

LOVE is on the air

With *Sanjog Se Bani Sangini*, Zee hopes to revive the trend of love stories on the small screen

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Love stories are the order of the day. Starting with *Kasautii Zindagii Kay*, which is considered to be the best love story on celluloid, most shows these days revolve around the concept of love. *Sanjeevani*, which began as a hospital drama, went on to become a love story. Its sequel, *Dill Mill Gaye* was more about doctors falling in love than treating patients. *Balika Vadhu*, which deals with child marriage, too has an interesting angle of love between the lead protagonists, Jagya and Anandi. *Miley Jab Hum Tum*, a college drama is more about college students falling in love than anything else. In keeping with the romantic sagas on air, Zee TV's latest offering *Sanjog Se Bani Sangini*

is also a love story which has Iqbal Khan reprising his role as a loverboy after his debut serial *Kaisa Yeh Pyaar Hai*. The intense, actor who was last seen in *Waaris*, is paired opposite Binny Sharma, a contestant from the first season of *Dance India Dance* on Zee TV.

Though Suresh Motwani, Fictional programming head, Zee TV denies that this is their attempt to catch up with the other love stories on air, he does agree that most of their shows have a strong element of love in them. "If you look at our channel, most of our shows including family dramas have an element of love in them. *Pavitra Rishta* is a beautiful love story between Archana and Manav, *Agle Janam Mohe Bitiya Hi Kijo* has the romance between Lali and Shekhar while *Yahan Mein Ghar Ghar Kheli* is about Abha and Karan's love track and *Choti Bahu* is the mushy story of Karan and Radhika. Even *Jhansi Ki Rani*, which is a historical, has an interesting love angle to the plot. We easily have some of the best love stories on air on the channel."

In *Sangini...*, Iqbal, who is best remembered for his romantic outing in *Kaisa...*, plays the character of Rudra who has lost Pihu, the love of his life. Pihu, played by Aditi Gupta, is his childhood sweetheart who ditches him and gets married to someone else. Unable to deal with this, Rudra becomes an alcoholic and that is when Gauri walks into his life. Binny, who plays Gauri's role, describes her character as a responsible and humble woman. "In a lot of ways Gauri is like me. She is a very sweet, homely girl with a lot of responsibilities. I relate to her," says Binny who always harboured ambitions of becoming an actor. She adds, "Even while I was on *DID*, I got a lot of offers for films but I didn't want to take a huge jump to films. My mentors on the show also said that I should try my hand at acting so when *Sangini...* came my way, I took it up."

Quiz Iqbal about his self-imposed break and he says, "I don't know why I wasn't on TV. It is important to keep doing work but I was enjoying the sabbatical and didn't think too much about it. When *Sangini...* came to me I thought it was a good role to come back with." Playing a lover boy comes naturally to Iqbal. "It is not that I want to play these intense roles but I guess the audience likes me in such roles. In love stories you get to play characters with a lot of shades. In this show too, Rudra, my character, goes through a lot of changes, which I found interesting." Though Binny admits that she hadn't seen Iqbal's earlier television shows, she was super excited to be launched in a show opposite him. "He is a very encouraging co-star who pushes you to do your best. We discuss my shots and he tells me where I can improve. It's good fun to be working with him." Though Binny is open to taking up films too, she is quite clear that she won't ever quit dancing. "I'm synonymous with my dance. For me acting and dancing, both are equally important." Iqbal, too is raring to enjoy his latest stint on the small screen.

It, however, remains to be seen if viewers connect with this latest pair of lovers.

When *Sangini* came to me I thought it was a good role to come back with. It is not that I want to do only romantic roles but the audience likes to see me as a lover boy
- Iqbal Khan

I am synonymous with my dance. For me, both acting and dancing are equally important
- Binny Sharma

Love stories that worked their magic

- *Kasautii Zindagii Kay*- The chemistry between Shweta Tiwari and Cezzane Khan made it one of the most popular shows on TV. It went on to complete 1400 episodes
- *Kaahin Toh Hoga* - Rajeev Khandelwal and Aamna Shariff shot to fame with this love story which was reportedly Asia's fourth most watched show
- *Kaisa Yeh Pyaar Hai*- Starring Iqbal Khan and Neha Bamb, it had a slow start initially but later became one of the most popular shows on TV
- *Des Mein Nikda Hoga Chand* - Sangeeta Ghosh and Varun Badola are still remembered for their roles as Pammi and Dev in this love story

