

REALITY SHOWS ON INDIAN TELEVISION: AN ANALYSIS

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DOI: 10.5958/2249-7315.2022.00359.8

ABSTRACT

India audience witnessed the first ever TV serial on Doordarshan in early 80s. Since then the progress of TV industry has been phenomenal. From the telecast of 'Hum Log' in 1983-84 till date there have been numerous types of serials telecasted on Indian television. Today India boasts of one of the world's largest markets. As per the data available with BARC, more than 66% households had TV sets in 2018. There was only one TV channel in India. After the arrival of satellite TV channels in 1992, there has been mushrooming of private TV channels in India. As of February 2021 there are 900 private satellite TV channels in India. Most of these are 24x7 TV channels. It means entertainment is available to Indian audience as and when they desire. Demassification in mid 90s brought about the inception of specialized TV channels for specialized audience. It opened the flood gates for the opening of a plethora of satellite TV channels. India for the first time witnessed the arrival of 24x7 TV channels in regional languages. With 24x7 TV culture there arose the need for a huge variety of TV programs. It was here that Indian television started looking towards the West for the genres, presentation and contents of TV programs. Reality shows are among the most popular TV shows in India. This paper analyses top reality shows on Indian Television.

KEYWORDS: Audience, TV Industry, BARC, Demassification, Reality Shows.

INTRODUCTION

Television has become a very powerful tool of communication, education and entertainment. Being an audio-visual media, it scores over the written word. It also enjoys a cutting edge over radio also. In India, considering the majority of the population living in villages, it has opened up tremendous possibilities in the field of communications to enlighten the masses. There is a lot of scope for improvement in television programmes. However, the quality of programmes can improve only if there is less government interference and control. Indian TV has more than hundreds of program genres for entertainment. 90's was the golden era for Indian Television because it ensured its reach to most of the audience with a huge variety of the programs. Satellite channels were the backbone to make the TV industry a huge entertaining aura in India.

Indian TV Reality Shows:

Last two decades of 21st century have witnessed massive and unprecedented growth in respect of

content of TV shows. Growth in visualisation aspect has also been phenomenal. The taboos of yesteryears have become matter of broadcast for show makers. New and innovative concepts are been worked upon and a plethora of issues are being highlighted. The perceptions have undergone sea changes. 'Hum Log' has the distinction of being the first drama of Indian television. It had 154 episodes. There have been mega serials like 'Ramayana', 'Mahabharata', 'Chandarkanta' etc. which made the audience keep glued to their television sets. Then came the era of family melodramas. Serials running for more than 1000 episodes were produced and telecasted. 'Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi' was the first Indian TV serial to cross 1000 episodes. In fact it had 1833 episodes. A Marathi serial named 'Char Divas Sasuche' entered Limca Book of Records. It was the first Indian serial to cross 2000 and 3000 episodes. Actually, it concluded after 3200 episodes.

The reality shows are becoming extremely popular on Indian television since early 90s. This specific genre has truckloads of diversifiable entertainment. Almost every channel is broadcasting one or the other reality show. These shows provide relief from the 'Saas-Bahu' type so called family daily soaps. These shows provide ample prospects to the talent and genius residing in the interiors of the country to showcase their talent.

The craze for reality television hit India with the arrival of Viva on Channel V. It had a band of five young singers. It was a grand success and proved to be inspirational for businessmen as well as youngsters. Talented youngsters came to believe that they have a platform to showcase their talent and become stars.

There are many reality shows on Indian Television now-a-days. In the study we will know about the makers of the show, theme of the show, host, judges and the contestant of the show. We will also study about its journey on Indian Television. In fact it is the concept and innovativeness of ideas that differentiates these reality shows from regular shows. There are certain Indian reality shows which are based on the concepts of familiar reality shows of the West but there is no denying the fact that quality, concept and content wise they rub shoulders with any other show on TV throughout the world. There is no dearth of choice for the Indian audience as every other day new reality shows are being introduced on TV.

Reality Show can be defined as 'a genre of television that presents unscripted events, or documents actual events. In India, reality shows are a success since it allows the audience to be the part of the show.' One needs to understand and appreciate that reality shows allow audience to actually participate in the show. This is an unmatched distinction of reality shows. In fact it is one of the reasons why reality shows gain so much popularity among young audience. Let us have a look at some highly popular reality shows on Indian television.

1. Antakshari:

It was a musical reality game show. It started in 1993 on Doordarshan. It continued till 2005. Pallavi Joshi and Annu Kapoor were its co-hosts. Actually Annu Kapoor remained its permanent host while the co-hosts changed with the passage of time. His co-hosts included Rajeshwari Sachdeva, Durga Jasraj, Renuka Shahane, Shefali Chhaya and Pallavi Joshi. It was a big hit with Indian audience who would remain glued to their TV sets for watching this show. It included old and new hit songs of Bollywood movies. It used to have three teams which were named as Parwane, Mastane and Deewane. Apart from India, the show used to be shot in locations abroad. This show made its host Annu Kapoor a house-hold name in India. Those were the times when 'Antakshari' was the most hit and the most sought after shows of the National Television.

2. Chalti Ka Naam Antakshari:

This show has been a singing completion in which teams participating in the completion are asked to sing pre-recorded songs of Bollywood. It was telecast on Star Plus. Sachin Pilgaonkar and

Shruti Ulfat co-hosted the show. This show used to have episodes dedicated to different seasons and fairs and festivals. For example it had special shows like 'Holi Special', 'Rain Special' etc. IT used to consist of four rounds. Ever episode of the show used to start by a song sung by Sachin and Shruti. This show was quite a big hit with the audience in its times.

3. Indian Idol:

The music based reality show 'Indian Idol' was the first music show of Indian television. It was inspired by the concept of American Idol. In this show, contestants from various parts of the country would participate to sing songs in order to show their singing talent. The show was released on October 28, 2004. It was an instant hit and immensely popular. Indian audience has witnessed as many as 12 seasons of this reality show. Mostly the invited guests are from music industry. The show always dedicates some episodes to the legends of the Indian music industry.

4. Big Boss:

It is another reality show having its roots in the West. In this show a 'house' loaded with all the facilities. All the contestants are required to live together in the same house as 'housemates' and they are isolated from the outer world. While in hose, there every activity is monitored by cameras installed at every nook and corner of the house. They are required to perform various tasks to avoid their elimination from the house. The ultimate winner is declared on the basis of public votes. The first show of the Big Boss was aired in 2006 on Sony TV. After two seasons it was shifted and continued on Colors TV. The shows has had as many as total 15 seasons. From Amitabh Bachchan, Shilpa Shetty, ArsadWarsi to Salman Khan, the show has a long list of its hosts. But Salman Khan has hosted the most of the seasons of this show. Rahul Roy, Gauhar Khan, Deepika Kakkar, Manveer Gujjar, Sidharth Shukla, Shilpa Shinde, Tejaswi Prakashare among prominent winners of the show. The invitee guests are mostly from Bollywood, they come over here Saturday or Sunday to promote their films. Also, some of Ex-contestants/winners come to give some tasks or for some fun games with Big Boss participants.

5. Kaun Banega Crorepati:

It is a money-winning quiz show, hosted by Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan. The concept of the show is based on that of a UK show 'Who wants to be a Millionaire'. Entries are invited from all over India. Those who send their entries have to undergo stern knowledge-based tests. Only very few make it to the final stage. Every episode consists of 10 contestants who play the 'fastest finger first' round and the one who wins it, reaches the hot seat for playing the quiz show. The first episode of KBC was premiered on 3rd July 2000 and the show is aired on Sony entertainment television. The prize money of the show was one crore in earlier seasons but since the last season, it has been increased to seven crores. The show and its format of presentation have a permanent fan base. Celebrities from Bollywood and other fields come over here for promotion of their respective films or events. This show is very much popular among the audience.

6. Roadies:

Another popular reality show 'Roadies' has been telecasted on M TV. It was an instant hit with young Indian audience. The contestants in the show participate in very challenging tasks. These tasks challenge their mental and physical strength. Participants are selected via auditions from all over the country. This show has been one of India's longest-running Reality shows with 19 seasons till now and it was launched in 2003. Ranvijay Singh is the person who hosted the mostly season of the show. Prince Narula and Ayushman Khurana were among the winners of the show. Neha Dhupia was also associated with the show. Controversial Indian Olympian Sushil Kumar was also of the judge in one of seasons.

7. MTV Splitsvilla:

Focused on dating, this show is telecasted on MTV. The contestants are young boys and girls. They are given several tasks. During the tasks infatuation for each other grows. Their mutual bonding grows stronger and stronger. Eventually the couples fall in love. The couple that survives till the end wins the shows. Urban Indian young audience is the target audience of this show. This show embodies Western culture and that's why it is endeared to the audiences who inculcate and follow Western values. Nikhil Chopra hosted it in its earlier seasons. Now-a-days it is hosted by Ranvijay Singh and Sunny Leone. It was telecasted for the first time in 2008. It has completed 13 seasons by now.

8. Sa Re Ga Ma Pa:

It is one of the oldest running reality shows in India. 'Sa Re Ga Ma Pa' is an Indian musical reality show. It was first aired on Zee TV in 1995 with a total of 33 seasons till now. The show has been a hit in regional Indian languages also. Its multiple regional versions have been aired in Punjabi, Telugu, Tamil, Bengali, Malayalam, Gujarati, Kannada and Marathi languages. Shreya Ghosal, the known Bollywood playback singer, was also winner of the show in its 4th season. This musical show gives ample opportunities and adequate platform to music lovers to come, perform and contest in the show. The one having command over various Ragas and Rasas of music, wins the show.

9. Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Lil Champs:

It happens to be a sub-series of 'Sa Re Ga Ma Pa'. It is meant for children of about 14-15 years age-group. It was aired on 8 July 2006 for the first time and it has completed 8 seasons. The show is a musical reality show. In this singing competition talented young children across various the length and breadth of the country participate. Though it is open to all but mostly urban based contestants are found in the show. Children get an opportunity to chisel their singing skills. Judges in the judgement penal judge the participants on the basis of their performance and singing talent. 'Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Lil Champs' is aired on Zee TV.

10. Dance India Dance:

It has been regarded as one of the best dance shows in India till date. 'Dance India Dance' is a dance reality show.. In it dancers from various parts of the country are put through arduous auditions to test their ability. Auditions are held for selecting the participants to participate and compete in the main phase. In the main phase dancers perform solo, duet, and group dance. 'Dance India Dance' is aired on Zee TV and it was started on 30 January 2009. Since then it has completed its 7 seasons. Jai Bhanushali, Karan Vahi and Sahil Khattar had hosted the show. Mithun Chakravorty, Geeta Kapoor, Remo D'Souza, Raftaar and Sonali Bendre have been in the judgement penal of the show.

11. India's Got Talent:

This show is based on the concept of the global British 'Got talent'. 'India's Got Talent' is a talent show where contestants participate in an audition in front of judges. There are several rounds. During the initial rounds, based on the performance of contestants, the judges decide whether the contestant should advance to the next stage in the competition or not. In the semi-final the contestants advance to the next stage on the basis of audience poll. Audience votes also play pivotal role in the final. First eight seasons of the show were aired on Colors TV. Since the 9th season the show has been shifted on Sony TV. Karan Johar, Malaika Arora and Kirran Kher are judging the show. Ayushman Khurana, Manish Paul, Bharti Singh, Sidharth Shukla and Arjun Bijlani have hosted the show.

12.Super Dancer:

It is another Indian dance reality show. In the show 12 dancers are selected on the basis of the auditions. In the main show each of them is paired with one choreographer. These choreographers work on the dancing skills of the contestants and train them to perform at their level best. Audience votes are also pivotal in this show. The audience poll is taken every weekend. It is on the basis of the audience votes that the winners are decided. The show is aired on Sony entertainment television. Such shows help honing the dancing skills of the dancers.

13.Master Chef India:

It is a cooking reality show based on the concept of 'Master Chef Australia'. The contestants have to go through the selection rounds. In the selection rounds, many contestants from all over India participate. They prepare and present a dish before the judges in order to enter the semi finals. There are 50 semi-finalist spots. After the semi-finals, 12 contestants progress to the main stage of the cooking show. Master Chef India was first aired on 16th October 2010 on Star Plus. The show has specific fan base like housewives and cooking lovers. There are three well known chefs who oversee and conduct the show. They give the contestants pre decided time to cook the dish decided by the judgement panel. The judges of the show decide the winner based on his or her dish.

14.The Rising Star:

This show has been inspired by an international franchise 'Rising Star'. It is a singing competition platform for youngsters. People from all over India take part in it. But it does not mean that only budding singers compete for laurels in this show. Rather, it is open for all age groups. It is an excellent platform for those who have talent, who aspire to get noticed and who wish to make a niche for themselves in the field of singing. The show features celebrity judges. Shankar Mahadevan, Diljit Dosanjh, and Monali Thakur were in the panel of judges initially. Later, Mohini Thakur was replaced by Neeti Mohan. They give tangible suggestions to the competitors. Apart from it live audience poll is taken. Live audience cast their votes online during the performances. The contestant starts singing from behind a wall that lifts once he succeeds in getting at least 70% of the live audience poll. Bannet Dosanjh, Hemant Brijwasi and Aftab Singh have been the winners of first three seasons so far. The first season of the show was hosted by Melyang Chang and Raghav Juyal while Ravi Dubey was the host of 2nd season. Aditya Narayan hosted the 3rd season. The show was premiered on 4th February 2017 on Colors TV.

15.Nach Baliye:

As its name implies, 'Nach Baliye' is a dancing show. This show comprises of celebrities as well as upcoming dancers. It encompasses dancers from the length and breadth of the country. After rigorous auditions as many as 10 dances are shortlisted for the main show. The dancers and celebrities are paired and each week one couple is eliminated based on their performance and public voting. In some seasons only the celebrities are paired to make it an all celebrity show. The show is aired on Star plus and it has completed 9 seasons. Saroj Khan, Malaika Arora, Farhan Akhtar and Shabbir Ahluwalia are hosting the show. Jai Bhanushali and MahiVij were among the winners of the show.

16.Jhalak Dikhla Jaa:

Indians love dance, drama and music. They are die hard fans of fine arts of which dance is an integral part. This show offers an opportunity on national platform to the upcoming dancers to exhibit their dancing skills. This show provides an opportunity to some lesser known stars to enthrall the dance lovers. The contestants dance on the tunes of famous Bollywood songs. 'Jhalak Dikhla Ja' also features contestants from Bollywood and TV industry in India. Their performances

are judged by a judgement panel as well as by the audience. The show was premiered on Sony TV but after four seasons it was shifted to Colors TV. This is basically a celebrity show that presents rich feast of quality dance to the audience.

17.Fear Factor: Khatron Ke Khiladi:

It is an Indian reality show. It is based on the concept of an American show bearing the same name. The US version of 'Fear Factor' has been one of the most famous reality shows in the world. Similarly, its Indian version has been an instant hit. Contestants in this show are asked to perform difficult tasks to survive in the show that are not easy at all. As the contestants progress to the next round, the complexities and difficulty level of the show goes on increasing. The show is famous among Indian viewers. It was first aired on Sony TV and then it was shifted to Colors TV. Famous Bollywood director, RohitShettyhas hosted most of the seasons of the show. Akshay Kumar and Priyanka Chopra have also hosted one season each. Shabbir Ahluwalia, Arti Chhabria, Ashish Chaudhary, Sidharth Shukla, Karishma Tannahave and Arjun Bijlani have won their respective seasons. It is amongst some of the most popular reality shows in India.

18.The Kapil Sharma Show:

This show belongs to the category of stand-up comedy. It is basically a talk show wherein celebrities from divergent fields come and have talk with the host. This show is telecasted of Sony TV and Kapil Sharma is its host. Kapil Sharma and his team of comedians mesmerize the audience by way of their performances. This show got a kick-start on 23rd April 2016. It has its own ups and downs. It had to be stopped on 30th January 2021.The show is purely based on comedy, but celebrities' visits on every Saturday and Sunday for film promotions makes it spicier and more interesting. Navjot Singh Sidhu has been replaced by Archana Purna Singh in the show. Presently the show is not aired from April 2022. The concept of the show may not fit in the definition of reality show in the strictest sense of the term but there is no doubt that it has been immensely popular shows in India. Most of the times, celebrities come and chat with the host Kapil Sharma.

19.MTV Supermodel of the Year:

It is a modelling show. It invokes the interest of those who want to make modelling their career and wish to excel in it. Numerous female contestants compete to become the super model of the year. This show not only provides a platform to the aspirants but also hones their skills in order to develop as better models. This show was started on 22nd December 2019 on MTV. The contestants are selected by way of auditions. The auditions are done on Voot app. The show is based on fashion and beauty industry. The contestants and winners of the show find opportunities in advertising, TV and film industry apart from music video albums.

20.MTV Stuntmania:

This is another show that provides a platform to those who are interested in performing stunts. It is a biking stunt show. It has the distinction of being the first show of its kind in India. Contestants are asked to execute different stunts in the show. Those who out-shine others advance to next rounds. Most of the occasions the performers perform their stunts while riding on Bajaj Pulsor DTS bikes. The winner of finale of each season wins a glittering trophy. In addition to that he wins the title of 'India's Best stunt-rider'. This show started in 2009. Ranvijay Singh was its first host. It opens the doors for the contestants to make a niche for themselves in film industry where there are many opportunities for the stunts men.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

Above discussion stands as witness to the fact that reality shows have not been alien to Indian

audience. Even before the arrival of Satellite TV Channels in India, certain reality shows were telecasted on Doordarshan. One may argue that they lacked glamour but of course they prepared the platform which was later captured by satellite tv channels. Entertainment industry has grown in leaps and bounds. Its growth has opened doors for new upcoming talent. As music video albums, television shows and film industry require multiple types of talent, reality shows give people the opportunity to contest and capture the eye of producers-directors. Episode after episode the young talent gets chiselled and the talented youth succeeds in making a niche for themselves. It is a reality that Ayushman Khurana, Gurpreet Ghuggi, Ranjit Bawa, Ranvijay Singh, Meiyang Chang, Roushan Prine, Bharti Singh, Ishmeet Singh, Afsana Khan etc. have garnered fame by virtue of reality shows only.

Undoubtedly, Indian reality shows provide a tangible opportunity to the celebrities as well as new comers. These shows provide viewers a range and variety of entertaining content. Indian Reality Shows are one of the most watched and loved content on television. Every show has its own elementary USP and format of entertainment. The common things between all the shows are celebrity guest, who visits over them for program or film promotions. Style of hosting and Hosts is the strongest element of every show. Celebrity judges and their style statement is also the centre of attraction. Winners of the shows also got name and fame for a period. But some of the contestants change this platform into a stage of success, but not all can make it possible. Reality shows has given us many singers, dancers, performers and entertainers.

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