

Defining Journalists Outlook Alok Mehta

It is a story of a boy who began his expedition of life from Ujjain as a misnomer. But by his resilience and hardship earned a distinction among the giants of journalism. No matter if it was Nai Duniya from where he started as a toddler or joining the reputed office of Outlook, his zeal remains intact. He has the reputation of being a proud part of almost all popular Hindi dailies. **Devesh Charan** tried to "Encounter" with the unexplored personality of **Alok Mehta** - Editor Outlook saptahik.



Despite a humble beginning, Alok has successfully managed the office of Outlook saptahik (weekly) magazine. To his credit has been the coveted designations like being General Secretary of Editors Guild (twice), being hi-profile anchor, it was he who was chiefly involved with the conceptualisation of popularly watched programme Encounter telecasted at Zee News channel.

Like every other ordinary guy, this son of a school teacher strived for study in the remote area of Madhya Pradesh. But the same chip with tremendous latent abilities made sure that the world does take notice of his true worth. This man of self belief has always tried hard to

redefine Hindi journalism. Some of his peers consider him as an institution in himself.

Collecting, collating, presenting and disseminating information is key success areas for any journalist. This is precisely where many journalists either gain or lose competitive advantage. Alok Mehta is a man who knows his art and continuously servicing the media for last 32 years without getting biased towards anyone. Born in Ujjain (M.P) on 7th September 1952, Mr. Mehta did his M.A. in Modern History from Vikram University (Ujjain). His career steadily moved up the ladder. He bestowed his journalistic acumen to almost all the leading newspapers and

magazine and with the advent of electronic media he has not left it untouched. He was Executive Editor, Hindustan Delhi from 1994 to September 2000. Then he joined Dainik Bhaskar group as editor before being offered the position of debut Editor in Outlook Saptahik. The Saptahik under him is steadily capitalising on the readers and giving more a well-entrenched Hindi Weeklies run for their money. Though print media has been his forte, his trust with audio-visual medium makes an impressive reading, rather. This is his rare attribute in the sense that his printed words and freely, providing pointers on the screen have kind in hand. The high-point in this medium has been his special interviews with almost all Indian Prime Ministers from Indira Gandhi down to the present incumbent Atal Behari Vajpaes. Since last 25 years, he has been contributing for National Broadcasting and Telecasting Channels which includes anchoring, commenting, producing, writing and editing. This is not the only aspect of Alok Mehta. Despite always on the toes in the journalistic activity he has not left his only love -writing. He has several books published to his credit.

While engrossed in print media, he never lost sight of audio-visual upsurge



With wife Prabhla and daughters Arunima & Astha

and kept pace with the changing technology in the field of journalism. In an international training programme of voice of America at Chaingmai (Thailand) in February 2000, he took training in Video Journalism with most sophisticated digital camera. During the workshop, he worked independently with digital camera, wrote scripts, edited and produced current affairs programmes. Renowned U.S. media consultant Michael Rosenblum noted his works with utmost satisfaction.

He splashed himself all over on audio-visual scene through Doordarshan and Indian T.V. networks. Many of his interviews long ago with high and mighty of India and Abroad in T.V. are still remembered and talked about. The leaders whom he interviewed make a

racism and in Bihar it was casteism.

About his journalistic instinct and guiding formula he said "I believe in non partisan journalism where our job is to inform." General impression about the Hindi print media is that it is always attached to some school of thought or backing from some vested interest. But Alok Mehta with his indisputable style established the impartial image in hindi journalism. He said "Country is important not the group. I have always tried to bring the truth to the forefront and never tried to sensationalize the news. We were the first people who exposed fodder scam in Bihar but we have not sensationalized it. We believe in responsible journalism. We do not have any prejudices and I believe our job is to inform only. We are here to decipher the

was the firm believer that hindi magazine will do good because hindi people does not have platform to air their views. I have shared this idea to Vinod Mehta, and the idea of outlook get through and I became editor of this magazine.

It is a general perception that editor and publisher use to be at loggerheads. But Alok shares a unique relationship with managing editor and publisher of Outlook. Vinod Mehta. Perhaps having identical name make a lot of people misunderstand both of them as real brothers. He smiles and tells : we both hail from different States. As Vinod belongs to Punjab and I come from MP. But we live like brothers because on many crucial issues our viewpoints gel very well. You can say our wavelength usually compliment each other.



With Foreign Minister Natwar Singh



In deep conversation with Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpai

veritable list of 'Who' who, not only of India but world leaders as well.

Alok won't applaud for his critical acumen and with his hard hitting stories and oratory skills he has unearthed the information and unsparingly divulged the scum. He is the man who has written about the fodder scam for the first time and stood his ground despite facing stiff challenges from the protagonist. About the turning point of his career he said, "Working as a resident editor of Navbharat Times, Patna was one of the most challenging assignment of my career. I went to Patna on the advice of Rajendra Maibur and stayed there for three years. From Germany to Patna was a great move but one thing was common at both the places. In Germany, it was

news. Even we have information about bofors. I was the first journalist to interview Olof Palme. But as happens at other places we never take credit for the things which we have done."

Alok Mehta roamed around the world and has an international exposure. He knows the globe. He is a man who started from the remote areas of Madhya Pradesh and went to scale new heights with all the national and international exposures. He has interviewed almost all the dignitaries and whose pen use to nail all the relevant political and social interest that is of national interest. Known for his impartial journalism he has never established the camp and worked in true spirit of journalism.

About the Hindi outlook he said "I

This journalist of journalists is concerned about the prejudiced mindsets that are a cause of worry. As he believes it to be the biggest threat for journalism. Like a man of sentiments he hates treacherous behavior among people. He calls integrity as his biggest strength. In his spare moments he always reminiscences his unforgettable journey to Himalaya.

Today, Alok mentions about his loving wife Pratibha being a true companion in all phases of life. As he speaks about the romance of his life : "Kehal aap sabh bithi ke hi jama hain". Really, only morally intact persons like him can withstand all tests of the time. Perhaps, that's why they inspire many generations to come.