

## Is the concept of reality shows good or bad?

The times are a-changing and the buzzword today is reality shows. In reality shows, contestants are placed in a “reality” they would not normally find themselves in. Indian Television is flooded with a whole host of reality shows, most of which are some sort of competition or be it singing, dancing, or task oriented programs. But how far is this concept in harmony with the Indian moral and social values? I think the content of today’s reality shows itself tells the whole story. Most of the reality shows have the same ideas; if it is a singing contest you can find a singing contest nearly on all the channels under different names, the same goes with dance programs. Of late the latest trend seems to be to put the contestants in difficult situations such as jungles or far off rural villages and then get them to do tasks. The reality of these reality shows is controlled and manipulated by television executives who make money by getting people to watch their show after carefully picking the contestants for it. That both the selection of contestants and the situation these contestants find themselves in are controlled by someone else indicates that reality television hardly reflects reality. By looking at the point or plot of these shows, it becomes even clearer that reality television is a genre and not a description. “Iss Jungle Se Mujhe bachao”, for example, was one of the longest running and most popular reality television shows. In this show, a number of people are stuck in a jungle. This is a situation a few people may find themselves in. The show does, however, take its contestants from the pool of celebrities existing and then tasks and contests are carried out where people are voted out and this is clearly done to create tensions within the group to add drama to the television show. By encouraging conflicts, the show differs from what a normal group of survivors would do. More likely than not, they would value the prevention of conflicts. On “Iss Jungle Se Mujhe bachao”, however, feelings are manipulated both by voting habits, by messages from people back home and by rewarding and punishing the different people and groups in the jungle. Since the show is controlled and manipulated, it cannot be referred to as reality. Big Boss is another of the more popular reality shows. In this show, a number of contestants are stuck in a house. Except for the few people who are unfortunate enough to be locked in a house against their will, this is not even close to being realistic. If people did happen to be stuck in a house for whatever reason, the behaviour would probably differ sharply from what is seen in any of the Big Boss houses around the world. For one, while people do say that they forget the cameras after a while, it is probably a little naive to think that they actually forget them completely. The presence of a camera will in many – but not necessarily all – instances make people change their behaviour. Big Boss also manipulates people into doing things they would probably never do in real life. Dolly Bindra, Rakhi Sawant, Rahul Mahajan proved to be deviating from a normal behaviour thus creating a suspicion about the originality of their actions. If this is correct, it would be a reason to conclude that the show does not reflect reality. Moreover such shows are not good for psychological development of youth. What are we trying to teach our youth through the *programmes like* “MTV Herohonda Roadies, chanel V’s Axe ur ex, Mtv Splitsvilla? Are we trying to say that it’s fair to say that you have to do anything to get ahead? That we must not trust anyone and rather always watch our back? Is it fair to create all this controversy for the sake of TRP’s? Why *can’t* we find something more wholesome on TV that is humorous and fun filled? Shouldn’t Television be a medium of relaxation?

Whereas on the other hand, some people think they get to know better about other common people or celebrities from different walks of life making it a good time pass because of the wow and surprise factor it carries with itself. It breaks the montage of daily saas-bahu sagas. With the unprecedented success of programmes like Kaun Banega Crorepati on Star Plus and Indian

Idol on Sony & sa re ga ma on zee TV. It has been proven that formats are a huge success in India. It brings in a lot of returns for the producers. Some think that the best thing about a reality show is that it is real, it is interactive: the viewers could decide who would be the winner.

In nutshell, reality shows are a good source of income for entertainment industry at the cost meaningful content for spectators. It creates a feeling of distrust and evilness in the minds of common masses especially youth. "A stitch in time saves nine", so Indian masses better make choices which are for betterment of the nation and not the other way round.