

## REVIEWS



## A welcome change Chhoona Hai Aasmaan

**Mon-Thu, 9 pm, STAR One**

After a despairingly regressive Parrivaar, Nikhil and Niret Alva's Miditech (of the Indian Idol fame) makes an adventurous outing (both in terms of content and treatment) in the soap fiction genre with their latest Chhoona Hai Aasmaan.

In a glut of indoor fixated women-centric soap sagas ruling the satellite primetime, Chhoona Hai... comes as a welcome break not only for its action filled outdoor sequences and the frequently flying Sukhois, but also for attempting an intelligent romance in uniform. If lead pair Iqbal Khan (Abhimanyu) and Jahanvi Cheda (Sameera) share an engaging chemistry pepped with humour courtesy their poles apart characters, the talented and understated Narendra Jha (of Raavan fame) gets a near parallel lead in Captain Veer Pratap Singh, an author backed role as head of a secret air force mission codenamed Hawks that aims to contain terrorist activities from across the border.

Abhimanyu and Sameera, led by Singh are part of an elite team of fighter pilots exclusively hand picked and commissioned for the Hawks mission. And while flight lieutenant Abhimanyu Adhikari extends expertise in ground attack combat-aircraft, Sukhoi30, weapon systems officer Sameera Singh is an efficient navigator, though a bit impetuous. Other young guns in the team include Vivan Bathena as the charming flight lieutenant Samrat Shekhawat from the Indian Air Force Missile Ops, the confused but computer hacker nonpareil flight lieutenant Farhaan Khan (Manish) modeled on Chandler of Friends and aviation engineer Tanvi Sharma (Vaani) and the slightly snobbish RAW trained Isha Oberoi (Aparna Kumar) who's supposed to be a desi Lara Croft.

Along with work, the now on, now off bickering lead pair has also embarked on a predictable love story track, which could be given ample time to develop, with their being no dearth of love sagas abounding on telly at the moment. A forgotten romantic track involving the elders Captain Singh and Sameera's mother Anupama (Vaishnavi Macdonald) with 'shock' potential however keeps threatening to surface amidst unannounced flashbacks.

Crisp editing (a rarity on TV), occasionally surprising terse one-liners, some well thought out plot constructions that help build character traits, a fabulous ensemble cast and the use of authentic IAF locations as backdrop make it a spirited action outing.

**Verdict:** Fans of the Fauji and Sea Hawks genre of TV shows should add this to their must-viewing list. While Jahanvi's Sameera Singh easily ranks amongst those rare earnest and natural lead female performances on TV, whether the dishy Iqbal Khan's Abhimanyu Adhikari (even his intro in the title track is modeled a la Shah Rukh Khan's football kicking entry in Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge) manages a repeat of Shah Rukh's popular Abhimanyu Rai act in Fauji however needs to be seen. Till then, this one's still worth a dekho.