



Rinku Rajguru is enjoying the adulation she is getting after the success of 'Sairat'. She was even offered a plateful of 'chaat' by a restaurant waiter, who was keen on seeing her take the plunge to Bollywood

LIFE BEYOND 'SAIRAT'

RINKU RAJGURU is known for her Marathi blockbuster, but she is in a mood to explore

SWASTI CHATTERJEE

Janhvi Kapoor, during an earlier chat with *Eastern Chronicle* shared how her *Dhadak* director Shashank Khaitan, had strictly asked her not to watch *Sairat*, before commencing shooting for the latter's Hindi remake. Though Janhvi, who reprised the role of Archie in *Dhadak*, had watched the iconic Marathi film twice before, she obeyed the director's instructions and didn't budge. And for all who have watched *Sairat*, what a respite it was! She could be transformed to a glamorous Parthavi, in a rich Manish Malhotra salwar suit to match up to Bollywood standards, but what Rinku Rajguru had done to Archie, can never be replicated. Such was the honesty and conviction of the teenager from Akluj.

Before starting work on *Sairat*, Rinku was an absolute novice when it came to films. But she doesn't show an iota of inexperience as she gets into the skin of Archie onscreen. Robust, feisty and headstrong, Rinku is as much Archie as she is Rinku! Perhaps, that's what made her portrayal so effortless on screen. It was the 'overnight star' syndrome for Rinku in Maharashtra – restaurants, clothesline and even a Marathi television channel, *Sairat* had caught on in the Western state.

And Rinku wasn't caught off guard. "Nagraj Sir (director Nagraj Manjule) had asked us to do whatever '*masti*' we wanted to, before the film hit the theatres because he knew that our lives would change after that." Two years later, Archie is still not short of fanboy moments from across Maharashtra. "People come to my house in the village and click selfies with my house in the background. They even click pictures of the bike that I rode to practise for *Sairat*," she says. She wanted to become a doctor earlier, but she had to take an external admission in college for her plus 2. Reason: "*Log pareshaan karte hai*." Clearly, Maharashtra isn't over the *Sairat* craze yet!

So much so that when Rinku was about to dine in a restaurant in Mumbai, a waiter offered her a plateful of *chaat*. Mind you, she didn't order it, but what the waiter said to her was heartwarming. "He came straight up to me and said that he wanted to see me in Bollywood and asked me if I could sign a Hindi film soon," Rinku smiles.

But even after such stardom,

Rinku is a grounded soul. In between this interview, she breaks into an innocent laughter and confesses she enjoys such adulations and only wants to do good work. There's honesty in the 18-year-old's voice, she hasn't had the exposure like her Bollywood peers. And she is averse to comparisons. "Janhvi's role was different," she says.

"Though we were part of the same storyline, *Dhadak* was a different film and let us not compare both," Rinku says. Rinku hasn't watched *Dhadak* yet, but she is happy that the film is doing well at the box office.

Much like Archie, Rinku is brimming with confidence. Remember the scene when Rinku drives away all the boys from a public well so that her friends and she could take a swim?

She didn't have a Godfather in the Marathi film industry, but found one in Manjule after her launch. And since then, as she proudly claims, she has been her own teacher! "I have got most of my *shikshan* from *Sairat*, and the character of Archie. But from then onwards, I am my own teacher. If needed, I talk to Nagraj Sir, my mentor," she says. She is learning the tricks of the trade gradually maybe. While her *Sairat* co-star Akash Thosar is already active on Instagram, Rinku is yet to open an account. But she feels it's the right time to be on social media now. "I was too young to handle social media back then. Now I feel I can tackle Instagram. It is fun. Though I don't have much confidence, I will learn soon," she confesses!

Hailing from a village in Western Maharashtra, she was never so serious about her appearances. "We are simple people. I didn't know that being slim is so much important in the industry. I cannot eat everything and have to take care of my skin. Earlier, there was freedom. But this is also fun," she says.

Post *Sairat*, Rinku is working on *Kagaar*, a Marathi film, which will release in Diwali. She had to shed weight to play the protagonist. And rightly so - she is so clear in audiences' mind as Archie, that it was a given that she needed a makeover to stay on. "I started running and checked my diet. I knew I had to lose a lot of weight to get recognition beyond Archie." And at a time when the Marathi film industry is seeing a sea change, Rinku isn't keen to stick to one language. "My aim is to be in good films in whatever language that I get."



Akash Thosar and Rinku Rajguru in Mumbai



PEOPLE COME TO MY RESIDENCE IN THE VILLAGE AND CLICK SELFIES WITH MY HOUSE IN THE BACKGROUND. THEY EVEN TAKE PHOTOS OF THE BIKE THAT I RODE TO PRACTISE FOR 'SAIRAT'