



MY TWO CENTS ON TV DVR, DRAMA SERIAL AND AD

- Abu Abdullah

Introduction:

First, let me give my audience a disclaimer. I was in Dhaka for about three weeks during the month of July. If I think about it now, it surprises me that, I did not watch TV for a single minute during that three weeks trip. Having said that, I subscribe to four Bangladeshi TV channels for USD \$32.99 per month, in my Portland home in USA. The channels that I have are RTV, NTV, ATN, Channel I.

box with programmable digital recorder. You can program the DVR for certain time slot of a channel. In USA, I subscribe to America's top 100 digital channels. The service provider gave me a set top box which has DVR and programming guide in that box. For USA channels, I look at the channel guide and select the program that would be aired next day or scheduled weekly. The DVR will trigger when the program is on and

include the 4 hour window of programming and the starting time of cycle that it starts. If that cycle is during the daytime of Dhaka, that will work better for me. Now, going back to the TV programming. My DVR allow me to simultaneously record 2 channels at the same time as I have 2 rooms DVR; however, you can get 4-6 room DVR, which will allow you to record 4-6 shows at the same time. I programmed my DVR



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to record NTV and Channel I from 5 AM to 9:00AM PST. For RTV and ATN, the recording starts 1:00 AM PST for the next 4 hours. That actually leaves all the primetime of my USA shows without any conflict of Bangla channels and worked out pretty well for my

For about a week, I started to record 3-4 hours of programming of each channels. That brings a total of 12 to 16 hours of deshi television to watch each day. How on earth I could possibly watch that many hours of TV programming after a day of full time job? The answer is the advantage of digital video recording or DVR. Although in USA, one study shows that in average Americans are watching 5 hours of television everyday; I personally watch average an hour or two. Watching Bangladeshi TV programs gave me some perspective on the corporate responsibilities of the media moguls and their business partners with the context of TV programming and Ad sponsors.

keep a copy for me in the hard drive. For Bangladeshi channels the guide does not get updated and there is no programming information available; hence we have to guess or select a time window to record those programs. This enables us to watch the shows at our convenience.

schedule. There was a time in my life, when I watched a lots of nonfictions, drama, thriller and action based programs, be it a soap, cinema or documentary; but now a day, I watch most of the comedy as pastime activity. That brings me to shows like, Friends, Office or "Everybody loves Raymond" or "Will and Grace" and Seinfeld. Let me refresh your memory about these shows.

Bangladesh TV Serial/Drama/Soap:

From my west coast home, which falls under Pacific Standard Time zone (PT), Bangladesh is 11 hours ahead of me. For example, 6 PM in Dhaka is 5 AM in Portland, Oregon. So if I could start recording 4 hours of prime time TV show from 5 AM to 9 AM, which is 6 PM to 10 PM of Dhaka's time, than I get almost all the popular shows and news covered. One of my friend suggested that most of the TV channels repeat 4 hours of programming through out 24 hours a day. I must acknowledge that, without any verification, I took my friends word for that.

Friends: It is a show of six friends in the "city"; "City "is known to be New York City through out the world. This soap captures all the nuisance of city living, living single, and living together, all the natty gritty details of dating and above all friendship.

What is DRV:

DVR is simply a recorder, like you video recorder; but digital. Being digital, it has the advantage of scanning frame by frame video. The major hardware is the HDD or the digital hard drive. You have one in your computer. DVR is a TV set top

Readers, please email me if you find it otherwise. In the email, please

Everybody Loves Raymond: It is a day to day story of two brothers and their parents. Raymond the younger brother is married and has 2 children. He with his wife Debra and the children moved into a house near his parents' house. Raymond's mother loves Raymond more than the elder



son Robin and hence the jealousy between the brothers. This is a funny family pass time show.

Office: This show is a primetime hit with its eccentric mockery of corporate culture in a small branch office. To spice things up, it introduces some affectionate love affair between colleagues and even subordinate and superior.

Last week, I saw two shows in one of the Bangladeshi TV channel, which are true copy of "Friends" and "Office". Although, I believe that any culture can get enriched if it embraces other culture. In the embracing process two cultures may get integrated, adapted and molded into one living culture. This living culture over the time evolves into a living manifesto of people that it represented. However, the process is not that simple. To me the show made me feel uncomfortable; sort of a feeling of "not getting alone". May be I am not culturally savvy enough. However, present day TV culture is definitely not the culture of Bangladesh that I knew of. Undoubtedly, Bangladesh has some unique culture that we feel good about. We should practice, portray and nurture that culture so that it could thrive. We could expose those cultures and bring the best out of it so that it could expand our identity to the greater good. If you look at any drama serial, almost all of them fall under one simple structure. There will be cell phone conversation for 50-80% of the episode. By doing this the director kills two birds with one bullet. Cell phone conversation is solo and cheap to shot. This makes his boss happy with respect to cost. Moreover it brings the Ad money from the Cell phone industry. It is hard to imagine how much dispensable money Cell phone operators have still today. If you follow any TV channel any given day, almost all the program runs by their money. I don't blame them. Think about it, If you fund a program, don't you expect that the program serves your interest? It is not healthy for an industry to 100% dependent on one industry; unfortunately in Bangladesh this is the fact.

Bangladeshi TV Ad:

This brings me to my second topic of this article, Ad. I know the Ad industry's sole purpose to bring the Ad to your attention and introduce the product. Hence you will be interested on the product the Ad is representing. Ultimately sales will flow through the roof. The Ad I am about to mention at least attract my 100% attention.

Ad 1: A family is watching TV and the TV died, they put a fan behind it,



slap few time; but still no picture. Then every body pitched in to buy a new TV, which fall short of 2000 Taka. Family chief put the dead TV to "Cell Bazaar" and claimed "just to fix the Knob and it will be fine". Notice that by cooling and slapping they could not bring the TV to live. Is that our culture? May be today! What kind of moral value we are feeding?

Ad 2: This Ad portrays pure form of begging. To make things even worse, the begging comes from a little kid. The little boy named "Shipu". The boy friend of his elder sister came to visit and this boy sending all kind of massage to get 3 Taka. Finally he reaches the guest in absence of her sister and asks for 3 Taka. Sure Bangladesh once leveled as "Bottomless Basket" and "Miskin" in middle-east. And now we are proudly practicing it over free media. Can't we do better than that?

However, there are some good programmings as well as positive Ad. For example, "Shada Moner Manush". Lots of positive energy present in this show. One of the positive Ads that I can think of is this: A business man start from zero, do all the hard work with due diligence and discipline, count every penny and justify the expense; not a penny more, not a penny less. At the

end the businessman appreciates the deal offered by a cell phone company; because it gets along with his value and ethics.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, as an expatriate I am immune to those immoral Ads or mixed up culture fed by corporate sponsor and interest group, because I have DVR. Moreover, I screen what my kids watch. As an expatriate, it makes sense to me why there are depression and frustration amount those young adults. These young adults do not have gym, sports field or any decent source of entertainment. What they do for "pass time" activity? Watch TV or if they can afford, chat over cell phone. It is boosting Cell phone industries bottom line, so they could not adopt social enterprise concept to fulfill their social obligation. Rest of the young adults get bored; thereby fall into depression and frustration. Although this may sound like very naïve explanation; however we can not deny that it is a major component. One may argue that past generation did not have all the facilities and infrastructure for sports and "pastime" resources; however they turned out fine without catastrophic depression and frustration. They are correct; however the past generation did no exposed to the media and internet to the extend that this generation is exposed to. This exposure brings the whole world in front of them. They see the disparity, discrimination and unequal distribution of wealth and resources before they are prepared to handle. These issues may fuel more of the negative energy.

Looking forward:

I hope that Ad industry and Corporate sponsors will assume more moral, ethical and social values for the betterment of the vary customer they depend on their business. We do not have laws to safe guard this type of TV program or Ad. More regulation means less freedom. I hope they will enjoy the free media and act responsibly. Free media like a sharp knife. It is the responsibility of the beholder to either us it like a thug or a surgeon.

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