

# Film Review: 2.0 has an important message but woven into a clumsy script



CHENNAI: Despite its meandering 148-minute narrative and a clumsy script, the newly released 2.0 has an important message that the world can ill-afford to ignore. The film, starring Akshay Kumar and Rajinikanth and directed by Shankar, highlights the dangers of mobile telephone tower emissions, and many Indian cities have already begun to feel this. The house sparrow, for instance, has virtually disappeared from Chennai and other places, and it is suspected that the high level of radio waves emitted by the proliferating towers is the cause. In 2.0 (in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu), renowned ornithologist Pakshirajan (played by an unrecognizable Akshay Kumar) hangs himself from a tower after his desperate attempts to save birds hit a wall.



The movie turns into a sci-fi fantasy with Pakshirajan mutating into a giant bird out to destroy every single mobile instrument and tower, leaving Chennai furious and frustrated. In steps the mad scientist, Rajinikanth's Dr. Vaseegaran, who is asked to bring back to life his look-alike robot Chitti to battle the evil unleashed by Pakshirajan. Along with Nila (a female robot played by Amy Jackson, the British model turned Indian actress), Vaseegaran sets to work in a nail-biting adventure with plenty of special effects. It is fascinating to watch the way telephone instruments make strange patterns in the sky as the huge bird, breathing fire and venom, sets about ridding the city of this pollution.

Shankar's ploy to make his latest feature film an all-India attraction by roping in Kumar appears to have worked, with 2.0 grossing 5 billion rupees (approx. \$800,000) worldwide in the first few days. Kumar's role is very short, so his fans may well be disappointed. However, Rajinikanth, who is considered a demi-god in southern India, surprises by an extremely subdued and subtle performance as a scientist who in spite of his crazy ways (in an earlier film he had created Chitti, the robot that finally went berserk killing men) endears himself to a city in distress.

But these alone do not make for compelling viewing, and the 3D computer graphic imagery (with all the clanking metal) can only help so much, especially when the writing is so unimpressive.

