

Children's entertainment – Needs more local, creative content

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Both Abhijit and Sunjida noted that there is no easy way to create good content and that it takes a lot of homework, in the form of pre-production, prior to the actual shooting and the necessary post-production operations.

"A well-researched, well-planned and well-executed production inevitably creates good content. However, producing children's content requires more research and time for execution and therefore it is more costly," added Abhijit.

FACING GLOBAL COMPETITION

In the age of digitalisation, entertainment has also become digitalised. As such, domestically created content now has to compete on the international stage.

The programme producer of Duronto TV mentioned that during the COVID-19 lockdown, children throughout the nation turned to

phones, tablets, computers and other technology for their entertainment needs, as they were stuck at home.

"Online platforms are the future. In this age, every phone, tablet, computer and similar devices are as good as a television," said Abhijit Chowdhury.

"With just a phone or tablet and an internet connection, any child can now watch an endless stream of content from across the world," he said. "Now, our content also needs to compete with global content. As a result, regular TV channels now have OTTs as new competitors."

On the other hand, commenting on the issue, Ezaz Uddin Ahmed shared, "I believe we need an iconic children's show, that will turn around the entire children's entertainment sector. Once such a popular show has been established, audiences and the sponsors will be interested in the sector once more."

Supporting the director of the Duronto TV, Abu Saif Ansari, the

Director of Programme and Business Development, Sesame Workshop, Bangladesh shared his thoughts.

"As a show, 'Sisimpur' focuses on ensuring children have an enjoyable learning experience with entertaining content," he said. "In Bangladesh there is indeed a lack of media content which offers an adequate amount of 'edutainment' for our children."

"However, developing a quality product needs relevant research, effort and time. At the same time, we have to make the content inclusive of all socio-economic backgrounds, religions, genders and race. Which is also a challenge."

In Ansari's own words, the psychology of children is subtly affected by what they watch, usually in terms of behaviour, characteristics, cultural values and morals. "A show like 'Sisimpur' can continue to play a pivotal role in promoting Bangladeshi culture, art, empathy, social well-being and

positive change, among the children of Bangladesh in the long term."

"Thus, the production of such a programme for a diverse society like ours is essential, but also requires extensive resources," he added.

Ansari also shared his thoughts concerning the business prospect of children's entertainment in Bangladesh.

"There is a massive opportunity here. Marketers can be more creative and responsible in this aspect," he said. "The

children might not be the target audience, but their parents are. When it comes to ensuring a safe entertaining and learning experience for their children, parents will surely be interested, considering the limited options around."

While the picture painted might seem bleak, it is also important for us to take it as a call to action for artistes, producers, directors, content creators, and others to come forward and take this industry to newer, more positive heights.

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"The foreign cartoons or shows are made keeping the culture and traditions of that country in mind. Many of our children speak Hindi better than Bengali, due to easy access to the internet" - Abhijit Chowdhury, the Director of Duronto TV

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