

What's cooking on TV?

Food programmes are major money spinners, writes SANDEEP SINGH

IF you live to eat you do not have to go to a restaurant—simply switch on your television set. Food has finally come of age in India, at least if one goes by the television rating points (TRPs).

Most channels targetted at the Indian family have a programme on cookery. The range varies from Indian to Continental, with celebrity hosts providing an extra dash of spice.

But what about the viewer? Let's try and find an answer to this question, on which the commercial success of the programme depends. The viewership data (TRPs) are taken from the Indian National Television Audience Measurement (INTAM), a division of ORG-MARG Research.

Without bothering about the restaurant, we can start by looking for those who admire it. Who can be better admirers than women, and Delhi women at that?

Let's consider the average viewership for the last quarter of 1998 among women of 35 and above in cable and satellite (C&S) households. At the same time, let's also consider the viewership for the most popular thriller and a female-led soap opera over the same period and target group. This will help us get a clearer picture.

Here, too, the programmes *Khana Khazana* and *Good Home Show* are doing well, and turn out to be better in terms of cost per rating point (CPRP), one of the most common measures of programme selection used by media planners and brand managers.

From here we move to Mumbai. Now let's see what happens among women in the 15 to 34 age group in C&S households. Even in a city like Mumbai there is no big difference between a women-specific programme and a

cookery programme, a fact clearly reflected by the ratings of *Saans* and *Khana Khazana*.

A little difference makes these programmes more cost effective. The most striking thing is that cookery programmes are doing well in the dynamic age group of 15 to 34 women in C&S households.

For this target group, these programmes are not cost effective at individual city level but, also at all-India level.

The media planners and the brand managers of *Tata Salt*, *Nestle*, *IFB* etc need to be congratulated for identifying the dark horses. Good performance can be attributed to various factors like good programming, time of telecast etc. At the same time, the other reason could be that the cookery programmes come as an appetiser after all that trash on the idiot box.

It is time now that the advertisers ranging from sanitary napkins to sarees, soaps to chocolates, moved to these programmes. All these programmes are in the afternoon on weekdays, when the woman is at herself, after finishing household work.

This is the time when she can sit and watch the commercials for personal products in detail without getting embarrassed.

Who knows, in the next millennium there could be a 24-hour channel for cookery, and if that sounds a bit far-fetched, one can always settle for a cookery programme at prime time. Any takers?

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