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Research Paper

Impact of Re-telecast of Ramayana and Mahabharata on Doordarshan during lockdown in India

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Introduction

Amidst the scene of a lockdown in India due to the rapid spread of COVID-19, everyone is looking for something interesting to do. Realizing the potential these days in isolation will provide, all OTT platforms have tried to step their games up by increasing the number of movies, TV shows, podcasts, etc in their libraries. It is evident from the emerging trends that as a result of more time in hand, people are turning to digital platforms for entertainment. Netflix, one of the most popular OTT mediums of entertainment saw more than 59 million app downloads in the first quarter of 2020, leaving behind competitors like YouTube, Amazon Prime and Disney+.

With the shutting down of schools and colleges earlier in March this year, people have been urged to work from home. Streaming and network companies have reported a sudden and substantial increase in the number of online gamers, streamers for entertainment and usage of communication channels. With this spike in the internet usage the telecom companies and Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), an industry body, were compelled to request all OTT platforms to

reduce their digital video qualities to standard definition from high and ultra-high definition. This step was taken to reduce the load on network transmission, however this move did not work in the regulators 'favour as the network channels were experiencing loads even before the lockdown. While the reduction in video quality freed up a fair 20-30% bandwidth for usage, it made little, almost no difference as the traffic of usage only increased post the lockdown.

Looking back until 1980s and 90s Doordarshan, the government owned channel, had monopoly over news, entertainment and radio mediums. However, with progressing times and the liberalization of licences for TV, the channel could not keep up with the new content offered by competitive players, various technological advancements and the new demands of the public. Having had to take a back seat in the entertainment industry, Doordarshan had become the State broadcaster. International channels like CNN and STAR TV and private domestic channels like ETV, Sun TV and Zee TV took over the television scenario in India bringing quality content with designated music, news, daily soap, sports, and infotainment channels among others. As time passed the number of channels and programmes being offered kept increasing and diversifying in nature leaving Doordarshan to just be a thing of the past.

Cutting back into 2020, with the implementation of a partial lockdown later turning into a nationwide full-fledged lockdown by mid-March, Doordarshan came up with the idea of appealing to people's nostalgia. The government run channel decided to air RamanandSagar's Ramayan along with other gems from the past like Mahabharat, Shaktiman, Circus, Chanakya, ByomkeshBakshi and Upanishad Ganga. The aim here to capture the audience, provide them with something unique and something they could personally relate to. The results of this experiments are laid down on the table for all to witness. The first four episodes of Ramayan got 170 million people glued to their seats. The opening day for the show (Saturday, March 28) garnered a total of 34 million in the morning slot and 45 million in the evening slot for the show. The second day saw an even better performance of reaching out to 40 million and 51 million people in the morning and evening slots respectively. Ramayan recorded the highest viewership by any show in the Hindi General Entertainment Channel category.

This suit was followed by various other entertainment channels as they also started re-airing old shows to retain their audiences. Various entertainment shows, kids ' programmes, daily sops and reality show programmes have also started re-

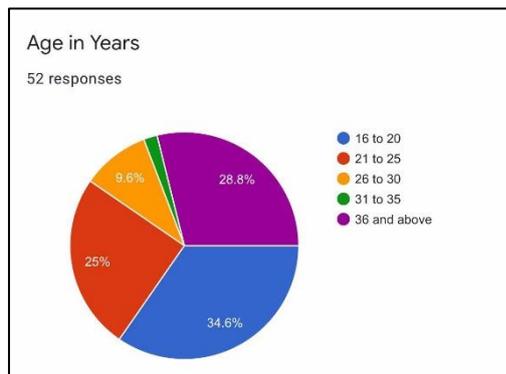
appearing on people’s TV screens. Apart from taking people back in time to appeal to their emotional inclinations, the aim of this consequent domino re-surfacing of various TV programmes may also prove to be a binding agent for the nation, to bring everyone together in these tough times.

Methodology

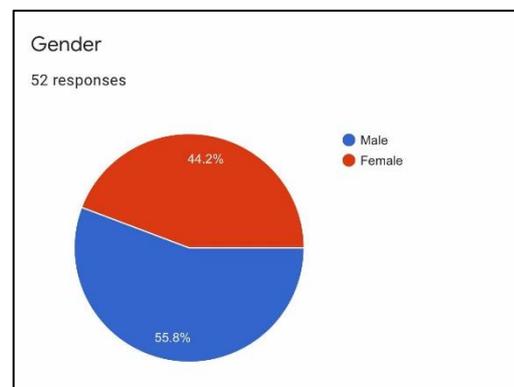
This research basically looks at how well Ramayan and Mahabharat as shows are doing with the audience. It looks at various aspects ranging from age to work profiles to gender.

A Google forms questionnaire of 11 questions was circulated among a random group of 52 people living in urban cities. The form was only available and accepting answers for 48 hours of its circulation. Once all the responses were recorded, an excel sheet was prepared and consequently, pie charts were made relating to and deriving from all the questions answered. The involvement of pie charts also makes the analysis of the recorded data quantitative.

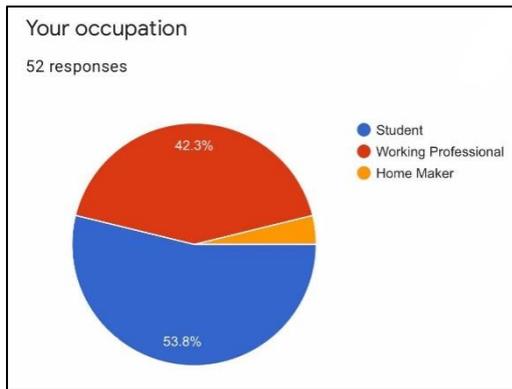
Result and Discussion



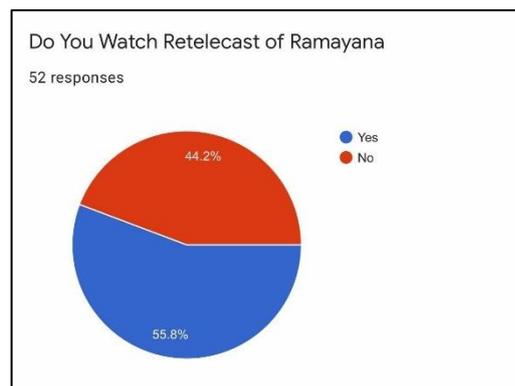
This pie chart shows that the maximum number of people involved in the research belong to the age group of 16-20 years and the least numbers are from 31-35 years of age.



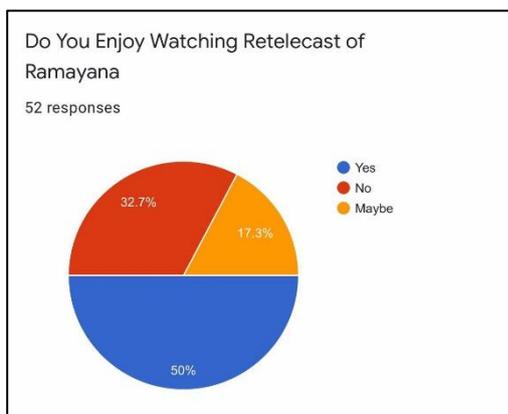
This pie chart evidently shows that off the 52 respondents, 23 are female participants and the remaining 29 are male participants. This results indicate that Ramayana and Mahabharata more watched by male respondents.



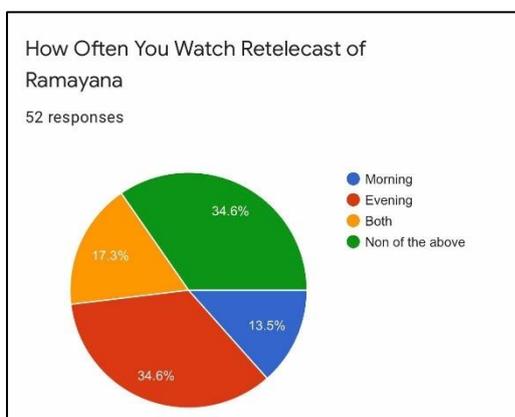
Here we can see that maximum participants being 28 are students. The next highest number of respondents belong to the class of working professionals and 2 of the respondents are home makers. Mixed tendency have shown in this graphs which indicate that students and working professional are watching re-telecasting of both programme.



Out of the 52 respondents 29 agree to watching the re-telecast of the show Ramayan whereas 23 people respondent with a 'no' to the question.

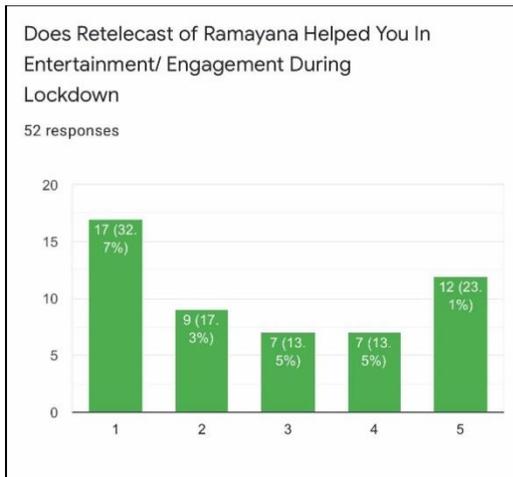


26 respondents from 52 say that they enjoyed watching the re-telecast of the show, Ramayan. Out of the remaining 26, 17 say they don't enjoy watching the re-telecast and 9 responded with a 'maybe'.

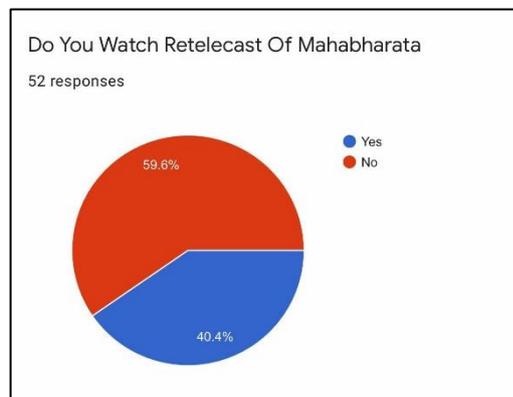


While 9 respondents out of 52 say that they watch both Retelecast of the day for Ramayan, there is a divided population among the people that watch it in the morning and in the evening. Only 7 out of 52 watch the re-telecast in the morning and 18 people watch it in the evening. 18 people also

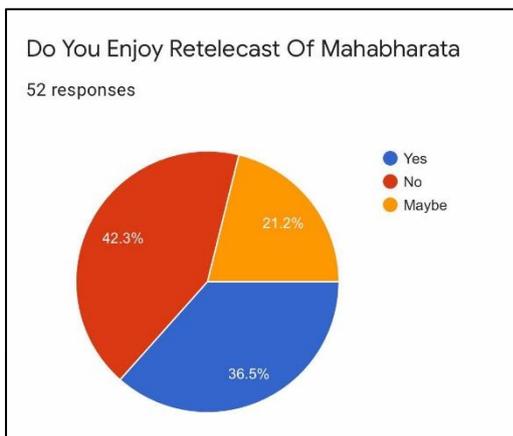
responded with none of the above'.



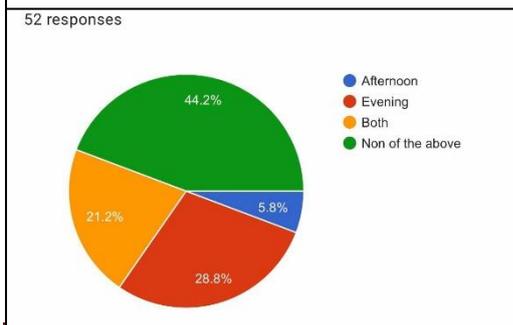
32% does not considered Ramayana entertaining during Lockdown



Out of the 52 respondents 21 agree to watching the re-telecast of the show Ramayan whereas 31 people resopon with a 'no' to the question. It's important to note here that less number of people watch Mahabharata than Ramayan.

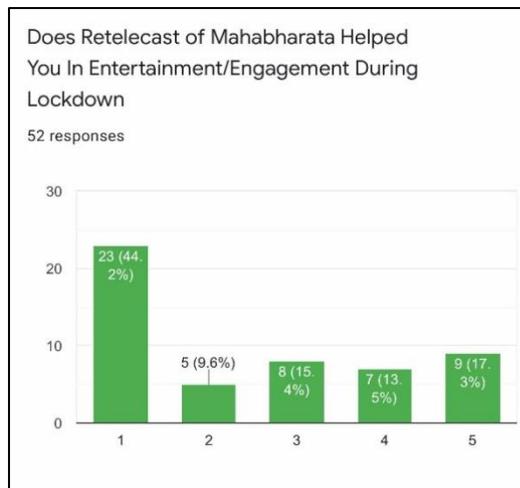


19 respondents from 52 say that they enjoyed watching the re-telecast of the show, Mahabharata. Out of the remaining 33, 22 say they don't enjoy watching the re-telecast and 11 responded with a 'maybe'.



While 11 respondents out of 52 say that they watch both Retelecast of the day for Mahabharata, there is a divided population among the people that watch it in the afternoon and in the evening. Only 3 out of 52

watch the re-telecast in the afternoon and 15 people watch it in the evening. 23 people also responded with 'none of the above'.



44% does not considered Mahabharata entertaining during lockdown. This lockdown period may have affected mental health of the people, therefore, people have the feelings of negativity and created panic situation inside and outside the home.

Conclusion

The research derives that out of the sample size of 52, people definitely enjoy watching Ramayan over watching Mahabharata. After two decades, both epic serials re-telecasted on Doordarshan which has highest reach in India has created a world record recently where in a single day 7.7 crore people have watched globally. People have recollected their childhood memory when Mahabharata and Ramayana were telecasted in the year 1987. Its been unprecedented and overwhelm response both the serials have create new impact on the user.

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