

THE ODYSSEY OF Beauty & Fame



Bidya Sinha Mim came into the showbiz industry after winning the 'Lux Channel i Superstar' competition in 2007. Since then, she went on to do hit films, like 'Poran' and 'Amar Praner Priya'. She won the 'National Film Award' for 'Best Actress' for her performance in the movie, 'Jonaki'r Alo'. In this interview with Rafi Hossain, she talks about how she went from being a beauty contest winner to a film star.

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The real challenge for me was after I won the Lux Channel i Superstar. I had to learn to be patient, and be able to pick the right film to work on. My mother helped me with everything. She supported and guided me. Without her support, I might not have been able to be where I am today.

II COVER STORY

Rafi Hossain: Thank you for giving us time, Mim. Are you currently very busy with the promotion of your film, 'Shapludu'?
Bidya Sinha Mim: Thank you for inviting me here. I have been extremely busy promoting *Shapludu* for the past few days.

Rafi: Do you prefer modelling over acting?

Mim: Not really; I don't do modelling much. I act as a brand ambassador for some brands. I had to take on good acting roles to reach such a level, where brands would come to me to make me their ambassador. So, my main focus is doing films.

Rafi: So, do you enjoy acting more?

Mim: Yes. I have always enjoyed acting. I also really enjoy doing TVCs as it has more acting and less glamour. When I do a TVC which is really acting based, I have a lot of fun doing it.

Rafi: Many say that people coming into the industry after winning beauty contests don't give enough effort into acting and are only glamorous. How do you respond to that?

Mim: When I first came into the industry, I had to hear similar things for the first few years. Afterwards, however, no one ever told me that. When I did dramas, I had roles where I couldn't use any makeup, and I have also done roles which require heavy makeup. I do whatever is necessary for the story. I have also done the same for movies. In *Shapludu* as well, I used little to no makeup as that is what the role asked for. Also, when I did *Poran*, I had to do shoots without makeup most of the time. I'm comfortable to work without any makeup.

Rafi: You took a break after your first film, 'Amar Ache Jol'. Why is that?

Mim: After *Amar Ache Jol*, I wasn't offered any good script. I got offers, but they were all for commercial films. At that point, I wasn't very enthusiastic about doing commercial films. Then, for *Amar Praner Priya*, the directors and producers were very eager to take me. After that, I took another break. I think that was either in 2009 or 2010. The break lasted till 2012, after which, I did *Jonaki'r Alo*.

Rafi: Throughout your career, you have worked with a lot of top-level film heroes. Who was your favourite to work with?

Mim: I really can't pick; I enjoyed working with every single one of them. Whenever I work with someone, I form a good friendship with that person. It always happens that when I'm done shooting, I start missing them as we were together everyday for a long time, and suddenly, I'm not being able to see that person. I have that kind of relationship with every co-artist of mine.

Rafi: It's normal to miss someone after working with them for so long. But, did that feeling of friendship ever turn into something more?

Mim: No. That never happened. I want to keep my professional life separate from my personal life. I have never developed feelings like that for any co-artist or director.

Rafi: What if your co-artist developed feelings for you. How would you handle that?

Mim: That has not happened to me yet. I think that I present myself in such a manner that even if a co-artist

feels that way, he cannot say it to me. Right now, I'm just focused on my career.

Rafi: Are there any actors or directors that you are very eager to work with?

Mim: In Bangladesh, I have been fortunate enough to work with everyone that I have ever wanted to. It may be in small projects, like TVCs, but I got the opportunity to work with them.

Rafi: Have you worked with a director in a TVC, and then wanted to do a film with them?

Mim: Not really; I never wanted to do so. I worked with Amitabh bhai several times, and when he made his first film, *Aynabaji*, he offered me a role in it. The film had a great story, but I felt that the female lead didn't play that big of a role in it. So, I decided to decline that role. Since the story couldn't be changed to give the female lead a bigger part, I said no to that project.



Rafi: Our industry is very male-oriented. Do you ever feel the urge to do films with a female protagonist?

Mim: Absolutely. I would love to do a project like that. There are many great storylines that have a female protagonist, but to make a film like that would require willing producers and directors. The female leads in most movies here are virtually identical. So, when someone asks me how my character is like, I say almost the same thing every time. When I did *Shapludu* and *Poran*, the characters were different.

Rafi: Will you stop acting if you aren't offered lead roles?

Mim: If I don't do the lead role, I don't think that I will do a project. I will continue acting, as long as I am offered leading roles. Many prominent female actors continue to be movie leads even after growing older. Their characters are like them. When I reach that age, I want to be like that.

Rafi: Most people coming into acting after winning a beauty contest cannot really make a mark. How did you manage to become a

prominent figure in the industry?

Mim: The real challenge for me was after I won the *Lux Channel i Superstar*. I had to learn to be patient, and be able to pick the right film to work on. My mother helped me with everything. She supported and guided me. Without her support, I might not have been able to be where I am today. There are many actors who are not punctual. I was never like that because I had to lead a very disciplined life.

Rafi: What do you think is missing from those coming into acting from beauty contests?

Mim: Most of the people coming into acting can't handle the platform. I don't know why this happens; maybe they can't maintain the discipline needed, maybe they can't choose their projects wisely, maybe some don't take their work seriously. A new artist has to give their hundred percent to every project they do. They need to show the directors that they are sincere and hardworking. If a newcomer isn't doing their work properly, the directors or producers stop casting them. I think that this is the main problem.

Rafi: When you were a child, did you dream about being an actor?

Mim: Yes, I did. I was too scared to tell my mother because I thought that she would disapprove this profession. However, my mother also had the same dream, so she really supported me. She was the one who pushed me to start doing films.

Rafi: When you signed up for 'Lux Channel i Superstar', did you think that you would end up winning it?

Mim: When I first registered, I had to go into a room with all the contestants. There were around two or three hundred girls there, who were all very pretty and smart. I was thinking to myself that I had no chance of winning. There was a photoshoot for everyone; it was the first time I did something like that. I was sure that I would get eliminated, but somehow, I made it to the top ten. After that, I became confident. That was when I started thinking that I could actually win it. When I was in the top twenty-five, I got really positive comments from the judges, which also boosted my confidence a lot. I realised that since I could make it to the top ten, I must have something in me. Otherwise, I wouldn't have made it this far. When I found out that I won the competition, I was in shock; I couldn't believe that I had actually won.

Rafi: You are at the peak of your career. It is natural that at some point, newcomers will take your place. If a time comes when people don't remember you as the star you are today, how would it feel?

Mim: I would feel really bad if that happens. The thing is, my goal is to make films which will make sure that people remember me, even if I'm not working anymore.

Rafi: Mim, it was a real pleasure talking to you. Do you have any parting message for the readers?

Mim: I would like to tell the audience that the only reason I have come this far is because of their support. I would also like to add that my new film, *Shapludu*, was released on the 27th of September. Please watch it in theatres with your family and friends. I am certain you will enjoy it. Please watch Bangladeshi films in theatres as it will ensure more good projects and more movie theatres being made.

Transcribed by Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub

