

LIFE ON THE SILVER SCREEN

The versatile actor Jitu Ahsan is a familiar face of the showbiz industry. Last year, Ahsan made his film debut in the critically acclaimed movie 'Gohin Baluchor'. This week in an interview with Star Showbiz, Jitu Ahsan talks about his role in 'Gohin Baluchor', his experience of the silver screen and his plans for the future.

You made your debut in the film industry a bit late. Why did you take so much time?

I have always prioritized efficacy of the character that I would be portraying in a project. I got plenty of offers of working in cinema. Sometimes I didn't have enough time, sometimes I didn't like the script, sometimes I couldn't appreciate the character I was offered to play on screen. I acted in a short film called *Laal Belun* in my very childhood. My father was associated with this film. Again, I was never in a rush of debuting in silver screen.

You made your film debut as a negative character. What attracted made you accept this role?

I am an actor. I never felt the necessity of bearing out my performance skills by playing the traditional, sentimental hero and dancing with my heroine on sea-shore. I decided to do the character of 'Hanif Sikdar' right after skimming through the script. This character had all the elements in it. I could sense that I would find enough space for acting. This character instantly attracted me because it offered an incredible amount of expression and variation. Also, portraying a heavily negative role requires audacity whereas playing the hero doesn't necessarily put one on a certain pedestal.

How was the response from the audience following your performance in 'Gohin Baluchor'?

My sincere gratitude to all those who watched the film. I got abundant compli-

ments for my performance in this film. The responses to my negative character in this film have been very positive till now. In fact, many critics have praised my performance in this film. My character could arrest the attention of the audience. This film can be called a commercial success as well, though I heard that it earned more profit abroad. My achievement through this film is appreciable.

You are very irregular on television these days. Why is that?

There is this common complaint that we do not watch Bangladeshi dramas. People are more fascinated by Netflix, YouTube, and a thousand other things. Making people sit in front of the television screen is no small thing. Why would you expect an individual to invest his valuable time to watch your work if this is not worth it? I have lost interest in working for television because the scripts are mostly thoughtless. To be very honest, I have the experience of working with directors who even did not have a script. When I asked them about my shot they literally went blank. There are dramas that have only two or three characters and an incoherent story. We have approximately 30 channels in our country and viewers still subscribe to YouTube and Netflix to get entertained. Isn't that tragic? Tragic but undeniable. Because in this era of unrestricted access to international media, people will certainly be selective and more inclined to something that would meet their interest. When options are many, an automatic

competition becomes apparent. I do not want to depreciate the standard of my work. I would rather appear in few but quality projects.

A lot of comedy dramas are being produced these days. Tell us something about it.

There is a marginal difference between comedy and clownery. The comedy dramas we watch on TV these days are mostly witless and idiotic. The directors forget to draw the line between comedy and buffoonery. Thus the viewers do not find much interest in them. Also one does not necessarily get entertained by comedies. Entertaining the audience is not equivalent to making them laugh. People find entertainment in all genres of pure art. It can be a romantic drama, a serious story or even a story of separation and sorrow. I once acted in one of Humayun Faridi's dramas named *Chandrgrasta* for NTV during Eid. This is still one of the highest viewed dramas of NTV and it was not a comedy drama. People happily accepted its intelligible storyline and characterization. The problem is, the directors and script writers are not taking the intellect of our audience very seriously.

You were very close to Humayun Faridi. You considered him your mentor. And he always appreciated your acting. Tell us about him.

He himself an institution in himself. He was an invincible warrior. What I loved most about him was his integrity and his undiplomatic statements about his work

and life. Humayun Faridi worked in ample commercial cinemas. He was undisguised and straightforward about his participation in those cinemas. If he chose to appear in only some selective and abstract movies, our viewers would not have got the privilege of watching him perform that frequently.

Your father Syed Ahsan Ali Sydney was a dignified and legendary actor of his time. Do you have plan of working in any of his remakes?

I performed in one such remake. My father acted in a drama called *Nayana Sommukhe Tumi Nai*. Back then it became one of the most admired and popular dramas of BTV. Kaushik Shankar Das made a remake of it, *Durer Tumi*. It was probably in 2004 or 2005. I played the character of my father. Tisha was my co-actor. The storyline was the same but some changes were made in the script.

Tell us about your inspiration and future plans.

I embarked on media looking up to my father. But my inspiration of pressing on with my work is the love of my audience. When someone comes up to me and expresses their amazement that is an unrivalled inspiration. And my future plan about acting is to retain the standing and stature that I have earned over the years. I have no plan of working in hundreds of movies and dramas. I would rather focus on the quality of my works.



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