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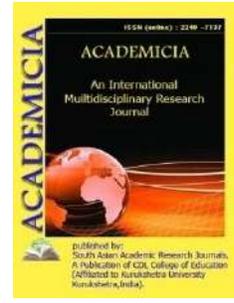
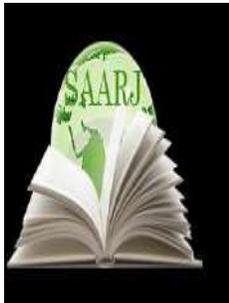


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KBC, INDIA'S MOST FAMOUS GAME SHOW: AN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Today, there are more than a dozen reality shows on air across all kinds of channels, from general entertainment to youth channels to the regional, all on prime time. These reality shows offer a wide scope for brand visibility. In this context, Kaun Banega Crorepati as a reality show was studied for its impact and the economics involved. The attempt of this article is to provide insights on the working of the TV channels, production houses, marketers & advertisers that provide the sponsorship, the general comparison of reality shows with serials and the overall impact created.

KEYWORDS: *Sponsorship, Reality Shows*

INTRODUCTION

Amid the COVID-19 lockdown, 'Kaun Banega Crorepati' (KBC) Season 12, hosted by India's famous actor Amitabh Bachchan caught the attention of audiences as millions logged in to participate in the show during May 2020. The broadcasting channel Sony TV claimed that the registrations grew by 360% from last year. In general, digital platforms with content on streaming platforms has experienced significant growth during the pandemic unlike most industries that faced a slowdown amid the lockdown (Joel Kurian, May 2020)

Brief History

KBC, an Indian TV game show based on the British programme 'Who wants to be a Millionaire' first aired on Star Plus for the first seasons from the year 2000 to 2007. Since 2010, produced by production company Big Synergy Productions, it has been airing on Sony TV. The reality show has changed the face of not only the participants but also the host of the show, Amitabh Bachchan. The participants are asked questions one by one, four options are given for each

question from which the correct answer must be chosen. In the game, the contestant is aided by four lifelines that one can exercise in case of difficulty in answering the question.

The series which aired on StarPlus for three seasons is the first show that took the channel's viewership to a greater height, being one of the top viewed Hindi GEC show in that time. KBC1 was the most watched television program and pushed StarPlus into number one position for the first time then and also reinvented Amitabh Bachchan's career. In its next two seasons, it continued to hold its number one position.

The fourth season which began airing on Sony Entertainment Television ended with an average rating of about 4 TVR as also the fifth season. It consistently claimed the largest primetime-viewership share among Hindi GECs, sweeping nearly 50% viewership share of the genre's highest watched slot between 8 pm – 12 am.

Overall, KBC has been the most-watched Hindi GEC occupying first position ([Wikipedia, 2020](#)).

Impact

What impact did the show have on India's larger TV viewing landscape across major geographies? Had it changed how people watch Hindi GECs in general, or does it extend to other genres on Television? Here are a few insights based on Zapr's unique fingerprint-based analytics for KBC's reach over 40 million unique profiles in India.

Sony TV's primetime viewership went up significantly by 69.1% in just one month after KBC 9 aired on TV in 2017. Nearly one-third of KBC's initial viewers remained loyal who stayed from the first to the last episodes. Further, every person who ever tuned into KBC impressively watched it almost halfway through the episode.

There was audience migration from other channels, shows and genres which aired during the *same* time as KBC on Television. Results revealed highest movement from other top watched shows like *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Lil Champs* (22.90%) on Zee TV; *Khatron Ke Khiladi* (22.40%) on Colors TV; *Dance+3* (18.70%), *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai* (17%), and *Ishqbaaz* (16.40%) on Star Plus.

KBC drew in massive audiences from Hindi Movies channels (59%) such as Sony Max, Star Gold, Zee Cinema, and Hindi News channels (46.5%) such as Aaj Tak, India TV, Zee News. Interestingly, the quiz show drew in 25.10% viewers of Kids channels such as Nickelodeon, Disney Channel, Hungama; and 34% of Sports viewers across channels such as Star Sports, Sony Six, Ten Sports.

KBC topped Primetime hours, 44.4% share of all Hindi GEC viewers between 8 PM - 12 AM on both weekdays and weekends.

Coming to KBC's penetration in major cities across India, Delhi, Mumbai and Ahmedabad had the highest penetration among metropolitan cities, while Indore, Lucknow and Bhopal topped cities with above 1 Million populations.

The highest section of viewers belonged to mid-end section (58.3%) using phones prices between Rs. 7,000 - Rs. 16,000, followed closely by low-end phone users (41.1%). However high-end phone users formed a negligible minority of 0.6%, suggesting strongly that KBC's TV audiences

were mainly comprised of lower and middle income groups with average purchasing power (zapr, blog)

KBC got adapted into other Indian regional versions in Tamil, Bhojpuri, Bengali, Kannada, Marathi, Malayalam and Telugu (i) Koteeshwaran in Tamil aired on Sun TV from October 2000-June 2001 and later in 2012 for three seasons on Star Vijay (ii) Ke Bane Crorepati in Bhojpuri on Mahuaa TV in 2001, hosted by Bollywood actor Shatrughan Sinha (iii) Key Hobe Banglar Kotipoti in Bengali on Mahuaa Bangla in 2011 and later in 2018, hosted by Indian cricketer Sourav Ganguly (iv) Kannadada Kotyadhipati in Kannada on Asianet Suvarna in 2012 and later on Colors Kannada for four seasons (v) show was remade in Marathi on Colors Marathi in 2012 (vi) Ningalkkum Aakaam Kodeeshwaran in Malayalam on Asianet in 2012 (vii) Meelo Evaru Koteeswarudu in Telugu on MAA TV in 2014 for four seasons

Oscar winner, Slumdog Millionaire, Danny Boyle's 2008 film, where the movie's host was portrayed by Bollywood actor Anil Kapoor, was loosely based on the KBC show ([Wikipedia, 2020](#)).

KBC has also provided the space for NGOs to grace the hot seat where they could share their inspiring work and stories that change the lives of the less fortunate. KBC provided a platform for NGOs across the country to raise funds for themselves. Many NGOs have participated in the KBC show like Apna Ghar Ashram, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, Cuddles Foundation etc (giveindia, blog).

Economics

KBC turned out to be a money spinner and a profitable venture that explains for its repeated hosting by Sony Pictures over several seasons. For instance, in KBC 9 of 2017, Sony is estimated to have spent around Rs 200 crores and earned about Rs 400 crores in advertising revenue according to several brand experts and media buyers. Reliance Jio as the presenting sponsor paid close to Rs 100 crores that was more than three times the Rs 30 crores that chocolate brand Cadbury paid in KBC 8 (Lata Jha, Sept 2020)

The "powered by" sponsorship deals for Vivo and Ching's Secret cost was Rs 50 crore each, again an increase of three times from what the brands paid in 2014. Associate sponsors including brands such as Raymond, Datsun, Axis Bank, Aakash Institute, Big Bazaar and Quick Heal have come on board for around Rs10-15 crore each, again a rise from the Rs5 crore the show demanded for associate sponsorship the previous season.

Sony is estimated to have spent Rs 120 crores as remuneration to the host Amitabh Bachchan, a brand in himself, building lot of brand equity for the Sony Channel and the Game Show Concept. As KBC rolls, one wonders whether the format is bigger or the host? It has become increasingly clear that the celebrity host is the biggest pre-requisite.

The reason brand association rates had more than doubled is that the reach of the show, including digital platforms, has increased consumer awareness and engagement. It is difficult to seek people's attention when there is so much clutter and only a show like KBC can demand a premium as it caters to the aspirations of the common man.

One of the biggest challenges for any entertainment brand is to continue to find relevance in the same format. According to the creative producer, Siddharta Basu, KBC stayed relevant by not

being just another quick quiz show. Rather, it's closer to life and its drama where one could see a life changing in the span of an episode. The prize money for the contestant has risen from Rs 1 crore under STAR TV in 2000 to Rs 5 crore in 2010 when Sony took over.

For marketers & advertisers like Reliance Jio, Vivo, Oppo etc which look for reach and certainty with clear objective of gaining dominant market share, it would make sense to pay handsome money to be associated with entertainment brands like KBC, IPL, Big Boss, Kapil Sharma Show etc. KBC is a high profile show and sponsors get tremendous visibility. A mass brand like reliance Jio seeks connect with the heartland of India as title sponsor (Nandini Raghavendra et al, Nov 2011).

Comparison with Serials

According to TV-audience measurement agency TAM, reality shows commanded 14.7% share of the viewership in 2010 on the top 5 Hindi channels, second only to serials' 64% share.

These shows are highly popular, particularly among the youth, and offer a wide scope for brand visibility including co-branding, prize sponsorship, business partnership and guest appearance.

Reality shows are particularly popular among the youth. Reality as a format appeals and connects well with the youth.

Reality shows are cheaper to produce and easier to sell to marketers because they give brands a wider scope to participate than family dramas.

Cadbury's chocolate is exchanged in Kaun Banega Crorepati, the fourth edition of the popular quiz show now running on Sony channel, while General Motors give away Chevrolet Cruze sedans to the winners of Bigg Boss, which makes various celebrities live in the same house for three months and viewers choose the best resident.

Reality shows also offer scope for promotion of films or cross-promotion of shows. Madhuri Dixit, for example, appeared on Kaun Banega Crorepati as a participant, and also announced Jhalak Dikhala Jaa, another reality show on Sony channel in which she is a judge.

It's in line with the developed markets such as the US and UK. Reality shows dominated ratings among viewers aged 18 to 49 in the US last summer. A New York Times report said that 15 of the top 20 highest-rated TV programs among younger adults were reality shows such as America's Got Talent, Big Brother, The Bachelorette, So You Think You Can Dance and Survivor. All of these shows have been remade in India. Unlike fiction shows, where actors are paid, most participants in reality shows come free, in search of their five minutes of glory on TV and to become famous (Omkar Sapre, Feb 2011).

Also, none of the content produced during a reality show shoot goes waste. Auditions, behind-the-screen happenings are shot, and broadcast before the actual show goes on air. Controversies and fights between participants create a buzz and the show becomes a talking point in the press or on social media.

Production firm UTV Television's CEO Santosh Nair says TV channels buy reality shows at three times the price they pay for fiction shows. UTV Television has produced reality shows Dance India Dance for Zee TV, Cash Cab and Emotional Atyachaar for Bindass, Rakt Sambandh and Rakhi Ka Insaaf for Imagine TV, and Maa Exchange for Sony TV.

Channels pay more because there are many ways to attract advertisers and marketers and earn extra income. SMS votes are a big draw for game shows and talent competitions, and also generate revenues for the channels.

CONCLUSION

Reality shows are highly popular, particularly among the youth, and offer a wide scope for brand visibility including co-branding, prize sponsorship, business partnership and guest appearance.

Today, there are more than a dozen reality shows on air across all kinds of channels, from general entertainment to youth channels to the regional, all on prime time.

In conclusion, Channels like Sony TV take on shows like KBC to build a time slot, leverage on its success and ride that time slot with other fiction shows to leverage higher margins.

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