

The Story of India



OPTIMUM TELEVISION

ZEETV

MOTION CONTENT GROUP



Short Synopsis

Jai Ho - The Story of India is an emotional tribute to one of the greatest civilisations on Earth, a civilisation that changed the course of history and is shaping the future of humankind.

Trailer

<https://vimeo.com/741089843>

Synopsis

A silhouette of a person in a desert landscape at sunset, with a camel and two other people in the background.

India is a 75-year old nation, and a 5000-year old civilisation. *Jai Ho - The Story of India* is a celebration of both.

It captures India's entire unbroken journey - social, cultural and economic - in three-stylishly crafted episodes.

**What made it one of the greatest civilisations ever seen on Earth
How it stumbled,
How it is rising again, and
What keeps it and its ideas going...**

The series is a humble tribute and salute to this mesmerizingly beautiful civilisation - and her people and ideas - that has influenced the world like few civilisations have ever done.



The Story

Many great civilisations of the world were not yet born when the Harappan Indians lowered their small boats in the high seas and set off on a long, unknown journey that few had attempted before. It was a journey that would mould history. Following the stars and birds in the sky, and halting at many places along the coast, they reached Mesopotamia.

4500 years ago, this voyage of 2500 kilometres was nothing but a maritime miracle. The goods they were carrying in their boats would mesmerize the rulers of the ancient kingdom - and the world later on.

It was a journey that gave birth to the global trade, an economic phenomenon that India dominated like no country or civilisation has done in history.

This did not happen by chance or accident.

It was a land of knowledge, creativity and enterprise, a few key ingredients that built an eternal civilisation that would outlast all others in the world: India. A land of unimaginable wealth and prosperity.

With wealth cometh plunderers. India suffered many. A long spell of colonisation followed.

By the time it woke up to freedom, the richest land in the world stood amongst the poorest nations on Earth. But, as one historian quoted in Edward Luce's *In Spite of Gods* puts it, in the end, India always triumphs!

India did fight back. And what a fight back it has been! In 75 years, it has overtaken the empire that ruled over it for 200 years! A comeback that has few parallels in the world.

The spectacular journey of this land, the civilisation, and the nation continues. It is tipped to be the 2nd or 3rd most powerful economy of the world in the next two decades.

It is the triumph of the idea of India. And the indomitable spirit of her people.

In three stylishly crafted episodes, we re-live this entire journey --- how this civilisation rose, stumbled, and is rising spectacularly once again.





Why The Series

The idea behind the series was to re-tell the story of India, and re-live its unparalleled glory, in a way that all Indians across the globe could enjoy it without any barriers and boundaries - natural or manmade. Few civilisations on earth have impacted the human history the way India has. **Jai Ho - The Story of India** is meant to be a humble reminder of the same.

The idea to re-tell India's story came to us in 2017. It has given us five restless but exciting years ever since. The road ahead was filled with uncertainties --- who will financially back it, and, more importantly, who will telecast it? Because despite having the largest literate population in the world, documentaries in India still do not get the kind of respect and support they receive elsewhere, especially in Europe or the Americas.

But, the power of the idea did not allow us the option to stop or pause.

Painstaking research, countless meetings and discussions with scholars across the world and storyboarding was taking place on one hand, and on the other, Zee Television, Amit Goenka and Sunita Uchil happened in the meantime. Even before we could finish the first paragraph of our pitch, the network announced: we are on!

And then came Group M, and Ashwin Padmanabhan, who offered to financially support the idea.



The Grind

Director's Statement



The team was in place! It allowed us to tell India's story freely, objectively, and passionately.

The original plan was to release the series on 15th August 2021. COVID, however, consumed it. But, the moment it weakened somewhat and India started lifting the travel bans, we were travelling. 18 months and almost 100,000 kilometres in 14 states and 60 locations later, we started believing that we had the story that we wanted to tell.

As we continued travelling deep and deeper inside India, a mesmerising picture kept unfolding --- the picture of a vibrant India. Big and small, we encountered powerful Indian ideas at work at every step of the way, ideas that gave us a small insight into why and how this civilisation has kept its journey alive.

There were places where the language stood between us and the local people, but did it prevent communication? From Karidigadde in Karnataka to Pynursla in Meghalaya, the language of heart works everywhere, as we realised soon enough.

The idea was to leave the India of social media behind, and go where the real one lives. From Cardamom hills and Periyar in south to the foothills of the Himalayas, and from the sandy and white deserts on the western tip to the eastern tip where half of a small rock sits in India and the other half in a foreign country, from eternal ghats of Benaras to the world's longest, unseen living root bridge, we went wherever India took us.

What an India we met!

Jai Ho !

Cast



Prasoon Joshi - Host

Who else could host ***Jai Ho - The Story of India*** but Prasoon Joshi, one of the most gifted poets, authors and thinkers of India? A multi-faceted creative force, Prasoos has brought to life many iconic songs and poems, and has given vision and screenplays to a number of memorable movies.

Two-time national award winner, Prasoos is also the chairperson of the Central Board of Film Certification, and runs a global advertising and marketing company too.



Sharad Kelkar - Narration

Ever since ***Bahubali***, Sharad Kelkar – and his voice – has become an icon, a household name. A versatile actor, Sharad instantly agreed to lend his booming voice to ***Jai Ho - The Story of India*** the moment he heard the storyline of the series.



Upma Bhatnagar - Executive Producer, Director and Editor

Upma Bhatnagar and her production company, Optimum Television, have created many successful shows for networks across the world. Many of her shows have travelled to more than 150 countries worldwide. Upma picks up positive stories from India and turns them into big-ticket shows for global audiences.



Ricky Kej - Original Music

Two-time Grammy Winner, and a UN Ambassador, Ricky Kej is an internationally renowned Indian Music Composer. Ricky has dedicated his life and Music to creating awareness on the Environment, and positive social impact. He has performed at prestigious venues in over 35 countries, including at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and Geneva. Ricky has won over 100 music awards in over 20 countries.

Manoj Narain - Producer and Show Designer

A multiple award-winning storyteller, Manoj designed **Jai Ho - The Story of India** in creative collaboration with Upma Bhatnagar as a heartfelt tribute to the idea of India.

Optimum Television - Production Company

Led by the Executive Producer, Upma Bhatnagar, and Producer, Manoj Narain, Optimum Television is a global company that has offices in the UK and India. It has delivered some of the most successful shows on India for global audience, working in partnership with the biggest and finest networks in the world like Disney, National Geographic, BBC, ITV and Discovery. Many shows produced by the company have gone to 150+ countries in every part of the world.



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