

REINVENTING

ISHITA

Rumana Rashid Ishita rose to fame with her award-winning performances in 'Notun Kuri', a talent show for child artists aired on 'Bangladesh Television'. Post her success in 'Notun Kuri', Ishita has never had to look back. However, at the height of her acting career, the talented actor decided it was time for change, and subsequently she tried her hand at TV drama direction. In this week's interview with Rafi Hossain, Ishita talks about her career, her passion for acting and her aspirations.

|| COVER STORY ||

Rafi: Welcome to *Uncensored* with Rafi Hossain. Today we have with us the actor Ishita who has been away from the media scene for a while now. Ishita, tell us about your hiatus from the media.

Ishita: I am not on a hiatus really; I have just decided to give myself some breathing space. I don't work on more than two or three projects a year. Things change over time; one's priorities change. My personal life takes up a lot of time, so I can't find the time to act regularly.

Rafi: How do you feel about the success of your recent drama, 'Pata Jhorar Din'?

Ishita: Pata Jhorar Din is very dear to my heart. I am grateful to the director, Redoan Rony, for considering me for this project. Rony is a very capable and popular filmmaker. When he offered me this role, I took it very seriously. Even though I wasn't well acquainted with Rony, I was moved by the story, and instantly agreed to join the cast. I had high expectations from this drama because of its moving storyline, and my expectations were met when the audiences embraced it with open arms.

Rafi: When did you realise that acting was not your main priority?

Ishita: Whatever I do, I give it my all. I graduated in 2004, and worked for Channel i for eleven years. I had to invest a lot of time there. After that, I left my job and completed my MBA. Later, I got busy with my personal pursuits, so acting had to take a backseat.

Rafi: What made you decide to quit acting?

Ishita: I have been acting from a very young age; grade one to be specific. That's why I tried to steer my career towards a new direction. I joined Channel i right after graduation. They provided me with the creative freedom that I craved. I directed dramas for them, and wrote scripts as well. I am a restaurateur these days. I also teach at a private university, which I enjoy immensely. All things considered, in order to do something different, I had to distance myself from acting.



Rafi: You have been an actor and a director. Tell us, why does the showbiz industry in Bangladesh lack good female directors?

Ishita: I have been greatly supported by my office, Channel i, in my directing pursuits. They provided me with all the opportunities and logistics that I needed. Sadly, most people aren't fortunate enough to get such opportunities. To be honest, I think we have more directors in our industry than we need, and most of these directors are male. One needs to muster a lot of self-confidence before entering a career, and I see that in the female directors of today. I see many talented female assistant directors these days, and they are on the path of building their career as full-fledged directors in the future.

Rafi: Would it have been difficult for you to become the Ishita you are today if you hadn't been affiliated with acting since childhood?

Ishita: Very early on in life, I realised that life is run through discipline. I wouldn't have grown up as an actor if I hadn't been involved with acting since childhood. All

things considered, I can confidently say that acting has been an essential part of my life.

Rafi: How supportive have your in-laws been regarding your involvement with the media industry?

Ishita: My husband has been very supportive of my career choice. Moreover, almost half of my in-laws are involved with acting in one way or another. Also, singer Feroza Begum is my aunt in-law. She was the one who introduced me to my husband. Our family is very culturally influenced; so they have always been very positive about my involvement with the media.

Rafi: Did you ever consider marrying someone from the industry?

Ishita: Media is my family, and the people of the showbiz industry are a part of my extended family. That's the reason why I never got married to someone from the media. This thought never even crossed my mind.

Rafi: Who is your favourite actor?

Ishita: I like the work of almost everyone who has worked and are currently working in our industry. Among the senior celebrities, I really admire the works of Suborna Mustafa, Ferdousi Majumdar, Aly Zaker, Asaduzzaman Noor, and Afzal Hossain. Amongst the actors of this generation, I like the works of Siam Ahmed and Sabnam Faria.

Rafi: What made you switch to acting from dancing?

Ishita: We don't really have enough options in our country to consider dancing as a career. If someone wants to continue dancing because of their love for it, they must struggle a lot. Acting is a little different from dancing. If someone really wants to spend their entire life as an actor, they can. I learned dancing as a child. I have utmost respect towards dancing. However, it never enticed me much. To be honest, I have a softer spot for acting than I have for dancing. That's why I chose acting as my profession.

Rafi: You sing well. Have you ever considered music as a potential career choice?

Ishita: To be honest, I find musical collaborations difficult. I really enjoy singing, and in the future, if I can manage everything properly, I might do a music related project.

Rafi: What are your future plans?

Ishita: Direction is a very challenging task. I have had a four-year break from the media. The industry has changed a lot over the last few years; new technologies have been introduced, and new faces have taken over. Although the basics of filmmaking remain the same, I will need time to adapt to the changes. As of now, I do not have anything concrete in mind. Let's see what the future has in store for me.

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