



By A Correspondent

He is a power-packed producer with TRP-ruling shows. A believer in clean, unadulterated entertainment, Rajan Shahi has given us serials such as Bidaai and Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hain.

With several other interesting projects in the pipeline, Shahi's struggle is a story worth telling. "Though my maternal grand-dad, Jayrajji, was very popular in his days, I had a regular up-bringing. I studied in Delhi and then moved to Mumbai for greener pastures. It was in Mumbai that my struggle began," smiles Shahi.

Shahi started off assisting Gulzar, Lekh Tendon and Sanjay Khan. In 1994, he joined director/producer Ravi Rai and that was the turning point of his life. "I was actively involved in famous serials such as Sailaab and Thoda Hai Thode Ki Jaroorat Hai," says Shahi, adding, "I have done everything from being a spot boy to direction to production. There have been days when I've just eaten Maggi and slept on shooting floors. There have been days when I have shared one small apartment with several other strugglers as well."

Yeh rishta **success** kehlata hain

Producer Rajan Shahi has been beaming across positivity in a telly world ruled by tears

Then, of course, followed a very successful stint: His first independent show as a director, Dil Hai Ki Manta Nahi in 1999, was a super-hit. This was followed by other directorial ventures such as Jassi Jaisi Koi Nahi, Hamare Tumhare, Rishtey, Kareena Kareena, Reth, Saat Phere, Mamta, Millee, Virasaat and Saathi Re.

As times changed and the television industry started beaming teary-negative family sitcoms, Shahi thought differently. "I thought, 'Why can't I make a serial which exudes positivity?'" A great believer in the Indian value system, Shahi explains his positivity, "India is a country where the young generation respects the older generation, where God plays an integral role and where one lives for another. I needed a show that reflects this positivity and lets people connect."

That's how his production house, Director's Kut, was born. He turned producer with Sapna Babul Ka Bidaai, which won lots of accolades. The dream run continued with Bidaai topping TRP charts for months and Yeh Rishta... running on even now.

Ask him why his serials target the second-tier cities and not urban India and he laughs, "Well, I work on what is in demand and that has reaped us benefits. But, yes, I am ready to do something urban, which connects with the metros."

Speak about being a resident of Lokhandwala for over a decade and he is all smiles, "This is heaven. I visited here with my grand-

dad when I was 15 and I thought, 'I will have some connection here later'. And look, here I am. I enjoy the cosmopolitan feel of the place and of course, I love the food."

But, above all, he grins, "What I really

love about this area is that all festivals are celebrated here. People care for their vicinity, want to keep it clean and bond during festivals."

We wish him all the positivity he beams across, back to him.