

#ENTERTAINMENT

Badhon on movies, struggles and aspirations

"I had been flung into the raging sea during my daughter's custody battle. This is not all, many belittled me and discouraged me through and through and yet, I rose like a Phoenix from the ashes."

Azmeri Haque Badhon

Badhon has been living in the dark confines of her movie *Rehana Maryam Noor* since its releases on July 7, 2021. That's what happens when a movie is based on harassment, social injustice, and inequality. But before she became an overnight cult favourite, Badhon was a regular person like the rest of us: a girl with her own set of misperceptions and mental struggles.

We met the actress for a tête-à-tête to know more of the lady before the success, the lady who never knew she'd be mentioned at Cannes.

As we meet, she is dressed in a radiant magenta crop-top and check printed trousers, her moderately long jet-black tresses spill over her shoulders. In fact, once she walked in, she made the aura more comfortable with her quick jokes and casual conversations, as if we were previously acquainted.

"*Rehana Maryam Noor*, directed by Abdullah Mohammad Saad has been extremely close to my heart," she begins. "I have had a similar tumultuous personal life and the subtle connection with the drama had been a relief – as if the universe was reassuring me that everything would be



ok, that there are more people out there going through similar struggles," Badhon confessed.

Abdullah Mohammad Saad became instantaneously famous for his unabashed, fearless take on the female character. While working on the project, both Badhon and Saad bonded well enough for her to be able to claim to us that Saad was a complete recluse, typical of geniuses and had zero inclination towards anything else but fresh creative establishments.

"This man is a genius! A person who could convert a clueless, 'whitewashed with

makeup' person like me, into a dedicated actor with zero makeup, can be nothing but pure talent. And yes! I do not mind if this information goes to print," remarked Badhon.

Naturally speaking, we wanted to know more about the makeup bit. Badhon was all animated as she began to explain. "You see I was never comfortable in my natural skin tone. I always thought white was beautiful and I used to put on heavy makeup even if I had to go out for groceries. Saad was the first person to make me appear before screen in zero makeup. He is the one who instilled that enormous level of confidence in me through the character. After *Rehana*, I realised for a fact, that I didn't need makeup to hide my flaws or to impress anyone. People should like me for who I am, the person with all the flaws, if not then too bad," stated the actress.

It's true that when Badhon was a little girl and even a young lady, her family life had been achingly normal, with conservative parents; she had no other inclination but to be the perfect daughter, wife and mother. "My failed marriages exposed me to the ugliest of truths, of life being anything but rosy.

"And this increased tenfold during my daughter's legal-custody battle. I had to fight against society, barbaric laws and even sexual harassment to win back my daughter. A daughter who I had raised with all the love in the world, and yet, being a mother to her meant nothing to the world!

But thankfully, this made me the resistant person that I am today. The confidence that you see oozing is nothing but the strength which I had gained while being on my own two feet, alone, fighting against the world with only one belief that I had to get what I wanted, and that was all of what was needed."

Moving onto lighter topics, we discuss *REKKA*, Mushkan Zuberi, and her brilliant portrayal by the actress. "It would be wrong to say that I wasn't intimidated at first, but Srijit Mukherjee believed in me and his encouragement helped me bring the character to life," revealed Badhon.

Returning back to the world of fiction and the daunting task of a follow-up on a *RMN* or *REKKA*, Badhon says, "I can't keep on being lucky forever, but definitely I will always be on the lookout for movies that challenge dogma."

And we expect nothing less from the confident, feminist, artist that she is today. Her sky-rocketing confidence level only encourages other young woman out there to break down the glass ceilings and take their truest form, rather than what they have been taught to appear as, for the sake of society.

Dear Badhon, keep on dazzling us with more brilliant works. The world waits to see more of the Phoenix that is you.

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury
Photo Courtesy: Zaaya

