

Ayushmann Khurrana's Vicky Donor remains an exhilarating watch after all these years



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There are many, many films that I would rather forget the moment the curtain falls. In fact, some among these are so bad that I would rather walk out after the first half, when it is interval time — a system that Indian movies have adopted perhaps to sell popcorn and other snacks that are insanely priced.

However, there are a few movies that I feel like revising ever so often. One of them is *Vicky Donor* (2012), helmed by Shoojit Sircar, who gave us some lovely works like *Piku*, *Madras Cafe* and *Gulabo Sitabo*. Of all these, it is *Vicky Donor* that I loved the most.

For one, it spoke about a very novel subject — sperm donation and adoption which till today, despite all modern thinking (sex outside marriage, divorce, extra-marital affairs, etc, etc) carry a

stigma. Most people want to have their own biological kids, because of unwarranted prejudices.

Vicky Donor passes through these with admirable ease.

Ayushmann Khurrana is endearing as a man who marries a woman who cannot conceive. Khurrana essays Vicky Arora, and Yami Gautam is Ashima Roy, a banker. They meet at her workplace when he arrives to deposit his mother's cash from her beauty parlour. He is charmingly arrogant, she is proud and feels a sense of disdain towards Vicky.

There are four people in this couple's life: Vicky's mother, Dolly (Dolly Ahluwalia), his grandmother (Kamlesh Gill), Ashima's father (Jayanta Das) and Dr Baldev Chaddha (Anu Kapoor). They are all brilliant: Dolly and the grandmother who have several pegs of liquor every night are marvellous icing humour on their familial woes. The grandmother

is unhappy because Dolly did not bring dowry, while the younger woman is tense because of Vicky's waywardness. Ashima's father with his Bong excitement and passion has been portrayed with rib-ticking humour and accented English that are worth watching and re-watching.

And Ayushmann in his debut outing is excellent with an amazing arc: first as a carefree, unemployed youth who does not think twice before selling his pet dog and later as a reluctant sperm donor cajoled into this by Dr Chaddha. He convinces the young man that his sperm will make many childless couples deliriously happy. Eventually, the money which comes from selling sperm puts a zing into his steps.

Everybody is happy, but not Ashima, when she learns after getting married to Vicky that he has been selling his sperm. She is even more shattered when she learns that she cannot conceive.

Of course, we all know how the film will end. There are some lovely lessons in it: the great service that a sperm donor does for society and the value of giving a home to an orphan child through adoption.

Kapoor gives an unforgettable performance as a fertility specialist who not only helps childless couples make their homes complete but also sets right Vicky-Ashima's life.

However hard I have tried I have not been able to find a flaw in *Vicky Donor*. It is evenly paced, is rhythmic and marvellously performed — even Dolly and the Gill are superb, enriching the narration in no small way.

Will the work eventually become a classic? I hope so.

Vicky Donor is now streaming on Amazon Prime.

The writer is a senior movie critic and author