

= Aval Appadithan =

Aval Appadithan (English : That is how she is) is a 1978 Indian Tamil @-@ language drama film directed by C. Rudhraiya in his directorial debut , and co @-@ written by him with Somasundareshwar . The film was produced by Ragamanjari in association with the M.G.R. Government Film and Television Training Institute . It stars Kamal Haasan , Rajinikanth , and Sripriya , while Ilaiyaraaja composed the film 's music . The plot revolves around Manju (Sripriya) and the difficulties she faces in her life , due to her romantic relationships , resulting in her developing an aggressive and cynical nature towards men .

Aval Appadithan was released on 30 October 1978 , on Diwali day . Although the film received positive critical reception , it was not a box office success at the time of its release . However , the film began to develop an audience after directors P. Bharathiraja and Mrinal Sen commented positively about it . The film was noted for its stylish filmmaking , screenplay , and dialogue , a large portion of it being in English .

Aval Appadithan was the first film made by a graduate of the M.G.R. Government Film and Television Training Institute , facilitating students of film technology to achieve success in the field of cinema . The film received the second prize for Best Film at the 1978 Tamil Nadu State Film Awards , while Nallusamy and M. N. Gnanashekharan won the Best Cinematographer award . Additionally , Sripriya received a Special Award for the Best Actress of 1978 . In 2013 , CNN @-@ News18 included the film in its list , " The 100 greatest Indian films of all time " .

= = Plot = =

Manju (Sripriya) was raised in a dysfunctional family that consisted of a timid father and a philandering mother ; she hurtles from one disastrous affair to another , leading to her degenerating into a cynical woman . Into her life enter two radically different men . One of them is her boss , Thyagu (Rajinikanth) , who owns the advertising agency she works for . He is a stereotype of the successful man : money @-@ minded , opinionated , arrogant , and a male chauvinist . In sharp contrast is Arun (Kamal Haasan) , who has come to Chennai from Coimbatore to make a documentary on women . Sensitive and sincere , he believes his job has a purpose and is both shocked and amused at the cynical attitudes of Manju and Thyagu .

Manju has been drafted by Thyagu to assist Arun in his documentary . As Arun and Manju start working together , Arun begins to understand Manju 's complex personality . She tells Arun about her unfortunate past relationships : How she was molested by her uncle , the ending of her first relationship in college when her lover left her by marrying another woman for the sake of employment , and how her second love , Mano (Sivachandran) , a Christian priest 's son , used her to satisfy his needs and lust , calling her " sister " in front of her parents . These incidents have led to her present attitude towards men . Arun later shares these conversations with Thyagu , who warns him to steer clear of such women .

Inevitably , Arun falls for Manju . However Manju incurs Thyagu 's wrath when he overhears her reprimanding her office staff for commenting on her character . When Thyagu also comments about her , she resigns from her job . When he learns of this , Arun requests Thyagu to re @-@ employ her . Thyagu simply laughs and says that she is already back , after which Manju seems to have a change of heart and starts courting Thyagu . Arun is devastated to see that she has turned out to be just the sort of woman that Thyagu earlier said she was ? opportunistic , money @-@ minded , and fickle . When he asks her about her contradicting stands in life , she responds by saying that is the way she is and will be .

The truth finally emerges that Manju was merely baiting Thyagu to teach him a lesson . When Thyagu starts believing that Manju has fallen for him , he attempts to take advantage of her at a party banquet , but she rebukes and slaps him , after which Thyagu runs away in fright . However , this revelation comes too late for her , as Arun , who is disillusioned with her behaviour , has already married a small town girl (Saritha) . When Manju tells her aunt about the attempt to humiliate Thyagu and its ramifications , her aunt tells Manju that she deserved it for leaving behind a golden

opportunity to start a new life . In a final discussion in Thyagu 's car , Manju asks Arun 's wife , " What do you think of women 's liberation ? " . " What do you think of women 's liberation ? " , Arun 's wife replies , " I don 't know " . Manju replies with a cynical , " that is why you are happy " . The film ends with Manju standing on the road as the car carrying Thyagu and the married couple pulls away from her . A voice @-@ over says , " She died today . She will be reborn tomorrow . She will die again . She will be reborn again . That is how she is " .

= = Cast = =

Kamal Haasan as Arun
Rajinikanth as Thyagu
Sripriya as Manju
Sivachandran as Mano
Saritha as Arun 's wife

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

C. Rudhraiya , whose former name was Aarumugam , was introduced to Kamal Haasan by writer and director Ananthu . The three shared an interest in the works of Robert Bresson , Jean @-@ Luc Godard , Roman Polanski , and Roberto Rossellini . Godard and Bresson were part of the French New Wave , which focused on films based on social ideas , some of which were iconoclastic in nature . Rudhraiya , Haasan , and Ananthu wanted to experiment with their ideas in Tamil . This was Rudhraiya 's first film as director ; quite radical in his approach , he wanted to change the conventions of Tamil cinema at that time . K. Rajeshwar was writing a script dealing with women 's liberation at that time , and it was decided that his script would be used for the film ; the result was Aval Appadithan . The initial script by Rajeshwar consisted of two pages .

Aval Appadithan was the debut film for both Nallusamy and M. N. Gnanashekaran , who jointly handled the film 's cinematography . Vanna Nilavan co @-@ wrote the screenplay with Somasundareshwar and Rudhraiya . The film was co @-@ produced by Ragamanjari , in association with the students of the M.G.R. Government Film and Television Training Institute . Sripriya , who played Manju , was initially unsure about acting in the film due to her busy schedule at that time , and only agreed to do it on Haasan 's insistence . According to Rajeshwar , the characterisation of Manju was inspired from a woman he met and who had similar radical beliefs . In Rajinikanth : The Definitive Biography (2012) , Rajinikanth recalled , " if Kamal had said , ? Don ? t cast Rajini ? , nobody would have taken me [in Aval Appadithaan] . "

= = = Filming = = =

Throughout the film , the cinematography made extensive use of shadows and close up shots to emphasise the moods of the characters . Jump cuts were frequently used as well . Overall , 8 @,@ 230 metres of film negative was used to make the film , and the team incurred a cost of ? 20 @,@ 000 for exterior shooting equipment . The scenes where Arun interviewed women for his documentary were real scenes , improvised with women they would meet at colleges and bus stops , and shot using the live @-@ recording method . The film uses a sharp contrast of black and white colours to lend a surreal atmosphere to it , and no makeup was used for the lead actors .

Filming proceeded smoothly as almost all of the dialogues were ready by the time team went for filming the scenes . The camera angles were pre @-@ planned as well . Haasan shot the film in his spare time , as he was involved in over 20 other films as an actor during the production of Aval Appadithan . Before a shot , Haasan discussed the scene with Ananthu and Rudhraiya on how Godard would have done it . The film was shot in two @-@ hour sessions over a period of four

@-@ five months . The opening scene where Haasan looks into the camera and says " Konjam left @-@ la ukaarunga " (English : Sit a little to the left , please .) was meant as a sign to the audience to support gender equality . According to the Tamil newspaper Dinamalar , Aval Appadithan was shot in 20 days . The film 's final length was 3 @,@ 136 metres (10 @,@ 289 ft) .

= = Themes and influences = =

Aval Appadithan 's central theme is on women and their plight in society , as exemplified by Manju and her relationships . Born to a timid father and a mother with loose moral values , she is also subsequently affected by two people she becomes romantically involved with . One , her college mate , left her to marry someone else for the sake of a job ; and the second is Mano , the son of a Christian priest , who used her to satisfy his lust and then trivialised their relationship by calling her " sister " in front of her parents . These relationships result in her becoming wary of men and developing an aggressive nature towards them . Conversations related to matters like the status of women in contemporary (1978) times and the nature of humankind are frequently seen in the film .

Sociologist Selvaraj Velayutham says in his book , Tamil Cinema : The Cultural Politics of India 's Other Film Industry , that " The woman ? s characterisation is , of course , brought out entirely verbally by her [Manju] . According to her , she has become ' this way ' because of a wayward mother . [...] The film constantly resorts to existing myths about women and relationships : that a wayward mother destroys her children ; that a woman who speaks the ' truth ' is always alone ; that men are scared of her ; that the woman who is different is confused , not sure of herself and is only seeking love from a man but does not know it herself . The only plus point of the film is that it does not expose the body of women in the way it is customary to do . [...] The visuals constantly play upon the fact that she is pitted against the world . All this could have been avoided if only she had a ' proper ' mother ! "

Artist V. Jeevananthan compared Aval Appadithan to other films whose central theme was women , such as Charulata (1964) , Aval Oru Thodar Kathai (1974) , and Panchagni (1986) , while also labelling them as " classics that put the spotlight on women . " Ashish Rajadhyaksha and Paul Willemen , in their book Encyclopedia of Indian Cinema , say the film was also inspired by the 1972 film , Dhakam , which starred R. Muthuraman and Pandari Bai . The film is an exception on stereotypes of women , as shown by paralleling an independent woman , Manju , and a pious traditional woman : Manju gets into problems while Arun 's wife is happy . The last lines of the film where Manju asks " what do you think of ' women 's liberation ' " , Arun 's wife answers , " I don 't know " , to which Manju says " that is why you are happy " , send the message that one will inevitably get into trouble if one exhibits assertive behaviour .

Kamal Haasan 's character , Arun , is an early version of a metrosexual male ? sensitive and sincere . Rajinikanth 's character , Thyagu , is the exact opposite of Arun ? money @-@ minded , arrogant , and a womaniser . This is evident when Thyagu says to Arun : " Women should be enjoyed , not analysed . " According to Rajinikanth , Thyagu was very much similar to him in real life ? he too smokes and drinks , but applies vibhuti (sacred ash) on his forehead . This implies that Thyagu was also an atheist . According to film critic Naman Ramachandran , Thyagu was , by far , Rajinikanth 's most entertaining character up to that point in his career ; his character was a self @-@ confessed chauvinist who believed that men and women can never be equal , and that women are merely objects to be used for men 's pleasure . When Arun calls Thyagu " a prejudiced ass " , Thyagu responds by saying , " I am a male ass , " with the dialogue being in English . His opinion of Sripriya 's character , Manju , is seen when he says (also in English) , " She is a self pitying sex @-@ starved bitch ! "

= = Music = =

Aval Appadithan 's soundtrack and score were composed by Ilaiyaraaja . The soundtrack was released under the label of EMI Records . At that time , Ilaiyaraaja was one of the busiest persons in the Tamil film industry , but he took a reduced fee for his services , at the insistence of Rudhraiya

and Haasan , due to the film 's budget .

After the recording session of " Ninaivo Oru Paravai " from the film , Sigappu Rojakkal (1978) , Ilaiyaraaja asked Haasan to record " Panneer Pushpangale " that same afternoon . During the recording session , Ilaiyaraaja suggested that Haasan tone down the opening notes ; when Haasan sang perfectly as per his suggestion , Ilaiyaraaja accepted Haasan 's next rendition of the song . The song " Uravugal Thodarkathai " was reused in the film Megha (2014) . Ilaiyaraaja wanted Vannanilavan to write the lyrics for the song , since Vannanilavan had difficulties in writing the lyrics , he opted out . He was subsequently replaced with Gangai Amaran .

The soundtrack received positive reviews from critics . G. Dhananjayan said in his book The Best of Tamil Cinema , " Ilaiyaraaja 's brooding background score added to the sombre nature of the movie . Two songs , " Uravugal Thodarkathai " sung by K. J. Yesudas and " Panneer Pushpangale " sung by Kamal Haasan remain popular even today . " B. Kolappan of The Hindu wrote , " If the song " Uravugal Thodarkathai " poignantly captures the vulnerable moments in the life of a woman , " Panneer Pushpangale " and " Vaazhkai Odam Chella " in Aval Appadithan are known for their melody and philosophical touch . " According to Swarnavel Eswaran Pillai , author of the article The 1970s Tamil cinema and the post @-@ classical turn , Ilaiyaraaja 's songs were used " to punctuate the interiority of the characters rather than as a spectacle or as a device to move the plot forward . "

= = Release = =

Aval Appadithan was released on 30 October 1978 , on Diwali day . Awarded an " A " (adults only) certificate by the Central Board of Film Certification for its bold dialogue and subject matter , this led to the film initially struggling to find a distributor . After it was shown to several distributors and exhibitors , the Safire Theatre Group finally agreed to screen the film as a one @-@ print , one theatre release .

= = = Critical response = = =

The film received generally positive reviews from critics . On 19 November 1978 , Ananda Vikatan criticised the gaps in the film , particularly the abundance of English dialogue , the excessive focus on naturalism , and lower standard of technical work (especially the cinematography) . Despite these perceived flaws , the magazine still appreciated the film , " None of the actors have acted in the film . Everyone has immersed in the character they played , leading to no one really acting before the camera but just living the characters ... The director demonstrated his intention to stand out from others and his keenness to tell something different ... " G. Dhananjayan said in his book The Best of Tamil Cinema , " The confidence and command of the filmmaker comes out strongly in this film . " K. Balamurugan of Rediff said , " It was what we would call parallel cinema these days . "

Writing for The Hindu , Baradwaj Rangan said , " Aval Appadithan was different . The shadowy black @-@ and @-@ white cinematography was different . The dialogues , which were more about revealing character than advancing plot , were different . The frank handling of sex and profanity (' she is a self @-@ pitying , sex @-@ starved bitch ! ') was different . The documentary @-@ like detours were different . The painfully sensitive , feminist hero was different . Rudraiah was different . " Another critic from The Hindu , B. Kolappan , called the performances of the lead cast " excellent " . D. Karthikeyan of The Hindu wrote in December 2009 that Aval Appadithan would " remain etched in every film lover 's memory by showing the best of Rajnikanth 's acting skills . " Director Mrinal Sen remarked , " The film was far ahead of its times . " Critics also appreciated the live @-@ recording method of shooting the sequences where Haasan 's character , Arun , interviewed women for his documentary .

= = = Box office = = =

The film did not initially receive a big response from the public , and was not a box office success

upon its release . However , after the directors P. Bharathiraja and Mrinal Sen wrote positive comments on it , people began to watch the film and appreciate it , leading Aval Appadithan to develop a cult following . In November 2014 , Haasan defended the financial failure of the film , " Aval Appadithan was a guerilla attack on the industry by insiders like me . It slipped through their fingers , so to speak . With all the attention that films get these days , I doubt we can get away with such a film any more . "

= = = Accolades = = =

The film was awarded the Second Prize for Best Film at the 1978 Tamil Nadu State Film Awards . At the same ceremony , Nallusamy and M. N. Gnanashekharan won the award for Best Cinematographer , and Sripriya received a Special Award for Best Actress of the year .

= = Legacy = =

Aval Appadithan is one of only two films ever directed by Rudhraiya ; the other was Gramathu Athiyayam (1980) . Aval Appadithan was noted for its stylish filmmaking , screenplay and dialogue , a large portion of it being in English . The dialogues were sharp and were considered almost vulgar . It also broke the style of filmmaking followed up until that time . It was the first film made by a graduate from the M.G.R. Government Film and Television Training Institute , facilitating Indian film technology students to achieve success in the film industry . Sripriya included it in her list of favourite films she had worked in .

In a July 2004 interview with T. Saravanan of The Hindu , director Karu Pazhaniappan rated Aval Appadithan as one of the best films he had ever seen . In May 2007 , K. Balamurugan of Rediff included Aval Appadithan in his list of " Rajni 's Tamil Top 10 " . In July 2007 , S. R. Ashok Kumar of The Hindu asked eight Tamil film directors to list their all @-@ time favourite Tamil films ; two of them ? Balu Mahendra and Ameer ? named Aval Appadithan . Thiagarajan Kumararaja named Aval Appadithan as an inspiration for his film Aaranya Kaandam (2011) . S. Shiva Kumar of The Hindu included the film on his December 2010 list of " Electrifying Rajinikanth @-@ Kamal Haasan films " with Moondru Mudichu (1976) , Avargal (1977) and 16 Vayathinile (1977) . Haasan described the film as an " unconventional way of film making . " In April 2013 , CNN @-@ News18 included the film in its list , " The 100 greatest Indian films of all time " . In June 2013 , A. Muthusamy of Honey Bee Music enhanced the songs from their original version on the film 's soundtrack album to 5 @.@ 1 surround sound . In July 2013 , Sruti Harihara Subramanian , founder and trustee of The Cinema Resource Centre (TCRC) , told Janani Sampath of The New Indian Express that many people assumed the film was directed by K. Balachander , not by Rudhraiya . Sruti also has an album of promotional stills and photographs of the film 's production .

In November 2013 , The New Indian Express included the film in its list , " Kamal Haasan 's most underrated films " . In February 2014 , CNN @-@ News18 included Aval Appadithan in its list , titled " 12 Indian films that would make great books " . In Kathai Thirai Kathai Vasanam Iyakkam (2014) , the hero 's writing team discusses the theme of Aval Appadithan to get ideas for their film 's story , until they realise that the film was a failure at the time of its release . Indo @-@ Asian News Service , in their review of Sripriya 's directorial venture Malini 22 Palayamkottai (2014) , a film about a rape victim , stated , " Sripriya , who was once a successful actress , played a rape victim in Tamil drama Aval Appadithan . It 's probably because of that role and the effect it had left on her , she handles this subject with great care and understanding that most of her peers would lack . " In January 2015 , K. Rajeshwar said , " I was told that if Aval Appadithan were made today , it would be a blockbuster . I don ? t agree , for it ? s still taboo for a woman to talk about her sexual encounters . The profile of the audience should change . " In July 2016 , The Hindu included Aval Appadithan in its list of " roles that defined Rajinikanth the actor " .