

Sagars debut on COLORS
With smash hit
Kahani Vikram aur Betaal Ki
In new hi-tech avatar

The Sagar Parivar makes its debut on COLORS with the Kahani Vikram aur Betaal Ki, in a gorgeous fantasy with dazzling SFX by Jyoti Sagar who bagged 21 prestigious awards for the never - before - seen SFX of Hatim on Star Plus two years ago.

Kahani Vikram Betaal Ki will begin telecast from May 17th on Sunday mornings, on COLORS beginning with the story of Betaal's genesis and the adventures of the valiant King Vikramaditya who goes to bring Betaal out of his hiding in the dense, forbidding jungles inhabited by ghosts.

Shaan sings Title song of Vikram Betaal



Shaan, one of the most popular and sought after playback singers in Bollywood at present, has sung the title song of Vikram aur Betaal.

The song has just two words – Vikram, Betaal – and music director Surya Raj Kamal has played with just the two words to create a song that fuses the invigorating rhythm of

disco beats with musical classical notes of ragas that ascend to a crescendo when Betaal's screeching laughter and his famous words – main tumhare bus mein anewala nahin hoon Vikram, tu bola aur main chala – echo in the air.

It is perhaps the first time that Shaan has sung for the title of a TV serial with no lyrics barring the two words of the title. Shaan says he is much honored to think for Sagar banner. He says: "I have watched the original Vikram Betaal and enjoyed it immensely. My children have also read the stories and have enjoyed it. So it is a great pleasure to be associated with this all new serial and become a part of it. I feel that Surya Raj Kamal is a terrific composer. This particular title song will appeal to young viewers".

Another feather in Shiv Sagar's cap



At the creative helm of Vikram Betaal is Shiv Sagar, grandson of Dr. Ramanand Sagar and son of Prem Sagar.

Shiv, gold medalist alumnus of Le Roche, Switzerland, and a top ranker of Indian Business School, Hyderabad, where he bagged a cash prize of Rs.1 lakh for his innovative concept of a fantasy world he designed for the Sagar family based on the mythological software in their repertoire, has branched out from his areas of expertise in the corporate world to produce and direct television serials.

Shiv Sagar evidently has inherited the genes of his grandfather and father and is understandably enjoying the research and creative inputs he is putting into the on-going Mahima Shani Dev Ki on NDTV Imagine and the forthcoming Vikram Betaal on COLORS. Both are his creations right from conception to visualization to execution.

The idea of re-visualizing and recreating the thrills and fantasy of Vikram Betaal, after its unprecedented success on Doordarshan almost 25 years ago, occurred to Shiv Sagar quite out of the blue when he was reading about the enormous success of the original work done by his father Prem Sagar, the celebrated cinematographer and director who took on the mantle of Marketing when Dr. Ramanand Sagar created history with phenomenal success of Ramayan.

In fact, it was Prem Sagar's Vikram Betaal which paved the way for the Sagar's entry into the field of television with Vikram Betaal in 1985 on DD.

Prem Sagar's Vikram Betaal was the acid test that convinced the legendary writer film maker Ramanand Sagar that an eager and loyal family audience was waiting in millions of homes across the country to welcome the evergreen story of Shri Ram and Sita.

SUCCESS STORY OF ORIGINAL VIKRAM BETAAL

The original Vikram Betaal was hailed in India and abroad for the following achievements.

- a) Slotted in the non prime band at 4 pm on Sundays, Vikram Betaal managed to garner top viewership ratings and become a craze with children and adults. So high was the popularity of the show that markets and shops did poor business between 4 pm and 5 pm on Sundays as people stayed glued to their TV sets at home.
- b) It became the first fantasy on television. Special visual effects which was never tried before even in Bollywood, was tried with commendable success in Vikram Betaal. Viewers were captivated by the camera gimmicks that showed an uran khatola, a flying saucer, a submarine city, a dead body, coming to life etc. 'India Today' wrote: "The Sagar brothers have opened the bag of gimmicks on Indian Television" and the magazine went on to credit Prem Sagar with the achievement of unveiling the electronic era.
- c) Books based on the 25 Vikram Betaal stories as depicted in the television serial appeared in the books market, setting a trend. Over six sets of books and comics with the visuals of the serial hit the market simultaneously.
- d) The serial bagged the prestigious Uptron Award and several popular awards such as the Bombay Film Award and the All India Filmgoers Association Awards.
- e) It opened the avenue for merchandising and advertising based on the character of Vikram and Betaal. While cartoonists used the character to have digs at politicians and political situations, the advertising and marketing world capitalized on the stories to market products like SUPER WRAP (aluminum foil) TORTOISE MOSQUITO COIL etc., The Vikram and Betaal characters were also cleverly used in creating indoor games for children like SNAKES & LADDERS, LUDO, QUIZES etc.,
- f) For the first time, HMV released audio cassettes containing the sound track of the serial with dialogues, music and sound effects.
- g) Sagar Video had its launch with the release of Video cassettes of the serial in the home video market. It was the first experiment of its kind.

h) Vikram Betaal was telecast all over the world including Mauritius and Poland.

With such an impressive history behind the original product, what could be in store for the new Vikram aur Betaal coming up for telecast on the premier entertainment channel, COLORS?

Well, what is assured first and foremost is the unchallenged entertainment potential of the stories with their blend of supernatural fantasy, suspense, intrigue and intellectual stimulus. It is said that the stories were among a 1000 or more stories written by an obsessed writer as a personal mission for the entertainment of a king many centuries ago. When the king's sycophants did not let the writer, Somdev Bhatt meet the king he is said to have gone to a forest, lit a bonfire and begun to throw each story into the fire after reading it out aloud. The birds and animals of the forest were his audience and so enraptured were they by the stories that they didn't move from their positions for hours. The king heard about the weird phenomenon from his cook and the hunter who brought the fresh meat of a deer which was absolutely cold that day for the king's feast. The king set out for the jungle to witness the wonder himself and he listened to Somdev Bhatt and experienced the thrill of the stories written for him. The king managed to retrieve the Betaal Pachisi collection which comprised tantalizing stories with a mind boggling riddle at the end of each story.

The new Vikram Betaal is the same, age old classic collection of stories told with all the gloss and hi-tech visual embellishments available today.