



**TELEVISION
OF A
LIFETIME**

FARIDUR REZA SAGOR

In Golam Sarwar's words Abdullah Al Mamun has thought that the rumor that has been humming around the television office will not stop in a day. Rather, this drama will be staying for so long because the newspaper staff had started considering the television staff as their colleagues instead of their rivals.

That Abdullah Al Mamun has written a nice feature article on television. The bravery that the young Abdullah Al Mamun has shown in those days still it is continuing. Till now there is no television serial in satellite channels especially the Indian channels that has been made for every day. Nobody showed the courage. The mega serials on Star Plus which are very much popular nowadays are being telecasted 5 days in a week. Zee TV has started the daily soap first among the national and international television channels.

While the schedule of the artists, sponsors, etc. were the biggest problems in our country at that time over 50 years old Abdullah Al Mamun has shown his courage to make a daily soap named 'Jowar Bhata'. He has not only shown the courage but also gifted the audiences Jowar Bhata's 100 continuous episodes of 100

Man of Many Talents



Abdullah Al Mamun

days with title music. Title tracks are being used in almost all the mega serials nowadays. Abdullah Al Mamun himself wrote the lyric of that title song and a merely known singer like Chandan Sinha made the song super hit by giving his voice. Moreover, in the Jowar Bhata mega serial he has given chance to so many prominent artists to act. He made another 100 episodes of this drama serial on later.

Despite showing charisma of television



Golam Sarwar

drama Abdullah Al Mamun had to think of a lot when he was told to write up an article on television in 1965. Stage actor Abdullah Al Mamun used to think about how a small 19 inch television can show a bigger thing like drama. At that time the stage actors were criticizing that somebody wanting to frame drama in small screen. But seeing the first drama of television 'Ektola-Dotola' Abdullah Al Mamun has not only become excited but also

waited to see the next drama. Exactly at that time he thought that television drama is influencing him. He is being a regular audience of various programs in television apart from a stage actor because at that time in television screen a dance-drama was being telecasted.

Finally Abdullah Al Mamun has started writing about television drama in the art and culture page of Daly Shongbad. The dramas about which Abdullah Al Mamun used to write were produced by Zaman Ali Kha. That was the first writing on television in Bangladesh's history. This has also grabbed the attention of producer Zaman Ali Khan who has recently joined the television after radio.

On a night Zaman Ali Khan has come to the Shongbad office with his Volkswagen car. He has come to meet Abdullah Al Mamun who has written the feature article on television drama. Prominent actor Farid Ali has made the interactions between these two. It has to be mentioned that Farid Ali was not only the actor of television's first drama but also he brought so many prominent artists on the screen.

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LIFE'S LYRICS



VIKRAM SETH ALIAS AMIT

NASHID KAMAL

I first heard his name when 'A Suitable Boy' was published. The opening sentences referred to this lady who was a widow, she was choosing her sari from an almirah, in order to attend a family wedding. She was making a choice between a shiny tissue sari and other more pastel shades, worrying whether people will criticize her for wearing a shiny colour. I remembered my grandmother, who used to say similar things. The entire time that I had known her, she was a widow and never wore bright shades. I wondered about the author Vikram Seth, thought he must be a keen observer, otherwise this very detailed debate in a widowed woman's mind would not have appeared in his write up.

I was delighted to discover his sensitivity, as I read through his entire repertoire 'An equal music', 'Two lives' 'From Heaven lake', I went more and more into the soul of Vikram Seth, I wished to meet him!

So I did in the year 2014! Well, meet him is a misnomer, I saw him, or rather heard him speak. He was there in the Bangla Academy auditorium (Dhaka) for the inaugural of the Hay's festival.

Vikram Seth came to the dais. He started his speech with brilliant eloquence. "I am very indebted to Bangladesh. If Bangladesh had not been



there, I wouldn't have been born." The audience listened inquisitively. How could the country influence his birth?

"It is only because of the Bangladeshi influence that I was born. My Mamu lived and worked in Jessore. My grandmother lost her husband at a very early age. My mother was her only daughter. She sent her daughter to a missionary college in Darjeeling, hoping to set her in the right path of education and character building. There my mother took on a special liking to the lives of the Sisters and decided to go for

Sisterhood! My grandmother was alarmed. She packed her off from Darjeeling and sent her daughter to Jessore. My mother spent a few months in Jessore, loved Bangladesh and gave up her idea of becoming a nun, and agreed to marry my father. Hence, the Bangladeshi influence brought me to this world!"

The audience laughed.

"My actual name is Amit, the favourite character from Tagore's 'Shesher kobita'. Although I am known worldwide as Vikram Seth, to you

Bangladeshi, I appear as Amit."

Again the audience wondered why Vikram should be Amit...

"When my mother was carrying me, she was reading Tagore's 'Shesher Kobita'. I was born in a clinic in Kolkata and my father was not present. The clinic records will show that I was named 'Amit Seth' after birth. That very day, my father heard the news of my birth and called. He cancelled this name because every first born in my father's family had to be named with V. Hence, I was named Vikram. Thank God, I wasn't named Vivek or Vineeth! However, if I may, to you I am Amit."

I was very much charmed by the speech. I read in Abbasuddin Ahmed's autobiography that he was cajoled by poet Kazi Nazrul Islam to join him in meeting Poet Rabindranath Tagore. Abbasuddin was scared to death and ran away, avoiding meeting Tagore, much to the disappointment of Nazrul Islam. Abbasuddin wrote that he was afraid that his image of Tagore and that in real life may not tally. He would be disappointed if the real 'Tagore' was any different from what he had conjured. None of this happened to me! The real Vikram Seth and the author all added up. Thank you Amit.

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