



# International and home-grown formats can co-exist'

*It once ruled over content on television. But UTV Television is now facing a stiff competition from a bunch of young entrants like Balaji, Director's Kut and foreign production houses like Endemol and Fremantle. The newer production houses started providing varied content, fiction and non-fiction, and grabbed most TV hours. UTV, meanwhile, was concentrating on the lucrative south and even Marathi markets, and also looked closely at producing non-fiction shows, mostly in Hindi. Now, it's striving for a balance in fiction and non-fiction, airing and planning shows for key Hindi general entertainment channels like Star Plus, Sony and Zee. Suresh Nair, CEO, UTV Television, admits it's a big challenge to churn out good quality content, which will appeal to audiences. Talent, too, is a huge issue, with available talent less than the number of shows. Excerpts from an interview with FE.*

## **There are many players in the content creation space now. What is your T.JSP?**

Over the past couple of years, we have grown our non-fiction content and cemented a place for ourselves in that space. Our USP is that we are, perhaps, the only content production house which can deliver both fiction

and non-fiction. Last year, we increased our fiction space. Right now, we are working on two fiction shows, one is already airing on Star Plus (*Dor*) and the other will air on Sony soon. We are looking to strike a balance between fiction and non-fiction shows.

## **What are the genres you are concentrating on?**

We tackle all genres and that's the requirement of the times since broadcasters need varied content. And while international formats are working, home-grown concepts are doing well too, for instance, *Emotional Atyachaar*.

## **Is the regional space a good hunting ground for stories now?**

We have been working for a decade in the south and we are bringing some of the successful serials to the Hindi GEC space.

## **Are saas-bahu serials on their way out, with the audience demanding new stories?**

No, saas-bahu stories have not reached a saturation point, it's just that stories need to be told differently. *Saathiyaa* was a saas-bahu saga told afresh. If you give the audience a

good concept and if the story is believable, it will do well.

## **What are the non-fiction shows you are working on?**

We are working on the next season of *Emotional Atyachaar*, doing a show for Channel V, *Pyaar kiya to darma kya* and a non-fiction show for Imagine. We are also in talks to adapt an international format for Zee.

## **In non-fiction, do home-grown shows do well?**

There's space for both international and home-grown non-fiction, both can co-exist. We have seen that both *Bigg Boss* and *Emotional Atyachaar* have done well.

## **What are some of the challenges you are facing? Will the advent of HD add to costs?**

We welcome HD because it enhances quality so much. It's a different viewing experience and adds more value to programming. Broadcasters, too, are absorbing the extra costs. Talent is a challenge, available talent is less, the number of shows more. Churning out good quality shows and ensuring it runs successfully is also a challenge.