

**An Analysis of a Lady Who Rediscovered her Lost Charisma for the Good of the Society and Overcoming Strong Odds from a Patriarchal Society through the Film *How Old Are You***

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**Abstract**

Everyone knows women outnumber men in each and every discipline of life. But the male dominated society never has been admitted. May be because of a system generated society or impulse of men towards women like women should be live always at underground; not even basement to climb and settle a space in the patriarchal society. Most of the time men carefully forget to bestow care, share and space of respect to the counterpart. If anyone showers the goodness, the stereotypical society called them as 'womenpeckers'. Men are prematured product of woMEN. When the womanhood accomplished the social status in society, man fulfilled the dynamic nature of respect and social skills. No one can determine the expiry date of women's dream. A dream of never ending reflex impulse. A discovery of oneself, self realisation and self-esteem of womanism instead of caged bird made up of golden nest and saying peripheral happy.

**Keywords:** Outnumber, patriarchal society, womenpeckers, womanhood, self realisation

Roshan Andrews's film '*How Old Are You*' takes us along on a woman's pursuit to expose her long buried identity. Armed with a maestro performance by Manju Warriar, this superbly acted and emotionally engaging drama is a keeper of a film, and quite an impressive one at that.

Nirupama Rajeev (Manju Warriar) has turned 36, when we get to see her first, and age is a matter of rising concern for the woman who works as an UD clerk at a government office. Her husband Rajeev Narayanan (Kunchacko Boban) aspires to move abroad to Ireland, and Nirupama is doleful having been turned down by many an Irish company for a

job that would let her travel along with him. That their daughter (Amritha Anil) is least appreciative of her frantic efforts adds to her travails.

On a astounding morning, on being summoned to the Inspector of General's office, Nirupama learns that the President of India would like to have a conversation with her over breakfast. The devastating meeting makes her the laughing stock of Facebook jokes, and before long, she watches unluckily as her husband and daughter fly away to Ireland, promising to have chit chat sessions over Skype. As a traumatized Nirupama stands aghast, in walks Susan David (Kaniha), an old classmate of hers who reminds her of the firebrand that she once had been, prompting her to take one hard look at the mirror and see beyond the grey hair strands that have been messily colored. Susan David (Kanika), her old classmate, a successful business woman, reminds her of the woman she used to be and inspires her to rediscover her younger self-esteem.

The film moves with a statement of her classmate saying 'Is this the same person of 1998 batch' in Facebook and met her in office via her boss by introducing that they are classmates of IIM. She(Susan who is a Chief marketing officer of Britannia) kindles her inner consciousness by taking her to their college and recalled how she fought with the management to bring computer lab to the college. The first thing she did is a video with the narration of meeting of President of India in the facebook which has created a different image to her and her life goes with her daughter over Skype and her husband over Phone from Ireland.

Nirupama then explains her situation, when she met the president, to the social medias and clears her name. Her incapacity to rise up to her daughter's expectations and the discomfiture of her husband being mistaken for her younger brother further troubles her. Nirupama had a habit of having a vegetable garden on her roof, without the usage of chemicals or pesticides. One day Nirupama visits an old woman whom she would meet everyday on her bus. Both of them don't even know their names, and when she gets to know that the woman is sick, Nirupama turns up at her house with her own vegetable. The old woman thanks her for the time she spent for her and for reminding that she is not alone in this world. News of her pure vegetables spreads through the neighbor of the sick woman. In between, Nirupama's daughter calls her to Ireland, but she hesitates as she has lots of work left to be done. Her vegetables are asked for a wedding. For this Nirupama gives confidence

all her neighbors to cultivate vegetables on their rooftops as well, which turns out to be a huge success. Her friend Susan David encourages her into a seminar with delegates as audience. Her topic of biofarming influenced all the officials and gives her the job of making it a reality. Once again the President meets her and family.

The meeting turned out to be a successful one. The transformation of her character from a depressed woman to a steady and sprightly lady is almost predictable. *'How old are you'* leaves behind a sharp note to its audience. Near the end of the story, Nirupama reminds her husband to expect only what is given to her.

It so happens in several lives - not just of women, but of men too - that after a while, people forget the kind of persons that they had been long back, and start believing that they have always been the paler, weaker, scorched beings that they have evolved into over the years. Entering into a mode of denial, they often refuse to lend an ear to the Susan Davids who walk in and out of their lives, almost unwavering to carry on with their unreal selves, shaped out of a life that had somewhere in the middle slipped out of their hands.

Nirupama explores herself face to face with almost every situation that an average Malayali woman of her age goes through - ranging from the sly looks that an auto rickshaw driver casts her way, to the caustic tongue of an envious colleague, from a highly uneventful day to day existence that sends her shuttling between the kitchen and her workplace to a family that takes almost everything for granted. The dread of fast approaching the formidable age of forty, her inability to rise up to her daughter's expectations and the sheer discomfiture at her husband being mistaken for her younger brother, are just a few unwelcome additions to Nirupama's uncountable concerns.

Nirupama's journey from an impassive government servant who hides a weekly inside her office file to a self strong woman who finally sets right her priorities in life, is one that transforms her from a slouching female to one that walks with resolute strides and a head held high. With the age old adage that triumph favors only those who are brave enough to lose ringing loud in her ears, she proves a point to herself as she finally leaves a signature in her world.

Nirupama does redeem herself in the eyes of her family, winning their respect and admiration, but she has to be selfish to do it. She resigns her dull job and becomes an

entrepreneur, showing the spunk and grit she had once displayed in her college days, when she had been an inspiration for friends like Susan. And in the process she realizes that as a woman her dreams are no less important than a man's and the only person who has the right to put an expiry date on them is her own self. The film cannot claim to boldness or newness of theme but it does force us to introspect on the challenges the modern woman faces in her quest to balance happiness self-fulfillment and self-actualization. The film can be seen as Women's accomplishment, it also has messages about the nowadays children's mentality and practice and values of ex-generation practice to be well health being. It has shown in different places and to quote few, one day she happened to see her father playing with a Carom board after purchasing a new one and saying playing carom board will increase memory power. Her mother with a group of women clearing and chopping of a waste land and plant trees which may be useful after some years which is a lesson that we should give greenery to our next generation.

The film perhaps cannot escape an allegation that this is the stuff that fairy tales are usually made of. Indeed, it is, and yet if you reach out to Nirupama Rajeev and her chronicle of success with a beaming optimism, it is because you so much want women like her to win in this world; it is because of that fervent desire within each of us for such fairy tales to come true. Bitter sweet, smart and insightful, here is some sparkling writing by Bobby and Sanjay, they manage to retain its heartfelt quality right from the start to the finish.

This isn't the first time a film has been made on a woman out on a voyage to discover her lost identity and certainly it wouldn't be the last either. Which is why perhaps the biggest similarity between *'How Old Are You'* and the Hindi film *'English Vinglish'* should lie in the struggle that it's protagonists put up against all odds. That they are played by two of the best actors in showbiz today is of course, an added advantage.

Which brings me to the mother of all comebacks, that of Manju Warriar, after a long hiatus of fourteen years. Manju has mellowed remarkably well as a person, and the maturity has brought about a charm and magnetism that is incredibly appealing. That she throws in her heart and soul into her amazing performance vouchsafes the fact that a stunning gift as this cannot remain redundant for long. And Manju, without an jot of doubt establishes with an unparalleled flair that when it comes to her histrionic potentials, she is indeed Nirupama - one devoid of comparisons.

Actor Kunchacko Boban who has done powerful and unpredictable character in *'How Old Are You'*. The actor reminds a loud round of applause for persuasively depicting a chauvinist husband on screen; a role that perhaps no other actor in his league would even dare enough to touch with a barge pole. And there is Amritha Anil, the extraordinary talented young actor, who delivers a precise and concise feat as the couple's daughter, forced to make a choice.

Two other actors deserve a very special mention as well - Kalaranjini who has been around for the last few decades, but who has never ever managed to bring the house down as she does in 'HOAY', and Sethulekshmi who with her naive demeanor and spongy speech lights up every scene that we get to see her in. Diwakaran's frames are refreshingly first-rate, and Gopi Sundar's juicy background score tinged the overlapping of situation.

With Roshan Andrews *'How Old Are You'*, Manju Warriar asserts that age is just a number and matter of time. Brimming with buoyancy, this is a movie that should strike a fine chord with millions of individuals out there, and certainly do not mean the women alone. Though the film has mixed all the things which are easy in film but that is not that easy in real but one could take the real substance of film as women empowerment especially those who are brilliant and brave but could not do any novelty but settled with a normal life. One more message is that, children though they wanted their parents to be affectionate and caretaker, they also wanted them to be star of the society.

With so many scope and super duper hit, the film is going to be remade in other languages too. As the movie has to its credits with good re-recording, no duet and soothing songs which enhances the rhythmic modulation of worthiness.

### **Works Cited**

\*<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wF76ZzRJvo0>

\*Moviereviews.com. *How Old Are You*.27.May 2017