

# Hope to reach 90% of the market prior to launch

NDTV Imagine, the Hindi entertainment channel of the NDTV network, will launch in January next year. **Aminah Sheikh** spoke to **Sameer Nair**, CEO, NDTV Imagine, the erstwhile Star India chief, about the broadcaster's game plan. **Excerpts:**

**How has the transition from being the CEO of a well-established general entertainment channel to spearheading an upcoming Hindi channel been for you?**

The journey has been interesting. I had to start from scratch – from setting up an office, forming a team, commissioning programmes, getting graphics down and so on, since April. A significant portion of the work was done from business centres while we scouted for office space.

**How will NDTV Imagine break through the clutter?**

We have a good mix of programmes for the entire family. NDTV Imagine will offer reality shows, format shows, fiction and non-fiction shows, but with a difference. We have already announced a reality dance show with renowned choreographer Saroj Khan. However, unlike existing shows, in 'Nachle le with Saroj Khan' Khan will mentor viewers. By April, we will introduce animation and fiction programmes for kids.

**What is the channel's distribution target? How many homes do you hope to reach at the outset?**

We hope to cover almost 90 per cent of the Hindi speaking market prior to the launch. We have been talking to leading multi-system operators and also direct-to-home operators. NDTV Imagine will be distributed through One Alliance and NDTV's distribution division.



**How much money has gone into NDTV Imagine?**

Early this year, the NDTV Network raised around \$120 million, of which \$60-80 million has been invested in the channel.

**Will the network launch more such channels?**

Certainly, there will be more channels but they will be rolled-out in a phased manner. We are considering a Hindi movie channel, a music channel and channels in other genre.

**Is the network looking at other areas?**

We will foray into film production under a separate business entity and co-produce, produce and get into film distribution as well. We intend to make five-six films a year.