



Professional roles have found a place in TV soaps, but personal lives remain a key part of the plot

■ Sarbani Sen

Fighter aircrafts will soon comb the skies in *Chhoona Hai Aasmaan*, the serial revolving around the Indian Air Force that takes off on 15 October, on Star One at 9 p.m.

Sanjana aka **Nazeen Patel** plays a journalist in *Main Aisi Kyun Hoon*, which is being telecast on Sahara One.

This seems to be the season for professionals on television. Channels are making a significant departure from the *saas-bahu* staple with a promise to

address more contemporary concerns. However, one wonders whether in the long run they will remain focused or get embroiled in love triangles and family squabbles.

A twist in the tale

Left Right Left — aired on SAB TV — portrays six confused youth who have joined the military academy. The serial is in its second season, and the protagonist, cadet Naina Singh Ahluwalia, who was initially bent on proving her brother — accused of being a traitor — innocent, has shifted focus as she falls in love with a member of the faculty.

Anooj Kapoor, business head of SAB, defends this move saying, “When you weave a story around a person, the tale can have several twists. As the serial progresses, other aspects of his life also come into the picture. The personal as well as the professional life of the protagonist has to be shown.”

Going back in time

In the mid 1990s, the popular Doordarshan detective serial, *Reporter*, directed by **Vinod Pande**, had actor **Shekar Suman** solving mysteries. **Suhail Tatari**, one of the episode directors of *Reporter*, rues, “The audience today is a lot different from what it used to be in those days. With a plethora of channels competing with one another for TRPs, the focus is on entertainment rather than on information.”

Kalyana Sundaran, programming head of Sahara One, agrees. “The TRPs

increase when we zoom in on the protagonist’s gloomy home life. For instance, in our previous show, *Kittu Saab Janti Hai*, the audience didn’t like the central character — small-town girl Kittu — becoming independent. Girls who suffer silently seem to be favourites,” Sundaram says.

“The message is clear, God is there to do justice and it is not for the protagonist to take things in her own hands. With *Main Aisi...*, we are taking up the challenge as Sanjana, in her early thirties, rises above her conservative background to pursue a career,” Sundaran explains.

Training for the role

Riddhima Gupta, a young doctor, is interning at a hospital in *Dill Mill Gayye* on Star One. **Shilpa Anand**, who plays Riddhima, says that she had to train before shooting. “Real doctors have shown us how to check pulse rates and give injections,” she says.

About her reel-love life, she says, “My character has different shades to her. She is a daughter, sister, a responsible doctor, as well as a young girl who has fallen in love, but that does not make her less focused at work.”

Iqbal Khan, who plays Air Force officer, Abhimanyu Adhikari in *Chhoona...*, has researched the lives of real officers. “We were introduced to officers who spoke to us on the technical aspects of flying a jet. I can promise my fans that if the serial loses its focus, Iqbal Khan will be no part of it,” he says solemnly.

sarbanisen@hindustantimes.com



CADET DAYS: Left Right Left