

“A Study on Radio Show Yaadon Ka Idiot Box”*Nitesh Tripathi**Junior Research Fellow**Department of Journalism and Mass Communication**Faculty of Arts, Banaras Hindu University***Abstract**

Storytelling has always been an integral part of Indian tradition. There was a time when All India Radio had audio dramas, and narrations that had dedicated listeners. However, with advent of private radio channels the trend faded and narrating stories was a thing of the past. Though there was overflow of content, new programs and technology but still the magic of storytelling was missing. But all this changed with Yaadon Ka Idiot Box, a radio show by Neelesh Misra – a journalist-turned-lyric writer who began his radio show on Big FM 92.7. Such was the success of the show that it continued for 8 seasons. Even though Nilesh Misra moved to Red FM 93.5 with show named ‘The Neelesh Misra Show’ having same concept, it was still a huge success. The purpose of the study is to find out how the show managed to captivate the audience for such a long duration in an era where attention span of radio listeners is limited and how it kept the audience hooked for so many years.

Keywords- Yaadon ka Idiot Box, Storytelling, Radio

Introduction

The radio industry grew by an estimated 14.51% in 2016 to reach INR 22.67 billion and enjoyed a steady CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) (2012-16) of 14.54% which is more than television, print media or films. With an expected CAGR (2017- 2021) of 16.07%, the radio industry looks to double in size by the end of 2021 driven by growth in advertisers and audiences. The presence of radio stations such as Red FM, Radio Mirchi, Big FM, City FM, Hit FM, Big FM, etc. along with the high number of listenership in the country are the key reasons for this flourishing growth. Further, the adoption of FM Radio channels for advertisement and brand promotion, government campaigning etc. has enhanced the revenue of the players in the area. Smaller cities continue to perform better, driven by volume enhancements, as advertisers shift focus from nationwide pure brand building to more tactical, local, focused promotional targeting. The key to radio’s growth has been a combination of localized reach and affordable pricing which will be further enhanced with the 66 stations allotted in the second batch of Phase III auctions. But with constraints like- not broadcasting news, radio channels need to think out of the box to get space into consumer mind.

To overcome this they have resorted to original content, local affairs, focusing on specific genres like ‘retro’ or ‘love’ to carve out a niche and thereby maintain audience loyalty. While

contemporary Bollywood has remained popular genre, there are various genres and sub genres emerging with retro. One of them being the format of radio show ‘Binaca Geet Mala’ which is one of the most copied format in radio history. Most players, especially large networks have tried to distinguish themselves through innovative programming and content differentiation which has attracted advertisers. With ongoing phase III auctions, the situation is going to be only tenser. Among the private operators 92.7 Big FM adopted the retro strategy early and built multiple programming around this theme. One of its innovations was Yaadon ka Idiot Box which was an amalgam of storytelling and nostalgia. This show went on to become one of the most successful radio show of all times.

Yaadon ka Idiot Box was a radio show that broadcasted every night in 35 cities across India and listeners as young as 13 and as old as their grandparents huddled together to listen to this storytelling show on 92.7 BIG FM. Then listeners from across 19 countries tuned in and heard the gripping stories on Facebook. Yaadon ka Idiot Box had captured millions of audience with its storytelling and hence a need arises to find out the factor which led the show to win such a loyal fan base. Although his show was rather unusual when it was launched, he soon won a loyal fan following. There were times when people planned their commutes according to his show and entire communities gathered in the parking lot to listen to the radio, and hostels changed their mess timings to suit his show. The show had won multiple accolades including the Indian Radio Forum 2012 award for best Hindi Show broadcast after 11 AM & Radio Mikes 2011’s - most unique programming idea.¹

The show took people down memory lane through the best inter-twining of story with music. It had garnered huge tune-ins and was a hit amongst college students. The show took listeners through a one hour ‘theatre of the mind’ experience Monday to Friday, 9:00 PM and 3 PM to 6 PMon Sundays. Neelesh Misra, an award-winning former journalist and lyric writer of several huge Bollywood hits, author of four books and a scriptwriter was the voice of this show. The cornerstone of the show was that Neelesh Misra beautifully created an astounding experience behind every story to keep listeners glued into radio & triggered their imagination beyond boundaries. The host engaged the audience with heart touching stories about people and their lives built in the context of Yaad Sheher. These stories were interspersed with songs and music making the entire package irresistible to the listeners. The name ‘Yadoon Ka Idiot Box’ comes from the song of the same title from an album called ‘Rewind’ by Band called ‘Nine’ which Neelesh heads.

Each of the stories had connected with listeners on an intimate, personal level – these stories seemed to them like their own stories, of people from their own lives, from their own nostalgia. The unique style of story delivery, packaged with the seamless music fit, had fans from across

1- FICCI- KPMG Report 2014, 2017

age groups getting drawn to the show and coming back each evening for their daily dose of nostalgia. The show had the following mix of audiences:

- 52 % of the listeners were from the age group of 18-24 years.²
- 33% of listeners were from the 25-34 age brackets.
- The youngest listener of the show was as young as 13 years and the oldest listener was 55 + years
- The age group of 13 – 17 years was also one of the main listeners.
- In Season 1, it had 3 crore listeners every day. Also it had 5.5 million page views in just three months for the stories uploaded on Facebook between January - April 2010.³

The success of Yaadon ka Idiot Box led way to other non- music radio shows that are gaining popularity. ‘Kya Who Sach Tha’ by Fever FM, A 20-episode horror series inspired by several real life stories was aired with a new story for every episode. The show revolves around a fictional character, Dr. Nagar, a parapsychologist who narrates experiences from his daily life. Another example is ‘Friends in a Metro’ which is a series based on the lives of five individuals from distinct walks of life, brought together by circumstances which lead them to develop a wonderful bond of friendship.

This study will help us to find out extent of success of the show and also the reasons behind it. It is a fact that people have shorter attention span; still they liked the show even though it was longer than usual programs.

Objectives

- To study how people access radio channels and with what frequency do they listen to them.
- To study the demography of the audience of Yaadon ka Idiot Box.
- To study the extent of popularity of Yaadon ka Idiot Box amongst students.
- To study the factors/dimensions which are USP (Unique Selling Proposition) of the show
- To study the elements that makes Yaadon ka Idiot Box popular.

Research Methodology

For the purpose of study, Survey method was used. The geographical area chosen for the study was campus of Makhanlal Chaturvedi University, Bhopal. The sample size for the study was 99. The age of the respondents varied from 17 to 28 years. The basis for selection of respondents was- Students who were fond of listening to radio show Yaadon ka Idiot Box. The students of

2- <http://www.afaqs.com>

3- <https://dumkhum.com>

various departments of the university were taken as sample. Following were the departments from where sample was taken-

- Department of Electronic Media.
- Department of Computer Science and Applications.
- Department of Journalism.
- Department of Management.
- Department of Mass Communication.
- Department of New Media Technology.
- Department of Public Relations and Advertising Studies.
- Department of Communication Research.

The sample for primary data was selected by Purposive sampling technique. Each respondent was approached personally and was requested to fill up the questionnaire. Respondents were given the liberty to take their time for completing their questionnaires. Later the data collected was fed on SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and then analysis of tables was done to draw out conclusions regarding the study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

According to the objectives of the study, the data was collected and later analyzed. Following were the results-

Table 1- Showing Demography of the respondents

S.No	Demographic variables		
	Age(in years)	Frequency	Percentage
1	17-20	29	29.3
2	21-25	60	60.6
3	26 and above	10	10.1
Gender			
1	Male	37	37.4
2	Female	62	62.6
Educational Qualification			
1	Graduate	47	47.5
2	Post Graduate	46	46.5
3	M Phil	6	6.1

Table 1 represents the demographic data of the respondents. 60.6% respondents were from the age group 21-25 years. 29.3% respondents were from the age group 17- 20 years. And the rest 10.1% were from age group 26 and above. If we consider gender, 37.4% respondents were males and rest 62.6% were females. In the study, there were 47.5% graduates, 46.5% post graduates and 6.1% M Phil students.

Table 2- Showing Elements of preference for listening

S.No	Elements	Frequency	Percentage
1	Storyline	40	40.4
2	Sound effects	13	13.1
3	Virtual visualization	20	20.2
4	Characters	9	9.1
5	Voice of Nilesh Misra	56	56.6
6	Vivid description	13	13.1
7	Stories related to common life experience	31	31.3
8	Humor	6	6.1
9	Emotional quotient	12	12.1
10	Reminder of childhood memories	14	14.1
11	Unfamiliar songs that are played	11	11.1
12	Others	1	1.0

Table 2 represents elements that keep the audience hooked to the show Yaadon ka Idiot Box. 56.6% respondents said that they listened to Yaadon ka Idiot Box because of voice of Nilesh Misra and 40.4% due to storyline. Only 13.1% respondents listened to the show because of sound effects and 20.2% listened because of virtual visualization. 9.1% respondents said that they liked the characters of the story. 13.1% liked the vivid description while 31.3% found stories appealing as they were related to common life experience. Only 6.1% respondents listened to the show because of humor, 12.1% because of emotional quotient and 14.1% respondents found stories reminding them of their childhood. Merely 11.1% respondents listened to Yaadon ka Idiot Box because of songs that are played in between the show

Table 3- Showing Responses to questions

Respondents listening to Radio	Yes	No
Frequency	95	4
Percentage	96.0	4.0
Respondents listening to Radio actively or passively	Actively	Passively
Frequency	51	48
Percentage	51.5	48.5
Respondents listening to Big 92.7 FM	Yes	No
Frequency	85	14
Percentage	85.9	14.1
Respondents listening to the show Yaadon ka Idiot Box by Nilesh Misra	Yes	No
Frequency	79	20
Percentage	79.8	20.2

Table 3 represents responses to questions that respondents were asked to answer. 96% respondents were listening to radio and out of that 51.5% respondents listened to the radio actively while 48.5% listened passively. On being asked as to who listens to radio channel Big 92.7 FM, 85.9% respondents affirmed while 14.1% negated it. On further query about those who listen to the show Yaadon ka Idiot box on Big 92.7 FM 79.8% agreed while 20.2% said that they don't listen to the show.

Table 4 Showing Places where audience is most likely to listen to the radio

Places where respondents are most likely to listen to Radio	At home	Outside (while walking or driving)	At work or college
Frequency	48	47	4
Percentage	48.5	47.5	4.0

Table 4 shows the data on places where audience is most likely to listen to radio. 48.5% respondents replied that they listened to the radio at home another 47.5% replied that they listened to the radio outside i.e. while walking or driving. Rest 4% replied that they listened to the radio at either work or college.

Table 5 Showing Medium of accessing a radio channel

Medium	Frequency	Percent
Radio set	22	22.2
Online	8	8.1
Television	3	3.0
Mobile	53	53.5
Radio set fitted in cars, buses, on streets	13	13.1

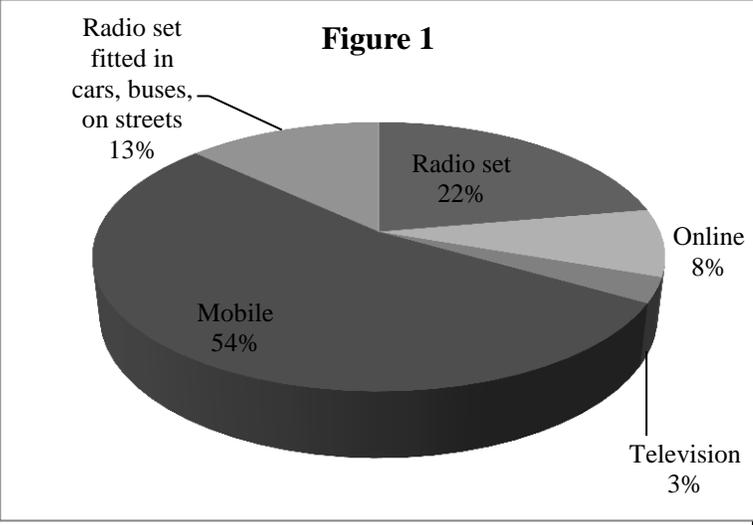


Figure 1

Radio set fitted in cars, buses, on streets 13%

Radio set 22%

Online 8%

Mobile 54%

Television 3%

Figure 1 represents medium of accessing a radio channel. Mobile as a medium is the most preferred medium (53.5%) followed by radio set (22.2%). While television (3.0%) is the least preferred medium to access radio channels, only a few respondents preferred online radio (8.1%) and 13.1% listened to the radio fitted in cars, buses or on streets.

Table 6 Showing Frequency of listening to radio in a day

Duration	Frequency	Percent
1 to 30 min	62	62.6
31- 60 min	23	23.2
1 to 2 hour	8	8.1
2 hours and more	6	6.1

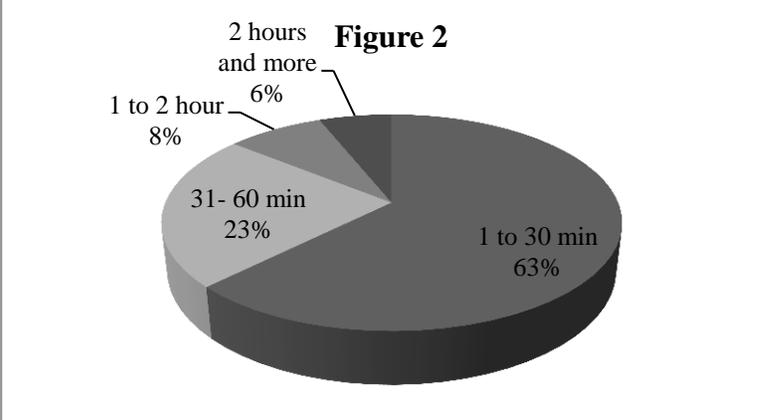


Figure 2

2 hours and more 6%

1 to 2 hour 8%

31- 60 min 23%

1 to 30 min 63%

Figure 2 represents frequency of listening to radio in a day. Most respondents said that they listened to radio for duration of 1minutes to 30 minutes (62.6%). While only few respondents agreed to listening to radio for 2 or more than 2 hours (6.1%). 23.2% respondents listened to the radio for a duration of 31-60 minutes and 8.1% listened to the radio for duration of 1 to 2 hours.

Table 7 Showing frequency of listening to radio in a month

Duration	Frequency	Percent
Daily	32	32.3
Once in a week	18	18.2
Twice a week	15	15.2
Thrice a week	15	15.2
Rarely	19	19.2

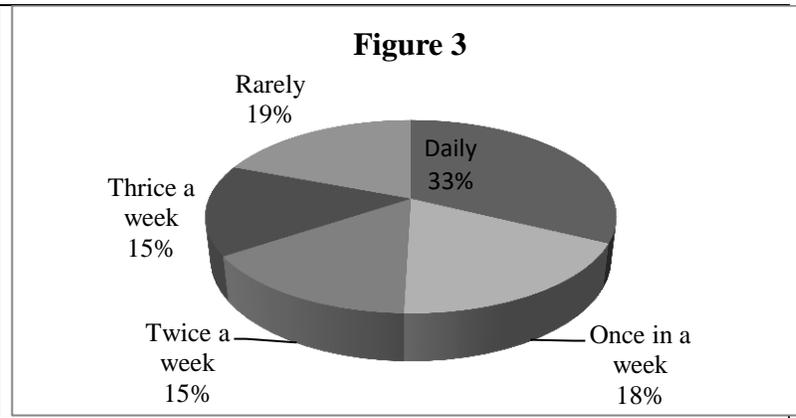


Figure 3 represents frequency of listening to radio in a month. 32.3% respondents listened to the radio daily and 18.2% respondents listened to the radio once in a week. 15.2% listened to the radio twice a week and another 15.2% listened thrice a week. Only 19.2% respondents said that they listened to the radio rarely.

Table 8 showing programs audience listen to on the Big 92.7 FM

Programs	Frequency	Percent
Yaadon ka Idiot Box by Nilesh Misra	73	73.7
Top 100 gaane	18	18.2
Seher with Kamini Khanna	1	1.0
Bhopal ke Patiye	2	2.0
Others	5	5.1

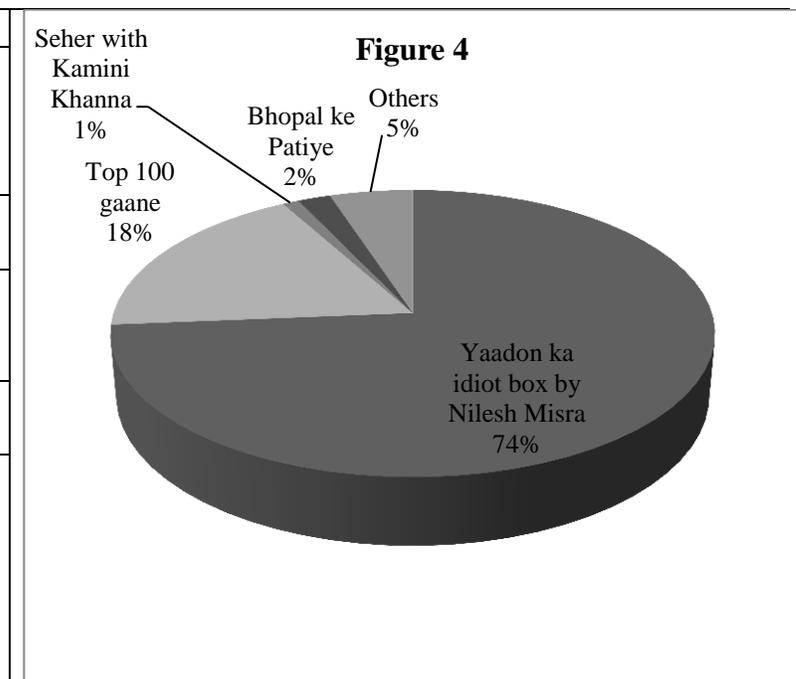


Figure 4 shows programs audience listen to on the Big 92.7 FM. 73.7% respondents listened to the show Yaadon ka Idiot Box and only 1.0% listened to the show Seher with Kamini Khanna. Top 100 gaane was listened by 18.2% and 2.0% listen to the show Bhopal ke Patiye. Rest 5.1% listened to the other shows broadcasted on Big 92.7 FM.

Table 9 Showing Frequency of listening to the show Yaadon ka Idiot Box

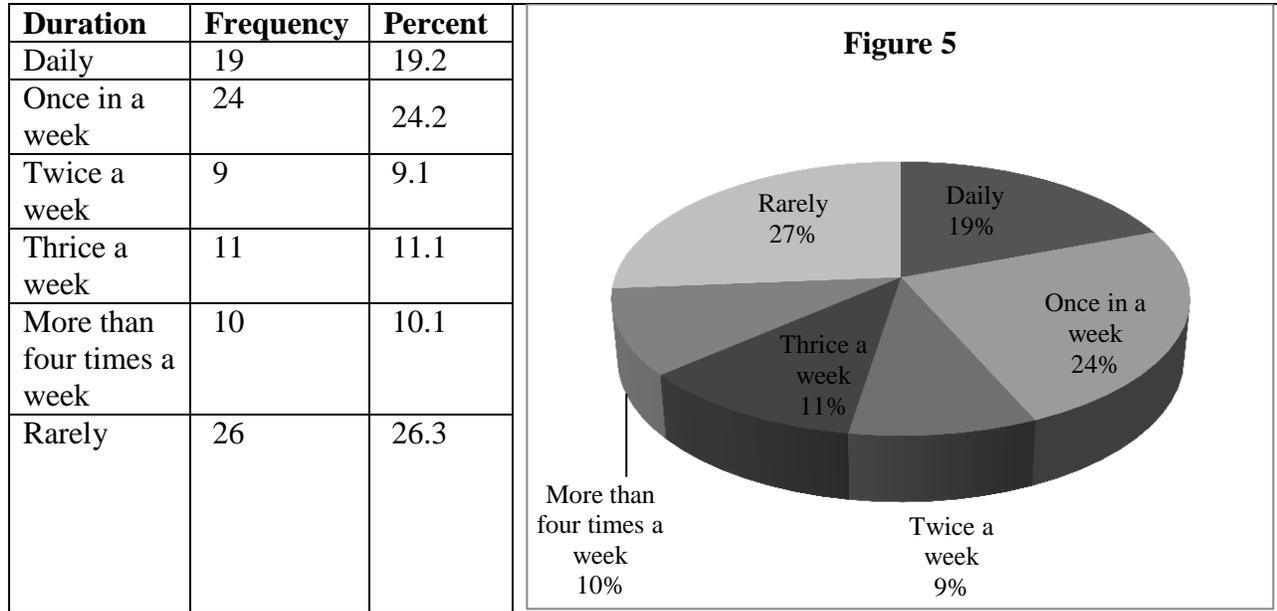


Figure 5 shows frequency of listening to the show Yaadon ka Idiot Box. 19.2% respondents listened to the show daily and 24.2% listened once in a week. 11.1% respondents listened to the show thrice a week and 9.1% listened twice a week. Those respondents who listened to the show more than 4 times a week were 10.1% in percentage and 26.3% respondents listened to the show rarely

Table 10 showing feelings of respondents after watching Yaadon ka Idiot Box

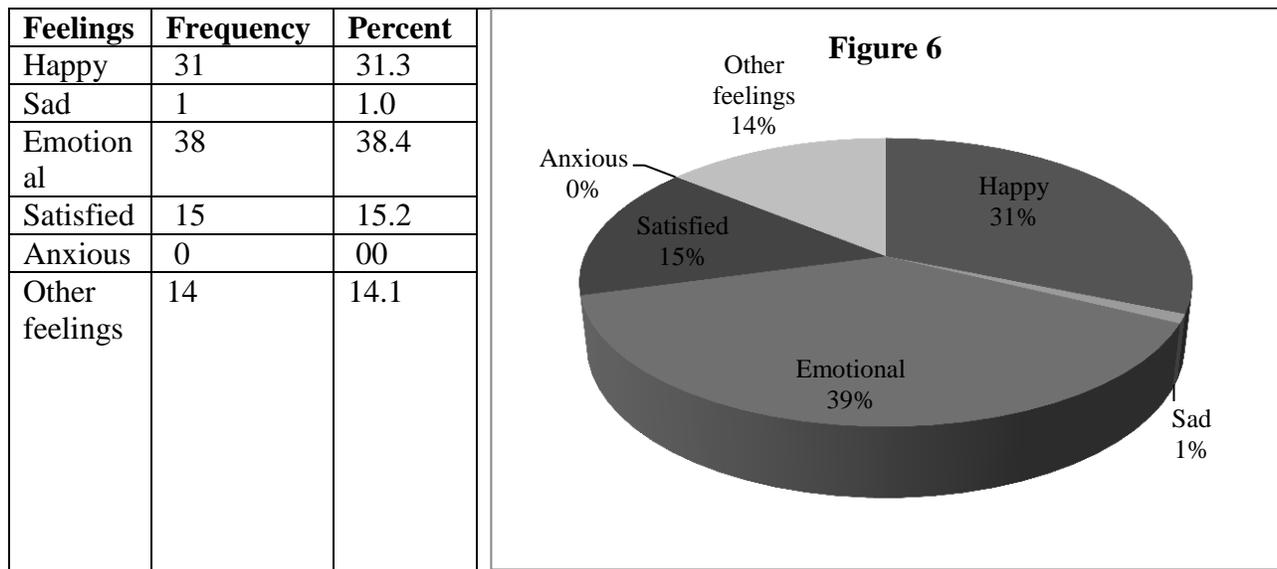


Figure 6 shows feelings of respondents after watching Yaadon ka Idiot Box. A large chunk of respondents were emotional (38.4%) while another chunk was happy (31.3%) after watching the show. 15.2% respondents were satisfied and 14.1% respondents felt other feelings like nostalgic. None of the respondents felt anxious after watching the show.

Table 11 Showing Elements that annoy the listeners of the show

Elements	Frequency	Percent
Advertisements	65	65.7
Songs	14	14.1
Sound Effects	9	9.1
Theme song being played repeatedly	11	11.1

Figure 7

Element	Percent
Advertisements	66%
Songs	14%
Theme song played repeatedly	11%
Sound Effects	9%

Figure 7 shows the elements that annoy the respondents of the show. 65.7% found the advertisements pesky broadcasted during the show. 14.1% were irritated by the songs and another 9.1% didn't like the sound effects. 11.1% respondents didn't like the theme song that was being played repeatedly.

Table 12 Showing Seasons of Yaadon Ka Idiot Box that respondents listened to

Season	Frequency	Percent
Season 1	44	44.4
Season 2	18	18.2
Season 3	14	14.1
Season 4	23	23.2

Figure 8

Season	Percent
Season 1	45%
Season 4	23%
Season 2	18%
Season 3	14%

Figure 8 shows the Seasons of Yaadon Ka Idiot Box that respondents listened to. 44.4% respondents listened to the Season 1 and 23.2% listened to the Season 4. Only 18.2% had listened to Season 2 and 14.1% listened to Season 3 of the show.

Table 13 Showing writers which respondents liked the most

Name of writers	Frequency	Percent
Anulata Raj Nair	10	10.1
Akbar Quadri	16	16.2
Kanchan Pant	6	6.1
Robin Kumar Singh	6	6.1
Anu Singh Chowdhary	6	6.1
Pankaj Mishra	45	45.5
Others	10	10.1

Figure 9

Writer	Percentage
Pankaj Mishra	46%
Akbar Quadri	16%
Anulata Raj Nair	10%
Others	10%
Kanchan Pant	6%
Robin Kumar Singh	6%
Anu Singh Chowdhary	6%

Figure 9 is showing writers which respondents liked the most. 45.5% liked Pankaj Mishra 16.2% liked Akbar Qadri, 10.1% liked Anulata Raj Nair, 6.1% liked Kanchan Pant, 6.1% liked Robin Kumar Singh, 6.1% liked Anu Singh Chowdhary and rest 10.1% liked other writers.

Findings of the Study

The study focused mainly on two areas- First was to find out the demography of radio listeners and second to study the extent of popularity of Yaadon ka Idiot Box among students and also the elements that make it so appealing. The study gave following insights-

- Almost all the respondents agreed that they listened to the radio. But half of the respondents were those who didn't listen to the radio actively. Most of the respondents who listened to the show were surprisingly female. Almost half of the respondents agreed that they listened to the radio at home and another half said that they listen to the radio outside. Most respondents had accessed the radio channels through mobile phone while surprisingly there were few takers for radio set which is the original medium of radio. Although listening to radio channels on television is a unique idea but still there were few who did that.
- A majority of respondents said that they listened to the radio for duration of 30 minutes or less which shows that students have less attention span when it comes to radio. On weekly basis most respondents said that they listened to the radio either once, twice or thrice a week which again proves the statement.
- A large chunk of respondents agreed that they listened to Big 92.7 FM which shows the popularity of the radio channel. Shows like Top 100 Gaane, Seher with Kamini Khanna

and Bhopal ke Patiye are not much popular in comparison to Yaadon ka Idiot Box. A few respondents also stated that they listened to Suhana Safar with Annu Kapoor apart from the shows mentioned in the options. Although a majority of respondents agreed that they had tuned into Big 92.7 FM just to listen Yaadon ka Idiot Box but only a few respondents listened to the show Yaadon ka Idiot Box daily.

- A majority of respondents listened to the show either once, twice or thrice a week. Almost half of the respondents said that had listened to Season 1 of the show while there were few takers for Season 2 and Season 3. Majority of the respondents liked the stories by Pankaj Mishra. A few of the respondents mentioned names of Arvind Sharma and Sidney Sheldon in the option of 'others'. Sabzi Wali Chachi, Pati Fauj Mai, Jeena Isi Ka Naam Hai, Vo Ek Raat and Kissa Ajnabi Ka were some of the stories that were liked by the respondents.
- Most of the respondents either felt happy or emotional after listening to the show. A few respondents felt nostalgic after listening to the show. A majority of the respondents said that they liked the voice of Nilesh Misra and also the storyline. Only a few respondents liked the sound effects, character portrayal or the humor presented on the show. Although the show is liked very much but still lots of respondents felt that advertisements in the show ruined their experience. Advertisements of brand like Otrivin don't fit into the story of the show and distracts the listeners.

Conclusion and Discussion

In the absence of multiple genres of music or talk radio, Radio stations need to learn to innovate and try and re-invent their station. Initiatives should be taken to go beyond music and RJ programming to create differentiation. With FM Phase III rolling out, the number of stations would multiply and the need for programming differentiation would accentuate and hence there is urgent need for exploring new areas. The study on show of Yaadon ka Idiot Box shows that originality in content always attracts people and so does the style of storytelling. The limitations of narration without video have been proved a myth again. The idea of providing nostalgia through stories made the show an instant hit. And future programming can be done by keeping in mind factors like detailing, sound research and uniqueness of the program. Also from the show one major conclusion that can be drawn is that the voice of Radio Jockey matters the most. This is the reason that only few RJs have managed to create a loyal fan base. The list includes RJ Malishka RJ Mantra, RJ Naved who with their unique voice have developed their own fan following. The popularity of the show proves the saying in media that 'Content is the king'. With just help of the originality of the stories and his voice, Nilesh Misra captured audience's mind. Unlike radio dramas, he did it without any requirement of other voice artists. Another step that can be taken to increase audience base is by increasing the social media presence. Thanks to convergence, it is now possible to watch or listen to your favorite programs in case you missed it. So an audio file of programs should be uploaded as soon as possible on website so that listeners can get access to the content online.

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