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A STUDY ON THE RE-TELECAST OF RAMANAND SAGAR'S RAMAYANA

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Abstract- In the time when most of the television channels were struggling hard for TRP's & viewership because of coronavirus pandemic, a re-telecast of 1980s religious program has emerged as a surprise hit in India. Ramanand Sagar's Ramayana aired again after 33 Years, has set a world record by becoming the highest viewed entertainment program globally. It is first time in India that a program has been re-telecasted and gained such popularity. As per Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ramayana received 170 million viewership figures in the first four episodes. One of the articles in economic times also mentioned that the format and quality of the program was enhanced for a better experience of viewers. The popularity of the show was observed not only among the specific age group but to almost all the age groups. The research paper focuses on the popularity of Ramanand Sagar's Ramayana and how it managed to gain attention among different generations of the family.

Keywords- Ramayana, Re-telecast

Introduction

The impact of coronavirus is devastating which is being felt globally. The ambiguity of the pandemic has forced many industries to change the way they operate and adapt to the new normal. Like many industries the entertainment industry has also witnessed a huge loss, the shooting of most of the daily or weekly shows has stopped resulting in the re telecast of the shows. At the time when most of the tv channels were trying to be in existence the government run channel announced the telecast of their most famous mythological serial of 80's Ramayana. It can be considered as a very good move as Indian viewers connect with the mythological content on a personal level. In the past, there have been any daily entertainment channel with no Hindu mythological program. Historically the appeal of religious show cannot be compared with any other specially Ramayana.

Ramanand Sagar Ramayana

Undeniably, Ramayana is considered as the landmark in Indian television's history. Written, produced and directed by Ramanand Sagar in the year 1988, Ramayana magically left all its audience intact for the longest of the time, no other show of Sagar had that impact on audience which this program had, not even shri Krishna, that was far superior in terms of direction and production. The show was telecasted in 55 different countries and earned a viewership of around 650 million. Ramanand Sagar's Ramayana holds a place in Limca book of records for the World's most watched mythological series.

Characters

The show featured Arun Govil as Rama, Dipika Chikhlia as Sita and Sunil Lahri as Lakshman. It also starred veteran actors Lalita Pawar as Manthara, Arvind Trivedi as Ravana and Dara Singh as Hanuman. Arun Govil mentioned in an interview that the character had such an influence on audience that they believed that he is lord Rama.

Debates and controversies

This program also attracted a political debate *Arvind Rajagopal in his book Politics After Television (Cambridge University Press, 2001)*, quoted that "The Ramayan serial overlapped with the most crucial phase of the Janmabhumi movement, when it changed from an ominous but still relatively obscure campaign into the dominant issue before the count. With such publicity given to its pre-eminent symbol, the god-king Ram, the Hindu nationalist BJP was emboldened to declare, the by the middle of 1989, that the Ayodhya movement had 'reached a state and status in Indian public life when it was no more possible to ignore its effect in politics'."

Covid and Re telecast – The re- run of the most popular show Ramayana started on doordarshan soon after PM Modi declared a nationwide lockdown. As per the print articles it was said that Prasar Bharti was in talks with the Information and Broadcast industry to re-air the show before the pandemic and the decision came out in the right time. The response of the announcement of re telecast of the program was so good that the channel decided to telecast twice at 9 am and 9 pm on DD National every day. As per the tweet of doordarshan made on 2nd May 2020 the rerun of the program made records of highest viewed entertainment program. Looking at the response the channel decided to relaunch its most iconic shows of 80's& 90's and announced the rerun of Mahabharat, Shriman Srimati, Shri Krishna.

Objective of the current Study- The present research paper focuses on the factors that made the re telecast of the show such a big hit. The following are the specific objective that this study aims at

- To find out which age group and gender has watched the show most.
- To find out the reasons of watching the rerun of the show telecasted on doordarshan (especially when there were other options like OTT)
- To compare the telecast of show on doordarshan with other daily channels.

Research Methodology

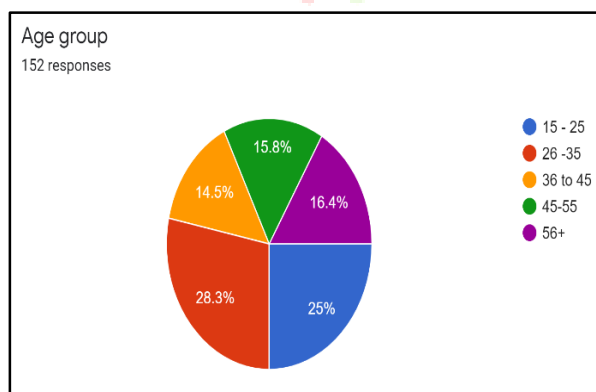
The study has followed quantitative method for collecting data by using an Online Survey platform “Google Forms”. The sample size was 150 respondents. After the online survey was conducted it was numbered 123. Researchers did an analysis of 123 responses. Out of 123 respondents 9 respondents have not watched the re telecast of the show films hence they were excluded from few of the questions. The target audience was from the age group 15 years to 45 and above. They were divided into four categories- 15 to 25 years; 26 to 35 years; 36 to 45 years and above 45 years. Researcher targeted both male and female respondents for the online survey. It was also a conscious effort to include respondents from all the forms of occupation. Respondents were classified into three major occupations- Students, Private or Public sector employees and people with no occupation. Simple percentile analysis was used for statistical analysis, as it was adequate to simply quantify the measures for the questions asked from respondents. 3D Pie Chart and Cluster Bar is used for representation of data.

This study was conducted through primary data collected from respondents. Survey technique was used for data collection through online platform - Google Forms. The survey was consisting of 12 questions, which would cover all research objectives of the study. The Survey was divided into 4 sections based on research objective.

- Demographics
- USP of the show
- Elements of the show
- Impact & prospects.

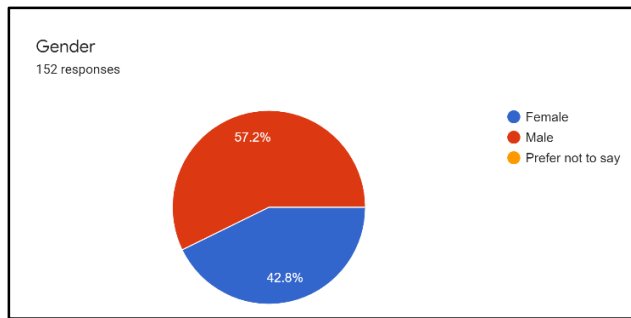
Data Interpretation & Analysis

Findings are based on the survey done with 153 male and female respondents including students, working professionals, businessmen from the age group of 15 years to 55 and above.

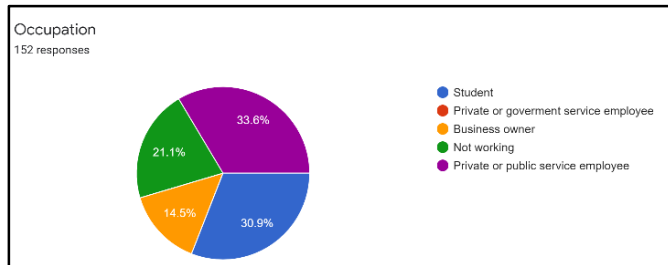


1.

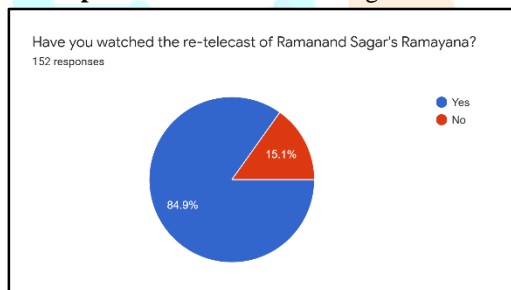
- **38 respondents** fall under the age group 15-25
- **43 respondents** fall under the age group 26-35
- **22 respondents** fall under the age group 36-45
- **24 respondents** fall under the age group 46-55
- **25 respondents** fall under the age group of 56+



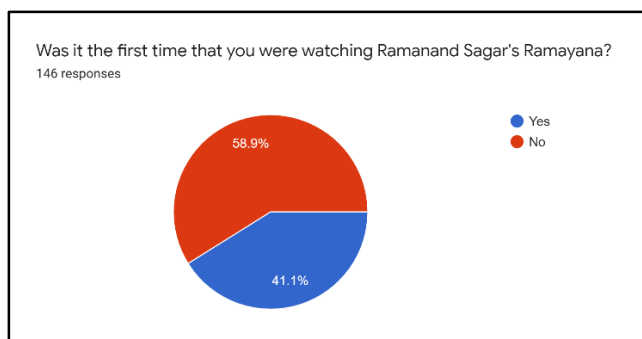
- 2.
- 87 Males
 - 65 Females
 - 1 preferred not to say



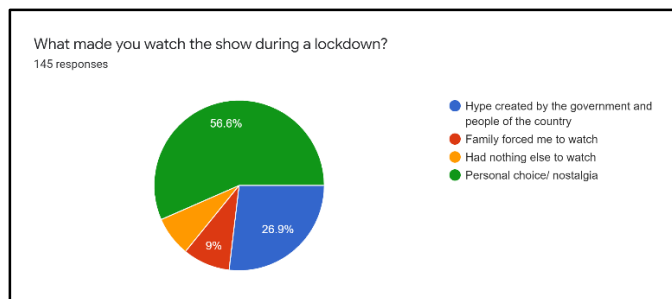
- 3.
- **47 Respondents** were students
 - **51 Respondents** were Private or government employees
 - **22 Respondents** were business owners
 - **32 Respondents** were not working



- 4.
- **129 Respondents** have watched the re telecast of the show
 - **23 Respondents** did not watch the re telecast of the show
 - **2 respondents** skipped the question

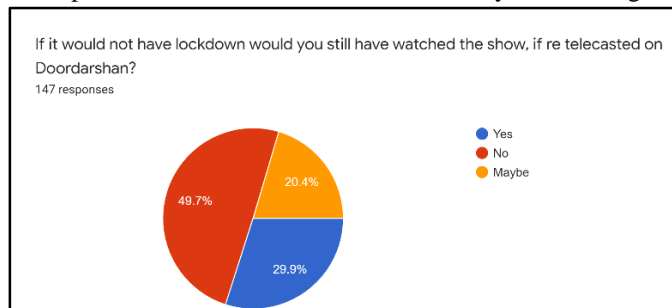


- 5.
- 60 Respondents have watched the program the first time.
 - 86 Respondents have watched the program second time.



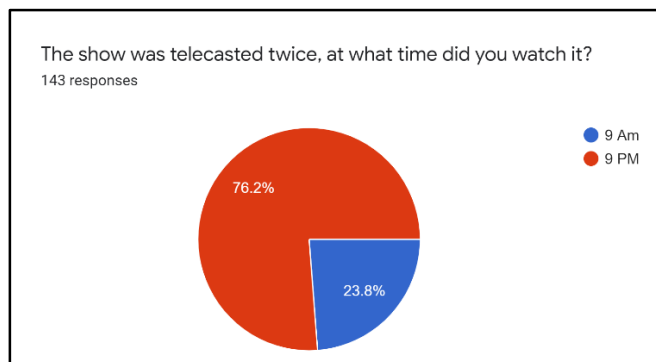
6.

- 39 respondents watched the show because of the hype created by the government and people of the country
- 13 respondents watched the show because the family forced them to watch.
- 82 people had their personal liking or choice to watch the show.
- 11 respondents watched the show because they had nothing else to watch



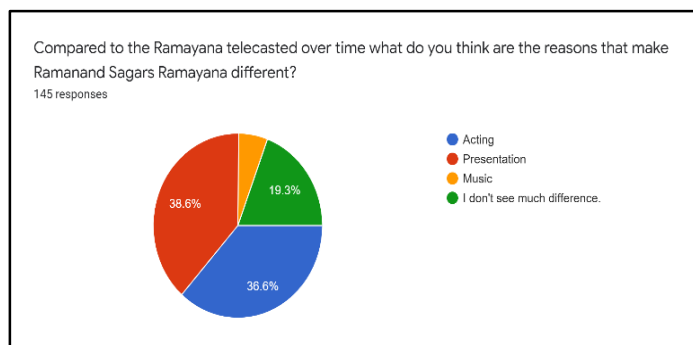
7.

- 44 Respondents think that If it would not have lockdown, they would still have watched the show, if re telecasted on Doordarshan
- 73 Respondents think that If it would not have lockdown, they would not have watched the show.
- 30 Respondents are not sure about watching the show if there was no lockdown



8.

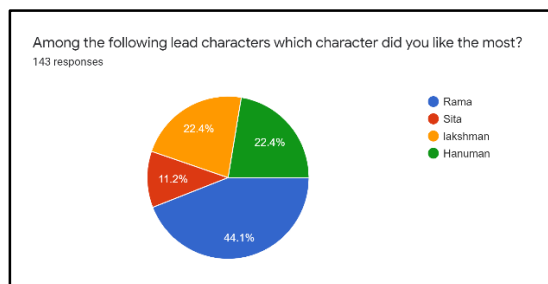
- 34 Respondents watched the show at 9AM
- 109 Respondents watched the show at 9PM



9.

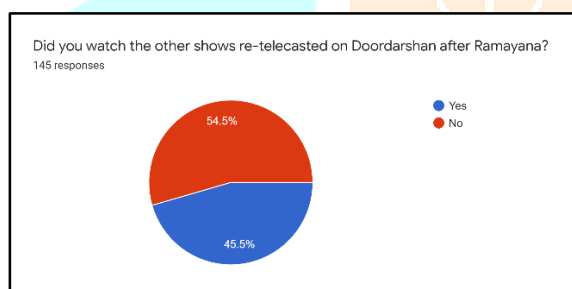
- 53 Respondents think that **Acting** is the reasons that make Ramanand Sagar's Ramayana different compared to another Ramayana's

- 56 Respondents think that **Presentation** of the show is the reasons that make Ramanand Sagars Ramayana different compared to another Ramayana's
- 8 Respondents think that **Music** is the reasons that make Ramanand Sagars Ramayana different compared to another Ramayana's
- 28 Respondents think that there is **not much difference** is the reasons that make Ramanand Sagars Ramayana different compared to another Ramayana's



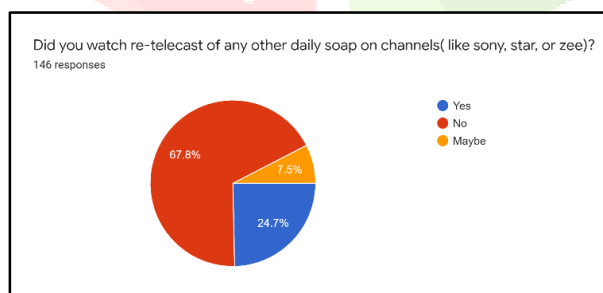
10.

- 63 Respondents liked the character of Rama
- 16 Respondents liked the character of Sita
- 32 Respondents liked the character of Lakshman
- 32 Respondents liked the character of Hanuman



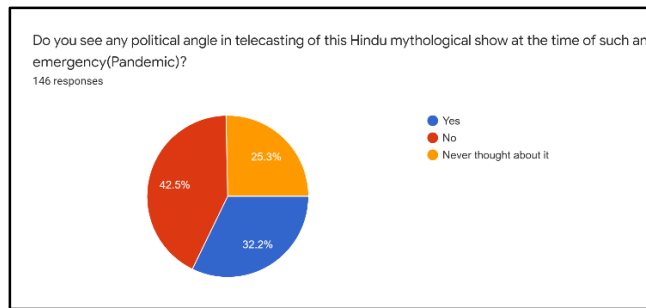
11.

- 66 Respondents have watched other shows re telecasted on doordarshan
- 79 Respondents have not watched other shows re telecasted on doordarshan



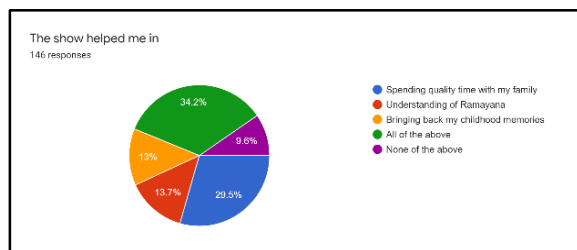
12.

- 36 Respondents have watched other shows re telecasted on doordarshan
- 99 Respondents have not watched other shows re telecasted on doordarshan
- 11 Respondents are not sure about the answer



13.

- 47 respondents think there is a political angle in telecasting of this Hindu mythological show at the time of such an emergency (Pandemic)
- 62 respondents do not find any political angle in telecasting of this Hindu mythological show at the time of such an emergency (Pandemic)
- 37 respondents never thought about it



14.

- 43 respondents think that the show helped them spending quality time with their family
- 20 respondents think that the show helped them in better understanding of Ramayana
- 19 respondents think that the show helped them in bringing back to their childhood memories
- 50 respondents agree to all the points mentioned above
- 14 respondents disagree to any of the points mentioned above

Research Findings and Analysis

1. The survey was circulated to different age group and the participation from all the different age group was average. Mythology is an integral part of Indian culture and the society has believed and learned a lot about it watching the tv mythological shows. It was observed that people from different age group have responded to the survey.
2. The survey showed that out of 152 respondents, 87 of them were male and 65 were female. Thus, there is a proper representation of gender across the sample with 57% male and 42% female respondents, gender bias or prejudice was negligible in the study. Most of the times gender has an influence over views and opinions. Various study on behavioural science states that both male and female carries different traits and behaviour patterns Hence, there is a possibility of having different views on certain questions As a result study has diverse views and opinions coming from both the sections of society.
3. The occupation was divided into four categories namely students, private & government employees, business owners and not working. As per the analysis the private and government employees (50) and students (47). The researcher has found that the re telecast of the program was seen by almost all the category of people.
4. The survey was circulated to 200 people in total, out of which 152 responses were received for this question. 129 respondents have watched the re telecast of the show.
5. Out of 146 respondents, 60 respondents saw this mythological drama for the first time while for 86 respondents it was the second time.
6. The COVID-19 Pandemic forced the population to work from their homes and indirectly gave them more time to spend with their families and their hobbies. The old Indian mythology 'Ramanand Sagar's Ramayana' aired during this lockdown got maximum eyeballs due to the nationwide lockdown. Out of 145 total respondents 39 said that they watched the show due to a political hype created by the government that revolved around religion. Whereas 13 respondents said that were forced by the family to watch. 82 had their personal liking for watching the show while the remaining 11 had nothing else other than Ramayana to watch.
7. The lockdown imposed due to pandemic gave the population more time to watch their favourite shows that were now a part of their nostalgia. However, out of 147 respondents 44 said that they would have still watched the show even it would not have been lockdown. While 73 responded in the favour of lockdown as they thought that it was the only reason which made them watch the mythological show. 30 respondents were unsure that whether lockdown was the reason behind watching show.

8. During lockdown 'Ramayana' was aired twice a day i.e 9:00 AM & 9:00 PM. Out of 143 total respondents surveyed 109 accepted the fact that they watched it during the prime time where the nationwide WFH could be a reason that they had no other possible time to watch. While 34 accepted that they watched the show during the morning hours
9. Ramayana have been made by many directors over years. With time there have been many changes that the audiences have witnessed. As per the survey the researcher found that the presentation and Acting in Ramanand Sagar is what distinguishes it from the others.
10. The character of Lord Rama played by Arun Govil was one of the most iconic character. In one of his interviews to a leading daily he stated that - audience can't see me beyond Ram" (timesofindia.indiatimes.com). As per the survey the character of Ram was liked the most followed by the character of Hanuman played by Late . Dara Singh.
11. Neither the audience nor the tv daily soap makers had many choices of creativity in the lockdown. All the shoots were stopped because of covid19 guidelines. A tweet by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry ***"Happy to announce that on public demand, we are starting retecast of "Ramayana" from tomorrow, Saturday March 28 in DD National, one episode in morning 9 am to 10 am, another in the evening 9 pm to 10 pm"*** gave hope and positivity to the audience. There was nostalgia among people who have seen the mythological show before and the new generation was curious to binge watch the program. The researcher wanted to know if the audience watched all the programs retecasted in Doordarshan to which 66 respondents have said yes that they have watched other shows telecasted on doordarshan while 69 respondents opted for No
12. The retecast of Ramanand Sagar turned out to be a great success and soon the other entertainment channels also started retelecasting their past hits, for instance Zee TV retecasted "Kumkum Bhagya", Ram Kapoor's "Kasam Se". Popular entertainment channel Colors retecast its popular show Balika Vadhu. As per the study it was found that out of 146 respondents only 36 respondents watched the retecast of shows aired in commercial tv channels while 99 did not.
13. In the year 1989 when Ramayana was first aired it attracted the heat from public as by the middle of 1989, the Ayodhya movement had 'reached a state and status in Indian public life. It was called as a political agenda of BJP by the ruling government. The retecast of the show again attracted many eyes as the opposition and public claimed that it's the strategy of government to divert the audience from the increasing number of covid19 cases in India (Singh,S first post.com). out of 146 respondents 47 felt that there was a political angle in the retecast of the show.
14. Out of 146 respondents 43+ respondents said that the retecast helped them in spending time with family while 20 respondents felt that the Ramanand Sagar's Ramayana helped them in understanding Ramayana in a better way.

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