_Film_Festival).



**Contents**

* [1Early life](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#Early_life)
* [2Acting career](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#Acting_career)
  + [2.11975–1977: Early career](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#1975%E2%80%931977:_Early_career)
  + [2.21978–1989: Experimentation and breakthrough](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#1978%E2%80%931989:_Experimentation_and_breakthrough)
  + [2.31990–2001: Commercial stardom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#1990%E2%80%932001:_Commercial_stardom)
  + [2.42002–2010: Struggles, resurgence and acclaim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#2002%E2%80%932010:_Struggles,_resurgence_and_acclaim)
  + [2.52011–present: Hospitalisation and return](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#2011%E2%80%93present:_Hospitalisation_and_return)
* [3Political career](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#Political_career)
* [4Acclaim and criticism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#Acclaim_and_criticism)
  + [4.1Acting style](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#Acting_style)
  + [4.2Comments on social issues](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#Comments_on_social_issues)
* [5Personal life](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#Personal_life)
  + [5.1Relationships](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#Relationships)
  + [5.2Family](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#Family)
  + [5.3Views](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#Views)
  + [5.4Philanthropy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#Philanthropy)
  + [5.5Money lending allegation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#Money_lending_allegation)
* [6Awards and honours](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#Awards_and_honours)
* [7Notes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#Notes)
* [8References](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#References)
* [9Bibliography](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#Bibliography)
* [10Further reading](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#Further_reading)
* [11External links](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#External_links)

Early life

Rajinikanth was born as Shivaji Rao Gaekwad on 12 December 1950 in a [Marathi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marathi_people) family in [Bangalore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangalore), [Mysore State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mysore_State) (present day [Karnataka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karnataka)).[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chpt._Introduction-13)[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-shivaji-1)[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-birth-14) He was named after the [Maratha Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maratha_Empire) king [Shivaji](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shivaji" \o "Shivaji), and was brought up speaking [Marathi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marathi_language) at home and [Kannada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kannada) outside.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chpt._Introduction-13) His mother was a housewife,[[d]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth" \l "cite_note-16) and his father Ramoji Rao Gaekwad was a police constable.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-shivaji-1) His ancestors hailed from [Mavadi Kadepathar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mavadi_Kadepathar" \o "Mavadi Kadepathar), [Pune](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pune), [Maharashtra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maharashtra).[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-17)[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-18) He is the youngest of four siblings in a family consisting of two elder brothers (Satyanarayana Rao and Nageshwara Rao) and a sister (Aswath Balubhai).[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-19)[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chpt._Introduction-13) After his father's retirement from work in 1956, the family moved to the suburb of [Hanumantha Nagar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanumanthanagar,_Bengaluru" \o "Hanumanthanagar, Bengaluru) in Bangalore and built a house there.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chpt._Introduction-13) He lost his mother at the age of nine.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-20)

Rajinikanth had his primary education at the Gavipuram Government Kannada Model Primary School in Bangalore.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-Primary-21) As a child, he was "studious and mischievous" with a great interest in cricket, football and basketball. During this time, his brother enrolled him at the [Ramakrishna Math](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramakrishna_Math), a Hindu monastery set up by the [Ramakrishna Mission](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramakrishna_Mission). In the *math*, he was taught [Vedas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vedas), tradition and history, which eventually instilled a sense of spirituality in him.[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chpt._1-22) In addition to spiritual lessons, he also began acting in plays at the *math*. His aspiration towards theatre grew at the math and was once given an opportunity to enact the role of *[Ekalavya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ekalavya" \o "Ekalavya)*'s friend from the Hindu epic [Mahabharata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahabharata). His performance in the play received praise from the Kannada poet [D. R. Bendre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D._R._Bendre).[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chpt._Introduction-13) After sixth grade, Rajinikanth was enrolled at the [Acharya Pathasala Public School](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acharya_Pathasala_Public_School) and studied there till completion of his [pre-university course](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pre-university_course).[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chpt._1-22) During his schooling at the *Acharya Pathasala*, he spent a lot of time acting in plays.

Upon completion of his school education, Rajinikanth performed several jobs including that of a [coolie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coolie),[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-23) before getting a job in the [Bangalore Transport Service](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangalore_Metropolitan_Transport_Corporation) (BTS) as a [bus conductor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bus_conductor).[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-bmtc-24) He continued to take part in plays after the Kannada playwright Topi Muniappa offered him a chance to act in one of his mythological plays. He decided to take up an acting course in the newly formed [Madras Film Institute](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film_and_Television_Institute_of_Tamil_Nadu) after coming across an advertisement.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-MM1-25) Though his family was not fully supportive of his decision to join the institute,[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth" \l "cite_note-MM1-25) his friend and co-worker Raj Bahadur motivated him to join the institute and financially supported him during this phase.[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-26)[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-27) During his stay at the institute, he was noticed by the Tamil film director [K. Balachander](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K._Balachander).[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-Rajini-28) Balachander provided Rajinikanth with his stage name to avoid confusion with fellow actor [Sivaji Ganesan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sivaji_Ganesan), having taken it from a character's name in his earlier film [*Major Chandrakanth*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_Chandrakanth_(1966_film)).[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-29)[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-30) The director advised him to learn to speak [Tamil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_language), a recommendation that Rajinikanth quickly followed.[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-31) Though he can read the language, he cannot write in it.[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-32)

Acting career

*Further information: [Rajinikanth filmography](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth_filmography" \o "Rajinikanth filmography)*

**1975–1977: Early career**

"Rajinikanth claims that I am his school. But I must admit that this wasn't the Rajinikanth I introduced. He has evolved on his own merits and strengths. I gave him an opportunity and unveiled him to the world. He went and conquered it."

—K. Balachander about Rajinikanth[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth" \l "cite_note-FOOTNOTEHindu201212-33)

Rajinikanth began his film career with the Tamil film *[Apoorva Raagangal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apoorva_Raagangal" \o "Apoorva Raagangal)* (1975), directed by [K. Balachander](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K._Balachander).[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-firstbreak-34) He was cast in a small role as the ex-husband of the female lead played by [Srividya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Srividya" \o "Srividya).[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-firstbreak-34)[[31]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-pioneer-35)[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-express-36) The film explored [relationships between people with wide age differences](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_disparity_in_sexual_relationships) and was deemed controversial upon release.[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-37) However, it received critical acclaim and won three [National Film Awards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Film_Awards) including the [Award for the Best Tamil Feature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Film_Award_for_Best_Feature_Film_in_Tamil) at the [23rd National Film Awards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/23rd_National_Film_Awards) in 1976.[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-38) A review from [*The Hindu*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hindu) noted that: "Newcomer Rajinikanth is dignified and impressive".[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTEHindu201267-39) His next release was [Puttanna Kanagal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puttanna_Kanagal" \o "Puttanna Kanagal)'s Kannada [anthology film](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthology_film) [*Katha Sangama*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katha_Sangama) (1976).[[36]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-40) Rajinikanth appeared in the last segment of the film; he played the role as a village ruffian who rapes a blind woman in the absence of her husband.[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chpt._3-41) Balachander cast him in a pivotal role in *[Anthuleni Katha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthuleni_Katha" \o "Anthuleni Katha)*, the [Telugu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telugu_language) remake of his own Tamil film [*Aval Oru Thodar Kathai*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aval_Oru_Thodar_Kathai) (1974).[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chpt._3-41) In *[Moondru Mudichu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moondru_Mudichu" \o "Moondru Mudichu)*—the first Tamil film to feature him in a prominent role—he played a character that "blithely row[s] away" when his friend drowns accidentally in the lake only to fulfill his desire to marry the former's girlfriend.[[38]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chpt._4-42) His style of flipping the cigarette in the film made him popular among the audience.[[39]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-43) In his final release of the year, *[Baalu Jenu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baalu_Jenu" \o "Baalu Jenu)*, he was cast as the main antagonist which troubles the female lead.[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chpt._3-41) He played similar roles in Balachander's *[Avargal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avargal" \o "Avargal)* (1977),[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-44) and [Bharathiraja](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharathiraja" \o "Bharathiraja)'s [*16 Vayadhinile*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/16_Vayathinile) (1977).[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chpt._3-41)[[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-45) The same year, he made his first-ever appearance as a lead actor in the Telugu film *[Chilakamma Cheppindi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chilakamma_Cheppindi" \o "Chilakamma Cheppindi)*.[[42]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-46)[[43]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-47) [S. P. Muthuraman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S._P._Muthuraman) experimented Rajinikanth in a positive role in *[Bhuvana Oru Kelvi Kuri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhuvana_Oru_Kelvi_Kuri" \o "Bhuvana Oru Kelvi Kuri)* (1977).[[44]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-rediff1-48) The success of the film brought the duo together for 24 more films till the 1990s.[[44]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-rediff1-48) Rajinikanth played supporting and "villainous" roles in most of the films released during the year.[[38]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chpt._4-42) In *[Gaayathri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaayathri" \o "Gaayathri)* he was cast as a pornographer who secretly films his relationship with his wife without her knowledge and in *[Galate Samsara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galate_Samsara" \o "Galate Samsara)* he played the role of a married man who develops an affair with a [cabaret dancer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabaret).[[45]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chpt._5-49) He had 15 of his films released during the year.[[46]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTESreekanth2008370-50)

**1978–1989: Experimentation and breakthrough**

In 1978, Rajinikanth had 20 releases across Tamil, Telugu and Kannada.[[47]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chpt._6-51)[[48]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTESreekanth2008369%E2%80%93370-52) His first film of the year was [P. Madhavan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P._Madhavan)'s [*Shankar Salim Simon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shankar_Salim_Simon), in which he was among the three leads. Following that, he co-starred alongside [Vishnuvardhan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vishnuvardhan_(actor)) in the [Kannada film](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kannada_cinema) *[Kiladi Kittu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiladi_Kittu" \o "Kiladi Kittu)*. He played the second lead in *[Annadammula Savaal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annadammula_Savaal" \o "Annadammula Savaal)*, which starred [Krishna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krishna_Ghattamaneni); Rajinikanth reprised his role from the [Kannada original](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahodarara_Savaal). He then played an important role in the supernatural thriller *[Aayiram Jenmangal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aayiram_Jenmangal" \o "Aayiram Jenmangal)*. In *[Maathu Tappada Maga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maathu_Tappada_Maga" \o "Maathu Tappada Maga)*, he was the main antagonist. *[Bairavi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bairavi" \o "Bairavi)*, directed by [M.Bhaskar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M._Bhaskar" \o "M. Bhaskar), was the first Tamil film to cast Rajinikanth as a solo hero.[[49]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-53)[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chap._6-54) It was for this film that he earned the sobriquet "Superstar".[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chap._6-54) [S. Thanu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S._Thanu), one of the film's distributors, set up a 35 feet (11 m) high cut-out of Rajinikanth.[[51]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-55) His next appearance *[Ilamai Oonjal Aadukirathu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilamai_Oonjal_Aadukirathu" \o "Ilamai Oonjal Aadukirathu)*, a quadrangular love story written and directed by [C. V. Sridhar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._V._Sridhar), saw him play the role of a man who sacrifices his love for his friend, played by [Kamal Haasan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kamal_Haasan). The film's success prompted Sridhar to remake the film in Telugu, *[Vayasu Pilichindi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vayasu_Pilichindi" \o "Vayasu Pilichindi)*, which retained the original cast of the Tamil film.[*[citation needed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed" \o "Wikipedia:Citation needed)*]

His next film, *[Vanakkatukuriya Kathaliye](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vanakkatukuriya_Kathaliye" \o "Vanakkatukuriya Kathaliye)*, had an introductory song to mark his entry, a trend that would soon catch on in with his later films.[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chap._6-54) *[Mullum Malarum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mullum_Malarum" \o "Mullum Malarum)*, released during the same period, received critical acclaim.[[52]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-56) The film marked the directional debut of [Mahendran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahendran_(filmmaker)), with a screenplay adapted from a novel of the same name published in *[Kalki](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalki_(magazine)" \o "Kalki (magazine))*.[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chap._6-54) It won that year's [Filmfare Award for Best Tamil Film](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filmfare_Award_for_Best_Tamil_Film" \o "Filmfare Award for Best Tamil Film) and a Special Prize (Best Actor) for Rajinikanth at the Tamil Nadu State Film Awards.[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chap._6-54) Following this, he made a foray into [Malayalam cinema](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinema_of_Kerala) with [I. V. Sasi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I._V._Sasi)'s fantasy film *[Allauddinum Albhutha Vilakkum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allauddinum_Albhutha_Vilakkum" \o "Allauddinum Albhutha Vilakkum)*, which was based on a story from the [Arabian Nights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabian_Nights). The same year, he acted in [*Dharma Yuddam*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dharma_Yuddam), in which he played a mentally ill person avenging the death of his parents. He then co-starred with [N. T. Rama Rao](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/N._T._Rama_Rao) in [*Tiger*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_(1979_film)). Upon completion of *Tiger*, Rajinikanth had acted in 50 films over a period of four years, and in four languages. Some other popular films released during this period are the youthful entertainer *[Ninaithale Inikkum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ninaithale_Inikkum_(1979_film)" \o "Ninaithale Inikkum (1979 film))*, the Tamil–Kannada bilingual *[Priya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Priya_(1978_film)" \o "Priya (1978 film))*, the Telugu film *[Amma Evarikkaina Amma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amma_Evarikkaina_Amma" \o "Amma Evarikkaina Amma)* and the melodrama *[Aarilirunthu Arubathu Varai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aarilirunthu_Arubathu_Varai" \o "Aarilirunthu Arubathu Varai)*. *Priya*, based on a detective novel by [Sujatha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sujatha_(writer)), had the distinction of being the first film of Rajinikanth to be shot mostly outside India, mainly in Southeast Asia.[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamachandran2012chap._6-54)

Raijinikanth, who credited [Hindi film](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindi_film) star [Amitabh Bachchan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amitabh_Bachchan) as his inspiration,[[53]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-57) began playing Amitabh Bachchan's roles in Tamil remakes of his films.[[54]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajinikanth#cite_note-indianexpress-58) This began