



“OVER THE TOP” (OTT) PLATFORM - A BLESSING OR A CURSE?

Dr. Milind Peshave

Principal, Dr. D. Y. Patil IHMCT, Pune

Dr. Jyoti Peshave

Associate Professor, Bharati Vidyapeeth IHMCT, Pune

ABSTRACT

The Indian television and entertainment industry is going through a paradigm change with the introduction of the “Over The Top” platform. This platform allows the viewers the flexibility of watching television and giving them ample of options to choose from. It is indeed a great breakthrough for the industry and this platform gained a lot of popularity amongst the viewers particularly the younger generations. The biggest characteristics of this platform are that the contents displayed are not subjected through any regulations or censorship as is commonly known as. Therefore the production houses and creative people have complete liberty to express their views and thoughts completely unfiltered. However, in the recent past, it has been observed that this platform has created some adverse effects on the viewers and the society at large. In view of this situation, it's time to introspect on the issue. This study aims at understanding the perception of the viewers of various age groups on the topic and to recommend some modifications in the OTT entertainment model.

KEYWORDS: “OTT”, “Over the Top”, “Television”, “Entertainment”

INTRODUCTION

Over The Top platform, commonly known as OTT have been gaining a lot of popularity in the last few years. The introduction of OTT brought a revolution in the Indian Television and entertainment industry. The breakout of Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown exposed a lot of viewers to this platform. A lot of viewers of the satellite television shifted to OTT platform due to the convenience and flexibility of watching that it offers. Moreover, taking this opportunity the OTT operators launched aggressive promotional campaigns to attract subscriptions. As a result of which there was a great increase in viewership of OTT. This platform also proved to be the only option for release of new movies amidst closure of movie theaters in the lockdown giving a booster to this industry. The youth and millennials were the major target viewers of OTT. It has been observed in the recent past that OTT platform acted as a savior during the lockdown due to availability of unlimited entertainment options to the viewers clubbed with a lot of varied contents to match the likings of all age groups. The biggest characteristics of the platform is its uncensored and unfiltered content. However, over a period of time, due to these characteristics, the platform is flooded with a lot of contents displaying vulgarity, sexuality and violence. Although these contents became very popular, a lot of them are not appropriate for watching with family and thus watching them privately either in private time or on the smartphones became the norm. In view of this, the viewers started spending a lot of time on OTT during the lockdown and the inertia of which even continued later thereby creating an addiction of the same. Although, this platform seems to be the future of the Television entertainment industry, it's time to introspect the ill impacts it may leave on the youth and on the society at large in the times to come.

This study aims at analyzing the determinants of shift of viewership to OTT and the disadvantages that it carries. The researcher aims at understanding the perception of viewers of various age groups on the topic and recommends some modifications in the OTT entertainment model.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review focused on the following key aspects of the topic under study:

- Evolution of OTT
- Viewers perception on OTT
- Advantages & Disadvantages of OTT

According to (Purdy, 2018) The OTT market is a complex space dominated by three powerful players, Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu - the Big 3. It is challenging for small players for finding their place in a market where content rules but more consumers can be dragged if they focus on providing differentiated content limiting account sharing, getting the price right and reducing churn through improved customer relations. The survey result indicates that although price is an important factor while purchasing OTT services, content still drives most consumer choices. A broad mix of quality content tends to be what consumers value from the Big 3, with "Access to the vast library of content" proved to be the top most reason users subscribe to these services. The small players who promise to provide the services, taking one of the above mentioned factors, are more likely to attract a big crowd for their subscription.

(Singh, 2020) OTT platforms has experienced a surge in consumption and subscriber can't, impacted by the COVID-19. The recent survey by InMobi states that 46% viewers are watching more content online. According to the experts OTT services could grow further in upcoming days as the television channels run out of content. "As these channels have been unable to shoot due to lockdown, they are running old content.

In such a scenario people will gravitate towards OTT to watch fresh content," says Paritosh Joshi, media consultant and principal, Provocateur Advisor. To benefit from this increase in demand platform such as Amazon Prime video and Zee5 have made few of their shows free to watch. Due to this, Zee5 has witnessed an 80% increase in subscription and over 50% time spend recently. Thrillers, urban drama and young romance are the top performing genres on the platform. The viewership for the movies has seen significant increase across the platforms. Cinema streaming services MIBI has seen 28% rise in viewership on its platform in March, compared to February.

(Singh D. P., 2019)The advent in Internet is changing the trend of Indian Cinema very rapidly. Reduced price of internet services lay the foundation for increase in OTT services like Netflix, Hotstar, Zee5, Amazon Prime and Alt Balaji. Many ventures are producing video content solely for these OTT services. These new ventures are changing the way of Indian Television and Cinemas. The OTT services analyze the video content watched by the users and keep providing them the content on similar genres. People liken to enjoy the services for free. Hence, OTT like Hotter provides very limited content for free. Also the subscription rates of these services are very low. The users enjoy the variety of International and national content. Action and Comedy are the favorite genres of movie. According to the survey, users spend on average, 2 hours a day watching OTT services.

Web services Rise of OTT Platforms: Effect of the C-19 Pandemic PJAE, 18 (7) (2021) 2280 are watched more often in OTT services. Genres like Young romance, action and urban-drama are into the top tier. Most of the users watch the content at night. Entertainment is the biggest reason behind the use of OTT. Second biggest reason behind the use is the mobility of the gadget. Third on its availability of content on demand



Meghan McAdams 2019. "What is OTT- Understanding the Modern Media Streaming Landscape". The study revealed that the OTT apps clearly represent the future of India. In her study the major thing that was concluded that 50% of OTT customers, are experiencing "subscription fatigue". From engaging with so many platforms. It was also mentioned that the growth of large-scale platforms like Disney plus could impact the prospects for smaller niche services.

Sharma, 2020, the on-going COVID-19 crisis has forced the multiplexes to shut down. As a result, the production houses are now releasing the onto OTT platforms directly. This has become a topic of concern amongst the multiplexes as the users might ship the traditional windowing pattern. INOX and PVR both issued a public statement reacting to this issue. According to experts this is solution to a short term need of the film industry which getting by financial difficulties. It is a win-win situation for OTT players who needs fresh content and the filmmakers who had their production ready but unable to release. However, this will not be a paradigm shift, in the long term, once things return to normal. The cinema generates more revenue for the production houses compared to the OTT platforms. Being this a vital factor, the films will hit the cinemas as earlier, once the market if free from COVID-19 crisis. Matter of fact, there may be possibility to see a surge in multiplex services for few days after the returning the things to normal.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify various OTT platforms available.
2. To understand the viewers' perception on OTT.
3. To analyze the determinants o switch to OTT viewership.
4. To analyze the disadvantages of OTT platform.

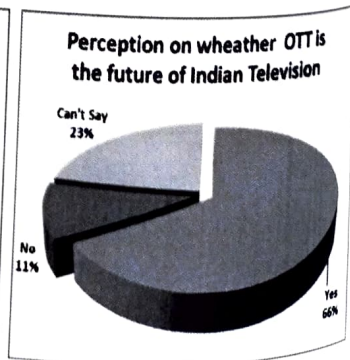
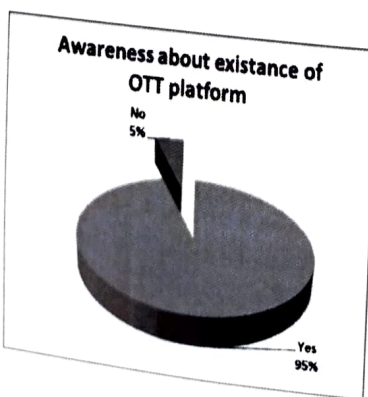
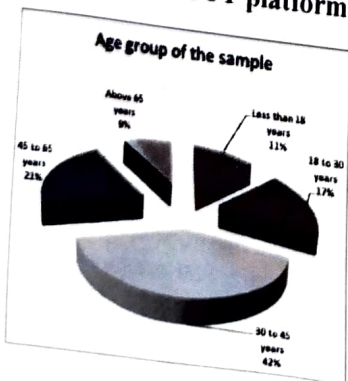
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data required for the research was collected using the following techniques:

- **Personal Interviews:** The researcher conducted group discussions with OTT viewers of various age groups to get an insight on the problem under study.
- **Questionnaire:** A questionnaire with relevant questions was drafted in google form and was circulated to the sample to obtain their responses.

FINDINGS & OBSERVATIONS

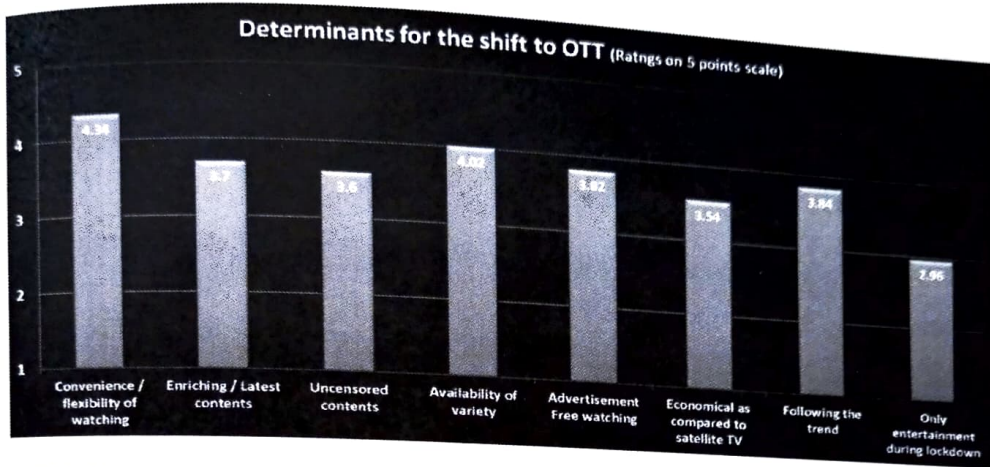
1. Perception of OTT platform



OBSERVATIONS

- The sample was truly representative of the population of viewership of OTT with respect to the age group.
- People are aware of the existence of OTT platform
- Viewers are of the opinion that OTT is the future on the Indian television.

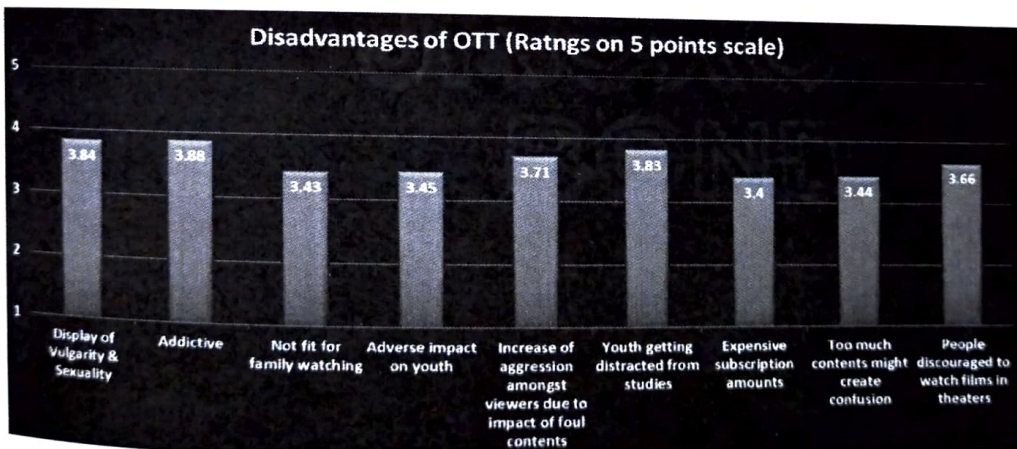
Determinants for the shift to OTT platform



OBSERVATIONS

- "Convenience and flexibility" & "Availability of variety" was the most determining factors for the shift towards OTT.

Disadvantages of OTT



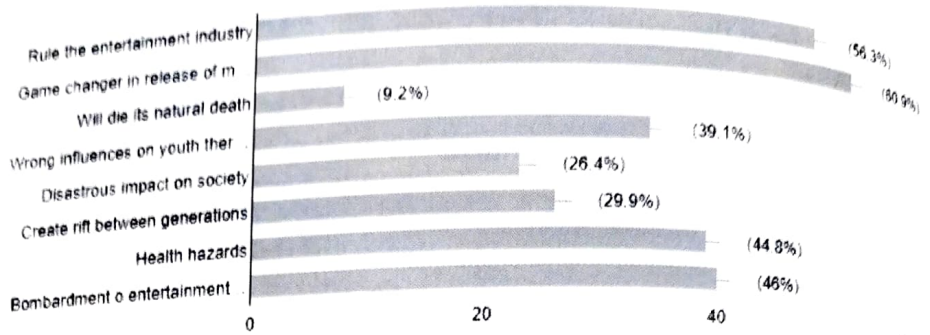
OBSERVATIONS

- "Addictive" nature of OTT, "Display of Vulgarity & sexuality" & "Youth getting distracted from studies" were the biggest disadvantages identified of OTT platform



4. Long-lasting impact of OTT in the future:

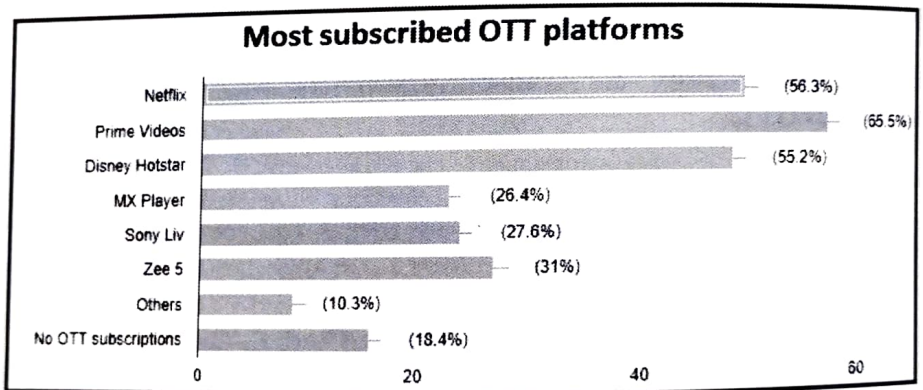
Long-lasting impact of OTT in the future



OBSERVATIONS

- “Game changer in release of movies & series” & “Rule the entertainment industry” were the most perceived long-lasting impact of OTT.
- The OTT platform has a bright future.

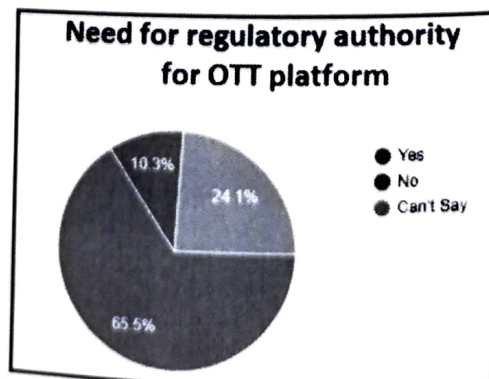
5. Most subscribed OTT platforms:



OBSERVATIONS

- “Prime Video”, “Netflix” & “Disney Hotstar” are the most subscribed OTT platforms.

6. Need for a regulatory authority to regulate the contents of the OTT platform:



OBSERVATIONS

• There is a strong need for a regulatory authority to regulate the contents of the OTT platform

Views of the Sample respondents

• Separate OTT for categorized entertainment like Sports, News, business, Kids etc.

• OTP is a threat to the present and future generations.

• I think person watching any content on OTT should watch it responsibly. People should use their intellect before drawing a conclusion because what is showcased on OTT in form of web series, movie are developed with the view of revenue generation. The writer of stories is going out of the way to create the unrealistic content. The viewers should always be aware of risks, dangers and practice caution since the content is only for entertainment purpose and making money.

• Should be more expensive so will be out of reach and can be watched by niche. Film release will get encouraged too

• There has to be some censorship board or authority controlling the content part

• OTT platform is good, only there should be control on vulgar language

• Its easy access resulting into distraction of the teenagers and young population

• Stricter parental control. Stricter rules set by the govt for the content shown.

• "Like social media absence of actual control on if censored content is being watched by right TG,

• Too many options available.

• To appear contemporary , series have lot of slangs"

• Use of language should be more decent

• Can be censored

• OTT platforms are certainly a game changing technology in online video entertainment. But the content of vulgarity should be monitored Indian government should intervene and make law for censorship of OTT platforms also.

• I generally prefer cinema hall for watching the movies rather than watching it on a small screen size phones.

• There is some really good content like latest series Rocket boys

• It's a double edged sword, has both positive and negative sides. People those who wish to watch quality movies has a multiple choice but definitely not at the cost of self-development.

• OTT indeed is the future of entertainment industry. However, regulations and monitoring is required so that all kind of viewers can willingly accept the content.



- It is waste of time and money
- OTT is also a solution to new comers / production houses with low budget. It may have more quality content than mainstream media/channels. But at the same time its addictive that you start a web-series and you want to finish it. so certainty time consuming and time wasting as well
- OTT Should also consider about educating the youth on diverse topics
- OTT has been a boon during Pandemic, especially for Senior Citizens who dared nit step out of home. Also, it provides variety of content. It has already second a part of youth and middle class houses. Controlled time, content should be user responsibility.
- Actually people have lost the true essence of living a life at a natural pace. We want everything to happen at the spur of moment. This thought process is aggravated as internet is available at a lightening pace and it is increasing the impatience of the human beings. We should emphasize on actual human interaction, small gatherings, small breaks to natural places to lead a meaningful life.
- OTT can be the future, as you can watch more personalized and independent content. However, there should be some rules regarding the content (sexual and foul language use)
- OTT is good if used judiciously
- Lot of vulgar language and nudity in OTT. Needs to eliminate that
- Lock system should be strong
- One should understand what he or she must watch
- OTT platform though having many disadvantages like security,& privacy concerns, internet accessibility, no censorship, gaining popularity among next generation.
- It seems it might be ruled by a set of people only.
- We cannot hold OTT platform responsible for any good or adverse effect on society as it is a CONSCIOUS CHOICE of an individual to subscribe or to choose the content to watch. However, up to an extent I feel, there has to be some control over the content in terms of vulgarity or sexuality.

SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Govt. of India should take cognizance of the foul contents on OTT platform and should set up a regulatory body to control the contents.
- The production houses and creators of OTT contents should be discrete about the contents considering its impact on the youth and the reparations on the society.
- Every person has to be responsible viewer and should be discrete about the contents that need to be watched.
- Every person should decide upon the viewing timings of OTT and should refrain from wasting productive time in watching OTT.

Parents of minors should set up parental lock for foul contents on the OTT.

CONCLUSIONS

The OTT platform has been the most successful ventures in the history of Indian Television. During the lockdown, when people were confined to their homes, OTT was a blessing in disguise. However, the contents available on the platform need a serious introspection. OTT became popular

REFERENCES

1. Alpana Kakkar, k. n. (2019, May 15). Analysis of Product Placement in Web Series and Its Influence on Consumer Buying Behavior. Retrieved from <https://journalofbusiness.org/index.php/GJMBR/article/view/2755>
2. Basu, R. (2020). Television and OTT. Retrieved from PWC: <https://www.pwc.in/industries/entertainment-and-media/television-and-ott.html>
3. Dixit, D. (2020, march 6). The rise and 'desification' of Indian OTT. Retrieved from Televisionpost: <https://www.televisionpost.com/the-rise-anddesification-of-indian-ott/>
4. Finance, Y. (2018, august 10). how entertainment has changed over time. Retrieved from yahoo finance: <https://in.finance.yahoo.com/news/entertainmentchanged-time-105245102.html>
5. Gaikwad, S. (2019, january 6). businesstoday. Retrieved from How Indian cinema evolved into being one of the most powerful modes of entertainment: <https://www.businesstoday.in/opinion/columns/how-indian-cinema-evolved-intobeing-one-of-the-most-powerful-modes-of-entertainment/story/307454.html>
6. Girish menon, H. P. (2017). The Digital First, How OTT platforms can be demand ready. KPMG.
7. Joshi Sujata, S. S. (2015, February). Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.1001.900&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
8. Kaushal, S. (2020, May 26). OTT Platforms In India See Subscriber Bases Surge Up To 80% Amid Coronavirus Lockdown. Retrieved from Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/swetakaushal/2020/05/26/good-news-amidlockdown-ottplatforms-register-60-80-surge-in-subscriptionbase/#77d0fab7413a>
9. Kohli, D. (2019, February 19). Looking into the future - ott trends. Retrieved Rise of OTT Platforms: Effect of the C-19 Pandemic PJAEE, 18 (7) (2021) 2287 from <https://yourstory.com/2019/02/looking-into-future-top-ott-trends-2019>
10. Laghate, G. (2017, March 02). How OTT players are geared up to woo Indian viewers. Retrieved from Brand equity: <https://brandequity.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/news/media/how-ott-playersare-geared-up-to-woo-indian-viewers/57275909>
11. Matrix, s. (2014). The Netflix Effect: Teens, Binge Watching, and On Demand Digital Media Trends. jeunesse : young people, texts, culture .
12. Purdy, s. c. (2018). KPMG's annual cable & OTT report.



13. Rajat kathuria, M. k. (2019, March). Retrieved from https://thinkasia.org/bitstream/handle/11540/9810/An_Analysis_of_Competition_and_Regulatory
14. Roshan. (2017, July 11). 5 benefits of Video on Demand over Traditional TV. Retrieved from muvi: <https://www.muvi.com/blogs/5-benefits-video-demand-traditional-tv.html>
15. Sharma, K. (2020, May 19). Will movies releasing directly on OTT platforms become norm post-Covid? Experts think otherwise. Retrieved from Business insider : <https://www.businessinsider.in/advertising/media/article/will-movies-releasing-directly-on-ott-platforms-become-a-norm-post-covid-experts-think-otherwise/articleshow/75808931.cms>
16. Singh, D. (2020, April 06). How is coronavirus impacting the streaming platforms with an increasing appetite of viewers. Retrieved from Financial express: <https://www.financialexpress.com/brandwagon/how-is-coronavirus-impacting-the-streaming-platforms-with-an-increasing-appetite-of-viewers/1919916/>
17. Sugata ghosh, r. n. (2018, October 18). How affordable over-the-top streaming has made entertainment a malaise . Retrieved from the economic times: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/media/entertainment/how-affordable-over-the-top-streaming-has-made-entertainment-a-malaise/articleshow/66266479.cms>
18. Wayne, M. L. (2017, October 13). Netflix, Amazon, and branded television content in subscription video on-demand portals. Retrieved from sage journals: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0163443717736118>
19. Xiaobing Xu, R. C. (2015). Competition, Cooperation, and Pricing: How Mobile Operators. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*; Vol. 7, No. 6; 2015