

I'm single, Riteish is just my friend: Genelia D'Souza

By Sajjad Haider

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Imran Khan's petite and perky costar Genelia D'Souza in Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na started her career with Mr Bachchan, no less.

"I did a Parker pen ad with him when I was still a kid. It seems I've been acting forever. Strangely acting was never an option. That ad was directed by Mansoor Khan. He kept me in mind for Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na, and here I am."

She continues, "Actually this film was being produced by Jhamu Sugandh first. That's when I screen-tested for the role of Aditi. I met the director Abbas Tyrewalla and he almost finalized me.

But he needed bulk dates from me and I was busy down South. He wanted to shoot at stretch. I couldn't do. I got busy in the South. Then one day I got a call from Aamir Khan's office.

Abbas wanted a complete newcomer. But Aamir wanted a girl who suited the character. The next thing I knew, I was on board."

Genelia says she was never that keen on an acting career. "But when I saw how I was appreciated down South I fell in love with the industry. I've been lucky. I didn't plan anything. I've never contacted a single producer. So far it's been an awesome journey."

After Tamil and Telugu Genelia has just made her debut in Kannada film. "I'm sure I'll be able to dub in all the South Indian languages soon. I know I can do it. I just need to get the slangs and colloquialisms correct. Honestly I need to dub my own lines in the South to give complete performances."

In Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na Genelia plays a girl quite like herself. "Except for one detail. Aditi picks fights with every damn person. I'm not like that.

I'd rather talk it out than fight. I had to really let go to be fighting on screen all the time.

The workshops really help. Both Imran and I are close to the characters. But we also discovered new facets of ourselves while playing the characters."

Like Asin, Genelia is now dividing her time between Bollywood and the South. "I'm getting a lot of calls in Mumbai. I want to balance it out. But the priority would be Hindi films right now because I've worked really long in the South.

But my South Indian films are also very important. I get very satisfying roles in Tamil and Telugu. And I can't let them go. Let's just say I'll do one film down South for every two films I do here.

In any case they wrap up their films super-fast down South."

The rumours about Genelia D'Souza and her first co-star Riteish Deshmukh have the child-woman

flummoxed.

"I'm very much single. Riteish is a friend. But that's it. I've no idea where these rumours come from. We're both very busy. When we occasionally meet up we're normal with one another, not the least selfconscious about what's written about us.

I'm very new to all this. I've done the two films with Riteish Tujko Meri Kasam and Masti...I started young, yes. In 2003 I had three releases in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu, " the Mumbai girl informs me.

"I got busy with the South that 's the only reason why it took me so long to get noticed in Bollywood.

There's a buzz about Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na because it is Imran's debut film. I'm definitely looking at it as a high-potential film.

I also had fun doing Priyadarshan's Mere Baap Pehle Aap. I enjoy doing films in all languages and genres."

She also has It's My Life with Harman Baweja coming up.

"I've done the original in Telugu down South. Then I also did the remake in Tamil. Now I'm doing it in Hindi. The Tamil and Telugu versions were similar. But the Hindi version is very different. Today both the South and Hindi are high-potential industries for me. I'm still a newcomer in Bollywood."

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