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MARCH 2019

THE BIRTH OF BARC: THE CHALLENGES OF ESTABLISHING A NEW TELEVISION AUDIENCE MEASUREMENT SYSTEM IN INDIA

INTRODUCTION

As the much-anticipated first set of BARC Television Audience Measurement Ratings started to come out on April 29, 2015, Partho Dasgupta, the CEO of Broadcasters Audience Research Council (BARC) India, felt justifiably elated. Reflecting on that day's experience, he later reminisced:

> "*It felt like watching your baby being born*!"

BARC India is a joint industry body set up by multiple stakeholders connected to the Indian television and advertising ecosystems, formed with the specific mandate to "design, commission, supervise, and own an accurate, reliable, and timely television audience measurement system for India."[1] Further developments since then have established beyond doubt BARC's ratings as the most reliable and trustworthy currency of television audience measurement in the complex Indian TV market. However, the road till this juncture had not been easy, with many expected bumps and unexpected twists and turns!

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[1] http://www.barcindia.co.in/about-us.aspx

No wonder, when Dasgupta and his team reflected on the arduous journey that started years ago, they could rightfully claim, with a tired but triumphant smile, "*We'll now be able to reveal what India really watches*!"

However, Partho knew that they did not have the luxury of being content with their recent achievements. With the fast changing dynamics of TV content viewership in India, through the adoption of new technologies and platforms, and consequent likely shifts in viewership patterns, an uncertain, and challenging yet exciting road lay ahead.