The Indian Game Show *Kaun Banega Crorepati* in the context of Media Globalization and Glocalization

A thesis presented to

the faculty of

the Scripps College of Communication of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts

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June 2011

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This thesis titled
The Indian Game Show *Kaun Banega Crorepati* in the context of Media Globalization
and Glocalization

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ABSTRACT

ROY, ENASKHI, M.S., June 2011, Journalism

The Indian Game Show Kaun Banega Crorepati in the context of Media Globalization and Glocalization

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The game show Kaun Banega Crorepati, adapted from the British show Who Wants to be a Millionaire? changed the television-scape of India. This study guided by the framework of glocalization examines how Kaun Banega Crorepati was successfully localized for an Indian audience. The study includes interviews with the producers of the show and a textual analysis of 50 episodes of the show through four seasons, and identifies elements such as: references to cricket, Bollywood, Indian history and mythology or religion; presence of famous movie stars as hosts, focus on contestants’ stories, and preaching, and examines how each of these elements made the show uniquely Indian. The findings indicate that while references to cricket, Indian history, and mythology or religion were more prominent in the first three seasons, in the fourth season the show’s producers focused on contestant stories and preaching. References to Bollywood was dominant in all the four seasons. Future research should expand the findings of this study by analyzing Indian adaptations of other show genres to determine if these findings are generalizable beyond the quiz show format.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

Michael S. Sweeney

Professor of Journalism
I would like to thank my thesis chair, Dr. Michael Sweeney, for all his time and patience. His enthusiasm and keenness about the subject encouraged me to pursue this thesis. The writing process would have been very difficult without Dr. Sweeney’s suggestions, revisions and attention to detail.

This thesis would not have been possible without my committee members, Professor Mary Rogus and Dr. Kevin Grieves. I would like to thank them for sharing with me their insights on the television industry.

I want to thank Siddhartha Basu and Atul Thakur for their time and the invaluable information they shared with me on the production of Kaun Banega Crorepati.

I extend earnest thanks to the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism, for accepting me to the program. With the school’s help, I enjoyed the chance to live and learn in another country, to experience a different culture, and to see another side of the world.

Heartfelt thanks I also offer to my friends Aisha Mohammed and Amarjeet Shankar Singh, whose support and encouragement got me through the graduate school.

Finally I would like to thank my family for their love and support: my uncle Sudipto Roy, my mentor; my brother, Dr. Krishnendu Roy, for being my guide in America; my father Bipul Kumar Roy, who nurtured in us the dream of education; and my mother, Tamali Roy, who allowed me to watch television in spite of stiff opposition, and whose commonsense approach to life has helped me come this far. Thank you.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td></td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td></td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Rationale</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and Theoretical Proposition</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: Background</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Literature Review</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Framework of the Study: Globalization and “Glocalization”</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: Methodology</td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5: Creating Indian Identity of the Millionaire Model</td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Autonomy to Locals in Creating an Indian Identity</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language in Creating Local Identity</td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions in Creating a Local Identity</td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of Hosts Toward KBC’s Local Identity</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6: Episodes and Television Commercial Analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television Commercial Analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode Analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greetings and Banter</td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awe of Actors</td>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contestant Stories</td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preaching</td>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regionalism</td>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mythology and Religion</td>
<td></td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricket Reference</td>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference to Bollywood</td>
<td></td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Affairs and Events Questions</td>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 7: Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The study focuses on television game shows in the context of media globalization and “glocalization.” It looks at the Indian game show *Kaun Banega Crorepati* and examines how a “format replicated” show was localized for the Indian audience. The study concentrates on the changes introduced in the Indian version of the popular British game show *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* over four seasons and how these changes, in respect to format of the show, presentation style and content, made a Western show a local one.

*Kaun Banega Crorepati* (*KBC*) is a licensed franchise of the British show *Who Wants to Be Millionaire*. This show is one of the most successful ever on Indian television. The show has had four seasons over the last 10 years. (In India the season of television shows does not follow the fall-spring pattern that is prevalent in U.S.A. In India a television show’s season can stretch from anywhere from three months to a year and a half of consecutive episodes). Presently the show, which was originally broadcast in Hindi with English graphics and some English in the host’s greetings and banter, is being produced in seven Indian language versions: Bangla, Bhojpuri, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Bangladeshi.¹ This is testimony to the fact that the show is immensely popular and that glocalization is being implemented at every step.

In India, the show, armed with astronomical prize money, the biggest movie star of India, Amitabh Bachchan, as its host and a mass-based programming strategy, was an instant hit in the year 2000. In a country that has 17%² of the world’s population, and with a per capita income as low as Rs 16,688 ($380) in the year 2000-01, Rs 10 million

¹ (S. Basu, personal communication, March 11, 2011).
($225,000) is a lot of money. Most could not dream of earning this large an amount even in a lifetime, but if they were lucky and smart they could win that amount in an hour. Like its British and American counterparts, the first three seasons of KBC had 15 general knowledge and current affairs questions, the fourth season that was aired in October 2010, had a 13-question format; for every right answer the contestant was rewarded with a cash prize. The questions kept getting harder as the contestant approached the end of the question series. If a contestant could answer all the questions correctly, he/she won a cash prize worth a million of that country’s currency. In the case of KBC, the grand cash prize was not one million, but 10 million Rupees (Rs) or a Crore which was then approximately $225,000. The prize money doubled to 20 million Rupees in the second and third season and in the fourth season the prize money was 50 million Rupees. The word crorepati means one who has 10 million, and the name of the show translated as “who will be a 10 millionaire,” an almost a literal translation of the British show.

Scope and Rationale

Format adaptation is a dominant trend in global media (Moran, 2009). When a show becomes popular in one country, the central idea of that show is sold to producers or TV channels across the world, who then remake the show and try to adapt it to the sensibilities of the audience of a different culture. This is usually done by introducing local elements, themes and characters. The process of localization is complex and unless properly localized the shows disappear without leaving a mark with the local audience. The purpose of this thesis is to study this dominant trend in one of the most rapidly growing media markets of the world- India. KBC was one of first and most successful format adapted shows yet to be broadcast in India and hence examining KBC is the ideal
choice of study to delineate localization strategies for format adaption in India. While *American Idol* and *Ugly Betty* were successfully adapted to *Indian Idol* (first season in 2004) and *Jassi Jaisi Koi Nahi* (ran from 2003 to 2006), the show *Weakest Link* when adapted to India in 2002, right after the success of *KBC* was rejected by the audience, thus indicating the power of the local in a global environment. With increased globalization of media, and the concern over one-way flow of information, it is more important than ever to advance our understanding of how the global and the local interact with each other to create a meaningful experience for their consumers.

Design and Theoretical Proposition

This study uses the framework of glocalization to examine the interaction of the global and the local. The local elements or themes introduced in the show are identified and examined to see how they blend in with their Western counterparts and thus become more acceptable to the audience. The study relies on interviews with the creative team involved with *KBC* and does a textual analysis of a sample of 50 episodes spanning four seasons and all the promotional television commercials used to promote the show to understand how the show was positioned and localized for an Indian audience.

No other studies, so far, have looked at all the four seasons of the show. Nor has there been any study that analyzed how the use of the localizing elements strategically differed and their emphasis changed from one season to another, which makes this study important.
CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

The first season of the show Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC) was launched in India on July 3, 2000, and was telecast on the channel Star Plus. It was broadcast Monday through Thursday, 9 to 10. The show immediately caught the fancy of the audience garnering huge television ratings. Once it was well accepted by the audience, the show helped spawn a number of clones that were based on similar question-answer models and offered cash incentives. It can be said KBC ushered in the genre of non-fiction programming, both game shows and reality-based shows in India. Common men and women were put on television and the contestant’s response determined the flow of the show. Hence, KBC is a good example that can help explain and give a perspective to the present television-scenario in India. The show became a phenomenon, got associated with several rags-to-riches stories and even set the scene for a movie, Slumdog Millionaire, which won seven Academy Awards in 2009. The fourth season of the show was broadcast in 2010. The show was three times hosted by Bachchan in 2000 and 2003 and 2010, and its third season in 2007 was hosted by Shah Rukh Khan, another popular Indian movie star.

The first three seasons of the show was broadcast on the channel Star Plus. Star Plus was a part of STAR TV (Satellite Television Asian Region Broadcasting Corporation), and its majority stakeholder is Rupert Murdoch. Star began its operations in India in 1991 with a variety of news and entertainment channels. But Star Plus struggled at first to find its rhythm. In the 1990s, the regional language channels attracted more audience with their local language programming and Star’s initial challenge was to get
the audience to watch its Hindi programming. Its main competitors, Zee TV and Sony Television, were doing comparably well at this time. From June 18 to June 24, 2000, across nine cities of the country, Star Plus’s audience share was as low as 1.5% compared with 12.7% for Zee TV and 8.2% for Sony (Masand, 2000). Zee TV and Sony’s main draws were emotion-laden, weekly soap operas, which connected well with an Indian audience. Star Plus tried its hand with soap operas but did not manage to pull any audience from its competitors. The channel had to act quickly in order to survive. The answer was a game show that would appeal to a pan-India audience across a wide range of age groups.

The adaptation of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* as *Kaun Banega Crorepati* in India was first suggested by the Hong Kong-based head of Asia-Pacific programming for Star TV, who sent a video of the original program to Mumbai, India. Three staff members from Celador, UK, the production house that made the British show were sent to India to train the local production team, and later a team of four from India was sent to the US for further familiarization with the concept. While getting inspired by a foreign entertainment show for television was not an entirely new phenomenon, legal format adaptation of entertainment content was relatively new. As far back as 1984, the success of a Mexican *telenovela* in promoting social and educational themes such as family planning and women’s rights in Latin America was replicated in India. A home-grown weekly soap opera called ‘*Hum Log*’ ran 156 episodes and enjoyed ratings of up to 90% in Hindi-speaking North India or an average of 50 million viewers (Thomas, 2006). But with a sudden increase in channels and few production houses to provide content, networks such as Star looked at format adaptations as a more viable option to maintain a steady flow of
new programs. Star followed the Western style of program presentation more than any rival channels. The Indian news on Star TV closely resembled that on the BBC and CNN. The channel even had an interview program called *Star Talk* that clearly imitated both BBC’s *Hard Talk* and CNN’s *Larry King Live.* While the sitcom *Friends* aired on another channel of the network, an adaptation of it called *Hello Friends* was aired on Star Plus. Before the launch of *KBC*, the channel also acquired the game show *Family Feud* and made its Indian version, *Family Fortune,* which was well accepted by the audience. Along with introducing international-style content the channel also tried to introduce viewers to the idea of prime time, non-fiction entertainment programming. But viewers, who were caught between economic liberalization and development-oriented television programming aired on the state-owned TV channels, largely rejected international formats and adaptations.

*KBC,* on the other hand, despite following the international format managed to become hugely popular. But, to understand the true impact of the show one needs to look at the historic development of television programming in India. Indian television was solely operated by *Doordarshan,* the government run broadcast channel. *Doordarshan* was established when television came to India in 1959. *Doordarshan* followed a developmental broadcasting model (Fursich & Shrikhande, 2005). In developmental broadcasting, content is created with the objective of educating, informing and supporting the government’s development purposes. Television is a means of establishing a national identity as well as helps the government to forward its modernization agenda. As a result, prior to privatization in India, the broadcast media

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*Hard Talk* is aired on BBC network, and is an interview show with famous personalities.
was often the mouthpiece of the government. It was only in the early 1980s that advertisement sponsored programs were accepted on *Doordarshan*. For most post-colonial countries, developmental broadcasting was only a part of their programming, and for their content, they often depended on the U.S. India to the contrary replaced the foreign content with mainly rural educational programming and nation building. The Indian government hoped that television would be bringing the rural masses up to speed with development (Fursich & Shrikhande, 2005). But in trying to provide the rural audiences with development-based content *Doordarshan* ignored the urban viewers who had few entertaining programs to watch but owned most of the television sets (Singhal & Rogers, 1989). This was the beginning of India’s rural-urban audience fragmentation, where audience fragmentation already existed due to the many languages and regional and cultural differences. But the difference has always been the starkest between rural and urban viewers (Rao, 1999).

Two programs, however, managed to bridge the rural-urban divide and were equally accepted by both audiences. These were *Ramayana* and *Mahabharat*, the ancient Indian epics based on Hindu mythology. Broadcast in the years 1987 and 1989 respectively, these two television shows were hugely popular (Sarkar, 1997). But these two shows did not quite live up to the goal of developmental broadcasting as they were grounded on mythology, and moreover media scholars have criticized *Doordarshan* from propagating a Hindu ideology in a country that is deemed as secular. Nevertheless these two programs changed the way television was viewed and marked the move of a developmental broadcast system toward market-driven entertainment oriented broadcasting. Between the late 1980s to the middle of the 1990s, *Doordarshan* tried to
balance its developmental agenda with entertainment-based programming. But the pattern of television viewing in India was changing with the onset of satellite television.

The satellite revolution began in 1991 and was mature enough to yield results in the early 2000s, thus vastly expanding viewing possibilities. From five satellite channels that aired staples from British and American channels, by the mid-1990s, audiences had access to over 100 channels. Satellite television by this time had reached 88 million homes in India, thus increasing the national reach of every show (Bajaj, 2007).

The liberalization of the Indian economy in the 1990s permitted foreign ownership of television stations and what followed was an exchange of cross-national programs. Soap operas, prime-time serials and daytime talk shows, such as Oprah, were being dubbed in Hindi and aired in the South Asian subcontinent. India now had an idea of what the Western media was like and was ready for its own big shows. KBC was the first show that gained popularity in entire the country.

Star Plus started KBC on July 3, 2000. The first few days of KBC received a lukewarm welcome, but within two weeks, it gripped the imagination of the nation. When the audience realized one could win big money, the reaction was frenzied. When the phone lines opened for the second time for registration, there were 800,000 calls on the first day, from the city of Kolkata alone. Such was the craze that on July 24, after three weeks of the show, three million people registered on the same day, taking down the phone lines of the show (Thomas, 2006). This was the first time a mass-based quiz show rather than an elitist quiz show was aired. The contestants did not need to be extremely knowledgeable or smart; they merely had to have presence of mind and commonsense.
People from all regions of the country, irrespective of their educational and economic background, started to appear on the show (De Sarkar, 2005). Satinder Singh, who ran a small furnishings shop in a little-known hamlet in the foothills of the Himalayas, won Rs 1.25 million ($30,000). On the day his episode was telecast, all shops were closed in the small town and the roads were deserted. Bangalore-based dentist Harish Mediratta won Rs 5 million ($120,000) and immediately saw a rise in the number of patients who came to see him. Software engineer Lopamudra Misra won Rs 2.5 million ($60,000). She recalled random strangers stopping her on the road and congratulating her on her feat. Calcutta-based Raj Kumar Chakraborty won Rs 1.25 million ($30,000). His father was seriously ill, and the middle-class bank clerk even after a 30.6% tax deduction on the prize money, could pay for his father’s treatment. The contestants were happy, they were getting their 15 minutes of fame, and inspired by them millions across India tried to register for the show and participate in the game.

India talked about KBC-- from who won the largest amount on the show, to how some of them knew all of the answers but were not getting lucky enough to get into the show. They talked about how the show appeared rigged to some viewers and everything in it was pre-determined. They guessed what were likely to be the pattern of the questions, and how much host Bachchan was getting paid for the series. All sort of speculation was going on. The nation had its self-proclaimed KBC-pundits, who were having heated debates with about the show. A few examples from the letters to the editor of the newspaper Indian Express, on September 17, 2000, show the mixed reaction people had after the program had been on air for a month and a half.
These days, when people want to earn money at a superfast speed, *KBC* is thought of as a viable option. One also needs to thank *KBC* for recalling the forgotten hero, Neville de Souza, whose hattrick goals in the 1956 Olympics was a superlative feat, equivalent to more than a gold medal in the world’s premier sports event.

— P. N. Kumbhare, Pune

There is no doubt that *Kaun Banega Crorepati* and Amitabh Bachchan’s charisma has caught the nation’s imagination. However, many of the contestants display colossal ignorance. This makes me wonder how they managed to even reach the select 10. There should be a better method of selection rather than mere luck.

— Shanmugam Mudaliar, Pune

Amitabh Bachchan has brought families back to their dining table once again. *KBC* acts like a bonding force between them. And now, family members prefer to watch the programme together, testing each other’s knowledge in the process. I think this is sufficient reason to give the show a perfect 10 rating.

— Rajneesh Batra, Jodhpur

Despite his recent spate of box-office flops, Amitabh Bachchan’s popularity hasn’t diminished, as is evident from the success of *Kaun Banega Crorepati*, the most popular program ever in the history of Indian television. Though Bachchan’s contribution to the programme is immense, it’s the element of chance and the draw of easy money that keeps us enthralled.

— Sajit Nambudiripad, Malappuram

While the computer kept churning out answers, *KBC* was making fortunes for the channel and Bachchan. After two months from the launch of the show, *KBC* was the highest-rated program between 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. in cable and satellite homes (Bajpai, 2000). According to A.C. Nielsen’s TAM Peoplemeter (a television viewership measurement survey). The Nielsen ratings also reveal that the viewership for the

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4In India, TAM is commonly referred to as TRP or TV Ratings Points. In India the TAM ratings are based on peoplemeters installed in only 16 top cities in nine states. The people meter, about the size of a paperback book, is placed on each TV set in the sample home. The box has buttons, and lights are assigned to each person who lives in the household (with additional buttons for guests). Each meter is capable of accurately monitoring every second, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, what is being viewed on each TV set.
program was increasing. The highest rating for week one (beginning July 3, 2000) was 12.4 and the figure rose to 13.9 in week two, beginning July 10, 2000 (Bajpai, 2000). With the rise in the viewership, Star Plus’ revenue rose astronomically. The rate for an advertisement during the 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. hour rose from Rs 80,000 ($1600) for a 10-second spot to a steep Rs 300,000 ($6000) for a 10-second spot (Bhandare, 2000). With *KBC* garnering such large audiences, the advertisers wanted to join the bandwagon. Being on *KBC* increased the worth of the brand. While Sony made Rs 4.5 ($10 billion) from advertisements in 1999-2000 and Zee Rs 4 billion ($90 million), Star TV came a poor third with Rs 2.9 billion or ($65 million) (Senapati, 2001). But in 2000-2001, *KBC* alone made for Star Plus around Rs 1.5 billion ($34 million) through selling spots, apart from that there were associate sponsors for the show who paid additional money to be on the show (Masand, 2000). Star Plus got its highest audience share ever, 27.9%, on the day Harshavardhan Nawathe became the first person to win Rs 10 million or $225,000 (Shivdasani, 2000).

After a run of 18 months, the TRP (Television Rating Point) for *KBC* fell to two or three. The channel decided it had to make way for something new in the primetime. The show ended with the first winner of Rs 10 million coming back and playing the game and this time around he won Rs 5 million ($110,000) and he donated this amount to charity.

The second season of *KBC* started in 2005. The prize money for the second season was doubled to Rs 20 million ($550,000). *KBC 2* started on August 5, 2005. This time the show was telecast on weekends, Friday through Sunday 9pm to 10pm. The show

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and by whom. The meter stores this data. The data is then periodically transmitted by means of the family's telephone line, or a dedicated cellular telephone line to a central computer for analysis.
began with a high TRP of 19.75, and subsequently dropped to 15.07 and 10.33 by the second and third episodes respectively (Bhusan, 2007). The second season was planned with 85 episodes, which would have aired from August 2005 to February 2006, but the show came to an abrupt halt after 61 episodes when Bachchan fell ill. The second seasons had 120 million people registering for the show (Sheikh, 2008).

*KBC 3* with a new and younger movie star Shah Rukh Khan as the host started on January 22, 2007 and was on-air till April 19, 2007. The contestants who could not play the game in the second because the sudden halt in the game were all accommodated in the first few episodes of the third season. The show received calls from 70 million people to register for the game (Sheikh, 2008). *KBC-3* opened at a TRP of 12.33 with STAR Plus’ share going up to 60% from 37.7% the week before. The second day of the show, however, saw ratings slip to 10.44, and 7.36 in the third episode. The final episode of the week saw ratings climb to 9.24 (Bhusan, 2007). The channel allegedly earned a revenue Rs 200 crore from the 52 episodes (Sheikh, 2008).

After a whole decade, the show made a full-circle. A foreign format inspired an Indian show, a book was written about it, and the book got picked up by an international director and turned into a global hit movie. The success of the movie *Slumdog Millionaire* renewed the interest of India about the show (Shivdasani 2000). In the fourth season Bachchan was back as the host. The show started on October 11, 2010, which was also Bachchan’s 68th birthday. The show was aired on Sony Television, as the channel now owned the global rights for the show. Again the show garnered the highest television ratings, 5.5, among all the reality shows that were on TV at that time (Dubey, 2010). It is to be kept in mind that in 2010, the audience in India had move television viewing
options than it had in the year 2000, and this has led to an increase of audience
fragmentation. But, 10 years later KBC again proved its sustaining power; it was a
triumph of both the format and the localization. This thesis looks at all the four seasons
and argues that it is the right mix of the global and the local elements that makes this
show the phenomenon it is today.
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

Game shows are often dismissed as mere entertainment; their meaning is not seen to extend beyond the immediate concerns over winners and losers, ratings and market share. But the fact that quiz shows and game shows have been in existence for almost 80 years is testimony to a highly successful genre of broadcast programming, a reflection of popular culture, and space for the interaction of the common person with the ritualized television text.

Quiz shows actually have their origin before the advent of broadcast media. During the growth of newspapers in the early twentieth century, publications adopted the quiz or question-answer feature in a bid to attract audience and boost circulation (DeLong, 1991). Furthermore, theatrical performers in music halls incorporated games into their acts, building on a socially accepted culture of gambling (DeLong, 1991). But, while broadcasting did not invent quizzes or games, it was radio and television that made them into regular programs. In 1930s radio programs such as *Vox Pop*, which combined elements of quiz, interviews and human interest, and shows such as *Uncle Jim’s Question Bee*, which selected contestants from the audience to answer a range of general knowledge questions in return of monetary rewards, started emerging (Hoerschelmann 2006). The BBC radio in 1937 broadcast *Inter-Regional Spelling Competition* in the children’s hour. Not only was this the birth of the quiz show in British broadcasting, but was inspired by the American version. This was also one of the earliest examples of format adaptation (Crisell, 2001).

Game shows and quiz shows are often confused with each other and the terms used interchangeably. However, there is a distinction between the two, and keeping the
present study in mind, it is important to determine the genre of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* (henceforth referred to as *Millionaire*) as a show.

Both popular and academic definitions argue that “game show” represents the broader generic term, which then encompasses a range of subcategories, including the quiz show (Turner, 2007). Going by the broader definition, in one of the early studies of game shows, Fiske divided the genre of game shows into four subcategories based on the type of knowledge contestants need to participate (Fiske, 1987). The first kind requires factual, academic knowledge, such as *Mastermind*. The second kind demands a more popular brand of general knowledge such as *Jeopardy!* Fiske (1987), believed these two types of shows represent “masculine knowledge,” or knowledge that is factual and can be verified through an external public criterion of right or wrong. The third kind of shows, such as *Wheel of Fortune* and *The Price is Right*, requires the exhibition of everyday, commonsensical knowledge, the kind of information that is obtained through day-to-day social interaction and experience, often a part of the conventional wisdom. Fiske (1987), argued these shows work on the idea of “feminine knowledge,” or knowledge that is empirical or intuitive. The fourth category of game shows includes the *Newlywed Game*. To participate in these kinds of shows, the contestant needs to have information of a particular individual.

Drawing on Fiske’s (1987) taxonomy of knowledge, Hoerschelmann (2006) sees the main difference between quiz show and game shows as depending on their realm of knowledge. Shows that involve individuals or groups competing with each other on the basis of the factual knowledge they possess are quiz shows. Shows whose driving principles are human knowledge, gambling and physical activity are game shows.
quiz show scandal of 1958\(^5\) helped to delineate this distinction further (Hoerschelman, 2006). Shows such as Truth or Consequences and People Are Funny mainly relied on physical activity and did not involve any factual knowledge, whereas shows such as, The $64,000 Question were based on factual knowledge. But, they were all grouped as quiz shows. In the years after the scandal, new shows removed the genre from the sphere of serious knowledge, and instead associated with play and leisure. Instant entertainment and prizes further distinguished game shows from quiz shows.

Holmes (2008), drawing upon anthropologist Caillois’ (1961) study of “play” reaffirms the distinction between quiz and game shows on the lines of Hoerschelman (2006). Caillois (1961) distinguishes between games of “Agon” and games of “Alea.” Games of Agon (Agon in Latin means fight or struggle) are based on competition in which the outcome is decided by merit, whereas the games of Alea are based on fate or chance (Alea is the Latin term for the game of dice). But, Holmes (2008), through her interviews with industry practitioners such as Danny Greenstone, also points out that combine elements of both. Millionaire is a quiz show but with features such as “50/50,” “phone a friend” and “audience poll” there is drama added to the show, characteristic of a game show rather than a quiz show. So while Mastermind can be aligned with Agon, and Deal or No Deal can be aligned with Alea, Millionaire is an example where both the factual knowledge and the fate element are combined within the same game.

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\(^5\)It was found in May 1958 that the CBS game show Dotto was rigged. Following this revelation the ratings for all the quiz shows tumbled. More and more former quiz show contestants came forward to reveal how they had been coached. A contestant from "The $64,000 Challenge," the Reverend Charles E. Jackson, gave details to a grand jury, saying that he was given answers during his screening that enabled him to win. By October 1958, two of the most successful game/quiz shows Twenty-One and The $64,000 Question were off the air.
Bodycombe (2003), breaks down the genre of game shows further into categories including action/adventure, board game conversion, children’s, comedy and panel game, dating show, educational, family game show, lifestyle, puzzle, reality, quiz/general knowledge, sports, stunt/dare show and variety. Bodycombe’s (2003) extensive list reaches out to a wider range of reference points. These include scheduling practices and target audience (for example children’s or family game show), the function or worth of a program (for example educational), and extra-textual referents (for example, board game conversion). Depending on which segment of the population they would target, networks launched the appropriate variation.

But no matter which segment was watching, the audience of game shows played along with the television broadcast to feel smart, and this constant test of audience knowledge kept the audience interested in the shows (Cooper-Chen, 1994).

Game shows are made with what has been called the “flavor of the common man” (Lerner, 1957, p. 838). Game shows draw upon a vast, common-man population – a self-replenishing wave of faces. The faces belong to the regular people who are eager to get onto a show and strike it rich. More and more TV entertainment is being provided by the people who watch it (Delong, 1991). Quiz and game shows invite ordinary people into the apparently special space of television (Holmes, 2008). Root (1986, p. 97) observes that television employs people “to be ordinary,” and part of “the real person’s job is just to be like those watching, to act as viewers momentarily whisked to be on the other side of the screen.” Despite the perception that the contestant is the focus of the show, ordinary people go unpaid or un credited for their appearances on a quiz or game show.
(Root, 1986). Holmes (2008) argues this is because the real prize for the contestants is perceived to be their 15 minutes of fame.

For the home audience it is always the “win/win complexity of game shows” that works. If a player misses a question that the viewer knows the answer to, the viewer can feel proud and smart; on the other hand, if the player wins the viewer can still celebrate vicariously in the contestant’s victory. Some game shows, along with being entertaining, also educate the viewers, keeping them abreast of current affairs and general knowledge (Cooper-Chen, 1994). Furthermore, prizes are not only given to the contestants playing the game, but two-way TV is giving viewers a chance to compete for prizes against other viewers (DeLong, 1991). With the help of technology, “interactive television” – combining phone lines with live television -- allows audiences to compete with on-screen contestants.

The non-controversial and apolitical nature of game shows attracts advertisers, and they are cheap to produce, so, for broadcasters, these shows have been extremely profitable. Rubin (1984) found that television audiences ranked game shows fourth after news, sports and music as most-liked shows. Rubin (1984), concluded game shows have a special appeal among viewers aged 55 and older. Barwise, Ehrenberg and Goodhardt (1982) used Arbitron surveys to study repeat-viewing patterns of programs that are shown five days a week in the same time slot and found a marked degree of loyalty to all daily shows, including game shows.

Some have argued that game shows are a cynical exploitation of middle class greed and tap into the “lottery mentality” of the public, where people dream of an easy
way to make money rather than earning it through hard work. But pulling in audiences by offering huge prize money was a formula that all broadcasters cashed in on.

During the era of globalization, media game shows were exported from countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom to developing countries. Airing format-replicated shows was profitable for both the broadcasters and the producers. They were a cheap alternative to developing an original show, as the preliminary research was already done, and the response to it tested in a market. Depending on the budget of the producers’ the global format was localized appropriately.

Theoretical Framework of the Study: Globalization and “Glocalization”

The development of an integrated global media market began in earnest in the early 1980s and did not reach its full potential till the 1990s (Herman & McChesney, 1997). Newspapers and periodicals, written in the local language and almost exclusively focused on domestic issues for local audiences, were not very conducive to the rise of global media. The first prominent exchanges of content that led to the rise of a global media occurred in the 19th century. There were the international news agencies such as the French Havas, the German Wolff and the British Reuters, which, even though the content was meant for domestic audiences, had a particular slant toward foreign news. But the forms of media that truly encouraged the rise of a global media in the first half of the 20th century were motion pictures and radio.

Films were the first form of media to reach out to a truly global audience. In 1925 American-made films earned more than 90% of the film revenue in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Argentina and more than 70% of the revenue in Brazil, France and Scandinavia (Jarvie, 1992). Radio broadcasting developed in the
1920s. Broadcasting is inherently international in nature because electromagnetic radiation crosses political boundaries, but initially the technology was expensive, and to avoid interference in transmission, radio operated on a limited number of frequencies by a small group of broadcasters. But these two forms of media set the stage for the global trade of media content.

In 1980, communication broadly accounted for $350 billion, or 18% of the world trade. By 1986, the worldwide output of the communication and information industries was valued at $1.6 trillion, and it was growing rapidly (Hamelink, 1983). This increase in the trade of media content was spearheaded by developments in communication technologies and further urged on by global business’s demand for the most rapid and reliable global communication networks possible. In 1980s video cassette recorders and the growth of satellite and cable communication made the global distribution of media viable. Satellite services such as CNN, MTV and ESPN that started in the United States went on to become international brands. Aided by privatization and deregulation, these new technologies expedited the growth of numerous television channels, which provided a platform to advertisers to showcase their products.

However, the flow of material is extremely lop-sided; figures show that eight of the richest countries in the world account for 90% of global television exports, as cited in the Department of Culture Media and Sports report from London (1999). The same report also suggests that the United States of America dominates with 85% of all of the world’s imported children’s programming, 81% of TV movies and nearly three-quarters of TV drama. Hollywood led the pack for the global export of media content. Hollywood’s global exports doubled between 1987 and 1991 from $1.1 billion to $2.2 billion. But for
the same period the import of film and television material to the United States was worth only $81 million. The United Kingdom is the second biggest exporter of television programs; 79% of its exports go to North America, Australia, New Zealand and Western Europe (Graham, 2000).

This one-way flow of media content is criticized by political economists, which is propagated by thinkers such as, Marx, Veblen, Keynes and Galbraith. The theory explains media not just in terms of the effects of the communication on individuals and groups or its uses and gratifications, but also argues that the significance of media goes much further and relates to other social institutions, and to the economy, to the formation of ideologies. It stressed that when a small percentage of the world controls the rest of the world’s communication technologies and content, it essentially propagates an ideology that is favorable to the powerful countries. The political economy theory also points that transnational corporations come to control free speech, public access to new communication technology and personal control over information (Parks & Kumar, 2003). The theorists argued that local media structures that survived by catering to a local audience would be destroyed by the capitalist transnational media companies. However, by emphasizing the political and economic workings of the media industries, the approach underestimates the dynamism of the process of globalization.

Much like the political economic theorists, the proponents of cultural imperialism theory, such as Wallerstein (1974) and Hamelink (1983), highlight the loss of cultural identity and the growth of sameness, attaching a negative connotation to the process. The process of cultural synchronization that slowly phases out cultural diversity and makes local cultures anonymous is known as cultural imperialism. According to Hamelink “the
principal agents of cultural synchronization today are the transnational corporations” (Hamelink, 1983, p. 22). These include media corporations.

The concern over cultural imperialism through media, and free and fair flow of media in the 1970s, led the developing countries to question the New World Information Order as they debated and charged that the transnational news agencies based in the global North monopolized media and controlled news flow (Stevenson, 1994). Mustapha Masmoudi, a Tunisian who served as ambassador to UNESCO, crystallized the concerns of developing nations when he said,

The present-day information system enshrines a form of political, economic, and cultural colonialism which is reflected in the often tendentious interpretation of news concerning the developing countries. This consists in highlighting events whose significance, in certain cases, is limited or even non-existent; in collecting isolated facts and presenting them as a “whole”; in setting out facts in such a way that the conclusion to be drawn from them is necessarily favorable to the interests of the transnational system and of the countries in which this system is established. (Masmoudi, 1978).

UNESCO came out with the Macbride Report in 1980, which had recommendations to offset these concerns. The report dealt particularly with the issue of “democratization” of communication and information (Osolink, 2005). It assessed the negative aspects of one-way information flow, from richer countries to poorer ones, from those who have power and technical infrastructure to those who do not have them. The report also draws attention to the fact that the abundance of information and diversity of sources does not ensure perfection and reliability of information. It therefore advocates that plurality and free flow be balanced in terms of content. The questions of what it means in practice and how
to harmonize it with freedom of information, remained open to diverse opinions (Osolink, 2005).

Critics of cultural imperialism theory such as Tomlinson point out, international media research that looks at media flows solely in terms of cultural imperialism does not take into account the creative power of the audiences to resist the dominance of global television. The ideas of a homogenized Western media were soon under attack as media scholars pointed out that the influence of Western media on developing countries was exaggerated (Lull, 1995) and the impact of “reverse colonization” was underestimated (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1991). “Reverse colonization” is a process by which the asymmetric flow of television content from the United States and United Kingdom is checked through production and dissemination of content from other countries such as Mexico, Brazil, Hong Kong and India. For example, Brazilian television programs are now being exported to Portugal and Indian television programs are broadcast all over the Middle East and Saudi Arabia. In recent years, there have been even stronger criticisms of the “media imperialism” thesis for, above all, ignoring what are declared to be the complexities of trans-border flows in an emerging cultural globalization. Held et al. (1999) describe this as a “transformationalist” position, one that highlights “the intermingling of cultures and peoples as generating cultural hybrids and new global cultural networks.” Straubhaar (1997) refutes the idea that globalization has led to a “homogenization” of television and talks of more sophisticated “geo-cultural markets” based on regional interests, former colonial alliances and changing migratory patterns. While recognizing the continuing dominance (at least in quantitative terms) of the USA as a television exporter, he argues that globalization has led to an increase in the different
levels, possibilities and modes of communications exchange. Far from flattening out
media content, increasingly popular international genres such as soap opera and variety
programs are currently being “customized” according to linguistic and cultural patterns
organized on regional, national and local lines. According to Straubhaar (1997), a global
form such as a soap opera is being localized, for the dual purpose of global capitalist
development and for expression of local identity. Thus there was an equally strong
theoretical support for the local influences on media. The model which sought to
accommodate both the global and the local was “glocalization”

Glocalization as an epistemological and intellectual inquiry has
been suggested by authors such as Giddens (1990), Sreberny-Mohammadi (1991),
and Straubhaar (1997), but it is in the work of Robertson (1997) that
“glocalization” is best articulated for the purposes of understanding the
professional practice of journalism (Rao, 2009). Globalization, for Robertson
(1997), is a more appropriate concept to theoretically ground the sometimes
contending and sometimes cooperative forces of the global and the local.
Rejecting the false dialectical opposition of the global/local, center/periphery,
universality/particularism models as inadequate, Robertson (1997) argues that
glocalization captures the dynamics of the local in the global and the global in the
local. He proposes the model as a way of accounting for both global and local, not
as opposites but rather as mutually formative, complementary competitors,
feeding off each other as they struggle for influence. Rather than pitching global
against the local, “glocalization” attempts to break down “the ontologically secure
homes of each and present them as interconnected forces” (Robertson, 1997, p.
30). While some social theorists have attacked the concept of glocalization as being particularly apolitical, “without any teeth or resistance to the sinister forces of globalization” (Thornton, 2000, p. 79), Robertson calls for both understanding of the global-local nexus and of seeing “glocalization” as a tool of resistance and accommodation. Format franchising is an integral part of glocalization, and irrespective of whether the format is a legal franchise, all programs undergo some localization.

But the idea of resistance by the local agencies is seen as a pseudo attempt by some theorists. Mattelart (2002), thinks the idea that the global and the local are interdependent is fairly new, an idea that was propagated at the end of the 19th century, glocalization therefore does not take into account the long-term effects of capitalism. Even in the so-called knowledge based society or a globalized world it is the Western view of the world that is being rehashed and presented. Even in the cultural model or the local model where the local is privilege over the global, there still existed a center and a periphery and the technology always flowed from the center to the periphery. So any sense of freedom that the developing nations are experiencing in terms of local production of media content is a false sense of agency. The local forces are not putting up enough of a resistance against the influx of a Westernized media model. Ramaswami (2003), further adds that the so called media hybridity is carried out by the neo- liberal elites, “who are ethnically non-Western but culturally Western”. The Westernized local elites have tastes which are more in tune with the West and they do not take into account the
diverse ethnic audience. Thus glocalization merely mirrors the west and there is not localization in true sense.

But then, one cannot deny the hybridity or the glocalization where the local-cultural elements were infused with a Western format to create an Indian version of the Millionaire. One can’t reject the theories of globalization totally, nor can one only embrace theories that support localization. This study will examine the game show through the model of glocalization, which is a better fit for the data.

In the context of media, the mixing of the global and the local is prominent in the area of format adaptation or format franchising. Moran (2009), studied the practice of format franchising, and observed that the process of franchising was always accompanied by a cultural need to customize the format to suit local audience taste and outlook in a particular territory. Moran (2009), examined the process of localization on three levels using a model derived from translation theory. Translation Theory, based on Translation Studies, examines the process and products of inter-lingual translation in all its aspects. He concluded localization that occurs in such processes primarily involves the development of content that is nationally accepted through which audiences in a national territory can be addressed as a collective “we.”

Cooper-Chen (1994) studied 260 game shows across 50 nations and concluded that most shows worked on a model of format replication, where channels bought copyright for formats of mostly British and American game shows and contextualized them for their countries and cultures. But despite the capacity to transmit the same content worldwide, it is culture that always triumphed over technology. These format-replicated shows got a new incarnation with each new setting. Technology made it
possible for these shows to fit into the already existing cultural molds. Pathania-Jain (2006) points out that though localization is an expensive option because resources need to be spend at a local level for production, companies still do it to gain acceptance among the audience, advertisers and the moral police.

The effective strategies of localization can be divided into two broad categories – localization of programming content and cosmetic localization of programming (Pathania-Jain 2006). The strategies under the first category include things such as:

1. Splitting satellite beams, where with the help of technology beams are customized to target particular geographic areas within the satellite footprint. This helps advertisers to get access to target regional audiences, with local commercials inserted for those audiences. Star TV (the network on which the show *KBC* was aired) and MTV have successfully split their beams to reach particular audiences.

2. Giving creative autonomy to local employees and local partner firms. The local employees who are more in tune with the sensibilities of the local audience, and have the “cultural edge,” are hired to localize the content.

3. Using culturally specific made-for-market programming to draw in the audience. Pathania-Jain (2006), identifies three distinct features that help establish the local connection. These are local language, cultural iconography and local humor. Transnational media companies agree that audiences “prefer information content coded in their own language” (Collins, 1994, p. 389). Media houses either dub or subtitle existing programming into local languages or create content in the original language of that particular market. Cultural iconography that goes into localizing programming includes imagery that is easily identifiable. Again it is the local employees who are entrusted with
the responsibility of identifying the cultural signifiers. Clever caricatures of familiar settings form the basis of local humor, but international media companies keep in mind that the humor is not offensive to the cultural sensitivities of the people.

(4) Enhancing the visibility of local artists. Any threat the audiences may feel from the transnational corporations is eased by the presence of familiar faces who seek to connect the global with the local.

Pathania-Jain (2006) sees localization efforts as superficial and cosmetic where the networks put in less effort and time. Disney has stayed close to this model of localization when it supplies the software from U.S. studios to global affiliates who then dub the imported programming to the local languages. Advertisers often don’t want to sponsor English programs, and dubbing is a cheaper alternative than producing original content. In 1996, for example when the cost of dubbing was about $1,000 per half-hour, where as new programming could cost anywhere between four to 15 times the cost of dubbing (Pathania, 1998). But the tolerance of the Indian audience to dubbed programming is not very high. The other form of cosmetic localization is subtitling imported programming. Subtitles are used to increase a multi-lingual audience base. In a multi-lingual country such as India, even Bollywood films that are made in Hindi have used subtitles to gain larger audiences. The other technique used in cosmetic localization is to link imported programming with local hosts. The local hosts are recorded in front of a “green screen” and then the images are patched with an imported hi-tech background. The success of an international show mainly relies on how well the content is integrated with the preference of the viewers.
Rulyova (2007) analyses the localizing strategies of the Russian adaptation of the popular television game show *Wheel of Fortune*. The Russian show *Pole Chudes* is an instance of subversive glocalization that resists globalization more than an average adaptation of *Wheel*. The show shifts the focus away from the core element of the show, its game, to the contestants themselves and their stories, and thereby subverts the genre of the format itself. *Pole* appeared on Russian television screens in 1990, shortly before the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the new Russia. The time of its appearance is an important factor for it not only rejects the global but seeks out a new local, thereby helping the construction of a new national identity. In terms of format, the Russian show differed from the original versions by focusing less on the actual game and more on the talk. Similarly the host of the Russian show took on the role of a jester, unlike his low-key European counterparts. These changes, Rulyova (2007) argues, are instances of glocalization helping the show gain immense popularity in post-Soviet Russia.

Glander (2008) argues in favor of glocalization when he analyzes how Western game shows such as *The Wheel of Fortune* and *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* are localized for a Malaysian audience. The study is significant with the Malaysian context in mind, because these shows promote consumerism, accumulation of wealth and taking chances (which can be used as a euphemism for gambling), but in an Islamic country such as Malaysia, a counter-consumerist lifestyle is encouraged. The main challenge for the producers in this case was to get the audience to accept the idea that making money through game shows is not anti-social. The producers worked hard to introduce strategies
of desensitization to remove the negative connotations attached to the show and introduced cultural signifiers to make the show acceptable.

Commenting further on the particular nuances that need to be introduced from country to country when launching a format-adopted show, Histroni (2005), compared the content of different versions of the game show *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* He concludes the topics of questions varied from country to country with programs in Australia and the UK over-representing language, the USA and Singapore over-representing light entertainment, and India over-representing history. The share of local themes was positively related to the country’s size of population. In all the countries, questions that awarded more expensive prizes more frequently required academic knowledge, whereas pocket money questions more often called for popular everyday knowledge. Overall, the global quiz format appears to be sensitive to relatively small cultural differences. The hierarchy of knowledge it features is in line with Western norms.

Rao (2009) studied the impact of globalization on news and journalism in India, and then examined the localization that takes place to market the content in India. The Indian news industry has integrated with the global industry while retaining the local and the traditional beliefs and practices of the country. More than 90% of the news in these channels remains national, regional, community, and locally based. However, by adopting the Western styles of production and delivery, such as, making the news more visual both for television and for print, the use of altered images, more graphics, use of background tracks in television news and introducing the story through anchors, make the Indian news organizations credible actors in the transnational media scene (Thussu, 1998).
Further, connections with Indian customs and traditions are maintained through providing time slots and column space to cultural signifiers such as astrology and *Vastu Shastra.* Astrology and *Vastu Shastra* play central roles in Hindu social life, astrologers are consulted at every major life event including marriages, during sickness, births, and career changes (Rao, 2009). Looking at some examples of news coverage in India, Rao concludes glocalization can be interpreted as a set of practices in which the local media have absorbed the global, rejuvenated the local, and given audiences possibilities of strengthening democratic discourses. The Indian news channels do bear a strong resemblance to many Western news channels, but by focusing on content that is of importance to India, they stay rooted in the local culture.

An example of an effective localization in India is the Kannada version of *The Newlywed Game.* McMillin (2003) looks at the Indian version of *The Newlywed Game* and analyzes how the Indian show accommodates the global and the local in its hybrid programming. *Adarsha Dampathigalu* aired on one of the regional television networks and was broadcast in Kannada language (it was meant for the audience residing in the southerly state of Karnataka). McMillin argues *Adarsha Dampathigalu* has completely appropriated the global elements and made the show for most reasons is an indigenous one now. Localizing this show was not easy as it deals with marital relations, and talking about such relationships is taboo in conservative Hindu society. In a society that is highly patriarchal, and a strict division is maintained between the private domestic sphere and public sphere, the producers of the show had difficulty in putting it together. The show in

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*Vastu Shastra* is a traditional Hindu system of design based on directional alignments. It is primarily applied in Hindu architecture, especially for Hindu temples.
fact did put into practice a number of the localization strategies that Pathania-Jain describes. Unlike the Western counterpart, the Indian version had couples of all ages, not just newlyweds. Features such as participants whacking each other with heart-shaped pillows, an act that has no cultural meaning in India, were done away with. Keeping in mind the sensitivity of the audience, the questions asked were far from personal and instead dealt with things such as taste in music, etc. The show was hosted by a local film star; this not only enhanced the visibility of local artists, but also gave legitimacy to the content. The content was further localized by concluding each episode with a brief dialogue between an elderly man from the studio audience and the host, which justified the show’s purpose of discussing marital issues and further emphasized the importance of the institution of marriage in Indian society.

Kumar (2006) gives an example of ineffective localization of content for the Indian audience in the talk show *Nikki Tonight* that was aired in 1995 on Star Plus, the same channel which some years later aired *KBC*. This talk show was modeled after Western shows such as *Oprah*, and was targeted toward the urban, English-speaking population. But, from the very beginning, the show was deemed vulgar and offensive to the Indian taste. It was pulled off the air after it was engulfed in a controversy and got caught in a lawsuit when a guest on the show made a comment about Gandhi. The host, Nikki Bedi, was an Indian of British origin. With an Indian father and English mother, she was a blond woman who was not a typical Indian/Bollywood celebrity. Bedi was more global than local, and seemed more of a transplant. Bedi’s flirtatious antics, mischievous comments and queries about her guest’s sex lives were considered insolently outrageous in a society where one usually doesn’t speak of sexuality (Kumar, 2006).
show was offensive to Indian sensibilities and was rejected by the audience. Kumar (2006) argues that with the integration of the traditional into a highly globalized world of satellite television, the idea of the construction of nationality and cultural identity becomes even more important.

Ganguly and Kraidy (2004) re-examine the global-local equation of Indian media as they study the game show *Kaun Banega Crorepati* in the context of cultural hybridity. But they looked only at nine episodes of the first season of *KBC*, and thus their conclusion is based on limited content without examining the subsequent three seasons and also does not talk about the changes introduced in the later seasons. Ganguly and Kraidy (2004) see as a process of media convergence whereby a new mode emerges containing elements of combined media. Ganguly and Kraidy argue that *KBC* combined the elements of international media format yet retained the Indian, especially Hindu morality. Thereby the show became the symbol of the modern Indian media, which emerged as a process of globalization, liberalization and deregulation. Their study questions the theory of cultural imperialism and points out how shows such as *KBC* and networks such as MTV survived and gained popularity among the audience by toning down the international formats and adding local identifiers to the shows. In the case of MTV, it was Bollywood music that set the pace for localization and in the case of *KBC* it was a Bollywood icon, Bachchan, who gained audience acceptance. However the show and MTV did retain some of the global formats as to help maintain a hipness or coolness to the content that drew the urban youth -- a highly desirable target audience for the advertisers.
The literature reviewed so far and the objectives of this research leads to the following research questions:

Research Questions

Format adaptation is culture specific and the acculturating the content sufficiently is a challenge. Giving creative autonomy to the locals is way of ensuring the representation of local sensitivities. Identifying the creative team for *KBC* could help examine the localization process, which leads us to the first research question:

*RQ1:* How did giving creative autonomy to the locals help the show?

Enhancing the visibility of identifiable cultural elements help the audience relate to the content, therefore identifying the specific cultural signifiers for India and how they were used in the show is important. The researcher uses the Saussereian model of “signification” that is used in linguistics and semiotics, to explain and operationalize the term “cultural signifier” that is used in this study. According to the model the signs themselves are composed of two parts: the “signifier”: the letters on the page, the words or the sound that bounces off our eardrum and the “signified”: the concept that appears on our brain when we read or hear the signifier (Macdonald, 2003). For instance, the word “*Saree*” (a piece of unstitched cloth used as a dress) is a signifier, and when we think of it as a traditional Indian clothing that has existed throughout the Indian history, it is the signified. For the purpose of this study, the term “cultural signifier” is being operationalized as words or elements that a group thinks is an intrinsic part of their culture, and can identify with it collectively. For instance the word “wicket” is a cultural signifier for Indians as it is always present the game of cricket and Indians considers cricket as a part of their culture, similarly the presence of a Bollywood actor, is again a
cultural signifier as Bollywood is something that Indians identify with and consider an essential part of their culture. Identifying the cultural signifiers and their use, through game questions and otherwise leads to the second and third research questions:

*RQ2:* What were the specific cultural signifiers used in the show to help the Indian audience relate to the content?

*RQ3:* Was there a focus of the contest questions and if yes, how did it help in the localization of the show?

The literature suggests the selection of the host in important for any show (Kumar, 2006). But, beyond giving the show instant visibility how did the presence of movie actors hey create a local identity for the show, also why were these two actors Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan particularly chosen for this role? This leads us to the fourth research question

*RQ4:* Why were popular movie actors chosen to host the show and the contribution of these actors in making the show local?

Identifying the varying amounts of localization of each season is what makes this study different form the earlier studies on game shows and format adaptation. Finally the study looks at the retention of the international elements that help the show maintain its structure, which leads us to the fifth and sixth research questions respectively:

*RQ5:* What were the distinct differences among the four seasons and how did these differences contribute to making the show more local than its international format?

*RQ6:* How was the global and the local balanced, thus situating the show in the context of glocalization?
Studying the game show *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* in the Indian context and determining how it was localized for an Indian market is the purpose of this research. The literature reviewed above has focused on game shows, on globalization of television, and on instance of localization of format-replicated shows. The studies that have been done so far on format replicated shows are typically limited to content analyses. For example, Ganguly and Kraidy (2004) looked only at nine episodes of the first season of *KBC*. Similarly, Hetsoni (2005), who has compared the various versions of *Millionaire* around the world, only compares the questions of the different versions.

For this thesis the researcher interviewed people associated with the show and performed a textual analysis of a sample of episodes from all four seasons. It identifies the specific elements that were used in localization, and examines how these elements were used in varying measures over the course of the four seasons. Considering that all television channels in India now air format-replicated shows, and most of the shows go on to have multiple seasons, the glocalization of Indian television needs to be studied. India is the world’s largest free enterprise democracy, and with the monopoly of the government-owned television station diminished, people can choose to watch this program. In a country where people in each state speak a different language and practice very distinct customs and traditions, this was a show that appealed to the cultural sensitivity of a hugely diverse audience. The strategies of localization that went into producing this one show can be later expanded to study similar format replicated shows that air in the country. For other countries which also have format-adapted shows, the specific cultural signifiers required to localize a show will be different, but what one can learn from this show is that thoroughness attention to details is what makes a format
truly a balanced glocal one. Now that the show is being franchised into six regional languages of India, and in Bangladeshi for Bangladesh, this study can be used to further the enquiry of glocalization and how the local elements change for each market, even if they are part of the broader cultural area.
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This study used qualitative and exploratory research. The data were collected from documents, such as articles and news stories that were published in the English-language Indian papers and magazines from 2000 to April 2011. Data was also collected through interviews. The interviews were done on the phone and follow-up questions were asked over email. The persons who were interviewed are the producer of the show Siddhartha Basu, and Atul Thakur, a researcher who worked with the content team of KBC. And finally data was collected through a textual analysis of a sample of actual episodes.

In the present study 50 episodes of KBC spanning four seasons were analyzed. There were 12 episodes from the first season, 12 episodes from the second season, 13 episodes from the third season and 13 episodes from the fourth season that were examined. The episodes of the first two seasons were selected using convenience sampling as very few episodes were available on the Internet; this is also the reason why only 12 episodes of the first season were analyzed in spite of the season having 270 episodes. All the episodes of the third and the fourth season were available on the internet and they were selected randomly. There were 61 episodes in the second season, 52 episodes in the third season and 36 episodes in the fourth season. Of the 50 episodes analyzed, there were nine which were selected purposively. The purposively selected episodes are: from the first season, the episode that produced the first Crorepati or 10-

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7 Harshvardhan Nawathe, was the first Indian to ever win a sum of Rs 10 million on a television game show. This episode was telecast on October 19, 2000.
millionaire, and two special celebrity episodes; from the second season one celebrity episode; from the third season two celebrity episodes and from the fourth season, the first episode, the last episode and one celebrity episode.

The episodes were textually analyzed for the presence of the following 10 elements or themes: greetings and banter, contestants’ awe of meeting the actor, contestant stories, preaching, regionalism, reference to history, reference to mythology and religion, reference to cricket, reference to Bollywood and reference to international affairs. Each of these themes will be reviewed in detail in the discussion.

The categories that were created for the textual analysis were selected after looking at the literature on localization for India, the interviews with Basu and Thakur and after an initial sampling of the episodes of the four seasons. Pathania-Jain (2006), mentions the importance of language and local humor in localization, out of this suggestion emerged the theme “greetings and banter” category that was analyzed. McMillin (2003), Kumar (2006) and Pathania-Jain (2006), talk about how the selection of the host to can determine the fate of a format adapted show, and out of their observations emerged the theme “awe of the actors” which looks at how the participants and the studio audience react to the presence of a star host. In his interview with the researcher, Siddhartha Basu, the producer of the show said KBC was all about human drama and this is what makes the show different from its Western counterparts. The human-drama in the show was brought in by the contestants, and thus the category of “contestants’ stories” was created to analyze the same. McMillin’s (2003) analysis of the Indian version of the Newlywed Game, Adarsha Dampathigalu revealed that at the end of every episode, the

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8 On special occasion like a major Indian festival, the show had Indian celebrities, mainly movie stars and cricketers come onto the show. The celebrities donated their winnings to a charity of their choice.
host and an elderly member from the audience always stressed the importance of
marriage or how to maintain harmony in a marriage, the presence of these normative
monologues on that show urged the researcher to look for similar content in KBC which
led to the creation the category “preaching.” The category of “regionalism” was created
after an initial sampling of the episodes of all the four seasons, which indicated that in the
third season the regions of the country were played up. Pathania- Jain (2006), Rao
(2009) and Kumar (2006), suggest the inclusion of cultural iconography in a format
adapted show is essential, for it is something the audience can identify with. This led the
researcher to look out for culturally iconic elements in the initial sampling of the
episodes, and five culturally significant elements were found in KBC- Indian history,
religion, mythology, cricket and Bollywood. But, there were some questions that could
fall under both religion and mythology, such as, questions related to Rama, who some
believe is a mythical character while he is also worshipped as a god by a large number of
Hindus in India. This led the researcher to club mythology and religion into one category;
the other three categories that emerged were “history”, “cricket” and “Bollywood”. The
category “international affairs and events related questions” was created after the initial
sampling revealed the existence of these questions.

The categories were operationalized by the presence of certain words or elements.
The “greetings and banter” category was operationalized by looking for Hindi and Indian
language equivalent for words such as, hi, hello, good morning and good night. The
conversation of the host with the contestant playing the game, his/her family members
and his interaction with the studio audience qualified for banter. The “awe of the actor”
category looked at, the studio audience’s and the contestants’ and their family members’
reaction towards the hosts. Sentences such as “I am a huge fan of yours” or “please bless my children” or “please will you recite a dialogue from your movie” qualified for inclusion in this category. The “contestant stories” category was operationalized by what was mentioned about each of the contestants who went on to play the game. Things such as their occupation or what they did, what they wanted to do with the prize money were analyzed. The category of “preaching” was operationalized as, normative monologues that the hosts had at the beginning and the end of the episodes; when the host urged the home audience to do or abide by something, such as, getting their child vaccinated against polio; preaching did not include greetings or banter, or explanation of the rules of the game, the conversation with the contestant around the game, such as, how much money they had won, his reading of the questions, his introduction of the contestants or greeting the audience on special occasions such as festivals. The category “regionalism” was operationalized as any mention of a particular region or a city of India other than while introducing the contestants or in questions, use of regional language words while referring to the contestant or the computer and performing regional songs and dances. The category “history” was operationalized by the presence of Indian-history related questions on the show, such as: “During which ruler’s rule did Gandhara art flourish?” The questions also had to be supported by facts and not myths. The category “mythology and religion” was operationalized by the presence of questions that dealt with Indian mythology and religion, any questions that were related to the epics Ramayana or Mahabharat or the Indian gods, or questions related to religions such as Islam or Buddhism qualified for this category. The “reference to cricket” category was operationalized by the presence of cricket related terms in the questions and in the banter
of the hosts, words such as sixer, crease, innings, run-rate were some of the words that were analyzed for this category. The category of “reference to Bollywood” was operationalized by the presence of Bollywood movie, actor, director, dialogue or song related questions; the presence of Bollywood stars as guests (not the hosts) on the show and performance to Bollywood songs on the show. The “international affairs and events questions” was operationalized by the presence of questions that did not deal with Indian context.

The study also looked at the television commercials aired to promote interest in the show. The promos aired before the launch of the show for each season have been analyzed. A total of 12 commercials and one promotional music video were looked at. The commercials were analyzed for presence of the following cultural iconographies: Bollywood, cricket, history, religion and mythology; the prominence given to the hosts and the element of human drama. The reason for analyzing these themes in the promos was the same as the themes in the episodes. The other themes such as contestant stories, greetings and banter, regionalism, preaching and international events and affairs related questions were ruled out as they could not happen before the show went on air. The purpose of making this comparison was to see whether the emphasis of the show changed and how it was localized over a period of 10 years.

The analysis revealed that some of these themes were more dominant than the others, and the emphasis on the elements differed from season to season. The findings of the first and the second season were collapsed as no differences were noted.
CHAPTER 5: CREATING INDIAN IDENTITY OF THE MILLIONAIRE MODEL

The emerging trend in television content production is format adaptation in which production adaptation remains local but inception and development of the concept or format may have happened in another country. Adaptable television programming has become a commodity of international trade. *KBC* is such a format adapted show. Format adaptation refers to the industry practice of authorizing the replication of a media product by including local content; often the terms of adaptation are agreed on without compromising on the critical “format,” which in itself becomes a brand (Ganguly & Kraidy, 2004). When a production house or a television channel buys a format, it not only has rights to the concept but also access to production information, such as technical requirements, lessons learned, a shooting schedule, crew list, budget sample, and anything else of value to the production team. Software for the graphics and videos from the original and local adaptations can be included, together with scripts in the case of scripted formats (Esser, 2010).

Even though a finished program is less expensive to license and involves fewer complications such as having to produce the program locally, broadcasters and producers are choosing to license a program format because they believe the localized version will be more popular with the audience than the pre-produced counterpart. The success of a program’s format in other foreign markets gives confidence to the local producers that it is likely to click with their target audience too. But, a show format that is developed in a different country and is then franchised to another market cannot work if the content is a mere replica. Siddhartha Basu, who worked on the localizing of the *Millionaire* show, said:
The content has to be matched with relevant context, and that a good idea or concept needs an appropriate architecture, properly adapted to an Indian mindset and sensibility. It is the sense of detail in design and execution, and effective back-end that is critical to successful implementation, rather than carbon copy imitation, or wholesale grafting of methodologies. It is when licensors are sufficiently flexible and culturally sensitive that formats have the best chance of coming alive locally. However, there’s an equal risk when the format becomes so lax as to lose all shape and becomes meaningless.

You cannot transplant a certain experience already tried in one country and hope that it will work. It has to be a careful endeavor. The challenges of cultural adaptability in India are tremendous. The Indian market is different. Here Thums Up cola outsells Coke, and McDonalds doesn’t outsell local delicacies. Indianizing the format was very essential. ⁹

Every market has its own peculiarity or niche. Adapting a show for India involved including cultural elements that helped create the Indian identity of the Millionaire model. Some the cultural elements to which the producers paid attention -- such as language of the show, questions, and visibility of local icons -- are examined in this chapter. It should also be noted that as Pathania-Jain (2006) suggests, one of the strategies to effectively localize media content is to give creative autonomy to the local people. This chapter also examines how locals were involved in the show at the production level.

Creative Autonomy to Locals in Creating an Indian Identity

The task of producing KBC was given to Synergy, an Indian production house that specializes in making quiz shows. The owner of the production house, Siddhartha Basu, is a successful quiz master himself with 26 years of experience in making quiz shows for the Indian audience. Basu started his career as a quiz master in 1985 with a show called Quiz Time for Doordarshan. At that time this was the only TV channel India had, and it was state-run. Along with producing for television, such as the show

⁹ (S. Basu, personal communication, March 11, 2011).
Spectrum a quiz show that had participants from the seven SAARC countries, Basu’s company conducted live quizzes for companies and institutions all over India. As he said, “I’ve conducted live quizzes for neo-literates and nuclear physics professors, Tihar jail inmates and members of parliament, kitchen workers and chairmen of some of India’s biggest companies.” Moreover the production house had shown some flair for format adaptation before it made KBC, when in 1998, it successfully adapted and produced the BBC quiz show Mastermind, which was telecast on BBC India and called Mastermind India. Among the format adapted shows the production house has worked on are Mastermind India, University Challenge, Kamzor Kadi Kaun (The Weakest Link), Jhalak Dikhla Ja (Dancing with the Stars), all BBC formats; India’s Got Talent, Sach ka Saamna (The Moment of Truth) Heartbeat, from Endemol; India’s Child Genius (Challenge of the Child Geniuses), a Fox format; Bluffmaster (Dirty Rotten Cheater), from Distraction; Jaane Kya Toone Kahi (A Word in your Ear) and Aao Guess Karein (Second Guess) from Action Time.

For KBC, the involvement of local people was seen at all levels, especially the research team that wrote the questions for the show. Atul Thakur, one of the researchers with the KBC team, said,

They were very particular in picking people because the research team either had people like me who had a background of quizzing in school and college or they had a background of preparing for the civil services exam, which again is extensively based on general knowledge, and hence finding question was not that difficult for us. Apart from this we had an array of contributors from all over India ranging from university professors, journalists to college students who were paid per question in case of selection.

10 (S. Basu, personal communication, March 11, 2011).
11 Ibid.
12 (A. Thakur, personal communication, April 21, 2011).
The presence of contributors from all over India ensured that the different regions of the country were represented in the questions.

The set was designed by Nitin Desai, one of Bollywood’s leading art directors and set designers. The set designed for KBC was different from the original Millionaire design (Dundoo, 2009). A platform was erected using a hydraulic platform, to support the computer screens and chairs for the contestant and the host of the show. These changes had to be approved by the format creators.

The look and the attire of the host closely resembled that of the British and American counterparts. Bachchan wore formal suits with a tie, but for the special episodes involving celebrities he was seen in traditional Indian attire, kurta-pyjama and shawl. In the second season Bachchan, along with formal jackets, was also seen in printed shirt and leather jackets, a look that he had in the movie Bunty Aur Bubli, which was released earlier that year. In the third season the look of Shah Rukh Khan was designed by Bollywood director and designer Karan Johar. The designer kept it simple and stylish, the suits were in deeper tones, and each suit had minor detailing work and was worn with skinny ties (Upala, 2007). In the fourth season Bachchan’s wardrobe was designed by Ravi Bajaj, again a popular name in Indian fashion. The look did not differ from his previous two appearances, but he now wore thick-rimmed glasses. The involvement of locals was seen in all aspects of the show, and there was a touch of Bollywood all around it.
Language in Creating Local Identity

The idea of cultural identity and belonging is rooted in the language that is spoken by the people of a country. Language has a major contribution in demarcating cultural boundaries; other differentiators can be religion such as in the case of India and Pakistan. In the case of India, language becomes more important as the states are divided on the basis of the dominant language spoken in each. There are 22 official languages in India (recognized by the constitution), and even if it is not possible to cater to the sensibilities of speakers of each one, the broader understanding of Indian languages was taken into account during the writing of the show. Hindi, being the official national language, was chosen as the primary medium of communication; however the host would always repeat the question in English, as there are numerous Indians who do not understand all Hindi words. The graphics on the screen that showed the question and its four options were always in English, and this was taken from the original format. KBC also came up with certain catchphrases and its own lingo, which became very popular throughout the country. Basu sheds light on how some of them came about:

*KBC* has come to be known for certain specific phrases and terms. Some of the catchphrases were forethought, some just happened through rehearsal and discussion. “Shall we lock it,”*[and]* “Is that your final answer” was from the British original. *Computerji* just happened when Amitabh Bachchan did a personalized chat with the computer, *ji* being fairly common usage in polite company up north. The second season was called KBC *Dwiteeya*[^13] and *Dwiteeya* casually came off the top of my head during a rehearsal when Bachchan asked – so what do we call it, KBC 2 or what? He used *Dwiteeya* with a stylish, comic flourish.[^14]

The language used in the third season of the show, which had Shah Rukh Khan as host, was colloquial Hindi. The reason for this change, Basu said, was “a conscious attempt

[^13]: *Dwiteeya* means second in Hindi.
according to the channel brief to skew [toward a] younger audience in the third series. Shah Rukh used the language he was comfortable with.” 15 In the fourth season with Bachchan back as the host the language of the show was again pure Hindi. There was a conscious effort to script the show, and language was used as a main vehicle of localization.

Questions in Creating a Local Identity

The questions that were asked in the show were an essential part of the game. The challenges faced by the producers in coming up with the right kind of questions for the Indian audience were enormous. Basu said:

Indian contestants and viewers are such a heterogeneous lot, in terms of awareness, exposure, education, language, culture and so on, and the KBC net is cast so wide, that it can throw up the most unlikely candidates who hardly fit into any sort of regular quizzing profile. So the question answer content has to be really diverse, yet tap the popular pulse.16

Atul Thakur, a researcher with the show, said the question-making process for the Indian version was totally independent of the original British version. He said:

We were not given questions from the original version because the questions will be out of context in case of India. Neither were we asked to confine the question to India; rather the confinement was on the knowledge of an average Indian. An average Indian who is a man of this world will know things like the Tropic of Cancer passes through India. Our guideline was not to frame questions which can only be answered by five persons in India. The questions had to have some awe factor like “Oh my God I could have also answered it” or “Oh how can I forget it.” Apart from this we also used to give [a] hint in the question itself.

The reason of the success of the show was the concept of stacks. We used to make stacks of questions depending on the participants. A housewife will be asked to answer questions which she can answer according to her qualification. Similarly there will a different stack for an engineer and doctor. However most of

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15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
the participants never reached beyond a certain level and naturally most of the time we had to make [a] lot more lower-level questions.\textsuperscript{17}

Basu added that the instructions from the broadcaster were the questions had to be “populist.” Hindu mythology, much more than Bollywood or cricket, was widely considered the most populist topic for questions. Again, the producers said they had to keep in mind that there are gender and strong regional differences in awareness of particular subjects. “The heroes in one part of the country are barely known in others. So there is a constant search for content of pan-Indian relevance, while making sure that there is a range,” said Basu.\textsuperscript{18}

When asked how the question selection process changed over the course of the four seasons, Basu said, “There’s been a progressive movement away from whatever was bookish to a younger, more contemporary, and more current sensibility.” The language and the questions together added cultural context to the show, but the main difference of \textit{KBC} from \textit{Millionaire} and its other adaptations was the presence of a movie star host.

\textbf{Contribution of Hosts Toward \textit{KBC}’s Local Identity}

Of all the countries that the \textit{Millionaire} has traveled to, India is the only market that has attracted superstars to host the format. Sameer Nair, former CEO of Star Entertainment India, calls it “\textit{Sone pe Suhaga}” (a local saying that is equivalent to icing on the cake). The producer of the show, Siddhartha Basu, explained the reason behind choosing Bachchan as the host of the show:

As in films, the rationale of getting stars to host shows is two-fold: first, to get the larger-than-life “wow” factor for the show, which will attract the initial eyeballs and ensure sampling, [get people to watch the first few episodes] and second, to

\textsuperscript{17} (A. Thakur, personal communication, April, 21, 2011).
\textsuperscript{18} (S. Basu, personal communication, March 11, 2011).
get in revenues. After that, it’s the content and presentation of the show that keeps viewers hooked. In India, there was no other star who could connect to a pan-India audience, it was the biggest wow factor we could get.\textsuperscript{19}

The choice of Bachchan as host was a key to the process of “glocalization.” This is where \textit{Kaun Banega Crorepati} is significantly different from its Western counterparts. While in India the show is hosted by iconic Bollywood actors, the versions in the United States and United Kingdom were hosted by moderately eminent television personalities. Regis Philbin, the host of the U.S. version of the \textit{Millionaire}, was a media personality who was known more as a talk show host than a game show host (Baber, 2008). Before hosting \textit{Who Wants to be a Millionaire?} he tried his hand at hosting another game show, \textit{The Neighbor}, which was a ratings disaster. His talk show personality seemed out of place for a game show host. Through his career Philbin worked as a news anchor, radio host and also did standup comedy. He moved between New York City and Los Angeles a number of times. He had the art of making mundane stories interesting with his writing style, but did not distort the facts. As a talk show host Philbin had taken four shots at achieving national stardom but never got much success\textsuperscript{20}. But he had success with regional shows such as \textit{Live with Regis and Kathy Lee} which was one of the reasons he was chosen to host the \textit{Millionaire} in the U.S.A. It was in 1999, at the age of 68, he got the opportunity to host the American version of \textit{Who Wants to be a Millionaire?} This time Philbin proved to be the ideal host for the show. Even if he hosted the show for only for three seasons, he is still is the most successful host for the show in U.S.A. He hosted the show till June 2002.

\textsuperscript{19} (S. Basu, personal communication, March 11, 2011).
Chris Tarrant, the first host of the British version of the Millionaire, was also a television and radio anchor. Beginning in 1987 he hosted the breakfast show on London’s 95.8 Capital FM. He started hosting Who Wants to be a Millionaire? in 1998.

In India, Amitabh Bachchan’s stature, on the other hand, is similar to Marlon Brando or Sean Connery. His acting career has spanned more than 40 years. As of May 2011, he had acted in 176 movies. He has won the Indian National Award for acting three times and the Filmfare Awards (the main movie award in India) 12 times. He was also honored with Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri, which are the highest civilian awards in India. Shah Rukh Khan, the actor who stepped into Bachchan’s shoes to host the third season, is also enormously popular in India. The fourth season of the show that was aired in 2010 was hosted by Bachchan again and it was launched to coincide with his 68th birthday.

The need to have a strong authoritative figure to host the show arose from the historical presence of the character of the Sutradhar in Indian stories and plays (Kumar, 2005). The term sutradhar literally translates as “the one who holds the threads.” In Indian literature, the sutradhar is a central figure who simplifies and connects the various elements of a story to create a comprehensible narrative. He is the narrator who has the insight that the audience is not privy to. From his privileged position, he acts as a guide for both the audience and sometimes even the characters of the story. One of the key roles of a sutradhar is also that of a manipulator. Another duty of the sutradhar is to connect the theme of the play to a contemporary issue. The role of the sutradhar is similar to that of the chorus in Greek plays. The chorus usually performs functions such as explaining the action, interpreting the action in relation to the laws of the state or the
Olympian gods, give warnings of the future and give the author’s view. Almost all Indian theater and entertainment traditions that draw their roots from the classic Sanskrit literature and traditions have the presence of the sutradhar, such as the Bhavai in Gujarat, Burra Katha in Andhra Pradesh, Jatra in West Bengal, Nautanki in Uttar Pradesh, Tamasha in Maharashtra, Terukuttu in Tamil Nadu, and Yakshagana in Karnataka. All are inspired by classical traditions of Sanskrit theatre (Kumar, 2005).

In the early years of Indian television, programs that became enormously popular retained the character of the sutradhar. In the 1984, Doordarshan started airing the television serial Hum Log (We People.) Hum Log revolved around the strong family system in Indian and how the system was grappling with modern-day concerns such as family planning, women’s education and women’s rights (Singhal & Rodgers, 1990). The producers of Hum Log signed Ashok Kumar, a venerated and popular actor from Bollywood, to play the role of the sutradhar. Ashok Kumar addressed the in-built conflict in the narrative and moral dilemmas of the characters in Hum Log who were caught between tradition and modernity. At the end of each of the 156 episodes of the program, Ashok Kumar had a minute-long commentary about the show (Singhal & Rodgers, 1990). He was playing the host or the mediator for the show.

In 1987, Doordarshan started airing Ramayana, an ancient Indian epic. This show too continued the tradition of having a sutradhar. In Ramayana, the sutradhar was used to place the televised version of the epic in a long tradition of the epic’s variations over several centuries and across many cultures in the world. It was again Ashok Kumar who played the sutradhar or the narrator of the televised epic (Kumar, 2005). Ashok Kumar urged views to look at the epic with an open mind and narrated the historical legacy and
the references of the many *Ramayanas* in literature, theater, drama and cinema in
different languages not only within India, but also in places such as Thailand, Russia,
Germany and England. Viewers were already acquainted and accepting of Ashok Kumar
as a narrator, and his re-appearance in *Ramayana* only made the case stronger for a good
narrator for Indian audiences.

In 1989, *Doordarshan* aired *Mahabharat*, yet another ancient Indian epic. This
show too got very high viewership. This show too had a *sutradhar* (Kumar, 2005). In
elucidating the complex plots and characters of *Mahabharat*, the producers of the show
used “time” (*samay*) as the narrator -- “time” which heralds the past, present and future
and hence could foresee things none other can. Every episode would begin with *samay*
repeating what happened in the story so far and would giving an indication of what is to
come. The voice-over for *samay* the *sutradhar* was rendered by Harish Bhimani, a
famous voice artist in India.

Thus one of the key components for localizing *Millionaire* was to get an
authoritative figure, such as Bachchan, to play the host. He would be someone who could
integrate the role of the traditional *sutradhar* as much as conform to the image of the host
that was well delineated by the Western versions of the show.

The Bachchan phenomenon that was created in India reflected social conditions in
India at that time and Bachchan’s own charisma and acting that brought his movie
characters to life. Bachchan was India’s first real working-class hero. His characters were
significantly different from those played by his male predecessors such as K L Saigal,
Ashok Kumar, Raj Kapoor, Dev Anannd, Dilip Kumar, Guru Dutt, Shammi Kapoor and
Rajesh Khanna (Dwyer, 2000). These actors were mainly romantic heroes, and the
characters they played did not offer any real assessment of the rapidly changing society around them. India, after its independence in 1947, undertook a major program of industrialization and urbanization that had significant demographic changes. During the 1960s and early 1970s, especially after the 1971 war between India and Pakistan, huge numbers of people were migrating from the rural areas to the cities in search of employment. Urbanization radically affected Indians, whose lives traditionally were built around the myths and rituals of tradition and strongly knit community life. Their new life in the cities was often harsh and alienating, and it had no resonance with the rural life they had left behind. Limited housing and inadequate urban welfare led to the rise of slums, shantytowns and pavement dwellers. The people living there were poorly paid daily-wage laborers. Bombay cinema adapted to these changed circumstances. Bachchan became the icon of the new industrial working class, a section of the population who began to comprise a significant number of cinema-going public (Vitali, 2008).

Bachchan started playing the man who belongs to the urban lower class and tries to earn a living in a city. His character was always a man of action, who, in order to survive, sometimes blurs the line between the right and the wrong, and someone who despite being from the working class was rebelling against the capitalists. Never before the Bachchan movies had the occupation of the characters in Hindi film been so prominent. And not just the occupation of the lead protagonist, which was usually played by Bachchan, but also the occupation of all the characters of the movies. Bachchan played roles such as a factory worker, miner, porter, construction worker, shoe-polish boy and even a smuggler when he played the anti-hero role (Vitali, 2008). He brought a
sense of pride to manual labor through his working man roles without forcing them into the hierarchy of caste (Vishwanathan, 2000).

The angry young man or the industrial hero was largely created in the scripts of writer duo Salim Khan and Javed Akhtar. Javed Akhtar said the angry young man created a new kind of romanticism, a hope that he will make things better. This was romanticism of a bitter person (Dwyer, 2002). Khan and Akhtar wrote 10 scripts for Bachchan -- *Zanjeer, Deewar, Sholay, Iman Dharam, Don, Trishul, Kala Patthar, Dostana, Shaan* and *Shakti*. Out of these 10 movies, nine were hits. *Kala Patthar, Deewar* and *Trishul* for a trilogy of sorts, focused on Amitabh Bachchan as Vijay, the industrial hero. Vijay is driven by the desire to make up for the injustices he is forced to endure. The repetition of the name Vijay (meaning victory) in most of his movies had a resonance among the audience. Bachchan became the champion of the underdogs.

“Amitabh brought a new physicality into cinema. While not a muscular action hero, he was particularly tall and long-limbed, slim and hard-bodied and looked right for the parts. Another aspect of his physicality was his voice.” (Dwyer, 2002, p. 74) He has a deep baritone, and in his portrayal of the working-class hero he used his voice to express anger and convey the dissatisfaction of the displaced masses. But, at the same time Bachchan was able to express his anger in a measured manner. Javed Akhtar said,

People drop all their guard in a moment of anger, their real self is revealed. . . . As an actor Amitabh’s anger was never ugly. Other actors mix anger with arrogance. But Amitabh’s anger was mixed with hurt and tears. So you accept it, you get fascinated by it, and you find justification for it (Kabir, 1999, p. 88).

Bachchan became the voice of the subaltern masses. The rags-to-riches narratives accompanied with the agenda of personal revenge in Bachchan’s films were the
imaginary fulfillment of the slum dweller’s own fantasies. Bachchan’s anger came at a time when India was stepping into its next stage of development, an India that was outgrowing the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence (Mishra, 2002). Between 1980 and 1984, Bachchan starred in nearly every major hit movie. Even his minor films grossed more at the box office than the films of almost all the other film stars. In fact, of the 57 releases up to 1984, only five of Bachchan’s movies did not do well.

Bachchan has caused mass hysteria since he became a star. In a country which has as many as 22 major languages, multiple religions and starkly different regional customs, he was successful in breaking all boundaries and had a huge national fan following. Bachchan is considered to be the last of the pan-Indian film heroes (Vishwanathan, 2000). The current generation of Bollywood actors has niche fan bases. Some actors are popular in North India, some are popular in Western states such as Maharashtra, and some actors such as Shah Rukh Khan are more popular among the diaspora. Bachchan is the first post-partition major star who came from the Hindi-speaking heartland of Uttar Pradesh and who was thoroughly conversant with standard Hindi as well as its dialects, notably Avadhi.

The extent of his popularity was witnessed in 1982, when he was nearly killed while performing a stunt for the film Coolie. As his condition deteriorated then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi appealed to the people of India to pray for him. The mosque Haji Ali in Mumbai (a city that is the home for Bollywood, the Indian film industry) had special prayers offered for him, marking the first time the mosque had dedicated prayers for a Hindu person. There was an outburst of emotions as people converged on the hospital premises day and night to enquire about him. He survived, gained his health, but
quit movies. His next stop was politics. He entered the general election and won with 68.2% of the vote. After a four-year-tenure as a member of the parliament, he took a long sabbatical from public life.

In 1992, Bachchan started a media company called Amitabh Bachchan Corporation Limited (ABCL). After a few initial years of success the company started running debts in the millions. The company had ventured into too many projects simultaneously, and a few of those ran into huge losses. By 1998, ABCL had been declared an at-risk company by the government, and total liabilities to its various debtors were as high as Rs 800 million ($18.1 million) (Ghosh & Guha Roy, 1999).

Bachchan at this point was looking for work. He made a rash comeback to the movies, but after his long hiatus the hits were few. Then he started endorsing products to make money. So, when he was approached by Star Plus to host its new game show Kaun Banega Crorepati, he was hesitant but decided to take the plunge and start a new career on television. He was signed up for 130 episodes for nothing less than Rs 150 million ($3.4 million) (Kriplani, 2000). As in his movies, it was Bachchan’s turn in real life to return with a vengeance – this time, to the mass media. But the persona he portrayed on television was completely different from his silver screen image. The angry young man of cinema was now an arbitrator, thus staying to the true role of the Indian sutradhar. The producer of the show Siddhaarth Basu said:

KBC is synonymous to Amitabh. The Millionaire model was replicated in 106 countries. But I still get goose pimples when I see what Amitabh did on KBC. I have heard some movie theaters changed the time for screening movies between Monday to Thursday so that it would not clash with KBC. Even in his second innings [season] the ratings were higher than the first innings. Look, that initial euphoria of the first innings, when streets were empty, was missing in the second
innings. But in terms of viewership the second innings was better. When Amitabh fell ill . . . the show had to be terminated. 21

When the second season of KBC came to an abrupt halt, the producers decided to begin the third season of the show with a new host, Shah Rukh Khan. Recalling the choice of the host, Basu said:

Shah Rukh Khan was always the most obvious alternative. I think it was a great choice, though only as an alternative to Amitabh Bachchan. Shah Rukh is smart and [a] young people’s person. He is charming and cheeky. He was very willing to prepare hard. Shah Rukh has none of the anxieties that most actors have about anchoring. The tone, tenor and texture changed with Shah Rukh. 22

Shah Rukh Khan was a middle-class Muslim from Delhi who had very humble beginnings (Chopra, 2007). Khan started his acting career in early 1990s with television, playing the lead in a series called Fauji (Army). He moved to Mumbai, and has made it big without any nepotistic connections. Among the Indian audience he is bigger than Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt combined (Chopra, 2007). One of his biggest box-office hits, Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (The Brave-Hearted Takes the Bride), released in 1995, is still screening in a movie theater in Mumbai. So far Khan has won 14 Filmfare Awards, and a Padmashri, one of India’s highest civilian awards.

Khan’s cinematic text mirrors the rise of a post-liberalization middle class (Singh, 2010). He is seen as an open and friendly person who is immensely devoted to his wife and family. Shah Rukh Khan, a Muslim, is married to a Hindu woman, which again is seen as his explicit assertion as an Indian Muslim (Singh, 2010). Khan builds on his origins as a middle-class man with aspirations and economic prosperity for himself and

22 Ibid.
his loved ones. This “hero” does not resort to violence when faced with opposition and injustice, but tries negotiation and persuasion as means to his ends.

These two Indian actors embody the aspirations of the Indian audience. While Bachchan played the working-class hero who strived for a better lifestyle in his movies, Khan’s personal journey has been one of modesty to riches. The two actors also follow different faiths--Bachchan follows Hinduism and Khan embraces Islam--and thus having these two hosts gave a show a secular character. Apart from the fact that they are cultural icons, they are also personalities one can associate with a rags to riches narrative, which is the very essence of the Millionaire-model. As Basu points out, “KBC is not just another quiz game. It’s really about human drama. About hope and disappointment.” 23

Introducing human drama into the show was also the most significant way to Indianize it. In a country of almost 1.2 billion people, this was a chance for a few to become famous and rich. The discussion and analysis of episodes and the television promotional advertisements for the show that follow will discuss how the show moved from being centered on the game to one about human drama.

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23 (S. Basu, personal communication, March 11, 2011).
CHAPTER 6: EPISODES AND TELEVISION COMMERCIAL ANALYSIS

Television Commercial Analysis

This section of the study does a textual analysis of some of the television promotional commercials aired to promote interest in the show. The commercials that aired before the launch of the show for each season have been analyzed. The promos were analyzed for the presence of the following themes: Bollywood, cricket, history, religion and mythology; the prominence given to the hosts and the element of human drama. A total of 12 commercials and one promotional music video were looked at. The purpose of making this comparison is to see whether the emphasis of the show changed and how it was localized over a period of 10 years.

During the launch of the first season of *KBC*, there were two promotional commercials shown on television. In the first one, Bachchan walked up to common people and asked them “*Nau Baaj Gaye Kya?*” (Is it 9’o clock?), and the signature music of *KBC* would follow the question. The second commercial had Bachchan looking straight into the camera and asking a simple question, “*Ek crore mein kinte zero hote hai?*” (How many zeros are there in 10 million?) The first commercial showed Bachchan interacting with the common person and implied the biggest star of Indian film industry would appear on television and interact with the common people; it also emphasized the timing of the show as it aired from 9 to 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday. The second commercial was blatantly talking about the prize money that could be earned in the show. Both the commercials had a “question” as the main theme, which again reinforced that it was going to be a quiz show. Thus the three elements that were used to promote in the...
first season were the prize money, the host and the question. About the promos of the first season, Basu said:

“In the first season, the initial promotion of the show was devoted to Amitabh Bachchan as the host and the huge prize money that was up for grabs. It therefore had Bachchan pitching the entry call for an unprecedented prize amount and there were parallel tutoring promos [which were run with a voice over and subtitling] on how to dial in and take part, the response to this campaign was overwhelming.”

The second season was called KBC Dwiteeya, which means “second” in Hindi. This season was promoted through three television commercials. In the first one, the character of an aspiring cricketer named Vijay Nazare was trying to make it big, but lacking in skills he was never successful. But he did not lose hope, and now life was giving him a second chance through becoming a contestant on KBC. The second commercial had a struggling actor, Vijay Kumar, who again wanted to be a big star, but did not achieve success and was now hoping to win big money from KBC. The third commercial had a hopeful singer named Vijay Lahiri, who again could not become famous and was trying his luck with KBC. The commercials had Bachchan rapping the story of these characters, saying, “Don’t lose hope is the moral of the story” and then saying to the viewer: If you are willing to try you may end up winning twice what you had expected. The tagline was Umeed Se Dugna, or two times more than one’s expectations. Thus like the first season, the prize money -- which is this case was 20 million, or twice that of the first season –was highlighted, and there was an emphasis on human drama of all the characters trying to make it big. The association with Bollywood was also evident in the Bollywood-style rap song and the fact that the names of all the three characters in the commercials were Vijay, a name that has also been the most
common screen name of Bachchan in his movies. This time cultural signifiers such as cricket and Bollywood were introduced in the promotion of the show. Ajay Vidyasagar, who was the vice-president of marketing and communication for Star Plus in 2005 said, “We chose a cricketer, an actor and singer because these are commonplace ambitions of most Indians.” (Parkar, 2005).

The third season was promoted with a series of commercials and a four-minute-long music video. One commercial started with a young boy in New Delhi who asked too many questions, but as the boy grows up his curiosity increases and finally to find answers he leaves New Delhi and moves to Mumbai, where he is still asking questions, this time as the host of KBC. The advertisement tries to trace Khan’s journey from his hometown of New Delhi to Mumbai, where he earned fame. The thrust of this commercial was back on the host, as this was the season in which a new host was being introduced, but the emphasis was again on the human drama, the personal journey of the actor, from being a middle-class man to becoming rich and famous. Ajay Vidyasagar, who was the executive vice president of marketing and communication with Star India in 2007, agreed that the film is aimed to strike an emotional connect between the viewers and Khan (Nair, 2007). Sagar Mahabaleshwarkar, creative director, O&M, the agency which created the film, voiced a similar view, “Yes, this film is SRK [Shah Rukh Khan] centric,… [we wanted to ] portray Khan in an interesting way while maintaining the essence of the communication.” (Nair, 2007).

The emphasis was on questions as the tagline for the advertisement was Kuch Sawal Zindagi Badal Sakte Hai, roughly translated as “Some questions can change life” which was again taking back the show on the lines of a human drama. Continuing this
thread of thought, in a second commercial had Khan having a monologue with himself in which he said we always wanted answers from life, but maybe the questions we ask are wrong, and it takes only one right question to find all the answers. Sagar Mahabaleshwarkar, creative director, O&M, the advertising agency that made the commercial said “The intention was to communicate the power of a question and this insight was derived from the format of the show itself. As is obvious, it is a question that can change the fortune of a person on the show.”

The music video had Khan dancing to a fast-paced track and the lyrics of the song again had Aisa Sawaal jo Zindagi Badal De or “The right question can change one’s life.” Khan performed on Hindi song with some lyrics in English. The song was choreographed and sung by a Bollywood choreographer and musician, Ganesh Hegde. In the video there was a reference to other popular movie actors such as previous host of the show, Bachchan, and actor Raj Kapoor. This time in the promotional campaign, the prize money was not emphasized, but again Bollywood was used as a cultural signifier and the stress was back on questions.

For the fourth season, in the first promo that hit the screens the audience could only see the silhouette of Bachchan walking into the set of KBC and whistling its signature tune. The other commercial showed Bachchan walking down a hallway, looking down at old black and white pictures as he whistled the signature tune of KBC. Since Bachchan was going to host the show again after five years, and after the show had been hosted by someone else, these two commercials helped re-establish him as the host. Secondly showing the host walking down a hallway looking at old images or walking into an empty set, the commercials also made the audience nostalgic. Leo Burnett, India,
the creative agency that was responsible for the promotion of the show had research that showed that people were aware of what *KBC* is; so instead of familiarizing the audience with the concept from the scratch the promos were about recreating the nostalgia of the show (Joshi, 2010).

The next phase of the promotion had three commercials. In the first one, a young boy asked his father, “Who was emperor Akbar’s father?” The father never bothered to find the answer. He goes on to play *KBC*, and stumbles when he is asked the very same question by the host. In the second commercial a young boy is asked by his teacher, “Who said, ‘Give me blood and I will give you freedom?’” The boy never pays attention to the question and does not learn the answer. He grows up and comes to play the game where he is asked the same question, and the man now is clueless about the answer. The third commercial shows an old man requesting a government official to release his pension order; the old man says it is his constitutional right. He is ridiculed by the lady handling his case who says one does not need to know about the constitution. Later this same lady plays the game, and when she is asked who wrote the constitution of India she regrets not knows it. All the three commercials are followed by the tagline “*Koi Bhi Sawaal Chota Nahi Hota,*” or “No question is too small.” Through the two phases of promotions, the host of the show was emphasized; the thrust was on knowledge, that no knowledge goes waste. Nitish Tiwari, the executive creative director for Leo Burnett India said “There is this saying in Hindi, ‘*Koi Bhi Gyaan Vyarth Nahi Jaata*,’ or no kind of knowledge is wasted. We worked on this insight, while the creative idea was how the lack of knowledge you scoffed at could come back to haunt you when you need it the most,” (Joshi, 2010). Danish Khan, head of marketing for Sony Entertainment Television,
said, “The social reality in India is that knowledge is placed at the highest pedestal in Indian homes. Even parents always encourage their children to learn more. That is how we chanced upon the ‘knowledge is rewarding’ idea,” (Joshi, 2010)

The commercials all have questions that could be actual questions on the show and ones that a common Indian knows the answer to. But the commercials also play on the Oscar-winning movie Slumdog Millionaire, which again is based on KBC. In the movie the young protagonist never got to know the answer to the question “Who were the three Musketeers?” which was the same question he had to answer to win the final prize money. Through the two phases of promotions, the host of the show was emphasized, the thrust was on knowledge, that no knowledge goes waste, and finally it was acknowledging the movie that made the show world famous.

Over the four seasons the emphasis of the promotion moved from the prize money to the association of the show with the quest of knowledge, the stress was laid on human emotions, the aspirations of the participants. The show also was promoted more through cultural signifiers such as cricket, history and Bollywood-based concepts, which itself are emotion laden.
Episode Analysis

The episodes were analyzed for the presence of the following 10 elements or themes: greetings and banter, contestants’ awe of meeting the actor, contestant stories, preaching, regionalism, reference to history, reference to mythology and religion, reference to cricket, reference to Bollywood and reference to international affairs. Each of these themes will be reviewed in detail in the discussion. These themes were chosen from an initial sampling of the shows to discover recurring content. The analysis revealed that some of these themes were more dominant than the others, and the emphasis on the elements differed from season to season. The findings of the first and the second season were collapsed as no differences were noted.

Greetings and Banter

All cultures and countries have their distinct style of greeting. However in a global environment, “hello” “hi” a nod of the head and wave of the hand have become accepted forms of greetings. But, *KBC* heavily used the traditional greetings of India in the show. The banter of the host is an important element of the original *Millionaire* format where the host engages the studio audience as much as the contestant in the hot seat with his light-hearted humor. The banter interspersed with Indian greetings makes the show more satisfactory to the Indian sensibilities.

In the first and the second season, Bachchan used formal Hindi to greet the audience and the contestants. When he moved from speaking Hindi to English, it was again very formal. Words such as *Pranam* (salutation), *Namashkar* (meaning *hello* and one typically says it while bringing the palms together and lifting the hands to the chest) were used to start the show every day. Occasionally he also used the words *Satsriakal* (a
greeting used by Sikhs and Punjabis) and Adab (originally an Arabic word, meaning
*courtesy* or *respect*, widely used by Muslims to greet each other). The host was extremely
respectful in addressing the contestants and the family members accompanying them. To
address the contestant’s mother, father and brother words such as *Matashree, Pitashree,
Bhratashree* were used. Adding the suffix *shree* elevates the status of an individual in the
Indian society. The computer, which is an integral part of the game in the original model,
was referred to as *Computer Ji*. Adding the suffix *Ji* it was elevated it from the level of an
inanimate object to a thing that is to be respected. The tone of the conversation was
reverent. Given this emphasis on courtesy, the respect toward familial relations was an
effort to conform to the values of Indian society.

The banter that followed the greetings was mostly around the game, around the
questions asked and the prize money. For instance when a contestant was asked to
identify the nationality of tennis player Anna Kournikova, Bachchan asked the contestant
whether he was aware how glamorous the player in question was. He humored the
contestants in a similar manner when there was a question about Bollywood movie
actors. There was banter around what the contestants would do with the prize money.
Bachchan at times would ask a casual question to a family member accompanying the
contestants.

However, the third season of KBC, which had a different host, also had a distinct
shift in the greetings and the banter. The third season had the usual *Namaskar, Satsriakal,
Adab* and “Good evening,” but the greetings this time had a more secular tone to them
because of a larger share of Urdu words such as *Saalam* (salutation), *Nawazish Karam*
(thank you) *Shabbakhair* (good night), and *Guftugu* (chat). When interacting with the
contestants, Khan used sentences such as “Hum aapke liye dua karte hai.” Dua means prayer in Urdu. Time and again Khan used the Urdu word Inshallah, which means “If it is God’s will.” On one particular occasion when Khan hoped the contestant would win a huge amount of money from the show, he recited the prayer Nasrat Milal Hale. These efforts made to include the Indian-Muslim audience in the game were not made in the earlier seasons. The other noticeable change was the language itself that Khan used in the show. It was not the purest form of Hindi but rather a mix of colloquial Hindi and English, a language more Indians relate to than the pure form of Hindi. Words such as Aye-vai (just like that) or Kachha-pucca (half-cooked), which are Hindi slang, were used.

The greetings in the fourth season of KBC moved back to pure Hindi. Bachchan used salutations such as Devio Aur Sajjono Aap Sabko mera Binamrata Purbak Praman (“My humblest salutations to the ladies and gentlemen”). The greetings in other language were limited to an Urdu, Punjabi and English. The famous reference to the computer as Computer Ji was back, and so were other catch phrases such as Lock Kiya Jaye (“Let us lock the answer”) and “Sure, confident?” and “Is that your final answer?” were back as well. Bachchan usually recited Hindi poetry and rhythmic monologues at the beginning or the end of the shows. Bachchan greeted the audience on the occasion of the Hindu festival Dussehra, National Children’s Day, which is observed in India on November 14. Since the season started on his birthday, a lot of the banter in the show was around the fact that he was becoming older. There was less banter around the game itself. More time was devoted to narrating the contestant stories, talking to experts and celebrities. About the change in use of language, greetings and banter, Basu said:
We kept the comfort of the hosts in mind as well as the taste of the audience. The language of the first two seasons and the fourth season was more cultured, we kept in mind that in India we have a lot of courtesy in our speech and we tried to retain that. Now that the regional versions of the show are on-air and in production we are again paying attention to language. We have specific teams to research language and culture to engage viewers of these regions.24

_Awe of Actors_

The selection of movie actors as hosts was clearly crucial for _KBC_ since India is the only market where popular actors hosted the show. The analysis of the episodes reveals the star-factor clearly worked with the Indian audience.

Awe for Bachchan was evident among the contestants who would become nervous or very quiet in his presence. Contestants would touch his feet (a mark of respect in India) and often say things such as how their life would be transformed by this one meeting with him. The women contestants gushed about how much they adored him, and some admitted that the prize money was secondary; that meeting Bachchan was their primary motivation for participating in the game. One contestant composed a poem for him containing names of his major films; other contestants recalled how they prayed for his health when he was sick.

Bachchan, who is famous for his deep voice, used it to its full effect when he called up contestants’ friends and asked them to help with the questions. He always used the sentence “Main Amitabh Bachchan Bol Raha Hoon Kaun Banega Crorepati Se” (“This is Amitabh Bachchan calling from _Kaun Banega Crorepati_”). This action was always met with a spectacular reaction from the person on the other end on the phone. Sometimes there would be utter silence, people would stammer, they would become overly excited; some would say they did not believe it was Bachchan. The “wow” factor

was present even among celebrity guests. The most notable incident occurred when the most popular cricketer of India, Sachin Tendulkar, and cricketer Vinod Kambli played the game and they requested him to perform one of his scenes from the movie *Agniepath* as they stood awe-struck watching his performance.

In the third season of *KBC*, which was hosted by Khan, the euphoric reaction of the audience and their awe for their host was present almost as much. Many times the contestants or the family member accompanying them or the friend who was called to help the contestant would go on and on about how much they adored Khan. He was often referred to as King Khan or *Badshah* (“king” in Urdu), or with his screen names. Some contestants or their family members composed poems or couplets for Khan and would read them out aloud. Contestants recited dialogues from Khan’s movies or requested Khan to say some of his famous movielines. Contestants requested Khan to wish good luck to their families and friends back home who were watching them on television. There were younger contestants who touched Khan’s feet, which is a way to seek an elders’ blessing, a custom that is prevalent in all parts of India. Contestants also requested Khan to bless their children. Seeking blessing is a very integral part of Indian tradition. Khan also obliged some of the contestants by singing and dancing with them to the tunes of his movie songs or the title track of *KBC*. There was one contestant who had won nothing from the show and was going back empty-handed, but Khan as a gesture gave him his own watch. This last incident is particularly significant as it points out what difference a star makes vis-à-vis an ordinary television personality as a host. A watch given by a small-time television personality would have never conveyed the same meaning as the one gifted by someone of the stature of Khan or Bachchan.
In the fourth season of *KBC*, respect for Bachchan was once again evident among the contestants and the studio audience. This was in spite of the fact that he was hosting the show for the third time now and also played the host of other television series as well. Contestants again claimed that meeting him in person would be one of the most cherished moments of their lives. The start date of this season was intentionally set to coincide with his birthday, and on the opening of the show he was established as a larger-than-life figure. Bachcahn at times used his authority as he acted as an arbitrator on behalf of the contestants, such as with contestant Jyoti Chauhan. When Chauhan said her family had severed their ties with her after she married against their will, Bachchan urged the family members to overlook what has happened and re-establish their ties with Chauhan. Again the authority that a star such as Bachchan can command in this situation is what makes the selection of hosts justified. Basu said, “Each of them has the personality, and charisma to connect the audience at an emotional level. Of course having these icons as hosts helped the show to get the initial “wow” factor, but beyond that it worked because the actors connected with the contestants at a personal level.”

25

*Contestant Stories*

As *KBC* is identified as a *janta* quiz or *aam aadmi* quiz (quiz for the common man), looking at contestant stories is important. Also, the range of contestants who can come on the show in India is vast and diverse due to its cultural differences and economic discrepancy; this is not possible to the same degree anywhere else in the world. The contestant stories set the stage for a more emotional version of *Millionaire*, which is truly Indian.

In the first two seasons of the show, every day the 10 contestants who qualified for the first round of the show were introduced briefly, the host mentioned their names and the cities or villages they came from. Then the contestant who qualified for the main game was introduced in detail. Once again the host repeated their names and hometown, where they worked, if they were students and if so what they were studying, and if they were homemakers. The hosts asked the contestants how they plan to utilize the prize money and maybe a follow up question to the same. Lastly the host introduced and greeted the family member or friend who accompanied the contestant on the sets. Personal questions such as what the contestants were interested in such as movies or sports, or what kind of books they read, were asked further along in the game if the contestants had won reasonable prize money.

A similar trend of introduction continued in the third season as well. The host gave a brief introduction of the contestants. He mentioned where they were from, what they did, what were their likes and dislikes and what they wanted to do with the prize money. Some contestants had a very immediate need for the prize money, such as one contestant wanting to use it for the surgery of an ailing sister, another one wanting to use it for his daughter’s wedding and another man wanted the money to invest it in the magazine he owned. But there were contestants who were more imaginative and wanted to take Bollywood actors with them on vacations.

When it came to introducing the contestants, the fourth season was significantly different from the previous three seasons. This season was all about highlighting the stories of the contestants who were participating in the game. Earlier, the 10 contestants who qualified for the preliminary had only their names and their city or village
mentioned. But in the fourth season details of all the 10 contestants who qualified for the preliminary round were mentioned, such as what was their profession, where they come from and what they wanted to do with the prize money.

The contestant who got to play the final game then had a detailed audio-visual clip shown about him or her. The clip showed the contestant in the setting of his or her house and workplace; there were testimonials from family members and friends; and while talking about aspirations and why the contestants needed to win the money they were often seen to well up. For example, Chavda Vanrajsinh, a teacher from a remote village in Gujarat, was shown tending to his crops in the field, then shown teaching in a rural Indian classroom. His old father is shown working in the fields too. When the contestant talked about how hard his parents worked to get him educated, he choked up.

The background music for this clip was always a Bollywood audio track. More importantly the clip was not just shown once but shown in segments. The host kept coming back to the contestant stories whenever possible. For example Bachchan asked Chavda Vanrajsinh again how hard his parents really worked to get him through college. When contestants had won a lot of money, they were allowed to talk on the phone with their family members back home, and again this was an addition in the fourth season.

Some striking contestant stories arose in the sample analyzed in *KBC 4*: A woman police constable needed to pay her debts and needed money immediately for a surgery of her one-year old daughter. There was a young woman, who moved to Delhi after marriage, and she wanted to buy a house with her winnings. A young boy from Bihar wanted to use his winnings toward studying animation filmmaking and buying musical instruments for his band. There was a woman, Rahat Tasleem, who became the first
woman on Indian television to win Rs 10 million. She had gotten married at a very young age, and had to follow the tradition of *Purdah* (where she had to cover herself and also had restrictions about going out of the house), but she broke free of traditions, got herself educated and runs a small sewing shop where she employed other needy women. She wanted to start her own clothes boutique with her winnings. About the stress on contestants’ stories, Basu said:

>This time, it’s been the human interest [which was the] focus, with the *aam aadmi* and *aurat* [regular men and women] as the heroes. Rupees five crore [50 million] is a very big prize money to win and that life-changing sum heightened the drama. We wanted to capture this drama and captured the journey of each contestant who reached the final 10.\(^{26}\)

This season closely followed the rags to riches narrative that gave the show a highly emotional tone. The contestants were encouraged to talk more and be more informal with the host, and the human element was more obvious than the game itself.

*Preaching*

The importance of the role of the *sutradhar* (narrator) in Indian society has been mentioned earlier in the study. Beyond bringing in the star-power to the shows, did the hosts also go on to be successful *sutradhars*? By analyzing the preachings of the hosts, the researcher tried determine the effectiveness of hosts as *sutradhars*.

In the first two seasons, Bachchan’s monologues had a strong normative tone to them. He would often talk about things such as the importance of honesty and integrity, how one should not believe in hearsay and the importance of being respectful and civil toward each other. But the main emphasis of his preaching was endorsing the fact that mere luck and presence of mind could make one a millionaire. Given the fact that the

\(^{26}\) (S. Basu, personal communication, May 27, 2011).
idea of *Karma* runs deep in the Indian psyche, the act of earning a life-changing amount of cash on a game show in an hour had to be validated. This is where Bachchan’s preaching rationalized earning money through the adage: how one utilizes the money earned is more important than the mere act of earning the money; and that the very knowledge that the contestants were using to earn the prize money, itself was wealth. Bachchan stressed the importance of being successful, but again staying true to the Indian morality, which is driven by *Karma*. He pointed out that money was not the ultimate indicator of success, but rather one had to be hard working and persevering in order to achieve success. As an example he narrated the struggles of his father and himself, and tried to establish that the Bachchans too had to work very hard to earn fame and prosperity.

In the third season of KBC, Khan usually started and ended the show on a preachy or normative note. These public service messages were termed *Khan Ka Gyan* (“Khan’s words of wisdom”). His messages were directed toward the youth, urging them to be better human beings. Khan’s dialogues also rationalized that money is important and hence the contestants must spend their winnings wisely. For instance, when one of the contestants said if he won Rs 20 million ($400,000 approximately), he would travel to Las Vegas and try his luck at gambling, Khan promptly advised him to not squander his earnings. Similarly he wanted the audience to declare their income and not evade paying taxes. The second theme of Khan’s preaching was safety tips, such as, not to talk on mobile phones while driving or suggesting people should wear helmets while riding a two-wheeler, and read the user manual or warning labels before operating a machine or consuming something. Khan also directed his messages toward children telling them to
prepare well for their exams or explaining to them why and how to respect their elders. Khan emphasized the secular nature of the country in one of the episodes when he brought up a recent news story, which said a man of Islamic faith was appointed as the priest of a Hindu temple.

The fourth season of *KBC* was particularly preachy, and there were a number of public service messages, such as the need for parents to get their children vaccinated for polio, embedded in the host’s monologues and his dialogues with the contestants.

There were once again strong arguments given by the host that having money is important. It is important to note here that when *KBC* first started in 2000, Bachchan was facing an acute financial crisis and there were rumors that he might have to sell his house. But then it was the show *KBC* that helped him regain his fortune, because along with getting a hefty fee for hosting *KBC*, he also got offers to do numerous commercials, and became the spokesperson for several commercial brands, and started acting in movies again. More than being a logical argument, this was the experience of a man who was wealthy, then lost it all and struggled, and became prosperous again. This argument struck a strong emotional chord with the audience. Once again a strong emotional connection was established when the host justified earning money on a game show.

A second theme that emerged in his preaching was that the strength of India as a nation lies in its diversity, and it was a matter of extreme pride that the whole country is represented in *KBC*. The message was it is important to keep the diversity alive, but cooperation among people with cultural and linguistic differences is also desirable. He also came out in favor of mixed-marriages (marriage between people of different regions of the country). When talking to a contestant from Tamil Nadu in South India, who got
married into a Punjabi family in North India, he enumerated how his family has had a tradition of mixed-marriages, and that such marriages are a great way to consolidate and celebrate the diversity of India. It must be mentioned here that there have been protests and attacks going on in Mumbai against North Indians working there, in a display of an extreme form of regionalism which is fueled by *Maharashtra Navnirman Sena*, one of the political parties based in the region. A message against regionalism from someone as authoritative as Bachcahn is an effective way to address a burning issue of the day.

But the main theme of the preaching focused on the women of India. Whenever there was a woman contestant who was playing the game, Bachchan reminded the audience that women are equal with men and should be encouraged. He was very vocal against female infanticide.²⁷ He encouraged women to get educated and urged families to pay attention to the education of the young girls. When a contestant said his wife was semi-literate, the host requested his wife to resume studies. Similarly, when a young woman, an engineer, wanted to join the army he encouraged her and asked young women to make a foray into traditionally male-dominated fields. This was also the first time a woman, Rahat Tasleem, won Rs 10 million, and Bachchan hailed it as a moment of pride for all Indian women. Tasleem is a home maker, and when she got married she had to follow the Islamic tradition of *Purdah*, where women do not step out without covering themselves. Tasleem was deemed a woman who shaped her own destiny by breaking free of that tradition, getting a college degree and then helping other women to earn a living.

In the fourth season of KBC, which was by far the peachiest one, Bachchan had moved on from being a host who stressed on the importance of winning money to the role

²⁷ The last census of India in 2001 reported there were only 927 girls for every 1000 boys, and the missing numbers are attributed to female feticide.
of an arbitrator, a champions for women’s rights and a person with experience who could act as an advisor. The role elders play in the Indian society is important and getting the host to become an authoritative elder was truly a localization of the Millionaire model.

Basu added:

“As KBC got popular and was accepted by the audience, we had the hosts in a more enhanced role. After the first and second seasons Bachchan has appeared in several films and the viewers are not tied down with any particular image of him. That gave us the opportunity to do more experiments and variety in his role as quizmaster.”

Regionalism

In India the states take distinct pride and try fiercely to retain their identity. The linguistic division of states and the continuing fights by the people to get their own states is testimony to the importance of regionalism in India. Regionalism was played up in KBC to fit into the cultural mold of India.

In the first two seasons, Bachchan used pure Hindi as the main language of conversation. The questions of the show when they appeared on the television screen were in English and the host always read out the questions in both Hindi and English. The analysis of the episodes reveals that the language of the show, even if it had the overall tone of respect and courtesy which is prevalent in India, was still not the most obvious way playing up the different regions of the country. But whenever a contestant won big prize money, Bachchan congratulated the region where he hailed from, such as “Well done, Mumbai, you played very well” or “Well done, Kolkata.” In the last episode of the week the host recapped the major winners of the week and the regions they represented, and said, “Let us see how the other regions play next week.” Thus the

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regions were pitted against each other and contestants were urged to outperform other regions’ contestants.

The third season of *KBC* was more regionalized than the first two seasons. Khan tried to talk with the contestants in their regional language, but when he failed to converse fluently, it came as a comic relief. He wanted to know what certain things are called in the regional languages, and usually these were words from the question that the contestant was about to answer; such as he wanted to know what onions are called in Gujarat (a state in Western India). Khan tried to greet contestants in their family members’ regional languages, such as to contestants hailing from Gujarat *Kemcho, majama?* (“How are you, having fun?”) to contestants from Tamil Nadu and *Sarin* and *Thappu* (right and wrong in Tamil), to a contestant from Hyderabad, a city which again speaks a distinct Hyderabad dialect of Urdu, when Khan said, *Hau or Nako* (yes or no).

The second distinct effort to regionalize the show in the third season was made by referring to the computer not as *Computer Ji*, the saying that was made popular by Bachchan in earlier seasons, but rather by adding a regional suffix to the computer; a suffix that usually meant “elder” or “older brother” in that regional language. Thus when there was a contestant from West Bengal the computer was accordingly called *Computer Dada*, for a contestant from Punjab the computer became *Computer Praji*, and for Uttar Pradesh it was *Coumputer Tau*. Others were *Computer Anna* for Tamil Nadu, *Computer Garu* for Andhra Pradesh, *Computer Aeton* for Karnataka, *Computer Janab* for someone from Hyderabad, *Computer Kokai* for someone from Assam and *Computer Bhau* for contestants from Maharashtra. This was not only an effort to make the show more appealing to the regional non-Hindi speaking audience, but also each time the computer
was addressed as an elder, the importance of elders or heads of families in India was emphasized. The institution of family forms the core of Indian society both for the Hindus and the Muslims, and regarding the importance of family is another way of localizing the show.

Khan also asked the contestants about regional observances and customs and on one occasion he learned Bihu, the traditional dance of Assam (a state in the north-east India), from an Assam contestant.

In the fourth season, there was no overt effort to make the show appealing to the regional audiences. Bachchan, in his monologues, talked how it is important to celebrate the diversity of India. He once exchanged a brief greeting with a Punjabi contestant in Punjabi, and tried to talk to a contestant from Allahabad (the city which is the home town of Bachchan) in an Allahabad-Hindi dialect. John Abraham, a Bollywood actor who made a special appearance on the show, talked to a contestant from Gujarat in Gujarati and also danced Dandiya (a traditional dance form from Gujarat) with him.

History

India has a history that can be traced back as far as 4,300 B.C. Just by the sheer volume of events, Indian history is a rich source of quiz questions. KBC tapped into this source of knowledge and made it one of the key subjects of its questions.

In the first two seasons the emphasis of the question was on ancient Indian history and medieval Indian history. There were questions on the earliest river valley civilization, the Indus Valley Civilization. The Maurya dynasty with its kings such as Chadragupta Maurya (during his reign Alexander tried invading India) and Ashoka (the main patron of Buddhism), the Chola dynasty, and the Gupta dynasty were prominently featured. The
questions focused on the kings of the ancient period, major cities of those times and artwork from that period, such as: “Under which king’s patronage did Gandhara art flourish?” These were questions for the medium range of prize money from Rs 40,000 ($800 approximately) to Rs 320,000 ($6,400 approximately).

In the third season, questions about Indian history appeared frequently on the show; however the focus of the questions had shifted from the early Indian history to the era of the Indian freedom movement and the history of independent India. Questions about the Indian revolutionaries who fought the British or questions such as who was the first law minister of independent India were more common than questions about the Indus Valley Civilization dating back to 4,300 BC.

In the fourth season the history-related questions did not feature ancient India. In the 10 random episodes analyzed, there were only two questions from the Mughal period, which is mostly considered medieval Indian history. The focus of history questions had shifted to the 20th century and post-independent India. Accordingly there were questions about legislation enacted in the 20th century and questions about the industrialization of India. There was a skew toward women in history questions, such as prominent women of independent India. Common questions included who was the first woman to become the president of India, or who was the first woman to become the president of the Bombay Stock Exchange, or of which multi-national company did Indira Nooyi become the CEO? About the distribution of history related questions Basu said

“When we first started we needed both variety and volume in questions and factual verifications for the same. Indian history features in all seasons, however we have moved toward events that are more contemporary. This is mainly because the audience who wants to participate now is younger, many of them
were not eligible to participate when the show started 10 years back because they did not meet the age criterion.”

Mythology and Religion

Mythology and religion in India can be identified as unique cultural signifiers. The mythologies that have been a part of the oral tradition of India not only talk of the gods and goddesses, but are also the foundation of Indian morality and values. Similarly religion is an essential part of Indian lives, and it is the coexistence of a multi-religious environment that gives India its unique culture. Any attempt to localize a format adapted show therefore cannot be successful without including these elements in its content. The sample episodes were analyzed for the presence of mythology and religion-related content, of which was found in the questions of the show.

In the first two seasons the source of mythology questions were the Indian epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharat*. The focus of the questions was on the main characters of these epics, such as Rama in the case of *Ramayana* and the Pandava brothers and their wife Draupadi in the case of *Mahabharat*; what they did; things they used such as their weapons; the rites and rituals they performed; and their interaction with gods. Questions addressed all these aspects. For example a question that was asked to the first 10-millionaire the show produced was: “In the *Mahabharat*, who was Draupadi’s twin brother?”

The second predominant theme for mythology was the Hindu gods. The questions had more of a mythological overtone to them than a religious one. A popular theme of

30 According to the Indian Census data of 2001, India has 80.5% Hindus, 13.4% Muslims, 2.3% Christians, 1.9% Sikhs and 0.8 percent Buddhists living there.
question around the Hindu gods was their *Avatars* (incarnations), such as the god Vishnu having 10 *Avatars* in 10 *Yuga* (time period). Each of these incarnations have different stories around them and the questions harkend back to these stories, such as this question which was asked to a contestant in the first season: “In which of his *avatars* was Vishnu a dwarf?” In both the seasons all contestants would come across at least one mythology-related question in the early stages of the game, that is, before they even reached the level of Rs 10,000 ($200 approximately). If the contestant moved on in the game he/she would come across another mythology-related question, this time a more difficult one for higher prize money. It must be noted here that most states of India have their own variations of the epics and myths, but the questions adhered to the more popular mainstream version. The questions about religion were fewer; there were questions about Islam, Sikhism and Buddhism, such as “Which state in India had the highest Buddhist population?”

Questions related to Indian mythology continued to dominate the third season of *KBC*. Questions about the characters of the Indian epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharat* and Hindu gods appeared recurrently. However, Islam and Islamic mythologies were not ignored this time. Questions such as “According to Quran, from what did Allah create Jinah?” were present. These questions around mythology continued to be for lesser prize money.

The major difference between the mythology- and religion-related questions from the first three seasons of *KBC* and the fourth one was that, the questions were for higher prize money and were no longer easy to answer. For example a question that is related to *Mahabharat* that was asked for Rs 25 lakh ($55555 approximately) was “What *yagna* [ritual involving worship of fire] was performed by Yudhistira after the war of
Kurukshetra?" or the question “Which temple in India was first built with first gold, then silver, then wood and finally stone?” or In the sample analyzed there was only one question related to a non-Hindu religion or mythology, a question on Sufism. There were questions about *Kumbh Mela* (a Hindu religious fair, which occurs once in 12 years, on the banks of holy rivers in India), which had happened earlier in the year (2010). Basu said the questions relating to Hindu mythology was more prominent in the first seasons and again there was a move towards contemporary events.  

**Cricket Reference**

Cricket is the most popular and the most watched sport in India. The final match of the 2011 World Cup Cricket series (in which India played Sri Lanka) was watched by 67.6 million viewers over four hours. In contrast, the 2010 FIFA World Cup final was watched by only 1.5 million people in India (Businessline Bureau, 2011). The popularity of the game is such that Indians use many bits of cricket jargon in their daily speech. *KBC* used the popularity of the game and tried to make the show more acceptable to the audience by using cricket-related questions in the game.

In the first two seasons of the show, each contestant came across one cricket question in the early stages of the game. In the later stages of the game, if a question appeared it was about an international cricket statistic. The questions varied from personal records of Indian cricketers, to different fielding positions, the role of umpires, cricket tournaments (both one-day internationals and test matches) and cricket world cups. The first season of the show had the most famous cricketer of India, Sachin Tendulkar, and his fellow cricketer Vinod Kambli come on the show and play the game.

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The use of cricket-related questions and references continued in the third season of *KBC*. There were questions around the upcoming 2007 World Cup Cricket series such as, “Which country was to make its debut in 2007 Cricket World Cup?” There were also questions around common cricketing terms such as “Nervous Nineties” (which refers to the nervousness of a batsman when he is about to score 100 runs), “Crease” (a demarcated area on the cricket field), “Strike Rate” (an average of runs scored by the batsman per 100 balls), and “Pitch” (the central strip of a cricket field between the two wickets). These were questions for lesser prize money, which only indicates the popularity of cricket in India and how knowledge of cricket is now a part of the conventional wisdom for Indians. Khan also used cricketing terms to describe how the contestants were doing in the show, and asked contestants about their favorite cricketers and or to demonstrate how they cheer for India when the team is playing.

The frequency of cricket-related questions declined in the fourth season of *KBC*. There were only three questions present in the sample, two about the new cricketing format 20-20 and the third one about the legendary Indian cricketer Sachin Tendulkar. The show had cricket commentator Charu Sharma as an expert. There were more questions about other sports such as tennis, badminton and shooting. It must be mentioned here that from October 3, 2010, to October 14, 2010, (the season began on October 11) India was playing host to the Commonwealth Games sporting event. This event does not have the game of cricket.

*Reference to Bollywood*

Since the economic liberalization in the early 1990s, Bollywood has been the biggest cultural export of India to the West. Bollywood, the Indian film industry, makes
nearly 150 Hindi films each year and is a rapidly growing source of revenue for the country (Rao, 2010). Movies famous for their unique songs and dances, emotionally charged dialogues and often melodramatic narratives are now synonymous with Indian culture. The sample episodes reveal the Millionaire model was made more acceptable by introducing elements of Bollywood into the show.

In the first two seasons, Bollywood was a part of the game in the form of questions. Most of the time the very first question of the show which was for the lowest prize money was related to Bollywood, and in most cases the questions were for the less than the prize money of Rs 5,000 ($100 approximately). Questions such as: “Who played the title role of godmother in the movie Godmother?” or “Who was the singer of the song Chaiya Chaiya?” or “Who directed the movie Main Hoon Na?” were for the lowest prize money in the game. Again if the contestants proceeded toward higher prize money they would expect a second Bollywood-related question, this time a little tougher. Basu said, “We tried to make the show for the common man, and Bollywood is one are the common Indian’s know a lot about. Hence we had the Bollywood related questions in the early stages of the game.”32 The main themes of the questions were the movies and popular actors. Sometimes after the contestant gave the answer, the host would ask if he or she watched Bollywood movies and which actor they liked. There were a number of Bollywood celebrities who came to play the game on special occasions such as the Indian festivals. In these episodes the hosts would talk to the actors about their lives after every question, and there would be conversation on memories that Bachchan and the actors

shared together, such as some incidents while they were shooting. The guests also mentioned which charity their winnings would go to.

The trend of focusing on Bollywood continued in the third season of *KBC*. Bollywood movies were the most obvious theme for the questions. The range of questions was diversified, from old movies to recently released ones, to dialogues and props used in the movies. In this season dialogues that were by Amitabh Bachchan were an important theme for the questions. There were questions about the actors, as well as questions about their personal lives and achievements, such as who was the only female Bollywood actor to be represented in wax at Madame Tussaud’s Museum in London?

The questions that were about Hollywood movies had a Indian tweak to them, such as the question, “Who wrote the screen play for the 1995 Hollywood movie Stuart Little?” and the options had the names of two Indian-Americans, M N Shyamalan and Mira Nair, and one British American, Gurwinder Chadda. There were also questions about television shows. Khan’s banter with the studio audience and contestants was peppered with movie-related terms and dialogues from his own movies. On several occasions, the contestants said if they won a sum of Rs 20 million, they would take a certain female Bollywood actor to some exotic location, and Khan would tease the contestants about the same. The practice of getting movie actors to come and play the game on special occasions and give their winnings to charity continued in the third season.

But it was in the fourth season that Bollywood emerged as the most overpowering element of *KBC*, maybe more that the element of the quiz itself. Bollywood was represented not only through the questions of the show and the presence of a movie actor host, but virtually everything about the show had a connection to Bollywood. Each
contestant came across a Bollywood-related question in the early stages of the game, for smaller prize money, mostly from Rs 5,000 ($111 approximately) to Rs 80,000 ($1777 approximately). The subjects for these questions were mainly Bollywood movies and actors. In the 10 regular episode that were analyzed for the fourth season there were only two Bollywood questions for higher prize money, for Rs 250,000 ($55,555) and Rs 125,000 ($27,777) and both were about very old movie stars and film directors. There was a new addition to the questions: an audio clip. In the same sample there were only two audio clips not related to Bollywood, the rest were either Bollywood songs, or dialogues from movies that the contestants had to identify.

This season had a grand Bollywood song-and-dance-style opening. The episode started with childhood images of Bachchan; quickly moved onto scenes of his popular movies; then he emerged out of a giant “A” or a pyramid-like structure narrating his father’s poem. Next he enacted scenes from three of his very popular movies, Kabhie Kabhie, Agneepath and Deewar; he then rapped and danced to his popular Bollywood songs. The accompanying artists with him on stage were dressed in the traditional uniform of an Indian porter or Coolie, and it was again during shooting for the film Coolie that Bachchan had met with the accident that almost took his life. The selection of one song was particularly important for the show, as the lyrics goes Khaike Pan Benaraswala, Khul Jaye Band Akal Ka Tala which means, “Eating one beetle leaf from Benaras will help one open the locks of one mind.” This song-dance performance lasted for nearly 10 minute of the 90 minute episode which was the opening episode of the fourth season.
There was a huge presence of Bollywood personalities on the show, and many were not coming to play the game. Out of the random sample of 10 episodes there was some form of a celebrity presence on eight days. There were four actors -- Sanjay Dutt, John Abraham (who came twice), Bipasha Basu and Mini Mathur -- and one film director and actor, Rajat Kapoor, who were present in the studio to meet the contestants and the live audience. On two other occasions the contestants were talked to actors on the phone. When one contestant said he is a huge admirer of actor Deepika Padukone, she was promptly called up on the phone and made spoke with the contestant. On a second occasion a contestant said she adored Abhishek Bachchan, Amitabh Bachchan’s son, and he too promptly came on air over the telephone. The show again had a gala Bollywood-style finale where Bachcahn’s former co-star and a very popular actor of India, Dharmendra, came on the sets for a chat and they refreshed some of their old memories.

**International Affairs and Events Questions**

In all the four seasons, the questions which were worth higher prize money were often related to international events and affairs. This was a way the connection with the global was maintained in the show. Some of the examples of the international affairs related questions are: for Rs 12.5 lakh (1.25 million)- “What is the color of an octopus’ blood?”; for Rs 50 lakh (5 million)- “Which was the first country to ban burqa in public?”; for Rs 1 crore (10 million)- “Which African nation was the first to elect a woman President?”; for Rs 5 crore (50 million)- “Who in the year 1982, became the first person to receive an artificial heart?”. But again since not a lot of contestants reached the stage where they were playing for the highest prize money, not a lot of questions of international relevance were found to analyze.
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

The major trends of localization that were observed after the episode analysis of the four seasons are as follows.

The greetings and banter in the show moved back and forth between pure Hindi and colloquial Hindi. The idea was to use the language people are comfortable with, and the comfort of the host in using a language was also kept in mind. The English subtitling in graphics was maintained throughout the four seasons to help the non-Hindi speakers of India understand the questions. There was a conscious attempt to make the third season more secular, but overall the show still retained the identity of a national show. While in the first three seasons the banter was mainly about the game, in the fourth season the banter moved toward the contestants and their stories.

The awe towards the hosts of the show is present in all four seasons. The respect toward the actors never wavered even with the change of hosts or during the gap between the seasons. The admiration for actors only became stronger with time.

The contestants’ stories were played up in the fourth season, so much so that the earlier seasons by comparison they appeared to be inconspicuous. Earlier, if a contestant won big prize money, people would get to read of them and their personal lives, mostly in regional papers, but in the fourth season the human drama was highlighted, much in a Bollywood style. Each contestant was celebrated in the show, with women contestants given particular prominence.

The show became more preachy with time. The role of the sutradhar was totally realized, where the host, instead of being just a presenter, came to wield a certain amount of authority. He became an arbitrator, an elder, a spokesperson. The theme of the
preaching again connected the show with the human elements where the host says at the end of the day the contestants become a member of the *KBC* family, that the relationship that they establish is not one of money but they become family and family ties are stronger.

As far as regionalism was concerned, it was the third season that put the most emphasis on celebrating the distinct cultural regions. The fourth season on the contrary put more emphasis on unity. This may also be due to the fact that seven regional versions of the show are to be launched in 2011, and hence the regional elements were underplayed on the national version.

Concerning the content of the questions, in the first two seasons there was a lot of emphasis on history while in the third and the fourth season history had taken a back seat and there was a definite move toward emphasizing current affairs. The trend was similar for questions related to mythology and religion, which were not as common in the fourth season as in the first three seasons. These two dominant cultural signifiers were used to make a foreign format an Indian one when it first came to India, but once the format was accepted the slant was more toward other cultural elements. Similarly cricket, again a very prominent cultural signifier, was heavily endorsed in the first three seasons, but made way for other sports in the fourth season. The questions that were related to international events and affairs showed followed a consistent pattern through all the four seasons where they were kept for higher prize money.

But it was Bollywood which from the very first season has been a dominant cultural signifier. Reference to Bollywood existed in the questions, the celebrities who came on to the show and the hosts. Bollywood was played up and the narrative of the
game with its stress on human emotions and stories almost became a Bollywood movie plot.

In a larger context, this study examined the localization strategies that were used to make a format adapted game show a distinctly Indian one. Guided by the glocalization framework, the present study argued that creating “cultural proximity” between a program and its audience is the key to the success of any format adaptation. Glocalization is a useful framework to understand the complexity of the international communication process. When the globalization theory casts the global as an inevitable force that does away with all ethnic identities, the idea of glocalization makes the global and the local coexist. It recognizes the international elements as much as the national and the regional ones.

In the game show Kaun Banega Crorepati, which is adapted from the original British show Who Wants to be a Millionaire? the original elements that were retained in the show included the question-answer format with four-option style of quizzing, graphics, music, arena-style seating for the studio audience, and the shots in which the television cameras zoomed in on the one contestant sitting under the lights on the hot seat. Many catch phrases, style of speaking and even some host postures were retained. These elements of the format helped the show retain its global identity. The localizing elements were things such as the language of the show, which had an extremely reverent tone like most Indian languages; questions related to Hindu mythology and history; and heavy use of cultural signifiers such as cricket and Bollywood. The show put emphasis on the contestants’ stories and a certain amount of preaching by the hosts. The show also had famous Bollywood actors hosting it, actors who command an authority and also are
representative of the strong patriarchal value system in India. The global elements of the show, which were mainly manifested in the technology involved in the show, did not become a symbol of control but instead of progress. Localization of the show through focusing on contestants’ stories helped the Indian audience to relate the show to their lives. The careful selection of localizing elements did away with the resistance that the local audience has toward a foreign format.

The analysis of the four seasons helped to foster an understanding of how particular localizing elements, such as history or mythology, were emphasized in certain seasons, while other elements, such as contestants’ stories and regionalism were highlighted in other seasons. Studying only one season would not have revealed as much. This study is the first one to study all the four seasons of the show.

The timing of the study is particularly important as the show recently concluded its fourth season and will now be adapted to six regional Indian languages (Bengali, Bhojpuri, Tamil, Telegu, Kannada and Malayalam) and in Bangladeshi for the audience in Bangladesh. Basu said:

The interest the television industry show in the game revived it. The last season of KBC on Sony showed the power of the format. There are huge viewerships in our country beyond Hindi entertainment channels, who mainly watch shows in their mother tongue. As we began seeing a demand for shows in these markets, we as a production house and as content creators, were happy to create regional versions of the show.  

The Bhojpuri version of the show will be hosted by famous Bollywood actor Shatrughan Sinha. Hailing from Bihar, he is very popular among the target audience. The Bengali version of the show will be hosted by the former captain of the Indian cricket team, Sourav Ganguly (Dubey, 2011). Again, Ganguly is from Bengal and has a huge

fan-following among the target audience. This selection of hosts for the regional version again confirms the findings of the study, which found that selecting popular public figures who can act as authoritarian figures is important in the Indian context, and Bollywood and cricket are used as specific cultural signifiers for India.

Even if this was a case study of only one Indian format adapted show, it is indeed the most successful show. Hence the findings of this study can be later used to study the shows that are adapted for a national audience. The study can be further strengthened by examining the regional versions of the show and by looking at other format adapted shows that became popular in India such as *Indian Idol* (adapted from *American Idol*) or *India’s Got Talent* (adapted from *Britain’s Got Talent*) and seeing whether some of the localizing elements such as contestants’ stories, presence of an authoritative host and preaching were used to localize these shows as much.
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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Episodes watched


APPENDIX
Appendix B: Television commercials watched

Kaun Banega Crorepati season 2 commercial 2. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0tqFgTlryQ&feature=related.