

Iqbal Khan and Shraadha Arya, lead stars of the show *Tumhari Paakhi*, promise a different fare on television. In Chandigarh, they open their hearts out...



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**COUPLE CHEMISTRY:** Iqbal Khan and Shraadha Arya

# Small screen, big aim

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FROM *khushi ke aanso to dukh ke aanso to bas aise hi rona aa gaya...* the amount of tears that Indian television actresses shed might boost the sales of glycerine producing companies, so when a television actress claims that she hasn't cried in any episode of the show, which is into the third month of its shooting, it's hard to believe! The star cast of the show, *Tumhari Paakhi*, which hit the TV screens this month, Iqbal Khan and Shraadha Arya, give us a few more examples of how their show, which is based on the novel, *Navvidhan* by Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, is different from the rest. The difference, however, is not very stark.

Shraadha plays Paakhi, who has had a child marriage with Iqbal, who plays Anshuman, and is eagerly awaiting his return for eighteen years. "She isn't the typical girl, who's crying for her husband to come back. She is very confident and yet innocent," Shraadha says while explaining her character. Last seen in *Main Laxmi Tere Aangan Ki*, Shraadha says that the show might have child mar-

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riage as a part of the storyline, but it is definitely not regressive. "Paakhi isn't the poor girl with no future. She works as a guide in Udaipur and is very independent."

Shraadha agrees that women characters on television have been stereotyped, who indulge in kitchen politics, wear unreal clothes and make-up; are made to worship male characters. "It all depends on demand and supply of content. This is what people want to watch in small cities of India."

## Male point

Iqbal Khan is quite a popular face on the Indian television, even if he is not omnipresent on the small screen. The actor likes to take it easy and even through this show he has made a comeback after a hiatus of two years. "Even a bad show manages to be on air for a year at least, which

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means that I have to work for twelve hours a day for a year. Thus I take a break post every show," Iqbal says. In the meanwhile, he enjoys time with his daughter, who is now two years old. He has got offers for a few reality shows as well.

Iqbal's character in *Tumhari Paakhi* is that of a business tycoon, one who is very image-conscious. "So much so that he even bothers about the label of socks that people might see if they peep out of the shoes. Marrying a girl from a small town is a big deal for him." He feels that working in the television industry isn't easy, given the long working hours, "But when did money and fame come easy?"

As for channels' constant struggle to boost the TRPs and doing away with shows

that fail to fetch numbers, he says that actors can only give their best on the screen. "For the rest of the facts responsible for the success or failure of a show, they can't do much." The show has been shot in different locations of Rajasthan, Maharashtra and even Himachal Pradesh.

Iqbal also shares the opinion that the storylines of most of the shows are similar. "TV channels conduct surveys and research as to what content would be welcomed by the Indian audience. The content hasn't changed at all in the last fifteen years and for that to happen, we also need a renaissance in our society," he says. But then even 24 has found an audience and this is because everything sells in India, literally.

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