

Api Karim's celebrity talk shows "Amar Ami" on Banglavision.



Farzana Brownia on "Let's Move".

Entertainment is still the prime purpose of television around the world, believes Nawazish Ali Khan, Senior Vice President, Programmes, ATN Bangla. "After that," says Khan, "people are interested in hot topics in the news, politics, etc. But even politics has become glamorous now."

"According to Television Rating Point (TRP), entertainment programmes on television are still at the top," says Khan. "Talk shows have gained some viewership, like 'Meet the Press' on ATN. But they rarely get ratings." Khan recalls a good show aired on ATN in the past on art and literature called "Kotha Bola", "But it didn't do very well," he says. "It really all depends on how big, how glamorous a programme is."

"Right now, because of the upcoming elections, people watch talk shows, etc., because of the excitement, controversy and bickering surrounding the elections," says Khan. "Once the elections are over, I think the popularity of such shows will decline."

Ideally, says Khan, television, especially in developing countries, should be focusing on educational programmes. But we see very little of this, if any. "Even what is shown is sugar-coated," he says. "And so we have film actress Shabnur talking about HIV/AIDS instead of a qualified doctor, because that's who people want to see. It's all about entertainment."

"The main revenue of television channels still comes from dramas," agrees Mustafa Kamal Sayed. "And so, in any given week, more dramas are shown than talk shows or even films."



Children have also found a voice on private television channels.

"Drama as a genre is just the most popular," says Sayed. "Dramas are a part of life and people get more emotionally involved in them than they do with any other programme. Talk shows and other programmes have educational value, but people don't take them to heart or remember them as much."

Shykh Seraj, however, disagrees. "Dramas *used* to be the most popular television programme," he says, "but then came shows like 'Chhayachhondo' -- on film songs -- then magazine programmes." People's tastes have changed over the decades and this is reflected in the television content, says Seraj. Channel i, for example, does not air only entertainment programmes during "prime time".

"The concept of prime time itself has become redundant in today's global age," says Seraj. "Prime time used to be the time between about 6 or 7 in the evening to about 10 at night. But when you're broadcasting 24 hours around the world, what is prime time here is early morning in other countries and vice versa. Thus all the time is prime time and the popularity of shows like 'Tritiyo Matra', broadcast at 1 in the morning and re-telecast at 9 in the morning, is proof of that."

As for advertising sponsors, before, there were only drama and entertainment programmes, says Seraj. Now, other programmes get a share of the ads previously given to the former. "Programmes like news and talk shows have also become entertaining," he says, "which is why ads during the news are the most expensive."