

OTT Platforms and Changing Media Consumption Patterns in India

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Abstract: *The way Indian viewers watch entertainment has gradually evolved over the last ten years. Even while movies and television are still significant, a lot of people increasingly rely on online streaming services, or OTT services. Instead of watching planned television programs, viewers can watch movies and television shows online thanks to services like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+Hotstar. Many viewers have embraced these services because of the freedom to choose what and when to watch. The expansion of streaming services has also been aided by rising smartphone usage and reasonably priced mobile data. This study investigates how Indian viewers' media consumption habits are being impacted by OTT platforms.*

Keywords: The way Indian viewers watch entertainment has gradually evolved over the last ten years.

I. INTRODUCTION

Entertainment consumption in India has never remained completely static. For a long time, television dominated the domestic media environment. Families often watched programs together in the evening, sometimes planning their routines around specific shows. Cinema also played a strong cultural role, particularly during weekends or holidays when visiting a theatre was considered a common leisure activity.

Things began to change when internet connectivity improved and smartphones became more widely available. What once required a television set and cable connection could suddenly be accessed through a mobile phone. Around the same time, streaming services began expanding their presence in India. These services, now widely known as OTT platforms, introduced a different way of distributing content.

Unlike traditional broadcasting, OTT platforms do not depend on fixed schedules. A viewer can open an application and watch a film, documentary, or television series immediately. The experience feels less structured and more individual. Some people might watch content late at night, while others prefer short viewing sessions during travel or breaks.

Another noticeable shift lies in the type of content being produced. Streaming platforms have invested heavily in original programming, including regional language series and experimental storytelling formats that were not always common on traditional television. As a result, viewers are experiencing a variety of storylines in addition to viewing content in different ways.

Understanding how OTT platforms affect media consumption has become a fascinating field of study because these changes are occurring so swiftly. This study aims to investigate whether these platforms are changing people's viewing habits and what might be influencing their rising popularity in India.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

OTT platforms' growing appeal begs the question of whether these services are altering traditional media consumption habits. The study attempts to understand how streaming platforms influence viewing habits among audiences.



III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Understanding changes in media consumption helps researchers and media professionals observe how audiences respond to technological developments. This study sheds light on how digital streaming services are shaping entertainment choices in India.

IV. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are some limitations to this research. The number of people who participated in the survey was limited, which means the findings cannot represent the entire population of India. The majority of participants were likewise from metropolitan backgrounds, where internet access is relatively stable. Media habits in rural areas may differ significantly.

Another limitation relates to the speed at which digital technologies evolve. Platforms, subscription models, and viewing trends change frequently. Because of this, the patterns observed in the paper may continue to evolve over time.

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the influence of OTT platforms on media consumption habits.
2. To understand audience preferences for digital streaming content.
3. To identify what motivates people to use OTT platforms.
4. To observe whether OTT platforms affect traditional media usage.

VI. HYPOTHESIS

H1: OTT platforms influence audiences' media consumption patterns in India.

H0: OTT platforms do not significantly influence audiences' media consumption patterns in India.

VII. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Researchers have increasingly investigated how streaming platforms influence audience behaviour and media consumption patterns. One of the earlier observations in this area relates to binge-watching habits. Panda and Pandey (2017) noted that rather than waiting for planned television broadcasts, a lot of youthful viewers would rather watch many episodes in quick succession. Their findings suggested that uninterrupted access to content is one of the primary attractions of streaming platforms.

Lobato (2019) examined that OTT platforms have changed traditional media distribution networks, and the global expansion of streaming services. Producers can now share content directly to audiences via digital channels rather than depending on cable networks or theatrical releases.

Tryon (2015) also highlighted the transformation of television viewing behaviour in the digital environment. According to his analysis, on-demand streaming allows audiences to organize their viewing experience more independently, leading to longer viewing sessions and personalized entertainment habits.

Subsequent studies have looked more closely at these developments. Karunakaran, Selvabaskar, and Ram (2022) studied viewer motivations for subscribing to OTT services and found that factors such as relaxation, entertainment, and escapism strongly influence continued usage of streaming platforms. Their work suggests that streaming services often become part of everyday leisure routines for users.

Yadav, Goyal, and Malik (2023) investigated the rapid growth of OTT platforms and identified accessibility, diverse content availability, and ease of use as major reasons for increasing subscriptions. Additionally, their study emphasized the COVID-19 period's effects, during which streaming platforms experienced a significant rise in viewership due to restricted outdoor activities.

Another study by Tiwari et al. (2024) examined OTT platforms' impact on youth audiences in India. The researchers observed that digital streaming services offer viewers a wide variety of programming and convenient access to



entertainment, which encourages young audiences to shift away from traditional television. At the same time, the study also pointed out concerns regarding the influence of uncensored content and increased screen time.

Studies focusing on youth audiences also reveal behavioural changes linked to OTT usage. For instance, research examining young viewers' engagement with streaming platforms found that binge-watching has become a common lifestyle pattern among frequent users. Motivations often include relaxation, entertainment, social conversations about popular shows, and the desire to keep up with trending content.

When combined, these results indicate that OTT platforms are not simply alternative distribution channels. They are gradually reshaping media consumption patterns by encouraging personalized viewing, binge-watching behaviour, and greater reliance on digital entertainment services.

VIII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study follows a descriptive research approach. The intention was to observe general viewing patterns rather than conduct complex statistical analysis.

Primary data was gathered via a structured questionnaire. The survey included 100 respondents consisting mainly of students and young professionals, as these groups tend to use digital media frequently. Convenience sampling was used to select participants due to accessibility and time constraints.

Secondary information was acquired from academic books, journal articles, and research publications discussing OTT platforms, digital media, and changing viewing behaviour.

Simple percentage calculations and descriptive explanations were used to comprehend the responses for data analysis.

IX. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The responses collected during the survey indicate that OTT platforms are widely used among younger audiences. Instead of viewing television, the majority of participants said they watched information on mobile devices. This suggests that digital viewing habits are significantly influenced by portability.

Additionally, a lot of respondents stated that they like to watch several episodes of a web series at once, especially on the weekends. This pattern of binge-watching appears to be fairly common among regular users of streaming services.

Another observation from the responses is the appreciation for content diversity. Overseas series, regional language releases, and platform-specific original shows were commonly mentioned by participants as justifications for OTT service subscriptions.

Challenges

Despite their growth, OTT platforms encounter a number of difficulties. Not every area has dependable internet service, which limits access for some audiences. Subscription costs can also become a concern when users wish to access multiple platforms simultaneously.

Another issue that occasionally arises relates to content regulation. As streaming platforms produce more original content, debates about censorship and platform responsibility have become more visible.

Remedies

Improving internet infrastructure, particularly in semi-urban and rural regions, could make digital streaming more accessible. Introducing flexible subscription models may also help platforms attract a broader range of users.

Encouraging the production of regional content may further strengthen the connection between streaming platforms and diverse audiences across the country.

X. CONCLUSION

A significant step in the evolution of media consumption in India is the rise of over-the-top (OTT) platforms. Viewers have more freedom to choose when and where to watch material thanks to streaming services. This convenience seems to be a major draw for many users, especially youth.



According to the study's findings, over-the-top platforms are progressively becoming a standard component of daily entertainment. The opportunity to view shows and access a variety of content libraries without having to wait for regular broadcasts is appreciated by viewers. However, on the same note, many consumers still find value in traditional media like television and movies.

Rather than completely replacing earlier forms of media, OTT platforms appear to be expanding the range of options available to viewers. India's media consumption habits will probably continue to shift as digital technologies advance.

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