

## Alok Nath wishes he could play a wicked character

The wonderfully talented and natural actor Alok Nath has come a long way since his amazingly successful role as Masterji in Ramesh Sippy's TV series 'Buniyaad', but not far enough.

'I agree with you when you say I deserved a lot more. But this is what destiny had in store for me. And I'm happy to do the work that I get on television. Of course, not all of it is commendable. But one can't blame anybody for the standards on television. The home viewing medium is the essence of middleclass entertainment. I'm very happy with the work I'm doing on television,' Alok told IANS.

The actor, however, regrets being typecast.

'The problem in both cinema and television is, an actor gets slotted in a particular character... Once I made a mark in the hearts of the audience as the patriarch, I continued playing that role.'

While Aneeta Kanwar refused to be typecast as the matriarch after 'Buniyaad', Alok couldn't do the same.

'She had the guts to walk out of the entertainment industry. I didn't. It wasn't easy for me to support a family on my own terms. So I made career compromises, and I'm not ashamed of it. One has to bow down to opportunities. If one fights the system one is taken to be arrogant.'

For a while there was talk of Alok's arrogant behaviour.

'Some unfortunate incidents did happen during 'Tara'. But these controversies didn't damage my career. In fact, they added that little bit of spice and helped in my efforts to change my image from Masterji in 'Buniyaad' to the modern city-guy in 'Tara'. But soon after, producers went back to offering me the role of a goody, goody father. That's the role I get. What to do?'

In cinema Alok is struggling to hold up his head.

'The father roles that I did in films are being offered to younger more trendy actors. I've done enough films. And I don't mean to sound defeatist, but I've stopped fighting the system. Ultimately, this is my bread and butter. I've no regrets.'

He admits films are a disappointment.

'I've an interesting though small role in Mani Shankar's 'Mukhbiiir'. Shankar has the vision to cast me against my popular image as a retired underworld don. In fact, he has cast a talented newcomer Sammir Dattani in the central role. We need more directors with such guts. I enjoyed doing 'Mukhbiiir'. But in Rajshri's 'Vivah' I again played the sweet father.'

Television still gives Alok the space he wants.

'I get lengthy and meaty roles and I'm allowed to work on my own terms. I'm doing the serial 'Sanskar' for Doordarshan which Chander Behl has directed. Though I play the father again, he isn't submissive. My character gets to fight the world to defend his family. I'm enjoying playing a dad who has his values in place but is nonetheless a modern man.'

He's also in the Rajshri Productions TV series 'Woh Rehnne Waali Mehlon Ki'.

'Again I play an ideal father. I wish I could play a wicked character. But no one wants to cast me in that light. I wish I was as good in real life as I'm constantly made to be on screen.'

Alok has often been compared with the late Sanjeev Kumar and the actor is, of course, flattered by the comparison.

'Sanjeev Kumar was a great actor. My career did take off in cinema to an extent. But it didn't reach a stage where roles were specially written for me. The cinema and television mediums changed. I was too busy trying to grapple with the changed reality on both the mediums to care about the content of my assignments.'

*Subhash K. Jha* ( © IANS / India eNews)