

# Productions That Defined Television

TELEVISION  
OF A LIFETIME



FARIDUR REZA SAGOR

From the earlier stages of television commercial there was one prominent female model at that time and her name was Tazi Rahman. Tazi Rahman was seen donning in almost all of the commercials during that time.

Due to righteous commercial rules Bangladesh television is still able to maintain its standard to its audience. The rigorous following of such television policies was rightly maintained due to hard works of Ishralul Haque. He played a strong role in maintaining as the head of the television commercials for a long time. Even though it is government owned institution, the strong rules and regulations of television for 40 strong years made sure that there were no complaints of clients not giving money.

During the policy making of package programs, both people from commercials department and program department had to share some mutual ideas. And the combination of such ideas simply touched audience heart.

Due to the introduction of package programs in television, many freelance producers were able to gift us wonderful package programs. The same can also be said of the time when there were no package programs but still there were

people who gifted us wonderful programs in television.

Humayun Ahmed had always written dramas for television. Those dramas have received rave ratings among audience. Even before that time one of his drama was showcased in television. In that drama the pivotal role was played by Shimul Yusuf and Humayun Faridi. The producer of that show was Nasiruddin Yusuf. And screenplay was done by Afzal Hossain.

The Television audience of recent years will say that although Humayun Ahmed has taken many well-known artists in his dramas but he never included Afzal Hossain in his dramas. They will assume that Afzal Hossain did not do screenplay for his drama. What they don't know is that Afzal Hossain played a significant role of a doctor in the drama "Bohubrihi". Lutfun Nahar Lota was his co-star.

After working in some episodes of "Bohubrihi" Afzal Hossain was not seen working in Humayun Ahmed's dramas.

After the introduction of magazine programs, the days when magazine programs would not be shown they aired package programs in 2 Eids by replacing the programs that was produced by BTV. In both the programs the host was played by Abdun Nur Tushar.

One of the programs was called "Utshob" and the other was called "Eid Mubarak". "Utshob" program was produced in one of the office auditorium in Motijheel. In those day only "Ittyadi" was telecasted in the National Museum. Nowadays in many auditoriums and fields are used for showcasing magazine programs. In those days it was hard to find auditorium

It was hard to ensure audience and security protocol at that time. But still the producers of Package program can say with confidence that with hall packed with audience or audience flocking in fields they were able to produce programs with great peace.

Both the shows "Utshob" and "Eid Mubarak" is noteworthy because of producing a program simply with great planning, execution and the brilliant works of artists even though they didn't had much craft advances in their hand. With such skill and dedication these programs were able to replace the programs made by the television channel

Before using the current format of television, earlier programs only consisted of Quiz or general knowledge programs. Most of the participants entering into the small tight DIT auditorium were students from school and collages.

Slowly these quiz programs were

evolved into magazine programs. Here the interesting fact is that during the 60's period none of the artists or audience in television had any access to other channels except Bangladesh Television. The television producers with their knowledge and dedication were able to bring forward the pace of television programs.

In one of the quiz programs they would bring a famous celebrity or song artists. They would then hide the contestant's eyes from those celebrities. They only had the opportunity to ask 10 questions to identify the celebrity. If the identification of the celebrity is found out and if the celebrity is a famous dance artist then the producer will tell the artist to perform a sequence from their favorite drama. And if the artist is a singer then he will tell them to perform a song. This is the way through which magazine program entered into quiz programs.

There is no particular spot available for pop music in television, even though pop music garners popularity due to television. The biggest reason behind that is the showcasing of pop music in various magazine programs.

The writer is Managing Director,  
Channel i

Translated by Imtiaz Salim



LIFE'S  
LYRICS

## MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY OF BANGLADESH TELEVISION

NASHID KAMAL

There came a big cardboard box and we gathered around the box as the electrician took out a black- coloured box and fitted it in our living room. It was NIPON TV set, bought as a gift for my grandmother Begum Abbasuddin Ahmed. Little did I know that this black box was going to be my bloodline for over fifty years and I was to seek a career on Television.

I witnessed the beginning of an era. The ever talented Mustafa Monowar frequented our house in Purana Paltan, the house of the legendary musician Abbasuddin Ahmed, which was already the centre of arts and artistry for the residents of Dhaka city. I heard their conversations that a new thing, TV, was going to start. I had no idea what that meant, but felt very left out when Mustafa Monowar asked Uncle Abbasi to sing, Aunt Ferdausi to start the TV as its first performer. Moreover, he discussed a quiz show with my father, who was to host this youth programme and no one asked me to do anything!

Finally, Mustafa Monowar noted my presence as I sat in the verandah with my hands in my cheek. He asked me if I could introduce some of the child artists who would sing and dance, and if I could sing a song. And thus my career started on TV. That was fifty one years back, exactly in December 1964.

BTV was the only channel in

Bangladesh, and everyone who had a TV set was glued to the programmes. Appearing on TV meant that you were known to the whole of Bangladesh. The erudite producers who joined and developed themselves with exponential growth produced exemplary programmes which had both entertainment and intellectual direction. Debate competitions by Belal Baig, musical programmes by Md Barkatullah,



Nawazish Ali Khan, dramas by Abdullah Al Mamun, Atikul Huq Chowdhury, Children's programmes by Sakina Akhter, news, news casters, all had special appeal. If Alam Rashid appeared as a newscaster, the entire city would go gaga over him. The same was for announcers Hena Kabir and Masuma Khatun. It was a time of great emancipation and the countrymen tasted a great introduction to a very

sophisticated form of art, culture, language, literature, archaeology, patriotism, education, and literary rejuvenation appearing from this little box, which was hitherto unknown to the audience.

The standards were very high as Mustafa Monowar himself had very high standards. He trained us for perfect delivery, be it in live or recorded programmes. His colleagues also

practiced the same. The weekly drama was a special treat for all teenagers, as their parents allowed them to watch. It was worthy of being watched. The writer, the producer, the actor/actresses delivered to the best of their abilities and in comparison with today's high tech, high budget productions, those dramas had more impact on society, than many do now.

On one occasion, I remember opening our living room door to find Producer Atikul Huq Chowdhury waiting to meet my grandmother. He, I learnt, had come to collect wooden decoration pieces which Abbasuddin Ahmed had bought from Burma. One was a wooden figure (Burma teak) of two eagles and another was a collection of the heads of several animals. So acute was his observation that he borrowed these items for one of his dramas. Mustafa Monowar borrowed my aunt's ring for the 'Raja' (portrayed by actor Mustafa) in the famous drama (Tagorian) 'Rakta Korobi'.

The song 'Momotaz, Momotaz' was sung by Feroza Begum. The background depicted a Tajmahal. Poet Nazrul Islam came to life through this visual demonstration and it has stayed with us forever.

The enthuse of winning 'Notun Kuri' competitions, the joy of adult literacy being taught on TV, special 'Amjad Hossain' dramas on Eid days, Aly Zaker's masterpieces, Asaduzzaman Noor in Humayun Ahmed specials, brought the entire nation together. Among other roles that the BTV has played, the one role that is outstanding is that BTV created an impact on the mind of the audience. It gave us a direction of what Bangladeshi culture should be.

The writer is an academician,  
Nazrul exponent and writer.