Irfan Ali Taj
An IoBM Success Story
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Our heartfelt thanks to those named and to the many others not mentioned, for their endless support and for believing that the stories of IoBM must be heard, that too from the students themselves.

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“The IoBM Student Magazine appreciates the participation of its students and management, whom make it possible to bring the magazine in its finest form. Special thanks goes out to Sir Ejaz Wasay, Shoaib Lalani, Ahmed Javed Khan and Muzhira Amin for their contributions and support.”
In recent months a new burgundy colored building had sprung up on the sprawling IoBM campus, that one could just not help noticing. It was big, it was tall, and it was imposing.

Students wondered what would that building going to be used for. “That’s the new EMEC building”, some said. “That is where our classrooms are going to be,” said a few others. Then several faculty members were seen moving their offices into the new building. “Let’s go and meet our prof!” somebody suggested. A huge sign at the entrance of the building read as Shahjehan S. Karim Excellence Center. “Hmm... so that is what it is going to be called!”

On March 22nd a notification went out from the Controller of Examinations, stating that the second hourly examination starting three days later, would be held in the Shahjehan S. Karim Excellence Center building. Over the next six days streams of students bee lined to the new building to take their one-hour exam.

As they walked up the stairs in front, they found themselves in a plush lobby, with offices on either side. A set of staircases led up to the first floor. Huge examination halls on either side of the first floor were ready with rows of chairs lined up. The excitement grew. Everyone bustled around checking out the seating arrangement, dropping off their cellphones at the counter, and their bags in the allocated space.

There was the Examinations Team at hand to guide them. As they finally sat on their seats they did not show the signs of tension that they normally do at “exam-time”. The pristine environment had lit up their faces. “So good, so new, so cool...!” some kept saying. As the Controller announced the commencement of the examination, hush silence pervaded the environment.
Irfan Ali Taj: Songs from a Distant Valley
By Muzhira Amin Nayani – Semester: IV, BS (Hons) Media Studies

Irfan Ali Taj, an IoBM graduate, now one of the most chanted names on the lips of every youngster has recently collaborated with Zoe Viccaji to produce a very beautiful song called ‘Ashiqi Angar’.

He is a blooming young singer from the remote area of Chitral, who gives hope to the extinguishing music industry of his hometown. Irfan is one of those new comers, innovative enough to play and sing traditional folk songs of Chitral, and make them resonate in the mind of music lovers of these contemporary times - a quality which many modern singers find hard to achieve.

In an interview we recently conducted with him, he shed some light on his early life and childhood by candidly talking about how and what he thought and felt about music as a passion and a source of livelihood, which was in contrast with what his parents felt.

Taking a deep breath to collect his thoughts he said: “My parents are innocent people who have lived in Chitral all their life. They run a small business there to meet the needs of the family. Sending me to a college to a distant town was a huge deal for them - yet somehow they agreed and managed to send me here to Karachi to pursue my education. From a very small age, I was profoundly attracted to music - especially Persian and Sufi music. Playing instruments and singing songs has been a routine activity for me for as long as I can remember. I have always known this was what I wanted to do. Maybe, that is why it took me six instead of four years to complete my BBA. But, it was all worth it.”

His years at the university have been days he cherished with all his heart. He believes that IoBM has played a pivotal part in helping him become what he is today.

“Even though I never liked what I studied, my days at IoBM helped me more than I thought they would. There are some people affiliated with this place who have helped, guided and facilitated me more than I could have asked for. They include Danial Shah, Bahadur Ali, Ekhlaque Ahmed, and the entire Marketing Department. The marketing ideas I learned in my classes now serve as a great resource for me in promoting my music.”

He also revealed that the first time he got work was from a peer in the university. It was a ten-second clip that he did for brand ‘COKE’. Irfan described it as the start of his journey. It was not easy for his parents to continue to pay his college fees. Irfan always knew that this journey to fulfill his passion was not going to be easy. He spoke about how he found some freelancing work at a digital company, and continued with that for three years, saving up money to make his dream the reality that it is today.

His goal was and still is not only to earn money or just to accomplish his vision - one of his major aims is to become a socially responsible person.

“I strongly believe that business administration should not be job or be solely profit-oriented, but a contribution to society. This is not just something I say to other people, but I try to apply this to myself as well. My core objective is to preserve my traditional values, aspirations, and identity, and that is embedded in Chitrali Music.”

Towards the end of the interview, he said he wanted to leave a message for all the students out there: “You should not study simply to get a job or earn money, but nurture your talent as an individual to become an asset for your society. The most important thing to learn is how to market yourself – that is primary, no matter which industry you are headed for. Once you learn to do that, nothing is impossible to achieve.”
Azhar Ali

Me: Do you know your purpose in life?
Azhar: My purpose in life is to raise a few more Azhars in my village and in Pakistan as a whole.

Born and raised in a conservative family of Ibrahim Goth, North Karachi, where going to a reputable academic institution was no more than a dream, and even getting having sound education was unimaginable, Azhar Ali broke down all the chains that he felt had him imprisoned. Being the first one to go to a University in his entire family, he turned out to be a shining star for those who also wished to break free of the prisons of society stereotypes.

Coming from a financially challenged family Azhar, from a very young age, had to stand by his father to support his family financially. His father, who had married at the age of 17, worked at a towel factory, where he embroidered different designs on towels by hand. He taught Azhar the same craft, encouraging him to go with him to the factory as well. His only access to education was in madrassah where he received his early years of education. His father felt realized that the knowledge he had gained was too basic, and certainly not enough to prepare him to face the real challenges of life. His father, despised the fact that Azhar was about to share a fate much akin to his own. He therefore decided he had to do something to ensure that his son was given the fundamental right of acquiring quality education. Azhar himself was also aware that being the eldest among his siblings, he had to tread carefully yet resolutely, as he would be paving the way for his younger siblings and for the children of his village.

The dream of Azhar’s family came true when they got to know about TCF (The Citizens Foundation) - an institution responsible for providing a chance to underprivileged youngsters the opportunity to fulfill their academic needs. Azhar did his matriculation from TCF, located in Ibrahim Goth and went to Forman College for further studies.

During this process, TCF started preparing him for various entry examinations for universities in Karachi. That is how Azhar ended up at IoBM, where he is currently enrolled in the Bachelors of Computer Sciences program, and receives a full scholarship.

He believes himself to be lucky being a student of IoBM, where he not only hopes to get quality education, but also prepare himself to eventually take care of his family's needs. He recalls the joyous day when his father got to know he was accepted by IoBM, and remembers exactly how proud his father felt that her had realized one of his life-long dreams through his son. Azhar could not overlook the fact that a large part of what he had achieved was because of TCF - he encouraged me to mention the point in my article how thankful he was to have been able to prove his worth in this world so far. He said he remembered how every day his father would lend him the only bike they had as a mean for transport, to go to his college, while e he himself walked to the factory. He says he also remembered every demotivating comment he heard from individuals. But he knew he had his family's unflinching support. He now wishes to be able to repay them for all their efforts tenfold in the near future.

Another thing he is determined about is to overcome the issue in our society regarding education for females. Girls wishing to go for higher education are often ridiculed for thriving for thinking along those lines. Azhar is determined to change that stereotypical thinking, and ensure that all his siblings, especially his sisters, get higher education as that is their right as well.

This young man had many wise words to share and much advice to offer to the ones struggling in similar conditions, and even to the more privileged, who forget to be thankful for how kind life has been to them. When asked what difference did he wish to make with his progress, he said he wanted to create awareness in the areas where people have been shackled by fate and give them the same benefit of the doubt, and the same opportunity that life gave him, and to tell them that money is only an object - the one thing that drives a person to success is his efforts to gain knowledge, to strive for betterment of not just oneself but for those around them, and lastly to create a world where equality and equity prevail. He urges people around him to work hard and take chances, because those chances, no matter how cruelly they treat you at first, become worthwhile in the end. Azhar, as young as he is, teaches us how important it is to believe in oneself and how crucial it is to also take those around you towards progress and improvement. Many may say he is a young boy raised by a man in a towel factory. I say, he is a man raised by the strength of his will-power.
Neha Ahmed

Me: What is that one advice you would give us all?
Ramis: Don't ever be afraid to be the helping hand.

Neha, the youngest in her family has had her fair share of being adored and cherished among the rest of her siblings. Born and raised here in Karachi, exposed to the most prestigious schools and most glamorous lifestyles, she values her roots the most that reflect the goodness of her heart. From City School to Nixor College, to her 7th semester in IoBM, Neha has had a fulfilling academic journey because of which she was overwhelmed by the compassion of giving back the most valuable gift she had gained from society, to the society that she owed it to - the gift of 'education'.

She started off on her journey, five years ago, by teaching English Literature and language to O-level students free of cost. That led her to become a Team Lead, and the heart of TCF-ADP program at IoBM, a program for providing free education to the underprivileged. As Neha hastens to mention, that would not have been possible without the immense support she had received from the IoBM administration. Motivated by her progress, she became associated with a World Bank Project named 'Enclude' in partnership with CED (Centre of Entrepreneurial Development), MHB (Minding HER Business) and IBA (Institute of Business Administration), where she played a vital role in creating general awareness of business initiatives for women, including those living in the most remote areas of Pakistan. She searched for women who were endowed with craft skills and creative talent but had little or no idea of how to become an entrepreneur and establish a business. She taught them the basic skills to use their craft talent and earn a better standard of living. Those who completed the program also received certificates from IBA.

Originating from a family that prioritizes the attainment of education above everything else, she not only applied this motto to her life but shared it with the ones standing at a threshold, unsure if they had a share in what lay ahead. She describes her efforts as something quite small, yet one that could have a huge collective impact if more individuals joined the cause. She says that a little attention, where needed, and a little devotion leads to a thousand happy faces, making even the smallest efforts worthwhile. Leading a team of 30 to 35 people in TCF now, teaching the ones with a yearning to learn, and bestowing the society with her unwavering spirit - this is Neha Ahmed, an example worth emulating. A drop in the sea, forming a wave to change it all!

Muhammad Ramis Khan

Me: What do you aim to gain from life?
Ramis: I want to be known not just by fame, but because of some good deed that made the fame worthwhile.

Growing up as the most popular kid in the prestigious Falconhouse Grammar school, Ramis Khan had known a world that offered only well wishes and an easy path, until he was faced with obstacles that most young adults of his age normally do not face. Being as carefree as he was, he knew nothing of the consequences of actions or the power of an individual's determination until later in his school years, when the burden of supporting his family financially, suddenly fell on his unsuspecting shoulders. Stricken with grief on account of a family crisis he had only himself to turn to. Using that grief to empower himself, Ramis not only succeeded in establishing himself but also took his family forward, along with him.

The 16th of December, 2010, as he put it, was a turning point for him when he was able to find a job as a tutor. Starting off with an income of only Rs.2000 from tutoring, and earning Rs.150 per day by distributing newspapers around the neighborhood even in the harshest of conditions, he managed to support his family. He earned his money by the sweat on his brow. He achieved what he did with the support of his loved ones, and the helping hand of God. He spoke with affection about his cousin, Sahir Lodhi, a very famous Pakistani actor himself, who was a constant helps as he was going through tough time. Struggling for basic necessities of life, he did not waver from his goal of acquiring education for himself as well as keeping his younger sister in school. He credits his sister as much as himself for having taken care of their family.
From gaining commendable grades in O-levels and A-levels to entering IoBM and scoring 3.4 GPA in his 3rd Year of university, Ramis has still not given up tutoring, and earns an ample amount of money to meet his entire family's needs. The artist in him, took him recently to TV ONE where was able to get a role in a movie called “Rasta” that was released on 9th December 2016.

This young man is a unique example for the youth of today and, by his deeds, teaches lessons on how to overcome the greatest of hurdles in life, and face them with a smile on your face. His determination is still immovable and his goals shine bright in his eyes. Ramis, now in his early twenties, is a walking inspiration for us all. He wishes to be in the Forbes list of most influential persons around the world, notwithstanding the fact that he already is influential for so many of us. From a school student to a tutor, a newspaper boy, an actor, he is ideally placed to become a beacon of light for many young people facing adversity in their life. Ramis Khan, the hero of his own story is one man playing numerous inspiring roles.

In this world of deceitfulness and deception, honesty has become but only a word. Actions and deed show how far back we have retreated. Not only in talking about a third person, but also in projecting our own person, we tend to be dishonest and miss no opportunity to mask the truth if given a chance.

In poor countries like Pakistan, they say honesty is a trait difficult to possess. After all where most of the population exists below the poverty line, there is enough temptation to wax lyrical about oneself, or put the “other person” down. Poverty alone is not the cause – it is also the lack of good education. However, one particular incident, that I am happy to share, changed my perception that every person everywhere in this world is afflicted by the malaise.

Omar Javaid, one of our professors at IoBM narrated an experience that set me thinking otherwise. He was on a tour of Malaysia where he discovered that the majority of the shops in Kuala Lumpur did not have a shopkeeper standing by behind the counter. Instead, every products had a price tag attached to it and a payment box stood at the counter.

Customers would pick up the product they wanted and drop the money in payment box and leave.

Astonished by the story, I and some of my friends decided to run an experiment to this idea at our own university! We set up a table at the exit door of the CBM building with a sign that said ‘Take a bottle and put Rs. 30 in the box’. Every morning, I would set up 10 water bottles on the table and by the end of the day when everyone left, I would pick up the box - and to my utmost delight the response I would receive was incredible!

My first-day collection was 77% of the amount I had spent in buying the bottles, and the next day it grew to 100%. On one of the days, I found twenty-nine extra rupees in my box. I was both surprised and proud. That particular moment made me realize that although we may be a troubled nation, with unending problems taking their toll on us, the real version of ‘us’ is genuinely honest and worthy of trust.

I’m so proud of my fellow students at IoBM for the evident display of their real, uncontaminated self. May this wonderful spirit remain with them forever!
The Institute of Business Management (IoBM) is where you can find a blend of academics and fun, uniquely brought together, without compromising on either of the two, which is evident from the nature of events held throughout the year! To emphasize the significance of sports among extra-curricular activities, the Vanquishers Sports Society organized ISSF’16, a three-day sports event, from the 22nd to the 24th of November. The event was followed a tough week of exams, providing students the opportunity to unwind and reduce their level of stress that is evident on their faces during exam time. The three days of sporting events were thoroughly enjoyed by students, as well as faculty members.

From the generosity of sponsors to amazing performances by students, from gossips to giggles, and from screams to thunderous claps - everything was perfectly integrated in the event. The first day highlights included ‘throw ball’ and ‘dodge the ball’ matches, that were won by the Vanquishers society playing host! The throw ball semi-final was played against the Digicon Society, whereas the semi-final of ‘Dodge-the-Ball’ was played against the Literary Public Speaking Society. Oh, and let's not forget the chief guest at the opening ceremony - everyone's favorite Minister of Sports, Sindh, Sardar Muhammad Bux Khan Mahar, who also graced the occasion to everyone's delight.

The second day’s highlights were the cricket and futsal matches, which everyone loved. The semifinal of the event was played between Vanquishers B and LPSS, with the hosting team once again bagging the game.

The highlight of the third day was the push-ups done by the management team right after they won the cricket match against the faculty eleven. The closing ceremony was well attended. SWAT was unable to make the hat trick this time but they won many trophies throughout the course of the event. However, it was very surprising to see that they did not win the Tug of War challenge this year, as they usually do. The Marketing Society left us awe-struck as they won the final challenge.

The Literary and Public Speaking Society won the trophy and SWAT were the runners-up. During these three days, true sportsmanship was shown by each and every participant irrespective of which society or which academic year they were from. The hosting team, obviously, has die-hard sport lovers in their ranks but the three days of competition had awakened the sport lover in us all.

This year, the Vanquishers set a new benchmark in terms of planning, execution and feedback with respect to their main event, ISSF’16. It's going to be quite difficult for those who replace them next, to rise higher than the standards set this time. But let's wish them the very best of luck. Needless to say, we are already waiting for ISSF’17.
Qazi Umair graduated in 2013, from IoBM, with majors in Marketing. In 2014, he started an online platform, called Sukoon – a service for providing workers for home-repair services, from electricians to plumbers, to carpenters, and painters.

We had an informal conversation with Qazi Umair about his experiences. Here is what he had to say!

TA: I love the concept behind ‘Sukoon’. It is different and makes me want to try it. Tell us something about it.

QU: You must have heard that the smartest ideas are unplanned and spontaneous. While I was studying at IoBM, my mind continuously revolved around searching for creative ideas and market gaps, so that I could come up with an exciting and different entrepreneurial venture - but nothing seemed to be really good enough - so, I would think ‘Okay, let’s just leave it for now’. In my last semester, I was with my friends at a chai ka dhaba and out of nowhere, my friend said: ‘Let’s sell plumbers online’. We all laughed. But Shoaib Iqbal, the Co-Founder of Sukoon, could instantly pick up on the potential this idea had - and here we are, progressing with every passing day.

TA: Sukoon is doing very well. I see it everywhere on Facebook and hear people talk about it. Now that you are known, what is the plan?

QU: Both, Shoaib and I have graduated from IoBM and have a lot of memories to cherish. When you are studying, you fail to realize its practical application. But every model and every theory we have learnt has played its role in helping us establish our business, shape our marketing strategies, enhancing our management efficiency and excelling in satisfying customers. We had to work hard on our marketing, since we were introducing a new business model in the country, and I must acknowledge, the faculty of IoBM has been helpful beyond expectations. Apart from the theoretical concepts, life at IoBM is about sowing the seeds of life-long learning, in terms of managing time, teamwork, leadership, technology and more.

TA: Let us talk about the role of IoBM in enabling you to be where you are today. How has the education and skills helped you in your journey?

QU: Both, Shoaib and I have graduated from IoBM and have a lot of memories to cherish. When you are studying, you fail to realize its practical application. But every model and every theory we have learnt has played its role in helping us establish our business, shape our marketing strategies, enhancing our management efficiency and excelling in satisfying customers. We had to work hard on our marketing, since we were introducing a new business model in the country, and I must acknowledge, the faculty of IoBM has been helpful beyond expectations. Apart from the theoretical concepts, life at IoBM is about sowing the seeds of life-long learning, in terms of managing time, teamwork, leadership, technology and more.

TA: What are the challenges you have faced in making Sukoon a success?

QU: I am not sure if I can really call it a success, but we are doing fine, Alhamdolillah. The biggest challenge was to establish credibility, because people in Pakistan are reluctant to trust online services, especially when it involves someone coming into their home. It wasn't only about our customers - we too were apprehensive while hiring our workers, because the responsibility of hiring trustworthy, well-mannered and skilled labor was ours. The workers that we induct go through a stringent process of hiring and referencing so that only the best of the lot is available to our customers.
Anum Zafar is a student at IoBM, pursuing her BBA (H). She is managing her studies and work-life together, with exceptional ease. She is an inspiration for young women and a genuine beacon of hope. Anum runs an online clothing store, called ‘PLUM’ and designs eastern and western clothes, customizing them to the needs of the customers.

We had a chance to ask her about PLUM. Let’s see what she had to say about it.

**TA:** It feels great to see a woman progress, especially in Pakistan. I would like to know how ‘PLUM’ came into existence.

**AZ:** Since a very tender age, I have been following clothing trends and fashion. I used to design my own clothes even when I was a girl of 13. I won an award for being the best dressed person, for dresses I designed by myself, while I was in my school for three consecutive years. It gave me the confidence I needed to believe that I had what it takes to enter into the clothing industry - and I promised myself to pursue my interests. I made a friend at college who had the same dream as mine – so, we decided to go into the clothing business. In the beginning, we mainly dealt in western clothing because my partner wasn’t ready to invest in eastern clothing as everyone seemed to be in it. So, I opened up an online store called PLUM on my own, with my first eastern collection. The partnership in the making ended and I decided to devote myself to PLUM, designing and producing both eastern and western clothes, catering to all age groups. Can do you believe IoBM has enabled you manage both with such excellence?

**AZ:** It is a wonderful experience to study and work at the same time, because you can instantly apply the knowledge you have gained and the theories and concepts you have learnt. Sometimes the strategies work, sometimes they don’t - but I have the opportunity to ask my instructors about it, and then make the necessary changes. I believe things would have been different if I wasn’t studying at IoBM, particularly during the initial days of my business. I am also part of the IoBM Club for Entrepreneurs. That provides me with countless opportunities to polish my entrepreneurial skills. In collaboration with the student society, I organized a successful fashion show. It was indeed a great learning experience and I was also able to promote my venture among the students. Also, the motivation and support I get from the seniors in my student society is unbelievable.

**TA:** How did you come up with the name PLUM?

**AZ:** It is inspired by the brand ‘Mango’ because it’s my favorite one. I thought of a lot of fruit names and ended up with PLUM. Also, the purple color of the fruit represents royalty, nobility, extravagance, creativity, dignity, grandeur, peace, ambition and magic. The name represents all that I have ever wanted my brand to be.

**TA:** Customer feedback is always healthy and motivating. Can you recall a moment when you felt really happy about your work?

**AZ:** Yes. A customer of mine placed an order on bulk for clothes she had to send abroad to her sister. I remember devoting all my time and energy to that order. In the end, she simply loved each and every piece I came up with. Also, only coincidently, I ran into her at a restaurant where I was with my family, and she couldn’t stop praising my work in front of my parents. I will never forget how proud they were of me.

**TA:** Which of your competitors do you secretly envy?

**AZ:** As an entrepreneur, you simply cannot envy another entrepreneur. The competition is very tight but it is healthy. We motivate each other – so, I do not envy any of my competitors. In fact my best friend recently started the same business, and she has managed to run it so well in a short span of time. It is incredible. I wish the very best of luck for all entrepreneurs at IoBM. May we keep creating more entrepreneurs because the world needs us, and we need the world to succeed!
Depression – From the Pages of a College Student

By Arfa Mukhtar – BBA (Honors)

College life can be very overwhelming. One has to go beyond one’s limits at times to cope up with its multiple demands. You have to manage your academic, personal and often professional life too, all at once. The thought of meeting successive deadlines, completing assignments and reports on time every time, maintaining your personal relationships, looking out for internships and job opportunities, spending adequate amount of time with family and friends, ensuring that friends from school are not ignored as we make new friends in college… the list of “must-be-done-soon” gets longer and longer. Sometimes you feel that you are not the right circle of friends’ circle. Sometimes you think you are not capable enough to get good grades, not because you are not, but because you have too much on your mind to deal with - and that is when the problem starts. You push yourself, you try harder, you force yourself to be nice to everyone, you get into extracurricular activities as well - but then comes the “OMG moment” - you cannot handle anything. As a consequence, your grades start to fall, your confidence is shaken, and you get agitated even when someone who you love to be with innocently poses the question: ‘Would you like to come to a movie? We are all going.

Bitten nails, diet-loss, and deep dark circles around the eyes are a common condition among college students - but is widely prevalent condition our only concern? Talking about mental health and psychological well-being is still considered taboo in our part of the world, but maybe it is because we fail to realize the extent to which it influences our lives, especially when we are college students.

‘Depression’ is not the extreme degree of sadness or a lack of willingness to live. It is not casual loneliness or stress - it is a psychological state where you are upset with your current situation, where you feel something is missing and you cannot identify it, or where your performance drops with every passing day, but you cannot convince yourself to try harder. It is a state where your heart is sinking but you don’t know why. Above all, it is a condition you cannot really express or talk about.

Having once gone through severe depression, because I too could not take the challenges that life had to offer, at the same time being unable to understand why I could give my best academically, I surely know what it feels like to be in that situation. First off, you need to keep reminding yourself that you are a warrior and that no matter how worse today seems, it shall pass, and that tomorrow will be brighter than today. If your friends make you feel bad about yourself, cut them off because you don’t need people pulling you down - you need someone to lift you up. If you are overloaded with work, take a break and prioritize, so what seemed unmanageable in your frenzied state becomes manageable again. However, it is extremely important to address your condition, and not simply to think ‘I’m just a little sad, I will be okay’.

You won’t be okay if you don’t analyze why you are in that state. You need to talk about it with your siblings or friends, or even parents - whoever you are most comfortable with. Do things that make you happy, be it swimming, dancing or simply eating out at you favorite café. And remember, life is a onetime chance and you, my friend, are just the right person to make the most of it!

JOIN THE TEAM!
We are also looking for creative and energetic individuals to be part of the magazine editorial team. If you are a Graphic Designer, show us your work. If you can take up a Sub-Editor role let us know what you can do. Or if you are bubbling with ideas and can make them work, we have a place for you. To join the team send us your resume right away to us at: studentmagazine@iobm.edu.pk.
Don't you love it when the word review is in the title? The main question however is whether it befits a question or the exclamation that often follows it.

‘Dobara Phir Se’ is a story about complexities Pakistanis face in the modern world - it illuminates and breaks down deep stereotypical divides.

The film is by Mehreen Jabbar - a story of a man called Hammad (Adeel Husain) who meets a divorced woman Zainab (Hareem Farooq) on a ferry. After spending a few memorable moments with her, they both go their own ways. He naturally assumes that he will not see her again, which is obviously quite the contrary to what unfolds as the movie goes on.

They both run into each other again at a party arranged by of mutual friends, Saman and Vasay (Sanam Saeed and Ali Kazmi), who try to fix Hammad up with a girl named Natasha (Tooba), but after meeting Zainab, he casts Natasha aside. When he begins talking to her, Hammad discovers that she already has a husband (albeit, an unhappy one). That leads him to turn back to Natasha and pursue his objective of dating her, by begins by adroitly seeking her phone number. However, after a bizarre turn of events, Zainab is single again and our hero comes running back to the woman he could never really erase from his mind. This is where the plot picks up, and an all-consuming romance takes flight. A series of events follow as the relationship starts to take roots.

Having realized the premise of the movie, here is what I felt was the "good" and the "bad" in the movie without, as they say, giving away too many spoilers!

The Good:

There were certain things that were admirable in the movie - like Zainab's character as a strong, independent woman, raising a child on her own. The element of women empowerment was strong yet subtle. As things progress, you see that after the divorce, there is not necessarily an ever present moment of doom - rather a Hallelujah as we see her celebrating her freedom from a thankless marriage.

The movie helps in that regard by breaking this deep held stereotype in our society about the "tragedy of divorce". There was also a lack of mind dulling item numbers in this movie, that most Asian cinemas use as fillers, in an effort to emulate the format of Indian movies. In this respect, the script was strong and portrayed great conviction in, and understanding of the subject matter.

The Bad:

Although Dobara Phir Se aimed to challenge the norms of our society, it did not have the structure of a two-hour movie which is why it dragged out inexorably at times. Perhaps it also lacked in character development, as the backgrounds and backstories of each character were not explored in sufficient depth.

Another puzzling factor was the lack of anger in Natasha towards Hammad after he toyed around with her emotions. On a practical level, their engagement came across as purely unbelievable. The story certainly lacked in realism when it came to the core plot. Even in a fictional world, there is a limit to the level of exaggeration when it comes to portraying the vicissitudes of human emotion.

In my humble opinion, Dobara Phir Se is a light hearted movie, worth at least a watch. Who knows, when the credits start to roll, you might even be saying, "Dobara phir se"!