

## INDIAN REALITY SHOWS –THEIR GROWTH AND HOW THEY IMPACT TALENTS

Jaya M D M Phil student  
Dept. of Visual Media and Communication  
Amrita School of Arts and Sciences  
Brahmasthanam, Edappally North P.O  
Kochi - 682 024, KERALA

R Nandakumar  
Dept. of Computerscience  
Amrita School of Arts and Sciences,  
Brahmasthanam, Edappally North P.O  
Kochi - 682 024, KERALA

### ABSTRACT

*Most Indian television channels - both regional and national channels -depend heavily on reality shows to capture and retain their audience. This genre began with quiz contests and now appears in various formats and subjects – most reality shows focus exclusively on mass entertainment. This study focuses on the evolution of Indian reality shows – how they have evolved new formats and addressed ever newer subjects to attract and retain the attention of different type of audiences. The study examines reality shows from different channels and identifies professionals whose talent first came to light via these shows. The methodology used in this study is content analysis of Indian Channel Reality shows. The mode is often used in most talent shows is “who want to be a millionaire” and with in “60 minutes and Dateline”. This study explores reality in both their dimensions – the near infinite range of subject matter and content and as a platform for identifying and encouraging new talents.*

**Keywords:** Reality shows, talent, genres, forms and audience.

### INTRODUCTION

Globalisation of Indian entertainment industry led to strong western influences coming to bear on the Indian television audience in the mid 1990s. This influence was very marked in the emergence of programmes with a non-fictional basis. The non-fiction content shown on Indian channels started with news reels, news programs, educational programs, agricultural programs, films and documentary. Serious quiz programs were conducted on TV from the 1980s (Siddhartha Basu’s ‘Quiz Time’ for instance). Eventually, television serials and geographical documentaries created their own space and soon, the nature and content of the reality-based programs diversified wildly. ‘Kaun Banega Crorepati’, the Indian version of the quiz, ‘Who Wants to be a Millionaire’ was telecast on Star Plus/ Sony TV in 2000 attracted common people by firing their ambition get rich quick. The show was hugely enhanced by the presence of Amitabh Bachchan, who played the role of a benign elderly anchor to perfection.- Rahat Taslim, age 37, a graduate and a mother of two children, came from a traditional Muslim family based in Giridih, a small mining town in the eastern state of Jharkhand. The Indian superstar and host of the show, Amitabh Bachchan, introduced her as a housewife who gave stitching and embroidery lessons at home and who wanted to open a clothing boutique of her own if she won some money. “So you finally let her come?” boomed Amitabh Bachchan in his famous baritone at Imtiaz, her husband, sitting in the family gallery. “Oh, even this morning I told her she’s got no chance. But she insisted that she

would win,” her husband replied. Rahat played strongly and won Rs. 3.2 lakhs. (Reality television in India and Emerging Narratives of the Contemporary Indian Woman-Mona Sinha)A high point on the trajectory of reality shows on Indian Television happened on 6th march 2010. Dimple Ganguly from Kolkata was declared winner of a reality show named ‘Swayamvaram’ – the program’s intent was to find a suitable bride for celebrity Rahul Mahajan. Ms.Ganguly overcame competition from a whopping 16755 aspirants.With continuing globalization, international channels have continued to increasingly attract and influence our population, especially the youth. This has led to sweeping changes both the content and style of presentation of reality shows – this coupled to the ever increasing involvement of celebrities as anchors and hosts has led to a these programs continuing to retain a solid viewership among regular TV watchers. Though nominally based on everyday reality, Dramatisation is a vital ingredient in reality shows. Engineered competition, artificial or real emotional manoeuvres, competition (civilized and otherwise, including match-fixing), celebrity involvement and such stunts have come to be important. A reality show is a television programmer in which ordinary people are continuously filmed, often tending to be merely entertaining rather than informative. So a reality show attracts young people who are trying to become professional athletes and they get a platform to present their creative talent.. They may or may not be professionally trained or practiced. But the platform is same.

According to Steven Soderberg, “Reality shows are all rage on TV at the moment but that’s not reality, it’s just another aesthetic form of fiction”.Reality Shows often indulge in publicity and promotional stunts to generate curiosity among the audience. People always love seeing common man in strange or uncomfortable situations as they sense a connect with the person.Media journalists, columnists and scholars tried to define reality show as a genre and attempted to grant a label on what reality shows. The problem is that it is limited in scope and naturally omit crucial aspects of the genre. The focus primarily on the cast of the programs say “It’s a TV evolution genre, quasi-improvisational form of entertainment with no professional actors”. Instead of using professional actors, reality shows cast nonprofessional actors-generally glamorous people. Nonfiction series (traditional). Nonfiction special (traditional); one-time-only entries such as Nonfiction program (alternative/unscripted). These are staged and elaborately stylized reality-style shows without a game element; Reality/competition programs. These are specials or series that include a game, competition or some sort of contest with a prize attached. All these attempts fail to encompass the entire genre but the following definition comes close by applying to almost all formats of reality shows: “programs that feature non-professionals involved in semi-scripted dramatic situations in which the audience has a voyeuristic or participatory experience.”Aggressive marketing through product advertisements and reality shows itself is the major factor behind the success of Reality Shows. We see such marketing anywhere and everywhere the promos with large hoardings and in internet, magazines and other media. They too show some strong footage that even an uninterested person is bound to get hooked by the show.Major companies provide sponsorship to the producer of reality shows and in return their products are often strategically placed or otherwise promoted during show broadcasting.Reality shows used voting – by SMS or online – to create an impression among viewers of their being actively involved in the trajectory of the program and even a certain sense of power. This triggers debates and factionalism among the TV watching public and these divides are shrewdly exploited to further increase viewership.

#### EARLIER STUDY

In a study on 'Reality Television: Understanding the Genre and Viewer Motivations and Effects' Matthew Lombard, Mahdee T. Ali, Min-Ju Chung, Matthew Dissinger, Amanda Scheiner, Kendra Todd(Department of Broadcasting, Telecommunications and Mass Media School of Communications and Theatre)Temple University, Philadelphia discuss that the recent extraordinary growth in reality television programming has been the subject of considerable commentary by media critics but almost no attention from

communication scholars. And examined by them that "The results of this exploratory study suggest that over half of the current programs publicly identified as being part of the genre use what arguably is the core feature of the latest wave of reality programs, a primitive voyeuristic format in which the audience has a view of the participants acting naturally in their environment. The audience's immediate reaction to reality television would also be interesting in an experimental setting, which would also allow a more valid assessment of the actual influences of viewing these programs. In any case, the phenomenon of reality television is here to stay and communication scholars (and others) have much to gain from systematically exploring its role in our lives and our culture. In Asian Journal Of Management Research (2014) a study published on 'Impact of reality shows on common man and its sustainability' Subramaniam, Himanshu Tiwari , Associate Professors, Datta Meghe Institute of Management Studies, states that the reality shows are watched by both male and female viewers. As far as the impact of reality shows is concerned, it is concluded that these shows make an impact on respondents. The reality shows creates entertainment value and the respondent feel relaxed after watching these shows. In a study on 'Reeling the Reality: A study on contemporary Reality Shows and their Influence on other Entertainment Program Genres' Prashanth G. Malur<sup>1</sup>, Nandini Lakshmikantha and Prashanth , Dept. of Animation, Manipal University Bangalore Campus, India, School of Communication, Manipal University, Manipal, India and Acharya College of Graduate Studies, Bangalore, India respectively, discuss and points out that Reality shows has provided a platform for the people to showcase their talent, begin their career and sharpen their ability to have an insight of their own potential. The shows bring in the talents who have already proved their potential in society. Many a times we find both positive and negative impact on the participant. In reality, the younger generation participants compete at the age close to five and six, which has more impact psychologically when the judges remarks on the performances. 17% of the respondents watch reality shows for the celebrities and fraternities who make impact on the participants and more on viewers in most of the aspects like the lifestyle, attitude, behaviour and being interested in knowing more fantasies are being observed. It would rather be that the celebrities, who contribute to drive the shows commercially, must become the role models for the mass. A study on 'Impact of Television Reality Shows In Youth" conducted by Naveen Tiwari (IIBM Institute of Business Management) in 2016 observed that youth of the present day are strongly attracted towards TV reality shows and believe that television reality shows help participants to showcase their talents, help people to earn quick money and provide awareness on current & social issues. Hence the study strongly recommended that while conceptualizing reality show programs concepts should be based on information, science, sports and spiritual along with the entertainment and celebrity factor, which do not alter the moral values and sentiments of the viewers but rather gives the knowledge and inculcate their cultural and customary practices.

#### TYPES OF REALITY SHOWS:

Reality Shows have their own audience depending on the age group and taste of an individual.

- **Talent shows** : It includes singing, dancing, cooking or other forms of talent .Some of them are "Indian Idol" , "India's Got Talent" , "Jhalak Dikha Jaa" , "Just Dance" and "Master Chef India"
- **Game Shows**: Games can be of testing your knowledge or fitness in which the better you perform the more you will earn money. Some of them are "Kaun Banega Crorepati", "Wipeout", "Das Ka Dam" etc.
- **Hidden Camera Shows**: In these shows people are featured in awkward situations or odd situations and their reactions are noticed which most of the

time result in humor. Some of them are “MTV Bakra” hosted by Cyrus Barocha, “Just for Laughs Gags” and “Candid Camera”.

- **Social Experiment Shows:** This constitute of whole Drama, conflict and transformation. Some of them are “Big Switch”, “Holiday hijack”, “Secret Millionaire”, “Satyamev Jayte”.

### GENRE AND FORM

All shows lead by an anchor or a celebrity, depending on the programs judges [may be 3 or 4] with audience are included. Money winning shows often feature a lone celebrity and participants relatives and friends may be included] and audience. Participants can seek help from relatives, friends and audience, and also they can increase points from the viewers through sms or email. All type of reality show entertain viewers well and had a mixture of music dance and emotional drama to attract Indian viewers.

### OBJECTIVE

1. To study the evolution and growth of reality shows and their subjects
2. To examine the genres and forms of reality shows.
3. To examine reality shows as a launching pad for talented individuals seeking to build a professional career.

### METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in the study is content analysis. it is true that the reality shows creates entertainment value and the respondent feels relaxed after watching each shows may be a good reason for growth in different subject. The study is a content analysis of many channels reality shows are made It helped in identifying the stereotyping of female portrayal and the changing trends in Indian ads. As one among the media, advertising also has its cultural and ideological influence in the society.

**Universe of the study:** Indian Television Channels

**Population of the study:** Indian reality shows

**Sampling:** At least 2 reality shows are running in most regional and national channels in verity of subjects and with celebrity. In this perspective, considering all the Indian television programs, through judgment sampling the researcher selected Indian reality shows for the study.

### ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

We have described reality shows and outlined how they attract and influence all age groups of viewers. Through them, Talent, which would have gone undetected and unappreciated, sometimes gets a good platform to gain appreciation and attract attention – and money. Due to this concept of everyone having a chance of winning rich prizes, common people get attracted.



Fig. 1 A Still from Kaun Banega Crorepati

Winners automatically turn into celebrities which can act as a powerful source of financial progress and a source of encouragement in their further career. Some winners turned out to be onetime wonders but some rise to it take years for an artist to perform in front of public. The talent show provides a massive platform with lakhs of viewers. The participation of eminent celebrities and artists as judges will not only evaluate their performance in terms of scores but also provide sound feedback which will be invaluable in further honing the contestant's talents.



Fig. 2 A still from Master Chef India

Running more than 2 reality shows in every regional and national channels with around 25 subjects including music, dance, folklore, sports,

quiz, cooking, beauty, acting etc. In almost all shows participants request the unknown viewers of the program to vote for them through sms and email, thus implying an automatic presence of an audience for the result and professional carrier of the contestant.



Fig. 3 A still of Shilpa Shetty

**List of reality shows and talent and celebrities who emerged from them:**

- Shilpa Shetty: In 2007 when Shilpa Shetty won 'Big Brother' she became international celebrity.
- Divyanka Tripathi: Television industry's one of the most sought after actress Divyanka Tripathi started her journey with a reality show. Divyanka was the winner of Bhopal zone of talent hunt show 'Zee Cinestar Ki Khoj'.
- Meiyang Chang: With his twinkling eyes and melodious voice, Meiyang has been host of different shows. Singer turned host turned actor, Meiyang Chang first appeared in limelight through a singing reality show. He was among the top 5 finalists in 'Indian Idol Season 3'.
- Binny Sharma: Binny's stint with television started with participating in reality show 'Dance India Dance'. This Punjabi Kudi was among the top 18 but soon got evicted. It was a big blow to the dancer within her. 30 plus married woman in Zee TV's family saga 'Hello Pratibha'. by Gayatri Kolwankar
- Vishal Karwal: Trained as commercial pilot, Vishal was among the participants of youth reality show 'MTV Roadies 4'. He continued his spree with MTV by hosting shows. His first work on television was with 'Bhagyavidhata'. It was followed by 'Rishton Se Badi Pratha'.

**CONCLUSION**

Indian reality often show a sustained presence in the minds of television viewers through entertainment value, being closer to real life of viewers, it covers all age groups. While avoiding vulgarity and bad language, they present a national perspective and regional flavour and given their wide variety, their growth has not been a surprise. The reality shows create entertainment value and the respondent feels relaxed after watching each show may be a good reason for growth in different subject. In the tide of Globalised mediated culture and rapid urbanization, millions of Indians have lost the traditional platform for the creative presentation of performing arts; royal and feudal patronage of classical arts is long gone. The middle class has come to have only school and university competitions. So by fulfilling a real gap and much-felt demand, reality shows give a great opportunity for perform thereon creative performance. Reality enable common people to showcase their often uncommon talent, mould their career and help them achieve a sharp definition of their own potential. Celebrities who make impact on the participants and more on viewers in most of the aspects like the lifestyle, attitude, behaviour and being interested in knowing more fantasies are being observed. It would rather be that the celebrities, who contribute to drive the shows come to be role models for the masses.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Matthew Lombard, Mahdee T. Ali, Min-Ju Chung, Matthew Dissinger, Amanda Scheiner, Kendra Todd, 'Reality Television: Understanding the Genre and Viewer Motivations and Effects', Department of Broadcasting, Telecommunications and Mass Media School of Communications and Theatre, Temple University, Philadelphia

Karen F. Balkin (2004) Reality TV, New York: Green press

Subramaniam. S and Himanshu Tiwari 2014, *Impact of reality shows on common man and its sustainability*, Asian Journal Of Management Research.

Naveen Tiwari 2016 *Impact of television reality shows in youth*, IIBM Institute Of Business Management Of Business Management

Prashanth G. Malur (Dept. of Animation, Manipal University), Nandini Lakshmikantha (School of Communication, Manipal University,) and Prashanth (Acharya College of Graduate Studies), *Reeling the Reality: A study on contemporary Reality Shows and their Influence on other Entertainment Program Genres*

