



TOP of the BOX there's no No.1

No single TV serial can rule the roost for even a few weeks at a stretch

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Its competition at its highest! TV serials are fighting for the top slot. But in the current scenario, no serial is being able to hold on to the position for more than a week or two, reveal Television Rating Point (TRP) charts.

A few years ago one TV show could rule for months together. *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi* held the top slot for a very long time. A year-and-a-half ago, Star Plus' *Bidaai* too held the number one position for a year after which *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai* took over for a good seven months. But, right now, there are four to five shows that are battling neck-to-neck — *Pavitra Rishta*, *Uttaran*, *Na Aana Iss Des Mein Laado*, *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai* and *Balika Vadhu*. Recently, when there was a high point in *Na Aana...*, the show topped the charts with a rating of 7.1. But now it's Zee's *Pavitra Rishta* that's holding that position. A few weeks ago, when *Uttaran* had some major twists, it beat the field with a TRP of eight points. Which means production houses and channels are leaving no stone unturned in dishing out dramatic twists and turns to keep viewers' interests alive.

"It is a very positive trend,"

says producer Rupali Guha of *Uttaran*. "It's good for the audiences. It's also healthy competition among the producers. Each one is putting in hard work, trying to excel and make it to the number one slot."

Programming head (fiction) of Zee, Suresh Motwani terms this an exciting period for Indian television. "TV viewing is obviously becoming more democratic as is the case in the US. Viewers are becoming choosy and finicky; there's no absolute loyalty to one show," he points out. "There are five to six shows that they love and whenever there's an interesting twist in a particular show, they shift to it for a while. It's like the viewer is saying that whenever there's great *masala*, entertainment or high level drama, I'll watch you, but I'm not sticking to you forever!"

Producer-director Rajan Shahi (*Bidaai* and *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai*) agrees that the competition is getting fiercer by the day. "There's a lot of demand and hence pressure to have instant results and attain instant high TRPs. So every show is working towards achieving dramatic high points." Talking about the current scenario which does affect creativity, Shahi adds, "Nowadays, almost all stories are presented dramatically; the pattern of story narration has changed. What could have been over two years or more is being crushed, formatted only for six months. It may attract the audience for a while, but it will surely affect shows in the long run."



STRUGGLING? Stills from *Uttaran* and (top from left) *Pavitra Rishta* and *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai*

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