

Riya Sen

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Riya Sen at a fashion show

	Riya Dev Varma
Born	24 January 1981 (age 30) Kolkata , West Bengal , India
Occupation	Actor, model
Parents	Bharat Dev Varma , Moonmoon Sen

Riya Sen (**Bengali**: রীয়া সেন [ˈrija ˈʃen]; born **Riya Dev Varma** on 24 January 1981) is an Indian film actress and model. Riya, who hails from a family of actors including her grandmother [Suchitra Sen](#), mother [Moon Moon Sen](#) and sister [Raima Sen](#), began her acting career in 1991 as a child artiste in the film *Vishkanya*. Her first commercial success in her film career was with *Style*, a 2001 **Hindi** low-budget **sex comedy** directed by [N. Chandra](#). Some of her other films include producer [Pritish Nandy](#)'s **musical film**, *Jhankaar Beats* (2001) in **Hinglish**, *Shaadi No. 1* (2005) Malayalam **horror film** *Ananthabhadram* (2005).

Riya was first recognised as a model when she performed in [Falguni Pathak](#)'s music video *Yaad Piya Ki Aane Lagi* at the age of sixteen. Since then, she has appeared in [music videos](#), [television commercials](#), [fashion shows](#), and on [magazine covers](#). She has been a heartthrob sensation throughout India and is known for her gorgeous smile. Riya has worked as an activist and appeared in an [AIDS](#) awareness music video with the aim of dispelling popular myths about the

disease. She also helped raise funds for pediatric eye-care. Riya has faced controversies such as a [MMS clip](#) with actor [Ashmit Patel](#), her semi-nude photograph on photographer [Dabboo Ratnani](#)'s annual calendar and her on-screen kisses in a conservative [Indian film](#) industry.

Acting career

Riya first appeared as a child artist in the film [Vishkanya](#) in 1991, where she played the role of the young [Pooja Bedi](#). At the age of 18, she did [National Film Awards](#) winning director [Bharathiraja](#)'s [Tamil](#) film, *Taj Mahal* (2000), which did not achieve commercial success.^[1] She was scheduled to make her [Bollywood](#) film debut in *Love You Hamesha*, opposite actor [Akshaye Khanna](#); however, the film was stalled, and she finally made her debut in [N. Chandra](#)'s *Style* in 2001.^[2] This low-budget sex comedy^{[3][4]} was the first commercial success in over a decade for the director.^[5] A launch pad for Riya, cast in the female lead along with fellow-newcomers, [Sharman Joshi](#), Sahil Khan and Shilpi Mudgal, the film pioneered a trend of commercial success for small budget films in India.^{[6][7]} Riya and the second female lead of the film were replaced by aspirant actresses Sunali Joshi and Jaya Seal in *Xc'*.^{[8][9]}

Her next success was *Jhankaar Beats*, a comedy revolving around the music of legendary composer [R D Burman](#), which saw her playing a small and glamorous role^[10] alongside Shayan Munshi, [Juhi Chawla](#), [Rahul Bose](#), [Rinke Khanna](#) and [Sanjay Suri](#). Produced by [Pritish Nandy](#), publishing director of *The Times of India*,^[11] the film was made on a budget of [Rs. 25 million \(US\\$525,000\)](#),^[11] marking the sixth in a row of small to medium budget films made by Pritish Nandy Communications (PNC).^[12] Despite being part of a wave of offbeat films that mostly failed to make an impact at the box office,^{[13][14]} it drew public attention upon its release, which led to a commercial success among a restricted audience targeted by a selective release in twenty cities.^{[12][15]} It was one of the first films made in [Hinglish](#), a mixture of [Hindi](#) and English.^{[16][17]} In 2005, she starred in *Shaadi No. 1*, which had no female lead.^[18] This comedy, based on the theme of modern marriage, was directed by [David Dhawan](#), a renowned film director from this genre.^{[19][20]}

Although films like *Style* and *Jhankaar Beats* succeeded commercially, most of her later films have generated less revenue.^{[21][22]} A number of them remained unfinished. While many of her appearances have been [item numbers](#) and [cameos](#),^{[23][24][25]} few of her leading roles have been in low-budget films.^[26] Though she had small roles in *Dil Vil Pyar Vyar* (2002), *Qayamat* (2003) and *Plan* (2004), attention was drawn to her item numbers in all three, especially the one in *Qayamat* that featured her in a bubble-bath.^{[21][27][28]} Besides this, she performed another item number in *James* (2005) on director-producer [Ram Gopal Varma](#)'s behest, who has a history of casting aspirant actress-models like [Sameera Reddy](#), [Isha Koppikar](#) and [Koena Mitra](#) in similar roles.^[29] Furthermore, she took part in a dance number for [Sajid Khan](#)'s *Heyy Babyy* (2007) that featured several mainstream [Bollywood](#) actresses.^[30]

[\[edit\]](#) Non-Hindi films



📺 With its commercial ^{[31][32]} and critical ^{[33][34]} success *[Ananthabhadram](#)* was a high watermark in Riya's career

Riya has, in addition to [Bollywood](#) films, appeared in [Bengali](#), [Tamil](#), Telugu, [Malayalam](#) and English films. Her film career began in the earnest with Tamil films such as [Bharathi Raja's](#) *[Taj Mahal](#)*, co-starring Manjoj Bharatiraja in the male lead, and Manoj Bhatnagar's *[Good Luck](#)*, oppsite [Prasanth](#). Both of the films failed commercially, and she had a brief reappearance in Tamil cinema only to perform in a dance number for N. Maharajan's *[Arasatchi](#)*. ^[35]^[dead link]

Her first English language movie was *It Was Raining That Night*, a remake of the Bengali film *Hei Brishtir Raat*, scripted by Sudeshna Roy and directed by [Mahesh Manjrekar](#). In the film, she collaborated with mother Moon Moon Sen. ^[36] Riya was slated to appear in [Anjan Dutta's](#) Bengali-English bilingual film *[The Bong Connection](#)* with her sister, but she was eventually dropped from the project and replaced by Peeya Rai Chaudhary. ^[37] The two sisters were later cast together in director Ajai Sinha's *[The Bachelor](#)*, a Bengali film that, as of 2008, is yet to be finished. ^[38]

Her most successful non-Hindi film has been director [Santhosh Sivan's](#) *[Ananthabhadram](#)* (2005). The first Malayalam venture for both Riya and Sivan, ^{[39][40]} was both a critical and commercial success. It won five [Kerala State Film Awards](#) ^[33] and surfaced as one of the biggest Malayalam successes that year. ^{[31][32]} She played the role of *Bhama* in the film, a village girl who is lured by Digambaran, the evil magician portrayed by [Manoj K Jayan](#). In a song-and-dance sequence showing Digambaran turning Bhama into a medium for demonic rituals, the choreographer Aparna Sindoor made abundant use [Kathakali](#) movements. ^[41] The use of Kathakali has been a high point in the resurgence of the classical dance form in other major Indian films as well, ^[42] including [Shaji Karun's](#) *[Vanaprastham](#)* (1999) and [Adoor Gopalakrishnan's](#) *[Kalamandalam Ramankutty Nair](#)* (2005). ^{[43][44]} She made her Telugu Debut with *[Nenu Meeku Telusa...?](#)*, in which she was paired opposite [Manoj Manchu](#).

[[edit](#)] Modeling career



In the famous page of [Dabboo Ratnani](#)'s calendar's 2004 edition.

Riya became a popular model when she appeared in numerous music videos for songs by popular singers, including [Falguni Pathak](#)'s *Yaad Piya Ki Aane Lagi* (alternative title: *Chudi Jo Khankayi*), [Asha Bhosle](#)'s *Jhumka Gira Re*, [Jagjit Singh](#) and Bhosle's *Jab Samne Tum and Kahin Kahin Se*, [Lata Mangeshkar](#), Bhosle and Singh's *Dil Kahin Hosh Kahin*, [Sonu Nigam](#)'s *Jeena Hai Tere Liye* and [Shaan](#)'s *Sutta Maro*. She shot for her first music video, *Yaad Piya Ki Aane Lagi*, at the age of sixteen.^{[45][46]} This led to her being identified primarily as a performer for music videos early in her career,^[47] an image she aimed to shed in 2005.^[48] Riya has appeared on several magazine covers, including *Femina*, *Elaan*,^[49] *Man's World*,^[50] *Gladrags*, *Savvy* and Indian versions of *Elle*, *Maxim* and *Cosmopolitan*,^[51] as well as on the ramp of major fashion shows like Lakmé Fashion Week (2005–07) and Wills Fashion Week (2006–2007). She participated in fashion shows along with her elder sister, [Raima Sen](#).^[52] Besides modeling, Riya has ventured into the advertisement world as well. A high point of her modeling career came in 2006, when she became the soft drink, [Limca](#)'s brand ambassador, replacing [Deepika Padukone](#).^{[53][54]} Her other notable assignments include [Colgate](#), [Dabur](#) Vatika, [Reliance Industries](#), [Cadbury](#) Dairy Milk Chocolate, and [Nirma](#).

In 2004, she was featured [partially nude](#) in leading Indian photographer [Dabboo Ratnani](#)'s annual calendar, which is a major happening in the Indian glamor industry.^{[55][56]} According to Daboo, "Her mother saw it much later, after the calendar released. She thought it was too sexy, and Riya shouldn't have done it. But the response to the photograph was superb. Riya was so thrilled that for her next ad campaign, she asked me to light her up like I did in this."^[57] A career highlight for the model,^[58] it led to a three year contract with Ratnani to feature her on his annual calendar.^[59] She is the only female face to be featured on the calendar in five consecutive years (2003–07).^{[60][61]}

[[edit](#)] Personal life and family

Born on 24 January 1981 in [Kolkata](#), [West Bengal](#), Riya is the daughter of [Moon Moon Sen](#), a former actress,^{[21][62]} and granddaughter of [Suchitra Sen](#), a legend in [Bengali cinema](#).^[63] Before moving to [Mumbai](#), she lived in Kolkata with her parents and sister [Raima Sen](#), also an actress. Her father [Bharat Dev Varma](#) is a member of the royal family of [Tripura](#).^[64] Her paternal grandmother, Ila Devi, was the princess of [Cooch Behar](#), whose younger sister [Gayatri Devi](#) was the [Maharani](#) of [Jaipur](#).^[64] Her paternal grandmother [Indira](#) was the only daughter of [Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III](#) of [Baroda](#).^{[65][66]} Riya's maternal great-grandfather Adinath Sen was a prominent Kolkata businessman, whose father Dinanath Sen - a relative of former Union Law Minister [Ashoke Kumar Sen](#)- was the [Diwan](#) or a Minister of the Maharaja of Tripura.^[67] The sisters are credited on-screen under their mother's maiden name, although their official papers carry the surname Dev Varma.^[68]

Riya completed her schooling at [Loreto House](#) and Rani Birla College, both in Kolkata.^[64] Thereafter, she studied at the [National Institute of Fashion Technology](#),^[69] and she took up jewellery-designing as a hobby.^[70] She designs most of the clothes that she wears in films and commercials.^[71] Riya is trained in [Kathak](#) and is still pursuing it under Vijayshree Chaudhury.^[72] She is taking [kickboxing](#) lessons and has completed Level I of the 5 levels in [belly dancing](#).^{[10][73]} Riya entered the film industry through small-time modeling assignments, commuting between Mumbai and Kolkata and traveling by public transport during the her early career.^{[21][74][75]} After breaking into the film industry, she shifted from her mother's house in [Ballygunge Circular Road](#) in south Kolkata to Mumbai.^[76] There she moved into the family house in [Juhu](#), where she stays with her sister.^{[75][77]} During her stay in Mumbai, the media romantically linked her to model and actor [John Abraham](#).^[78] In the Bollywood press, she was, in 2008, speculatively linked to the novelist [Salman Rushdie](#), although both stated that they were simply good friends.^[79]

Riya has suffered a number of untimely incidents. During the filming of *Shaadi No. 1* in France, she was knocked unconscious after being accidentally run over by a [stuntman](#)'s motorbike, but she was not seriously injured.^[80] Shortly before the release of *Silsilay*, in which she starred opposite her boyfriend Ashmit Patel, a 90-second video clip was circulated through [Multimedia Messaging Services](#) and the internet, showing the pair in compromising situations.^{[52][81]} This was one of a number of controversies that erupted when celebrities were caught in similar situations using [cameraphones](#).^{[82][83]} Following this incident, the couple split up,^{[84][85]} although Riya denied that she was the girl in the MMS clip.^[83] One commentator claimed that the footage was an orchestrated publicity stunt.^[86] In 2007, she underwent a brief [detoxification](#) session in [Bangkok](#) for addiction to chocolate.^[87]

[edit] Public persona

Riya's on-screen performances have established her as a sex symbol and youth icon in India.^{[10][88][89]} Since entering the film industry, she has gained attention for wearing a bikini in *Shaadi No. 1*^{[90][91]} and sharing on-screen kisses with co-stars Ashmit Patel in *Silsilay* and [Sharman Joshi](#) in *Style*, respectively. Such performances garnered attention because of the relatively conservative outlook of Indian cinema and her own statements about such practises.^{[24][92][93]} Before becoming a film identity, she had a reputation for partying, which started at the age of fifteen.^{[94][95]} Riya's public persona is compared to her mother Moon Moon,

who was seen as a sex symbol of her time,^{[52][96]} while her sister Raima is mostly compared their grandmother Suchitra.^{[62][97]}

Although her film career has yet to achieve large-scale success, Riya has generated considerable media attention. She was ranked ninth on *Femina* *50 Most Beautiful Women*, published in the magazine's September 2007 issue. She was a jury member for the 2008 Final of the Mr. India contest.^[98] Along with Bollywood actors such as [Waheeda Rehman](#), [Shilpa Shetty](#), [Dia Mirza](#), [Raveena Tandon](#), [Jackie Shroff](#), [Naseeruddin Shah](#), [Tabu](#) and [Lara Dutta](#), Riya appeared in *Haath Se Haath Mila*, an [HIV/AIDS](#) awareness music video.^{[89][99]} She made charity appearances at [McDonald's](#) India to raise money for paediatric eye-care during [World Children's Week](#) (14–20 November) in 2003.^[100]

[[edit](#)] Filmography

Year	Film	Director	Role	Co-artists	Language	Other notes
1991	<i>Vishkanya</i>	Jag Mundhra	Young Nishi	Pooja Bedi , Kabir Bedi , Moon Moon Sen	Hindi	As a child artist
	<i>Taj Mahal</i>	Bharathi Raja	Machakanni	Manoj Bharatiraja	Tamil	
1999	<i>Good Luck</i>	Manoj Bhatnagar	Priya	Prashanth , Raghuvaran , Sukanya	Tamil	
2001	<i>Style</i>	N. Chandra	Sheena	Sharman Joshi , Sahil Khan , Shilpi Mudgal , Tara Deshpande , R. Madhavan , Sanjay Suri , Namrata Shirodkar , Jimmy Shergill , Sonali Kulkarni , Hrishitaa Bhatt	Hindi	
2002	<i>Dil Vil Pyar Vyar</i>	Anant Mahadevan	Gaurav's girlfriend	Milind Soman , Aryan Vaid , Reshmi Ghosh , Usha Bachani , Sahas Khandke , Rajpal Yadav	Hindi	Cameo appearance
2003	<i>Saazish</i>	Rajat Rawail	–	Ajay Devgan , Sunil Shetty , Sanjay Kapoor , Arbaaz Khan , Isha	Hindi	
	<i>Qayamat: City Under Threat</i>	Harry Baweja	Sheetal		Hindi	

				Koppikar, Neha Dhupia		
	Jhankaar Beats	Sujoy Ghosh	Preeti	Sanjay Suri , Rahul Bose , Juhi Chawla , Shayan Munshi , Rinke Khanna	Hinglish	The language of the film was a mix of Hindi and English
	Dil Ne Jise Apna Kahaa	Atul Agnihotri	Kamini	Salman Khan , Preity Zinta , Bhoomika Chawla , Helen , Rati Agnihotri , Renuka Shahane	Hindi	Cameo appearance
2004	Plan	Hriday Shetty	Shalini	Sanjay Dutt , Sanjay Suri , Dino Morea , Priyanka Chopra , Sameera Reddy	Hindi	Item number
	Arasatchi	N. Maharajan	Iruvathu Vaisu	Arjun Sarja , Lara Dutta , Raghuvaran , Vivek , Lakshmi Kavya Madhavan , Prithviraj	Tamil	Item number
	Ananthabhadram	Santhosh Sivan	Bhama	Sukumaran , Manoj K Jayan , Kalabhavan Mani , Biju Menon , Revathi	Malayalam	
	Shaadi No. 1	David Dhawan	Madhuri	Sanjay Dutt , Fardeen Khan , Zayed Khan , Sharman Joshi , Esha Deol , Soha Ali Khan , Ayesha Takia	Hindi	
2005	Tum... Ho Na!	N.S. Raj Bharath	Reema	Preeti Ganguly , Sumit Nijhawan , Nethra Raghuraman , Jackie Shroff	Hindi	
	James	Rohit Jugraj	–	Mohit Ahlawat , Mohan Agashe , Snehal Dabi , Nisha Kothari	Hindi	Item number

	<u>Silsilay</u>	<u>Khalid Mohammed</u>	Anushka	<u>Tabu</u> , <u>Bhoomika Chawla</u> , <u>Jimmy Shergill</u> , <u>Rahul Bose</u> , <u>Celina Jaitley</u> , <u>Ashmit Patel</u> , <u>Divya Dutta</u> , <u>Riyaz Ahmed</u> , <u>Victor Banerjee</u> , <u>Mahesh Manjrekar</u>	Hindi	
	<i>It Was Raining That Night</i>	<u>Mahesh Manjrekar</u>	–	<u>Dawn Moeller</u> , <u>Moon Moon Sen</u> , <u>Sushmita Sen</u> , <u>Ritesh Deshmukh</u> , <u>Celina Jaitley</u> , <u>Anupam Kher</u> , <u>Koena Mitra</u> , <u>Sunil Shetty</u> , <u>Jackie Shroff</u> , <u>Sharman Joshi</u> , <u>Raima Sen</u> , <u>Manoj Pahwa</u> , <u>Himani Shivpuri</u> , <u>Manish Nagpal</u>	English	
	<u>Apna Sapna Money Money</u>	<u>Sangeeth Sivan</u>	Shivani	<u>Arshad Warsi</u> , <u>Ashmit Patel</u> , <u>Aashish Chaudhary</u> , <u>Shamita Shetty</u> , <u>Tanushree Dutta</u>	Hindi	
	<i>The Bachelor</i>	Ajay Sinha	Nisha	<u>Arshad Warsi</u> , <u>Ashmit Patel</u> , <u>Aashish Chaudhary</u> , <u>Shamita Shetty</u> , <u>Tanushree Dutta</u>	Hindi	Unfinished
2006	<i>Rokda</i>	Ramesh Kotar	–	<u>Rishma Malik</u> , <u>Sonali Bendre</u> , <u>Akshaye Khanna</u> , <u>Nirupa Roy</u>	Hindi	Unfinished
	<i>Love You Hamesha</i>	Kailash Surendranath	Meghna	<u>Akshay Kumar</u> , <u>Fardeen Khan</u> , <u>Riteish Deshmukh</u> , <u>Vidya Balan</u>	Hindi	Originally scheduled for release in 1999, credited as Rhea Dev Varma
2007	<u>Heyy Baby</u>	<u>Sajid Khan</u>	–	<u>Manoj Manchu</u> , <u>Sneha Ullal</u>	Hindi	<u>Item number</u>
	<u>Nenu Meeku Telusa...?</u>	Ajay Shastri	Madhu	<u>Salman Khan</u> , <u>Preity Zinta</u> , <u>Sunny Deol</u> , <u>Bobby Deol</u>	Telugu	Dubbed into Tamil.
2008	<u>Heroes</u>		–		Hindi	

	<i>Zor Lagaa Ke... Hayya</i>	Girish Girija Joshi	–	Sohail Khan Mithun Chakraborty , Mahesh Manjrekar , Seema Biswas , Gulshan Grover Randeep Hooda , Rituparna Sengupta , Divya Dutta , Rakhi Sawant	Hindi	Unfinished
	Love Khichdi	Srinivas Bhashyam	–	G. Asrani , Sayali Bhagat , Aashish Chaudhary , Neha Dhupia , Javed Jaffrey , Celina Jaitley , Viju Khote , Inder Kumar , Johnny Lever , Paintal , Chunky Pandey , Delnaaz Paul , Vatsal Seth , Shreyas Talpade	Hindi	Announced
2009	Paying Guests	Paritosh Painter	Avni	Kay Kay Menon , Rajpal Yadav , Shweta Tiwari	Hindi	
2010	Benny and Babloo	Yunus Sajawal	Riya		Hindi	

[edit] See also

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This article contains **Indic text**. Without proper [rendering support](#), you may see [question marks or boxes](#), misplaced vowels or missing conjuncts instead of Indic text.

- [List of Indian film actresses](#)
- [List of Bollywood Clans: The Sens](#)
- [Sex in Indian entertainment](#)

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