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Rocketry The Nambi Effect Review: A Disappointing Directorial Debut from R Madhavan

Rocketry: The Nambi Effect U

★★★★★ 1/5

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1 July 2022 | English, Hindi and Tamil

2 hrs 37 mins | Biography, Drama

Starring: R Madhavan, Simran

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Director: R Madhavan

Music: Sam C. S.

R Madhavan has made his directorial debut with Rocketry, playing scientist Nambi Narayan in it.

R Madhavan does little justice to the story of Nambi Narayanan in his directorial debut, Rocketry: The Nambi Effect, which was screened at Marche du Film at Cannes.

[GAUTAMAN BHASKARAN](#)

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LAST UPDATED: JULY 01, 2022, 11:46 IST

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Nambi Narayanan is a distinguished rocket scientist, who was credited with developing the Vikas engine that was used to launch India's first PSLV. He had also done remarkable work in cryogenics, having garnered a full scholarship at Princeton and later refusing a fantastic offer from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), instead choosing to work for the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in Thiruvananthapuram. R. Madhavan's directorial debut, Rocketry: The Nambi Effect – which was screened at Marche du Film at Cannes in May and which is now in theatres – is a kind of biopic on Narayanan. But unfortunately its screenplay goes all over at 157 minutes.

Also, written by Madhavan (who plays Nambi Narayanan) with little focus, the first half of the movie seems like a physics class with so many science jargons thrown in that are both confusing and boring. It is awfully verbose and hardly cinematic.

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The second half runs like a spy thriller with Narayanan and his men racing – in one scene — across a vast icy expanse in what was then the Soviet Union. They are being chased by Americans, who want to lay their hands on what Narayanan is carting off to India with a plane waiting and all set to take off. A typical James Bond adventure or so it would appear!

The biggest flaw in Rocketry is the language; imagine French men, Russians and the British speaking Tamil. The CBI guys talk Tamil as well! What should have been a multi-lingual work has been completely messed up; the lip-sync is terrible, and performances leave so much to be desired.

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Simran, who essays the scientist's wife, Meena, has been wasted beyond imagination, so much so that she comes off like an "extra". Ravi Raghavendra as Vikram Sarabhai and Gulshan Grover's Abdul Kalam have fleeting moments on the screen, and at one point I began to wonder whether the yawningly long runtime was all meant for Madhavan. But he does little justice. He appears ill at ease as Narayanan, and is so disappointing that we cannot believe that this was the actor who was compelling in Vikram Vedha and charmingly natural in the Tanu Weds Manu franchise.

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Honesty, Rocketry should have focussed on Narayanan's dark days when he was accused of being a spy and tortured in jail. It is another story that he was finally acquitted and declared not guilty. This segment of his life needs to have been elaborated. For, this is the story that needs to be told with brutal frankness. Instead, Madhavan wastes the screen time in inane stuff; what is the idea of a pretty girl looking at a young Narayanan across the room and finally walking up to him to be told that he was thinking about his wife. Come on, this is not 1960s cinema, and we expected a lot more from Madhavan.

Yes, we certainly need one more film telling us all about Narayanan the man (not the scientist) whose loyalty to his country was severely tested.

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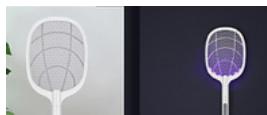


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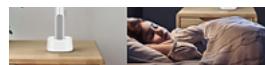
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