

Shah Rukh has brought wit and informality to KBC

Shah Rukh Khan has brought to 'Kaun Banega Crorepati' warmth, wit and informality and cannot be blamed for dipping TRPs of a show that may have lost some of its novelty, say the film star's many votaries, some of whom are not even his fans.

Defending the game show that is now in its third season - the first two were with Amitabh Bachchan - viewers say comparisons are inevitable, and sometimes unfair.

'I think Shah Rukh makes an excellent host for KBC. I'm not saying that he's better than Amitabh, because both are very different. But Shah Rukh, I feel, connects more with the participants and the audience... he makes the show very informal,' says Kalpana, a young marketing professional who confesses to not being a Shah Rukh fan.

'You take an instant liking to him though you may not be a diehard Shah Rukh fan. I just love the way he hugs people - almost like the 'jadoo ki jhappi in Munnabhai',' Kalpana told IANS.

According to an audience study by Optimum Media Solutions, the media specialist arm of Mudra Communications, only 44 percent of respondents watched all the first three episodes of KBC3, 25 percent watched only the first episode and 30 percent watched two episodes.

What the study doesn't say is that when KBC was launched in 2000 it was the first programme of its kind. The sheer novelty of a quiz show and the enormous prize money gripped viewers who catapulted Amitabh, then a fading superstar, to a super host.

However, when the same Amitabh returned with the second innings of KBC, TRPs were half that of the first season.

The TRP study did not however take into account the fact that news channels had begun packaging their best programmes during prime time - when KBC was on - and included hefty doses of entertainment as well, providing stiff competition to the quiz show.

In fact, TAM (television audience measurement) ratings reports have been under a lot of scrutiny for their authenticity.

The figures are conflicting.

Despite the confusion over the Conditional Access System (CAS) in Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata, during which many households went without satellite TV, the show has done an impressive 15+ Television Rating (TVR) in Delhi and around 9 TVR in [Mumbai](#) and Kolkata.

Said Kamini Jain, a homemaker: 'Shah Rukh is not responsible for the low viewership. He is a great host and engages with the audiences. He is charming and witty, but the problem is that the sheen has worn off. In the first season there was great anticipation because nobody had seen a programme like it.'

Added student Nimisha Dean: 'Each brought his particular screen strength - of informality (Shah Rukh) and formality (Amitabh) - to the KBC counter.'

'Audiences don't want an Amitabh clone. Any KBC host has to have his or her own style. If Amitabh did a good job so can anybody else. He can't be bigger than the show and if the show's TRPs are falling then the show needs to pull up its socks, and not keep replacing the host.'

It's an oft-repeated story on television. Sony TV's 'Indian Idol' had audiences going hysterical in the first season, closely following each contestant. The second innings saw TRPs dip substantially.

'The format of the 'KBC 2' wasn't interesting; hence the TRPs fell. The same has happened with 'KBC 3'. People come to see Shah Rukh, but they don't enjoy the format. So Shah Rukh can't be pulled up for a drop in TRPs,' said a Mumbai-based media analyst.

The programme is drawing the young too, and mostly because of the superstar's drawing power.

'My nine-year-old daughter Rajeshwari enjoys KBC because of the way Shah Rukh presents it. She finds it more interesting compared to Amitabh's. Earlier, she disliked KBC but she now eagerly looks forward to the show,' said Namrata Dutta, Rajeshwari's mother, from Kolkata.

'You can't have an apple-to-apple comparison. It's like comparing India's GDP with other countries" said Ajay Vidyasagar, executive vice president of STAR India.

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