

**Bidaai**

jewellery or the look of actors. Bungalows are not designed for shooting and hence have lot of limitations. But a set can be explored in many ways for visual beauty, opulence and location variety," he explains.

Sets also became a necessity because dailies are shot for at least 25 days in a month as compared to weeklies which required just about eight to nine days. Explains producer-director Ajai Sinha of *Hasratein* and *Astitva* fame who is currently making *Ghar Ek Sapna* for Sahara One, "Availability of bungalows beyond 12 hours is a big problem. Often dailies are shot in two units and hence sets are more convenient for shooting in a

**Thanks to dailies,
channels started selling
dreams - be it the story,
sets, costumes, jewellery
or the look of actors
- Sanjay Upadhyay, Sony's
creative head**

controlled and cool environment. Of course bungalows have their own charm but if you are looking for visual variety and colourful content then there is no substitute for sets." So feels producer-director Rajan Shahi of *Bidaai* fame, "When you are making 16 episodes in a month, you need to work in a disciplined environment. Like it or not, sets offer a factory-like set up for controlled output and round-the-clock assembly line production. A lot of time is saved in lighting and other things."

Lavish sets are not the only necessity, outdoors are another must-have

these days. Sony's *Hum Ladkiyan*, which is set in Benaras, has had its two schedules done there. *Meet Mila De Rabba*, another Sony show that is based in a village in Punjab, has also been shot extensively there. *Jo Ishq Ki Marzi Woh Rab Ki Marzi*, the Sagars' new daily for Sahara, has been shot in an 18th century palace in Satara. Producer Sunjoy Wadhwa had done a 30-day shooting schedule in Rajasthan for *Balika Vadhu* and currently the show is being shot at a grand set in Vasai spread over 9,000 square feet. "Sets are done as per the requirement of story. We needed a huge *haveli* set to shoot different story tracks," says Wadhwa. In fact, money is not an issue today. "Because of competition, television spend has increased quite a lot. When the emphasis is on upscale making, grandeur and opulence are a must," adds Wadhwa.

However, Sooraj Rao, creative head of Ekta's *...Mahabharat...*, is of the view that while the scale of making is high, he doesn't think a lot of money is being spent as compared to the days of the weeklies. "Bungalows used to cost Rs. 5,000 to 8,000 per day. While a set costing around Rs 1 to 2 crore, taking inflation into account, amounts to almost the same over a period of one to two years. Of course today the making is many steps ahead but that's also because of new technology. From low-band, television programming moved to high-band and then to beta and HD format," he explains. Even in the nascent days of television Sooraj says some of the serials like *Buniyaad*, *Gul Gulshan Gulfam*, *Shanti* and *Gatha* were shot on sets. "If it was possible then why should it be a cause of raised eyebrows now?" he asks.

■ A. L. Chougule