

■ NIVETHA C

Every day, we encounter countless women in our lives — be it our grandmothers, mothers, daughters, daughters-in-law, or friends — many of whom prioritise their maternal duties over their desires and aspirations. To inspire and empower women to pursue their dreams, Naturals' founders Veena K and CK Kumaravel have launched a music video titled *Woman of Power*. This video celebrates the resilience of independent women who have overcome numerous obstacles to achieve success.

Being an active advocate for women empowerment, musician and daughter of AR Rahman, Khatija Rahman has lent her voice to *Women of Power*, which has music composed by Sterlin Nithya and lyrics penned by Lavita Lobo. Khatija, who was excited about the project, talks about the recording session, "The recording session was fun and Sterlin wanted me to own the song. They both brought in the best of me." Khatija believes art is a powerful tool to bring awareness about various topics. "Be it painting, music, poetry, and dance among others, the medium helps to liberate, empower and uplift the soul and breaks barriers," she states.

Led by a team of accomplished women, the music video features real-life characters, delving deep into the struggles faced by educated women, who face financial constraints despite their capabilities. Being her debut video direction, Sterlin Nithya connects with the song and shares, "I have been in the industry for more than a decade, trying to get the deserved space and opportunity. Apart from making music for this project, I decided to direct the video. Many in the industry get intimidated when a woman puts out ideas and suggestions and very few helped me and understood my vision. I am thankful to cinematographer Jeba Ranjith, Shiva sir, Sundar Raj, Dr Chocachen Mathai and CK sir who believed in me.

Having studied at AR Rahman's KM Music Conservatory, Sterlin trusts that music is her higher power and would like to do more social cause-related projects. "It is important to use art for all the right reasons," she adds.

"Louder than thunder.... Make them all surrender," penned by Lavita is a fan of female songwriters like Jessie J and Alicia Keys. Coming from a commercial playback singing background, she didn't get an opportunity to express herself the way she liked. "We, as artistes, have to embody the composer's vision and emote according to the storyline, which is also challenging and fascinating in its way. But here, I had an opportunity to write something that truly resonates with my core being — empowering and uplifting the people around me, especially women," the lyricist says.

When asked about the inspirations while penning down the lyrics, she highlights, "Being a woman, I already had my share of story and inspi-



WOMEN'S POWER BEYOND MATERNAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Recently released music video, titled Woman of Power, celebrates the resilience of independent women. The team behind the video creation, Khatija Rahman, Sterlin Nithya and Lavita Lobo, talks about the significance of the topic and how financial independence is crucial for women

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— Lavita Lobo, lyricist

ration to offer through the lyrics, combined with the vision of CK sir, Sterlin and the brand. That is how I came up with *Woman Of Power*. I wanted this song to be the first thing one listens to in the morning to feel recharged and ready to take on the day with strength and courage. Apart from that, this will be a shoulder for you to lean on when someone is on the verge of giving up. The message delivered here will make one feel different and powerful." Her motto was not to blame anyone but to make people realise what can be done within their power to change the circumstances.

Financial independence is one of the most discussed topics in various forums. Talking about its impact, the 30-year-old lyricist remarks, "A lot of us are grown up seeing many women not being financially independent and that has conditioned us to believe it's not natural to be that way. Financial independence gives a lot of mental freedom to



Screen grab from the music video

women too. I think that's my main highlight."

Elucidating about the state of independent music, Khatija hopes, "It is improving, but the treatment of talented independent artistes based on their followers count in social media should change. Event companies hardly pay the artistes or even promote them. Sometimes, they don't even give them basic respect - at least cover for food and travel. I hope me speaking about it here will bring some change."