

At first (beginning in the 1920s), the Malayalam film industry was based in [Trivandrum](#). Although the film industry started to develop and flourish only by the late-1940s. Later, the industry shifted to [Chennai](#) (formerly Madras), which then was the capital of the South Indian film industry. By the end of 1980s, the Malayalam film industry returned and established itself in Kerala.^[1] Several media sources^{[2][3]} describe [Kochi](#) as the hub of the film industry, while the Kerala government publications^[4] and government sponsored Kinfra organisation^[5] states [Thiruvananthapuram](#) is the centre.

The first 3D film produced in India, *My Dear Kuttichathan* (1984), was made in Malayalam.^[6] The first [CinemaScope](#) film produced in Malayalam was *Thacholi Ambu* (1978).^[7] The world's first film with just one actor in the star cast was the Malayalam film *The Guard* (2001).^{[8][9]}

[Rajiv Anchal's](#) *Guru* (1997) and [Salim Ahamed's](#) *Adaminte Makan Abu* (2011) are the only Malayalam films to be sent by India as its official entry for the [Best Foreign Language Film category](#) at the [Academy Awards](#). Films such as *Piravi*, *Swaham*, *Marana Simhasanam*, *Chemmeen*, *Mathilukal* and *Vanaprastham* were also screened and won awards at several international film festivals.

History of Malayalam cinema^[edit]

Active Malayalam film production did not take place until the second half of the 20th century: there were only two silent films, and three Malayalam-language films before 1947.^{[10][11]} With support from the Kerala state government production climbed from around 6 a year in the 1950s, through 30 a year in the 60s, 40 a year in the 70s, to 127 films in the year 1980.^[10]

Origins (1907-1950)^[edit]

The first cinema hall in [Kerala](#), with a manually operated film projector, was opened in [Thrissur](#) by K. W. Joseph in 1907. In 1913, the first electrically operated film projector was established (in [Thrissur](#) again) by Jose Kattukkaran and was called the "Jose Electrical Bioscope". Soon such cinema halls were established in other major cities of Kerala. In the early days, Tamil, Hindi and English language films were exhibited in these theatres.^[citation needed]

The first film to be made in Malayalam was *Vigathakumaran*. Production started in 1928, and it was released in Trivandrum Capitol Theatre on 23 October 1930. It was produced and directed by [J. C. Daniel](#), a businessman with no prior film experience, who is credited as the father of Malayalam cinema.^[12] Daniel founded the first film studio, The Travancore National Pictures Limited, in Kerala.^[12] A second film, *Marthanda Varma*, based on a novel by [C. V. Raman Pillai](#), was produced by R. Sundar Raj in 1933. However, after only being shown for four days, the film prints were confiscated due to a legal battle over copyright.^[12]

The first [talkie](#) in Malayalam was *Balan*, released in 1938. It was directed by [S. Nottani](#) with a screenplay and songs written by [Muthukulam Raghavan Pillai](#). It was produced at [Chennai](#) (then Madras) in the neighbouring state of [Tamil Nadu](#). Balan was followed by *Gnanambika* in 1940 which was directed by S. Notani. Then came *Prahlada* in 1941 directed by K. Subramoniam of Madras and featuring [Guru Gopinath](#) and [Thankamani Gopinath](#). Until 1947 Malayalam films were made by Tamil producers. Artist P. J. Cherian was the first Malayali producer to venture into this field and the trend then changed. He Produced *Nirmala* in 1948 with Joseph Cherian, Baby Joseph his son and daughter-in-law in the lead

roles as hero and heroin; and many other family members in other roles breaking the taboo that noble family people do not take up acting. Thus 'Nirmala' became the first film produced by a Malayali setting many firsts for introducing play-back singing, cinema with a social theme where the entire family could sit together and watch it. Artist P.J. Cherian was the first cinema producer to explore the possibility of music and songs in cinema; and thus became the pioneer to introduce play-back singing in cinema. The lyrics of the film penned by the legendary Malayalam poet G.Shankara Kurup became so popular that song-dance sequences became essential ingredients of Malayalam cinema. Vellinakshatram (1949) was the first movie to be made in Kerala and it took shape at the Udaya Studios at Alleppey

1950s[edit]

Malayalam cinema has always taken its themes from relevant social issues and has been interwoven with material from [literature](#), [drama](#), and [politics](#) since its inception. One such film, *Jeevitha Nouka* (1951), was a musical drama which spoke about the problems in a joint family. This movie became very popular and was probably the first "super hit" of Malayalam cinema. However, this movie's success was bittersweet. Although its success accelerated Malayalam movie-making, films that were produced after *Jeevitha Nouka* closely mimicked its structure, hoping to find some sort of "success formula", thus hampering creativity for a long time. Nevertheless, this time was hailed as "the period of giants" in Malayalam film industry, due to the work of film stars [Thikkurissy Sukumaran Nair](#), [Sathyan](#), [Kottarakkara Sreedharan Nair](#) and [Prem Nazir](#).^[*citation needed*]

In 1954, the film *Neelakuyil* captured national interest by winning the President's silver medal. Scripted by the well-known Malayalam novelist [Uroob](#), and directed by [P. Bhaskaran](#) and [Ramu Kariat](#), it is often considered the first authentic Malayali film. Another notable production was *Newspaper Boy* (1955), which contained elements of [Italian neorealism](#). This film is notable as the product of a group of amateur college filmmakers. It told the story of a printing press employee and his family being stricken with extreme poverty.^[*citation needed*] The music took a turn away from the trend of copying Tamil and Hindi song. The poets Tirunainaarkurichy Madhavan Nair - Thirunaiyarkurichy, P Bhaskaran, ONV kurup, VR varma, rose up in this period as film lyricists. Brother Lakshmanan, Dakshinamurty, K Raghavan, Paravoor devarajan, MS Baburaj, Pukhenthey Velappan Nair etc. started a distinct style Malayalam music. Kamukara Purushotamman, Mehboob, Kozhikode Abdul Kader, AM Raja, Sreenivas, KP Udayabhanu, Shanta P Nair, Leela, Janaki, Shusheela, Vasantha, Renuka, Jikki etc. were the Singer from the 50s. The drama artist and school teacher Muthukulam Ragavhan Pilla lend many of his skills to cinema in this period.

1960s[edit]

[Ramu Kariat](#), one of the directors of *Neelakkuyil* (the other was P. Bhaskaran), went on to become a successful director in the 1960s and 1970s. [P. Bhaskaran](#) directed many acclaimed and hit films in the 1960s and 70s. The cameraman of *Neelakkuyil*, [A. Vincent](#), also became a noted director of the 1960s and 1970s. Notable films of this decade include *Odayil Ninnu*, *Bhargavi Nilayam* (1964), *Chemmeen* (1965), *Murappennu* (1965) and *Iruttinte Athmavu* (1966). The era of colour films came to Malayalam cinema with its first colour film, *Kandam Bacha Coat* (1961). *Chemmeen* (1965), directed by [Ramu Kariat](#) and based on a story by [Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai](#), went on to become immensely popular, and became the first Malayalam film to win the [National Film Award for Best Feature Film](#). Most of the films of the 60s were animated by the nationalist and socialist projects, and centred on issues relating to caste and class exploitation, the fight against obscurantist beliefs, the degeneration of

the feudal class, and the breakup of the joint-family system.^[13] In 1960s M Krishnan Nair, Kunchacko and Subramanyam were the leading Malayalee producers.

During the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, [Kunchacko](#) made significant contributions to Malayalam cinema, both as a producer and as director of some notable Malayalam movies. He started [Udaya Studios](#) in Alleppey (Alappuzha) in 1947, reducing the travel to Madras (Chennai) for film crew and actors. This boosted Malayalam film production in Kerala.^[citation needed] Many directors sprang up in this period, PN Menon made 'rosy' and later 'Chemparanthi', then Aravindan and Adoor too started work in 1960s to become famous later. Arguably M Krishnan Nair was the most prominent director producer of this period.

Further information: [List of Malayalam films of the 1960s](#)

1970s

The 70s saw the emergence of a new wave of cinema in Malayalam. The growth of the film society movement in Kerala introduced the works of the French and Italian New Wave directors to the discerning Malayali film enthusiasts. [Adoor Gopalakrishnan's](#) first film, *Swayamvaram* (1972), brought Malayalam cinema to the international film arena. In 1973 [M. T. Vasudevan Nair](#) who was by then recognized as an important author in Malayalam, directed his first film *Nirmalyam*, which won the [National Film Award for Best Feature Film](#). [G. Aravindan](#) followed [Adoor's](#) lead with his *Uttarayanam* in 1974. [K. P. Kumaran's](#) *Adhithi* (1974) was another film which was acclaimed by the critics. [Cinematographers who won the National Award](#) for their work on Malayalam films in the 1970s were [Mankada Ravi Varma](#) for *Swayamvaram* (1972), [P. S. Nivas](#) for *Mohiniyattam* (1977), and [Shaji N. Karun](#) for *Thampu* (1979). [John Abraham](#), [K. R. Mohanan](#), [K. G. George](#), and [G. S. Panikkar](#) were products of the [Pune Film Institute](#) who made significant contributions.^[citation needed]

During the late 1970s, some young artists started seeing Malayalam cinema as a medium of expression and thought of it as a tool to revitalize society. A noted director, Aravindan was famous in Kerala as a cartoonist before he started making films. His important movies include *Kanchana Sita* (1977), *Thampu* (1978), *Kummatty* (1979), *Chidambaram* (1985), *Oridathu* (1986), and *Vastuhara* (1990). 1970s also saw the emergence of a notable director [P. G. Viswambaran](#) with his debut film *Ozhukinethire* and mythical film *Sathyavan Savithri* from the same director, which was well accepted. Also, commercial cinema in this period saw several workerclass themed films which mostly had [M. G. Soman](#) and [Sukumaran](#) in the lead followed by the emergence of a new genre of pure action themed films, in a movement led by action star [Jayan](#) who is usually considered the first genuine commercial superstar of Malayalam cinema. But this was short-lived, and almost ended with [Jayan's](#) untimely death while performing a *stunt* in a film called *Kolilakkam* (1980). Nevertheless, he paved way for different films and future actors who proved their talents in both commercial and art genres, the most famous of them being [Mammootty](#)^[citation needed] and [Mohanlal](#)^[citation needed]. After [Jayan](#) came a new super star [Shanker](#) who gave innumerable romantic hits, *manjil vinjapookal* being his debut as hero. [Nedumudi Venu](#), [Madhu](#), [Urvashi Sharadha](#), [KP Ummer](#), [Sheela](#), [RaviKumar](#), [Vidhubala](#), [Raghavan](#), [Ambika](#), [Sai Kumar](#), [Bhasi](#), [Bhadur](#), [SP Pillai](#), [Lekshmi](#), [Jagadeesh](#), [Jayabharathi](#), [Jagathy srikumar](#), [Ravi Menon](#) and [Innocent](#) were the prominent actors then. [Mammootty](#), [Mohanlal](#) and [Suresh Gopi](#) started their life to Superstardom in the eighties.

Further information: [List of Malayalam films of the 1970s](#)

1980s[edit]

Adoor Gopalakrishnan made *Elippathayam* in 1981. This movie was widely acclaimed and won the [British Film Institute](#) award. His other movies include *Mukhamukham* (1984), *Anantharam*(1987) *Mathilukal* (1989), *Vidheyam* (1994), *Kathapurushan* (1995), and *Nizhalkuthu* (2003), I. V. Sasi the path breaker who has directed more than 131 odd films over a span of 34 years made *Kanamarayathu* (1984). [Padmarajan](#) made his early works in this period including the movie *Koodevide?* (1983). [P. A. Backer](#) and [Bharathan](#) are other names worth mentioning.^[*citation needed*].

The year 1988 also saw the release of Kerala's first superhit *softcore* film *Adipapam* which was directed by [P. Chandrakumar](#).^[14]

Golden age of Malayalam cinema[edit]

Most critics and audiences^[15] consider the period from the late 1980s to early 1990s as the golden age of Malayalam cinema. The Malayalam cinema of this period was characterised by detailed [screenplays](#) dealing with everyday life with a lucid narration of plot intermingling with humour and melancholy. This was aided by brilliant [cinematography](#) and lighting as in motion pictures like *Perumthachan* (1990), directed by [Ajayan](#) with [Santosh Sivan](#) as the cinematographer. These films are also remembered for their warm background music by [composers](#) like [Johnson](#), as in the motion picture *Namukku Parkkan Munthiri Thoppukal* (1986) by [Padmarajan](#). The golden age saw rise of big actors like [Mammootty](#), [Mohanlal](#), etc.^[*citation needed*]. [Mammootty's](#) had some of his noted movies making him one of the most successful leading actors of Malayalam film industry and superstardom like *Yathra*, *Nirakkootu*, *New Delhi* and *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha* during this period. [Mohanlal](#) had movies like *Rajavinte Makan*, *Ulsavappittenu*, *20-am noottandu* became a superstar of Malayalam cinema after [Mammootty](#) and which brought him critical accolades along with the stardom. This era also uncovered acting talents like [Nedumudi Venu](#), [Gopi](#), [Thilakan](#) in many movies which changed the course of narrative styles hitherto followed in Malayalam Cinema.

[K. G. George](#) had some of his critically acclaimed and commercially successful movies like *Yavanika*, *Adaminte Vaariyellu* during this decade. This was the period during which acclaimed litterateur and script writer [M. T. Vasudevan Nair](#) started teaming up with director [Hariharan](#) to produce some of the evergreen works like *Panchagni*, *Nakhakshathangal*, *Aranyakam*, *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha* etc.

Many of the movies released during this time narrowed the gap between [art cinema](#) and commercial cinema in the Malayalam film industry, as in *Mrigaya* starring [Mammootty](#) (1989, directed by [I. V. Sasi](#) and written by [Lohithadas](#)), *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha* (1989), starring [Mammootty](#), *Kireedam* (1989, directed by [Sibi Malayil](#), starring [Mohanlal](#) and written by [Lohithadas](#)), *Mathiluka* starring [Mammootty](#) (1989, directed by [Adoor Gopalakrishnan](#)), *Carnival*, starring [mammootty](#) (1989, directed by [P. G. Viswambharan](#)), *Amaram* starring [Mammootty](#) (1991, directed by [Bharathan](#)), *Kakkothikkavile Appooppan Thaadikal* (1988, directed by [Kamal](#)) and *Sargam* (1992, directed by [Hariharan](#)).^[*citation needed*] [John Abraham](#) continued to tread an unbeaten path of making movies like *Amma Ariyaan* on people's issues by raising the finance directly from people. [Fazil](#) was another noted director who had his significant movies in this era. The decade also saw significant number of movies with female characters becoming important or even central. This facilitated the discovery of some of the best female actors of the Malayalam Cinema like [Shobhana](#), [Seema](#), [Urvashi](#), [Suhasini](#), [Geetha](#), [Revathi](#), [Nadia Moidu](#) etc.

The period had an abundance of movies rich in creative humours from directors like Priyadarshan, Sathyan Anthikkad, Kamal and Siddique-Lal. The internationally acclaimed ^[according to whom?] *Piravi* (1989) by Shaji N. Karun was the first Malayalam film to win the *Caméra d'Or-Mention* at the Cannes Film Festival. Other notable contributions of this period include *His Highness Abdullah* (1990) directed by Sibi Malayil, *Abhayam* (1991) directed by Santosh Sivan, and the motion picture *Daisy* (1988) an expressive depiction of separation and longing set in a boarding school, directed by Prathap K. Pothan.^[citation needed]

Further information: List of Malayalam films of the 1980s

1990s[edit]

Some examples are *Mathilukal* (1990) directed by Adoor Gopalakrishnan, *Kattu Kuthira* (1990) directed by P. G. Viswambharan, *Bharatham* (1991) by Sibi Malayil, *Ulladakkam* (1992) directed by Kamal, *Kilukkam* (1991) directed by Priyadarshan, *Kamaladalam* (1992) by Sibi Malayil, *Vidheyan* (1993) by Adoor Gopalakrishnan, *Devaasuram* (1993) by I. V. Sasi, *Manichithrathazhu* (1993) by Fazil, *Ponthan Mada* (1993) by T. V. Chandran, and *Desadanam* (1997) by Jayaraaj. *Swaham* (1994), directed by Shaji N. Karun, was the second Malayalam film entry in the Cannes International Film Festival, where it was a nominee for the *Palme d'Or*. Murali Nair's *Marana Simhasanam* later won the *Caméra d'Or* at the 1999 Cannes Film Festival.^[16] *Guru* (1997) directed by Rajiv Anchal was chosen as India's official entry to the Oscars to be considered for nomination in the Best Foreign Film category for that year, making it the first film in Malayalam to be chosen for Oscar nomination.^[citation needed]

Further information: List of Malayalam films of the 1990s

2000s[edit]

Slapstick comedy was the predominant theme in the films of this era. *C.I.D. Moosa* (2003) by Johny Antony, *Meesa Madhavan* (2002) by Lal Jose and *Kunjikoonan* (2002) directed by Sasi Shanker are examples. Sequels to a number of successful films were made. These include blockbuster hit *Raavanaprabhu* (*Devaasuram*) and the sequels to the 80s hit movie *Oru CBI Diary Kurippu*, named *Sethurama Iyer CBI* (2004) and *Nerariyan CBI* (2005), which were huge hits. Many movies during the early 2000s were of low quality. But there were some movies which were examples of exemplary film making like *Meghamalhar*, *Madhuranombarakaattu*, *Nandanam*, *Perumazhakkalam*, *Kazhcha* etc. Dileep emerged as a major star force during this period after the blockbuster, *Meesa Madhavan*. Malayalam Cinema had a crisis, when a parallel culture of adult-content movies named "Shakeela films" emerged to be the best grossers for more than a year. Malayalam cinema saw a rare dearth of talent. At the same time, Tamil movies saw a surge of new talent in scriptwriters, directors and actors. This resulted in increased popularity of Tamil and Hindi movies in Kerala. Several film theatres were closed in rural Kerala and were converted to marriage halls. But by the last of year 2003, it was a happy season for the industry.

Further information: List of Malayalam films of the 2000s

Late 2000s and 2010s[edit]

After several years of quality deterioration, Malayalam films saw the signs of resurgence post-2011 with the release of several experimental films, mostly from new directors. Salim Ahamed's *Adaminte Makan*

Abu, the Award assembling drama, has been chosen as India's official entry to the [Academy Awards](#) to be considered for nomination in the Best Foreign Film category for the year 2011. Malayalam cinema *Adaminte Makan Abu* is the second Malayalam film to be nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film after [Rajiv Anchal's](#) *Guru*. Other films that contributed the most to this renaissance include *Ritu*, *Kutty Srank*, *Bhramaram*, *Paleri Manikyam: Oru Pathirakolapathakathinte Katha*, *Pranchiyettan & the Saint*, *Urumi*, *T. D. Dasan Std. VI B*, *Traffic*, *Gaddhama*, *Pranayam*, *City of God*, *Melvilasom*, *Beautiful*, *Ee Adutha Kaalathu*, *22 Female Kottayam*, *Second Show*, *Chaappa Kurishu*, *Nidra*, *Diamond Necklace*, *Veettilekkulla Vazhi*, *Manjadikkuru*, *Akasathinte Niram*, *Spirit*, *Ustad Hotel*, *Thattathin Marayathu*, *Ayalum Njanum Thammil*, *Bavuttiyude Namathil* etc. It encouraged talented actors like [Dulquer Salmaan](#), [Prithviraj](#), [Fahadh Fazil](#), [Indrajith](#), [Jayasurya](#), [Anoop Menon](#) with the emergence of promising screenwriters and directors such as [Lijo Jose Pellissery](#), [Anwar Rasheed](#), [Rajesh Pillai](#), [Anjali Menon](#), [Arun Kumar](#), [Dr. Biju](#), [V. K. Prakash](#) etc.

New Wave films[\[edit\]](#)

After several years of qualitative deterioration, Malayalam films saw the signs of some renaissance in the last two years with the release of several experimental films, mostly from new directors.

The year, 2011 marked the turning point in Malayalam Cinema. This year witnessed a lot of movies high on quality and technicalities^{[\[citation needed\]](#)}. The movie *Traffic* which was directed by [Rajesh Pillai](#) set the trend. Movies such as *Salt N' Pepper*, *Chaappa Kurishu*, *Indian Rupee* and *Beautiful* are some of the best released in that year.

This trend continued in 2012, a remarkable year for Malayalam cinema, with more than 15 movies categorized as "Super Hit" status. Movies such as *Second Show*, *22 Female Kottayam*, *Mayamohini*, *Ordinary*, *Mallu Singh*, *Grandmaster*, *Diamond Necklace*, *Ee Adutha Kalathu*, *Trivandrum Lodge*, *Spirit*, *Ustad Hotel*, *Thattathin Marayathu*, *Run Babby Run*, *My Boss*, *Ayalum Njanum Thammil* and *Bavuttiyude Namathil* are some of them.

Disribution[\[edit\]](#)

Most of the Malayalam films released in overseas. Malayalam films are distributed in various parts of [Asia](#), [Gulf countries](#), [Europe](#), [Oceania](#), [North America](#), [South America](#) and [Australia](#).

[Christian Brothers](#) was released in 80 centres in overseas and it is the widest release ever for a Malayalam film.

Malayalam films also distributed in several states of India especially in [Tamil Nadu](#), [Karnataka](#), [Andhra Pradesh](#), [Delhi](#), [Maharashtra](#) and [Gujarat](#). Some Malayalam films also released in [Madhya Pradesh](#) and [West Bengal](#).

Firsts[\[edit\]](#)

Malayalam film industry badly in need of oxygen, *The Hindu*, 30 March 2002</ref> Despite the apparent budget constraints, Malayalam cinema has pioneered technical, thematic and [production](#) techniques among films in India and South India.

- *Marthanda Varma* (1933): The first Indian [historical drama film](#). It was based on the life of [Marthanda Varma](#), the [Maharajah](#) of the Indian princely state of [Travancore](#) in the mid 18th century. *Marthanda Varma* was [film adaptation](#) of a novel in the same name by [C. V. Raman Pillai](#), making it one of the first Indian adaptations from literature other than the [puranas](#).^{[\[17\]](#)}

- *Newspaper Boy* (1955): India's first neorealistic film. It drew inspiration from Italian neorealism and was released a few months before Satyajit Ray's debut *Pather Panchali*, another neo-realistic film.^{[7][17]}
- *Padayottam* (1982): India's first indigenously produced 70 mm film.^[18]
- *My Dear Kuttichathan* (1984): India's first 3D film.^[6]
- *Amma Ariyan* (1986): The first film made in India with money collected from the public. It was produced by Odessa Collective, founded by the director John Abraham and friends. The money was raised by collecting donations and screening Charlie Chaplin's film *The Kid*.^[19]
- *O' Faby* (1993): India's first live-action/animation hybrid film.^[20]
- *Moonnamathoral* (2006): The first Indian film to be shot and distributed in digital format.^[21]

Directors[edit]

Malayalam cinema boasts many brilliant [film directors](#), starting with [J. C. Daniel](#), the director and [producer](#) of the first Malayalam film, *Vigathakumaran* (1928). Unlike other Indian films at that time, most of which were films based on the [puranas](#), he chose to base his film on a social theme.^[22] Though the film failed commercially, he paved way for the Malayalam film industry and is widely considered the *father of Malayalam cinema*. Till the 1950s, Malayalam film didn't see many talented film directors. The milestone film *Neelakkuyil* (1954), directed by [Ramu Karyat](#) and [P. Bhaskaran](#), shed a lot of limelight over its directors.^[17] [Ramu Karyat](#) went on to become a celebrated director in the 1960s and 1970s. [P. Bhaskaran](#) also directed a few acclaimed films in the 1960s. The cameraman of *Neelakkuyil*, [A. Vincent](#), also became a noted director of the 1960s and 1970s.^[23] Another noted director of the 1950s was [P. Ramadas](#), the director of the neorealistic film *Newspaper Boy* (1955).

In the 1970s, the Malayalam film industry saw the rise of film societies. It triggered a new [genre of films](#) known as "parallel cinema". The main driving forces of the movement, who gave priority to serious cinema, were [Adoor Gopalakrishnan](#) and [G. Aravindan](#). People like [John Abraham](#) and [P. A. Backer](#) gave a new dimension to Malayalam cinema through their political themes. The later 1970s witnessed the emergence of another stream of Malayalam films, known as "middle-stream cinema", which seamlessly integrated the seriousness of the parallel cinema and the popularity of the mainstream cinema. Most of the films belonging to this stream were directed by PN Menon, [I. V. Sasi](#), [P. G. Viswambharan](#), [K. G. George](#), Bharathan and [Padmarajan](#).^[24]

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a period widely regarded as the *Golden Age of Malayalam cinema*, a new array of directors joined the stalwarts who had already made a mark in the industry. The Golden Age saw the narrowing of the gap between the different streams of the industry.^[17] Directors like [K. G. George](#), [Priyadarshan](#), [I. V. Sasi](#), [John Abraham](#), [Fazil](#), [Joshy](#), [Bhadran](#), [P. G. Viswambharan](#), [Kamal](#), [Sibi Malayil](#), [Hariharan](#), [Sathyan Anthikkad](#), [K. Madhu](#) and [Siddique-Lal](#) contributed heavily in the Golden Age. Then there were extraordinary screenwriters like [M. T. Vasudevan Nair](#), [T. Damodaran](#), [A. K. Lohithadas](#) and [Sreenivasan](#) who contributed their part as well.^[citation needed]

The 2000s witnessed the decline of quality of Malayalam films. Many directors who excelled in the Golden Age struggled as many of their films continuously failed critically and commercially. As a result the gap between parallel cinema (now known as art cinema) and mainstream cinema (now known as commercial cinema) widened. The 2000s also saw a commercial film formula being created in line with [Tamil](#) and [Bollywood](#) films. Directors like [Shaji Kailas](#), [Rafi Mecartin](#) and [Anwar Rasheed](#) directed

blockbusters which had few artistic merits to boast of. Despite the overall decline, some directors stood apart and made quality cinema. [Shaji N. Karun](#), [Lenin Rajendran](#), [Shyama Prasad](#) and [Jayaraj](#) made films that won laurels. Notable directors who debuted in this time include [Blessy](#), [Lal Jose](#), R. Sharath, [Renji](#), [Roshan Andrews](#), [Amal Neerad](#), [Aashiq Abu](#), [Vineeth Sreenivasan](#) and Lijo Jose Pellissery.^[*citation needed*]

Malayalam film directors have made their mark in the national level as well. Out of the 40 [National Film Awards for Best Director](#) given away till 2007, Malayalam directors have pocketed 12, trailed only by Bengali (14 awards). The directors who have won the prestigious award are [Adoor Gopalakrishnan](#) (1973, 1985, 1988, 1990, 2007), [G. Aravindan](#) (1978, 1979, 1987), [Shaji N. Karun](#)(1989), [T. V. Chandran](#) (1994), [Jayaraj](#) (1998) and Rajivnath (1999). There are several recipients of the [Special Jury Award](#) as well: [Mankada Ravi Varma](#) (1984), [John Abraham](#) (1987), [Shaji N. Karun](#) (1995) and Pradeep Nair (2005)

Landmark films[edit]

The films in this list are those which have influenced the growth, trends, fame and acclaim of Malayalam cinema through its 80-year-long history.

1967 Cochin Express Director-M. Krishnan Nair The film launched the genre of professional crime detection movies with Prem Nazir acting as the detective, popularly called, CID, a term wrongly attributed to the detective, but actually standing for Criminal Investigation Department. It launched Pre Nazir as a 'CID hero' and he virtually lent his name to three movies, CID Nazir, Taxi Car and Prem Nazirine Kaananilla.

The Kerala State Film Awards are the most prestigious film awards for a motion picture made in the [Malayalam language](#). The awards have been bestowed by [Kerala State Chalachitra Academy](#) since 1998 on behalf of the Department of Cultural Affairs of the [Government of Kerala](#). The awards were started in the year 1969. The awardees are decided by an independent jury formed by the academy and the Department of Cultural Affairs. The jury usually consists of eminent personalities from the film field. For the awards for literature on cinema a separate jury is formed. The academy annually invites films for the award and the jury analyses the films that are submitted before deciding the winners. The awards intends to promote films with artistic values and encourage artistes and technicians.

International Film Festival of Kerala[edit]

Main article: [International Film Festival of Kerala](#)

The International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK) is a film festival held annually in [Thiruvananthapuram](#), the capital city of [Kerala](#). This film festival was started in 1996 and is organised by [Kerala State Chalachitra Academy](#) on behalf of the Department of Cultural Affairs of the State Government. The festival is held in November/December every year and is acknowledged as one of the leading film festivals in India

Association of Malayalam Movie Artists[edit]

Main article: [Association of Malayalam Movie Artists](#)

The [Association of Malayalam Movie Artists](#) (AMMA) is an organisation formed by artists of Malayalam cinema to safeguard their interests. It aims to act against piracy, to safeguard the interests of member actors and actresses, and to serve as a common forum to raise concerns and address issues. The

activities of AMMA include endowments, insurance schemes, and committees on wages and benefits on revision, fund for research, pensions, education loans for their children etc. for the members. The organization ventured into film production in 2008 with *Twenty:20* to raise funds for its activities. ^[citation needed]

AMMA was involved in the **film industry deadlock of 2004** and the alleged denial of work to senior actor **Thilakan**