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Review Article

Contemporary relevance of OTT platforms in the entertainment world with special reference to Indian cinema industry

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ABSTRACT

OTT platforms has increased craze in the youth and the larger audience attention due to variety in the content which focus not only on entertainment but also on the information. The major factors contributing the rise of the video streaming platforms are subscription with heavy discounts for the unlimited content, many content based work in the films in the form of documentaries in which information is given in an entertaining way. Another factor helped is the increased usage of smartphones and internet availability in the country. One of the spices of OTT is the web series which is a very trending program format. This study was carried on by the observation method, focus group study & the interview method of the research. The generalized conclusion the researcher got was that the people are more inclined to the OTT platform contents due to the ample of time available to them during COVID-19 pandemic, which worked as an inclined habit into people's routine.

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1. Introduction

Over the Top services are the services providers of movies and shows that are given directly to the digital user without using any cable or satellite television. Media and entertainment industry has emerged as the most dominant industry in Over-the-Top market due to increase in number of online video consumers. There are various kind of services provided by OTT which includes OTT messaging, OTT voice calling, video calling & OTT TV. From all these different kinds of services, OTT TV is becoming very much popular due to various benefits provided.

New media is changing our daily lives. Internet is the major cause for the changes in Indian cinema very rapidly.¹⁻³ There are many new technologies, which are used by viewer's to watch movies and documentaries on their personal gadgets. Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hotstar,

Zee5 and ALT Balaji, Jio tv are some examples, which are providing movies and other video content through internet. These platforms are new convergence of television and cinema.

Some new ventures are producing video content for these Internet platforms only. Now viewers can watch movies, web series, documentaries, news and short films at their convenience in reasonable price on these new media platforms.⁴⁻⁹ Major Objective of this study is to know how Indian Television and Cinema which are the traditional platforms, changing due to new online platforms and how youth is using these digital platforms for video content watching.

If there is one industry which wouldn't like the lockdown to end, it's indeed the OTT players. Due to epidemic "Corona Virus" which spread in all over the world, everyone facing the Pandemic "Lockdown" situation in which you are not allowed to go outside your house which means you

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have to spend your whole time inside your house with your family and gadgets.¹⁰ And naturally, the more we stay at home, the more we find ourselves glued to the screens. Now, with no film releases in sight because of the shutdown of theatres and shoot of TV shows stalled across the country, what everyone is finding solace in are the OTT platforms. In fact, web shows have become the best tool for people to get off the boredom, and the platforms, too, are ensuring that the audience is lured to the usage of the platforms. It just not increased the OTT viewership but also changing the viewer's watching habits.

2. Major Players of OTT Platforms

1. Netflix
2. Amazon Prime
3. Hotstar Disney
4. Zee 5
5. Sonyliv
6. Voot
7. AltBalaji
8. Player
9. Jio TV
10. Eros Now
11. Airtel Extreme and many more

3. Literature Review

1. Covid-19 is a global pandemic which has changed the world's way of consuming media. OTT platforms were already on boom, but this pandemic worked as a booster on this growth and development of this sector. In the light of consumption of the OTT and watching pattern, work done by (Dr. S. Anbumalar, Brina Antony, Aishwarya. S, Mithun P.M, Ajeeth Kumar. R, 2021) shows role played by OTT media consumption trends. In the study primary data is collected and percentage method is used to make comparison between two or more series of data. The major benefit which youngsters liked as per this study is the privacy which they were not able to get in common television in a family. It gave them freedom to watch the content according to their desire and interest. The researcher has focused more on the different types of OTT platforms & its analysis from the viewpoint of the consumers. It is basic research done on preferences of the OTT platforms by the consumers from among the specified OTT platforms.
2. OTT platforms has increased craze in the youth and the larger audience attention due to variety in the content which focus not only on entertainment but also on the information. The major factors contributing the rise of the OTT platforms according to the author of this paper (Navsangeet Saini, 2020) are subscription with heavy discounts for the unlimited

content, many content based work in the films in the form of documentaries in which information is given in an entertaining way. Another factor helped is the increased usage of smartphones and internet availability in the country. One of the spices of OTT is the web series which is a very trending program format. This study was carried on by the observation method, focus group study & the interview method of the research. The generalized conclusion the researcher got was that the people are falling more for the OTT platform contents due to the ample of time available to them during COVID-19 pandemic, which worked as an inclined habit into people's routine.

3. There are various kind of services provided by OTT which includes OTT messaging, OTT voice calling, video calling & OTT TV. From all these different kinds of services, OTT TV is becoming very much popular due to various benefits provided. Researchers have reviewed the behaviour of consumer in various studies and also used many models for understanding and reviewing the acceptance of new technology by customers and correlate it along with the adoption of OTT media. One of the models named *TAM (Technology Acceptance Model)*, (Davis, 1989) is the mostly used model. In this model two major variables i.e., perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness have been mentioned as a crucial factors which helps in prediction of users' adoption of new technology. In this paper by (Garima Sharma Nijhawan, Prof. (Dr.) Surbhi Dahiya, 2020), researcher have cleared two major factors – one as advertisement free entertainment and another one is lack of censorship which has a very deep impact on impressing the young generation.
4. Digitalization has changed the viewpoint of world for more and more penetration of smartphones and the addition to it is given by the internet accessibility. OTT industry also got boost due to these benefits. The sector of entertainment is the reason for more and more usage of OTT platforms. The accessibility and the availability of the variety of content is more in the OTT platforms as compared to other platforms in general. Here, in one click the person can get all the resources at a common platform. According to (Debasish Rout, Dr Ranjan Kantha, 2021, Paramveer Singh, 2019) the most preferred content for the OTT platforms was web series and the second most popular content was movies. People used to watch these content more on OTT platforms. The main reason for this huge acceptance of the OTT media is the in-person experience, variety of content, international content access, offers, time conveniency. The study here proved that in India there is huge scope of the penetration for OTT platforms, showing its future bright.

5. Once being considered as a luxury has now turned as a general commodity – which is the OTT video services. The entry of OTT video services has drastically changed the viewing pattern of the television industry. The research by (Tripti Kumari, 2020) has shown both the sides of coin for the OTT platforms. One side showing the success of the OTT platforms for gaining the popularity in the entertainment industry. Another side showing the lack of technological knowledge and readiness to accept the new technology acts as a barrier to the growth of OTT platforms. If the benefits of OTT are considered then it can be – content, quality of services of OTT services, cost, ease of use, convenience and user customization. And in terms of the lack points, lack of technological readiness, content openness and cost are the major reasons. But overall research suggest that future of OTT in India is bright.
6. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the scenario of the traditional watching experience in the cinema hall and television, to the OTT video streaming service. Cost effectiveness and access liberty are major reasons behind growth of streaming media in India. The dynamic watching habits in the OTT platforms and the services provided, it has created an impact on the cinema and the theatre industry in India and also worldwide. The researcher (Manoj Patel, 2020) come to conclusion that there might be no decrease in the footfalls to cinema halls observed after the COVID-19 pandemic gets over, as the respondents are in dilemma that they will prefer cinema halls for future viewership or they will continue with the subscription of the OTT streaming platforms. Here, the dilemma is due to the very fast growth of OTT in the Indian entertainment industry. People should get a greater number of benefits, discounts, offers and some cost worthy value addition to get diverted again to the Cinema halls for the traditional experience.

3.1. Scenario of OTT platforms before and after Covid–19 pandemic

In India, the OTT space is arising out of the classic television system and creating a fan base of its own. The number of OTT subscribers has reached beyond 29.0 million within March and July 2020. Research anticipates that these numbers will go higher and higher significantly in the coming months making India the world's second-biggest online video content consumer following China. Currently seeing there are around 35.0 million subscribers and moving with the target of reaching till 50.0 million subscribers by 2023 approximately.

OTT platforms were priorly seen as the metro trend, but now it seems as a nationwide trend with new customers coming from beyond the metros. The figure in the increment of the number of OTT service providers has been increased

a lot. There were only 2 OTT platforms in 2012, now there are around 40 platforms providing the subscriptions.

The first Indian OTT stage was BIGFlix, introduced into the Indian Entertainment industry by Reliance Entertainment in 2008. In 2010, Digivive presented India's first OTT mobile application, known to be nexGTV. It provided admittance to live TVs and on–request content. nexGTV was the pioneer to live–stream Indian Premier League (IPL) matches on mobile phones and streamed during 2013 and 2014.

OTT gained critical momentum in India around 2013 as both DittoTV (Zee), and Sony Liv were dispatched simultaneously. DittoTV contained shows across all media channels, including Sony, Star, Viacom, Colors, Zee, and so on (Sundaravel & Elangovan, 2020).

Hotstar (presently Disney+Hotstar) is the popular OTT platform in India, claimed by Star India as of July 2020. It has around 300 million dynamic viewers. Also, it has approximately 350 million downloads. In 2019, Hotstar started putting ₹120 crores in making unique content, for example, “Hotstar Specials.” 80% of the subscriptions on Hotstar originates from dramatization, films, and sports contents.

Netflix is basically American but joined India's entertainment industry in January 2016. It was enlisted as a limited liability partnership in April 2017. In the financial year 2018, Netflix procured incomes of ₹580 million. As statistics reveal, in 2018, Netflix had 6,000,000 active subscribers, among which 5–6% were paid affiliates (Sundaravel & Elangovan, 2020).

Eros Now, dispatched by Eros International, has the most significant amount of online content among India's OTT suppliers. It is a hub of 12,000 films, 100,000 music albums and audio tracks, and 100 TV shows. It has 211.5 million registered customers and 36.2 million paying subscribers as of September 2020

Hoichoi is India's first committed provincial language OTT service. It has dispatched 30 new shows and 12 unique movies in Bengali and has obtained around 200 Bengali films. It also broadcasts dubbed content from Arabic, Hindi, and English (Sundaravel & Elangovan, 2020).

For instance, AltBalaji witnessed 42% growth in subscriptions. In FY 2021 it has sold 4.7 million subscriptions which is much more compared to the FY 2020, for which the subscription sold were 3.4 million. Similarly, Zee5 claimed that from November 2019, its active subscribers grew 2.6x, engagement grew 1.3x and its average subscribers grew 3x in 2020.

Bedi shared an industry analysis of the overall production in OTT: 2019 was the first year when approximately 700–800 hours of content was specifically produced for OTT. This number would have touched approximately 2,000 hours in 2020 but due to constraints in production was restricted to 1,600–1,700 hours. However, with the pent-up

demand, in 2021 - 2022, there will be around 8,000-10,000 hours of original content produced.

With such massive growth in consumption, OTT platforms realised that they had to up their content game. They reworked on their content strategies and commissioned several new projects. Each platform increased investments into producing original content and focused on content acquisition. The year 2020 saw several new web series such as

1. Scam 1992
2. Patal Lok
3. Special Ops
4. Arya
5. Asur
6. Panchayat
7. Four More Shots
8. Bandish Bandits
9. A Simple Murder
10. Flesh, and many others

4. Findings

1. Vibhu Agarwal, CEO, and Founder, ULLU App says, "The pandemic has given a huge boom to all the OTT platforms. Much like other OTT platforms, we have also seen a significant surge in our footfall. More people are aware about ULLU and the content it offers. Normally, if 100 people download the app, 40 subscribe to it. The conversion has always been at the range of 40-45 per cent. However, during lockdown, it went up to 75 per cent. So, we started seeing 75 subscriptions per 100 downloads."
2. In 2021, Trade analyst Amod Mehra describes that OTT has changed the entertainment sector, "It has made watching films convenient and handy. Any person with a smart phone and an internet connection can watch a film, sitting anywhere in the world."
3. "The pricing of OTT is very affordable, and so are the internet packages provided by mobile service providers. It does not require a traditional broadcast or cable video infrastructure for distribution. For telecom, cable, media and content businesses, OTT video subscriptions represent a new business model built around ongoing customer relationships."
4. According to a report, the Indian OTT market is set to reach Rs 237.86 billion (US\$3.22 billion) by FY25, from Rs 42.50 billion (US\$576.73 million) in FY19.

5. Source of Funding

None.

6. Conflict of Interest

None.

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