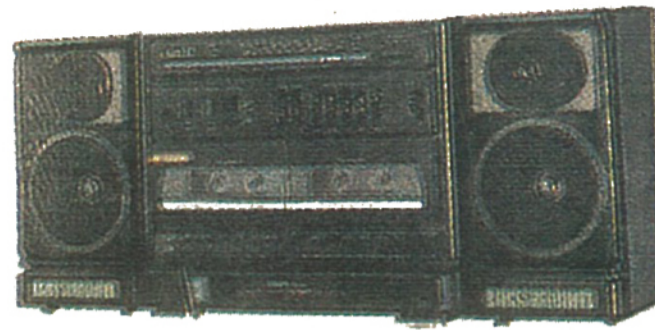


Videocon SX-47

**B**uying a hi-fi equipment used to be a very simple task. There weren't many products to choose from and there was no need to worry about technical jargon. Things have changed dramatically today. What intimidates the buyer today is the pseudo-technicality which shrouds the product.

I took a tour of the market to help the buyer unveil this shroud. I examined double cassette recorders with radios. The price ranged between Rs 3,500 to Rs 5,000. The purpose of these are meant to be second systems in the house, for bedrooms etc. The design priority in these sets is to pack in features at a moderate price. The sound quality is a step better than the regular mono/stereo cassette players. Here is what I heard.



BPL CW111K

## Looking for Hi-fi

**SANJIV MALVI** blasts some myths that surround sound, namely, moderately priced hi-fi equipment

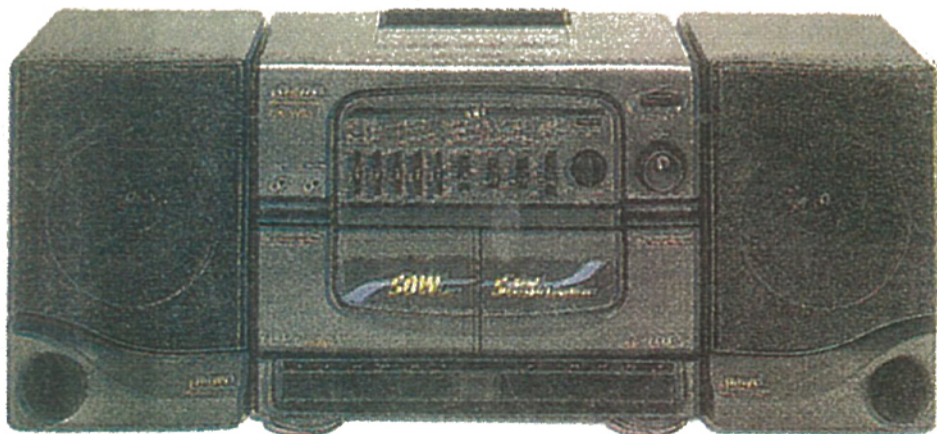
the system sound better. If proper care is not taken by the manufacturers, they may even deteriorate the sound quality.

The AIWA CA-W51 sounded the smoothest in this lot. The tonal

quality was balanced and pleasing to the ear. The styling was compact and neat. However it lacks output if you felt the need to blast. It doesn't have gizmos for extended bass. It is recommended for the sober.

The PANASONIC RX-CT810 has

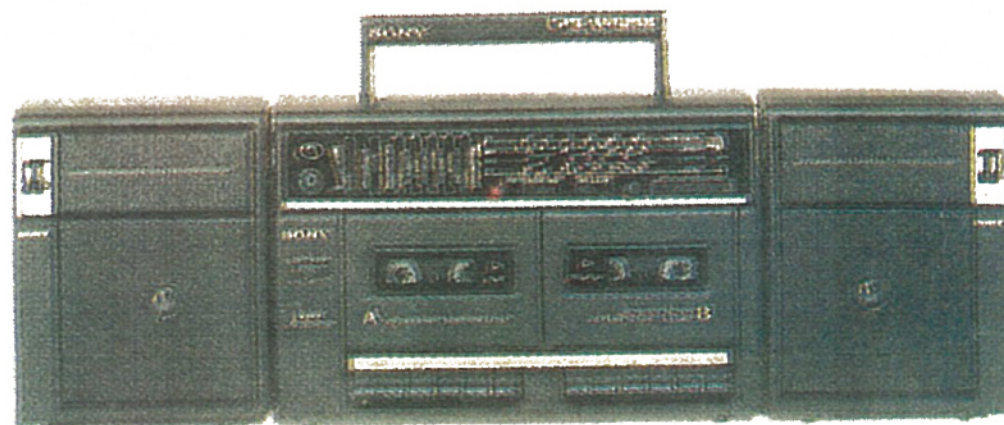
Make	Model	Power output	Price (Rs)
AIWA	CA-W51	50 watts PMPO	4,490
PANASONIC	RX-CT810	38 watts "	4,500
VIDEOCON	SX-47	60 watts "	3,500
PHILIPS	DR-828	80 watts "	4,354
BPL	CW111K	100 watts "	4,990
SONY	CFS-W4255	22 watts "	4,695



AIWA CA-W51

All the above systems are indigenously made.

As a general rule buyers of this format should look out for features like: high speed dubbing, stereo FM, 4 to 5 band graphic equalizer, radio with MW and SW. Once these basic features are present then we can look for fancy features like 'Bass Extension' and 'Surround Sound'. These two features do not necessarily make



Sony CFS-W4255

## SOUND TREATMENT

a well-rounded tonal balance. Curiously, even though it's rated for 38 watts PMPO, I didn't find the need for more power. However it lacked punchy sound.

The VIDEOCON SX-47 seemed great for the price. A general view expressed by the dealers was that Videocon gave you the best value for money. No other model was available for review.

The PHILIPS DR-828 has an electronically boosted bass in its Dynamic Bass Boost (DBB) system which makes the sound unnatural. However, the overall get up could do with a better finesse.

The BPL CW111K was the most expensive of the lot. It was feature-filled and looked impressive. The tonal quality of the sound tended to be on the 'tinny'. When you put on the surround mode it became even more so. The surround mode was very effective in expanding the sound stage. There is a separate speaker for bass reproduction, which seemed marginally effective. A label on the system said that it was a 5-way speaker system to which I object. A 5-way speaker system in genuine audio parlance means something totally different. However there are 5 speakers in the system. It's got ample power. It is recommended for the teenager, to blast.

The SONY CFS-W4255 was a disappointment, when considered as a Sony product. The tonal balance was way off the mark. On a normal setting of the equalizer, the sound was screaming at me. However, it looked a little different, with gold strips etc.

When you go to buy any of these do not get swayed by the Output Power advertised. Remember that 'Power Output' has no bearing on tonal quality. Manufacturers often tend to create a hype about power output to outdo competition. A lower powered system which sounds pleasant is always preferable to a higher powered system which maybe sounding 'tinny' or harsh. It is well advised to take a cassette of your favourite, familiar music and listen to it on different models, when trying out hi-fi. You will be amazed at the differences in sound you'll perceive.

**When you go to buy any of these do not get swayed by the Output Power advertised. Remember that 'Power Output' has no bearing on the tonal quality.**