

The Making Of A Programme

MOST viewers of the Box are totally in the dark as to what goes into a programme. A peek behind the scenes reveals an astonishing sight—mismanagement, innovation, confusion and even flashes of genius. We chose 'Parikrama' as our prototype programme because of its popularity. (60 per cent of the audience watches 'Parikrama' regularly, according to Doordarshan's research unit survey).

The driving force behind 'Parikrama' is the inimitable Kamleshwar, who made broadcasting history in Bombay when he introduced this programme on the lines of Melville D'Mello's 'Perspective'. But no one knows about the person behind the show: Producer B.K. Giri. When Giri first took over the programme in 1978, it had reached saturation point. He brought it to life again, taking it outdoors, shooting on locale, and infusing it with as much local colour as possible.

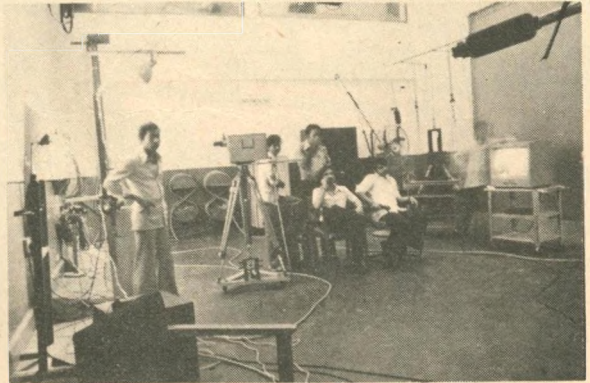
Programme planning begins with a brainstorming session among the team of five. "Although technically I'm the producer, it's really teamwork that counts," says Giri. After the topic is decided, the assistants do legwork for research. They go out and interview people and invite a chosen few to the studio. This is also when location filming is done. Now it is the compere's turn. Kamleshwar needs no rehearsals: The programme is spontaneous and extempore. There is much that can go wrong, and does, at the eleventh hour. Participants do not turn up, technical defects crop up all the time, editing rooms are booked months in advance, and worst of all, working material is of poor quality.

Sometimes, at the end of a programme a frantic courier rushes down from the Control Room and cries, "*Thehro, thehro*. The tape is spoilt. The entire recording will have to be redone."

And yet 'Parikrama' is one of the better planned programmes!



It is 2 p.m. on Saturday. The schedule recording time for 'Parikrama' is 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. **2.15 p.m:** The participants are waiting for the recording to begin. Usually, they have a long wait.



2.30 p.m: The sets have been arranged. Cameras and lights have been moved into place. Their work done, studio hands and cameramen lounge around, waiting for Kamleshwar to come. There is a languid air about the place.



2.45 p.m: Programme-host Kamleshwar has arrived at last, apologising profusely. He meets B.K. Giri, producer of 'Parikrama' outside the studio.

Usually, Kamleshwar has had no briefing about the programme till he comes for the recording. He does not even

know who he is to interview. "I get acquainted with the participants during the course of the programme," he affirms.

Typically, Kamleshwar lights a cigarette, Giri leans against the wall. In muted tones, Giri briefs him....



3.15 p.m: A quick visit to the make-up room for a dash of powder, "to keep away the sweat" as Kamleshwar puts it.

Some desultory conversation with his assistant, and Kamleshwar is ready for the studio.

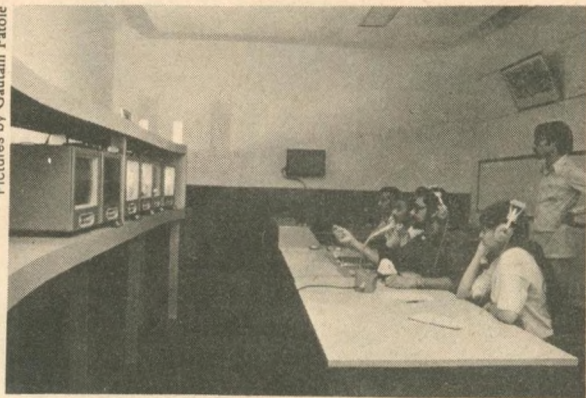


3.30 p.m: Time moves slowly. Nobody seems particularly upset by the wrecked schedule. Maybe they are used to the delays. On the sets, Kamleshwar takes his favourite chair. Cameramen discuss the final arrangements with him. Participant Pandit Taranath, a musician who lives in New York, seems happy that after a long spell in the waiting room, things are moving.



4.00 p.m: While cameras and lights are being adjusted, Kamleshwar begins his rudimentary questioning, putting the interviewee at ease. "During that informal chitchatting," chuckles Giri, "he is evaluating the person and deciding where to hit him."

Pictures by Gauram Patole

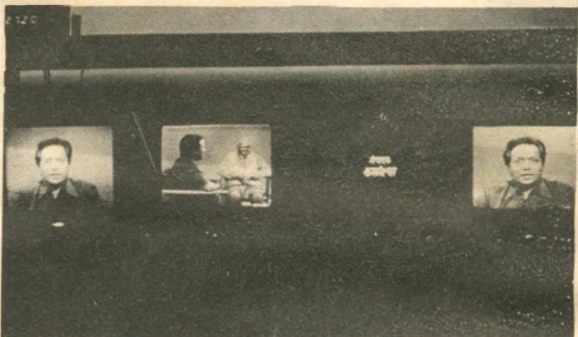


4.15 p.m: Back in the Control Room, things are in a bit of a chaos. The tape required for the programme has just arrived and is in the process of being checked.

It is then mounted, somewhat in a hurry. Giri and his assistant, Usha, take their places at the control board and put on their headphones. The monitors start projecting from the two camera positions. Giri handles the 'mixing'—that is choosing out of the two inputs he receives.



4.30 p.m: Finally everything is done. The actual recording begins. Cameras roll. 'Parikrama' is on...



Up to 4.50 p.m: And so it goes on. 30 minutes of close-ups and long shots, conversation and laughter. Kamleshwar with his inimitable style; Taranath, not at all camera conscious, responding easily, spontaneously.

With the summing up of the programme by Kamleshwar, 'Parikrama' comes to an end.

Everyone briskly leaves the control room and heads for the sets.

—Robini Soman