

A STUDY ON THE USAGE AND IMPACT OF ONLINE STREAMING PLATFORMS ON PARENTS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Abstract

Since the tremendous growth of COVID-19, the media and entertainment industry has also seen massive growth through OTT (Over-the-Top) platforms, which provide video streaming directly to viewers through the internet without the need for cable, broadcast, or satellite television. If the last decade was dominated by the growth of multiplexes, 2020 would be recalled as the year of OTT entertainment, with cineplexes and movie theatres shut for most of the year. OTTs have increased overall media consumption to a record high during the self-isolation period and are now gradually becoming a mainstream entertainment destination amongst increasing internet users. The COVID-19-related lockdown has created a battle amongst streaming service providers to attract and keep customers. As a response to this wider trend, various independent platforms have been able to grow and compete with established giants such as Netflix and Amazon Prime. The pandemic has spurred many adults to rediscover and enthusiastically consume children's entertainment such as animation shows, rhymes, and games. As per a study by one of the institutes of research, Netflix, is almost 60% favorite video-streaming sites, users around the world preferred to watch kids and family material every month last year. Adults ranging from various age groups found a medium to entertain themselves during pandemics by spending their time on different online streaming platforms. Affordable subscription fees, easier access to the internet, and spending more time at home proved to be a boon to the OTT platforms by gaining popularity amongst the older age.

Keywords: OTT platforms, Covid-19, diverse content, family entertainment, regional content.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of the pandemic, back in 2019-20 saw drastic changes in technological changes and shift in trends in consumption of content among the population of India, has seen a massive shift from the traditional modes ranging from radio, and TVs to digital platforms. People's life has been impacted by the Covid-19 outbreak and shutdown, which has influenced Indian consumption habits, media usage, consumer behavior, and marketing trends, and these effects are expected to last a long time. Much like the global trends that indicate a rise in the use of tablets, smart phones, laptops and internet-enabled devices for content consumption by the audiences, India too has seen a steep growth in the number of internet users. There are multiple factors that caused the sudden rise of usage of OTT platforms amongst the age group of 40-60s. The lack of outdoor forms of entertainment, encouraged families to purchase few subscriptions to OTT platforms which varied as per their needs and choices. The change in consumer behavior is extraordinary to observe and further investigate as there are multiple layers in this consumption pattern that needs to be unraveled and understood from various angles and point of view. A major factor in the sudden rise in the consumption patterns of content from OTT could be the “work from culture” during the covid period. Another interesting aspect would be the pricing strategy used by global players, in India by introducing region-specific plan, which would be affordable for the people of India. A study suggest that Bollywood and Cricket rule the hearts of Indian consumers on OTT platforms along with release of big the banner movies as well. This study aims to find out impact of the OTT platforms on the adult population of India during the COVID-19 period. The reasons for its prevalence over the traditional entertainment media and the implication it may have on media market and the industry in the longrun.

II. OBJECTIVES

1. To study the impact of lockdown/pandemic on the consumption/usage of online streaming platforms by the working professionals of India.
2. To find out the relevance between different variables viz, age group, choice of platform, availability of w of variety of content, and price for the shift of consumers preference.
3. To understand the need for online platform services during the pandemic/covid times, even after the existence of traditional platforms viz, TV wash were providing all-in-one-content.
4. To examine the implications, it will have on the content production and distribution vis-a-vis the change in consumption habits of the audience.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on qualitative research. For our better understanding, we had circulated a questionnaire to 100 respondents, which were filled by random people belonging to the age group of 35-50, which were either employed or unemployed.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

(Dahiya, 2020), “Role of COVID as a catalyst in increasing adoption of OTTS in India: A study of evolving consumer consumption patterns and future business scope”, COVID-19 is a global pandemic that has transformed the way audiences consume media. OTT usage became an unmistakable trend within this time period. Many statistics indicate a growing industry and consumer hunger for choice content available on OTT platforms. OTTs provide a never-before- seen customer advantage in terms of content selection, convenience of access, and device/medium selection (hand phone, laptop, tablet or TV screen). Gone are the days when family members argued over screen time on the family's single home gadget, the television. The researchers analyzed the evolution of the OTT space in India and reviewed the dynamic OTT environment - evaluating some firsts such as huge banner movie releases on platforms such as Amazon and Netflix, and the comeback of old favorites.

Mythological programs from the DD era, for example, can be found on Hotstar. Because there is no restriction in the OTT market, it was critical to examine the influence of increased content consumption on psychographics across generations (children, adults, and elderlies) to complete the study. With this context in mind, the researchers worked on the objectives and attempted to evaluate the role of the pandemic in evolving OTT media consumption trends; a qualitative mapping of increase in OTT adoption - Pre and Post COVID 19 in India; study underlying trends around increasing consumer appetite for the medium and analyze psychographic impact on children, adults, and elderlies - listing pros and cons for freely available content with minimal censorship. To extrapolate the data, the researchers used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.

(Sharma, 2022), “OTT platforms resilience to COVID-19 – a study of business strategies and consumer media consumption in India”, Stated that during the COVID-19 new habits aroused amongst the population of India, regards to content consumption, which shifted from traditional based platforms to OTT platforms. This paper suggests that the OTT media companies structured and new developed new strategies for engaging the people on their platforms. As per the studies, OTT platforms designed 7 strategies to provide a completely new experience to their users. This includes strategies in the form of enhancing customer experience, innovative plans, enabling mass regional content and engaging in “push/aggressive marketing strategies”. Also, this study revealed that, convenience, ease of accessibility and risk of spread of COVID-19 were the key factors for more engagement of people on OTT platforms. It is essential to note that, continuous innovations in the field of media and entertainment, would enable the stakeholders of this steaming service providers, a huge scope of penetration and also coming up with a new form of platforms, which would not only fulfill the core objective of OTT platforms viz is “engagement through fun” but also enable them as one-stop-provider for all digital content services, ranging from providing the audience opportunities to create any form content and also delivering them personalized content as per their needs and preferences.

(Sontakke, 2021), “Trends in OTT Platforms Usage During COVID-19 Lockdown in India”, Carried out a detailed study on the sudden rise of content consumption through OTT platforms, that too amongst the old age group between 35- 60 years, which are primarily the parents, who were working from home and spending most of their times with electronic devices and internet. The entertainment industry was at halt and no one in the world really

expected it to outperform in all aspects. The media and entertainment industry came up with new ideas of targeting the “old mindset people” who usually prefer the traditional modes of media, for their entertainment, but with rise of internet and OTT streaming platforms, this study aims to understand the trends that prevailed in the OTT consumption with respect to lockdown and COVID_29 outbreak in India. The sudden shutdown of the nation led to disappointment amongst the people working in the industries such as travel, transportation and entertainment, but gave opportunities to industries such as pharma, IT, E-Learning, Virtual reality and the OTT players got opportunity to rise and grow exponentially. OTT platforms turned out to be a rescue for the people of India, as most entertainment channels had no new ideas of generating fresh content. The closure of cinema, enabled the OTT service providers to change their game plans, and release as much as content for the people, especially for the old age segment of the population of India. With the option of easy accessibility and cheap-customized pricing plans, the OTT platforms became the most preferred source of entertainment for every individual viewer in India. Interestingly, through this study they understood that, smartphones turned out to be the new destination for content consumption, as the OTT service platforms provided dynamic and small pricing plans for their viewers, to cater the issue of convenience and affordability.

When the film industry had no scope of providing entertainment to the viewers of the country, the web series captured the old and the new viewers. This format of providing a content in the form of story narration attracted the most of the viewers. In fact, people felt usage of OTT more comfortable rather than stepping out for consuming content for entertainment purpose. With the Indian OTT market growing at rapid pace, India is the second to China in terms of internet users belonging to the age group 35 years and above. This means that the viewer either consumes content through smartphone or through TVs, and TVs traditionally being a source of entertainment, the growth of OTT platforms is inevitable. In the coming years, OTT as mode of communication and a source of entertainment will keep on attracting people from the old age group, and the world will be seeing a scenario where the Film industry, TV and the OTT platforms will start co-existing

(Pthe Reddy Sai Kiran Reddy, 2022), “OTT Platforms Usage of During Covid-19 Lockdown”, Content based on entertainment mixed an element of learning as well, will attract the attention of the population of India, and the old age groups will soon be dependent on the OTT platforms for entertainment. This study examined and carried a study to assess the tendency to use OTT platform services during the period of closure, to understand the causes and impacts of the same. Recreation is a major part of human life, and the this becomes more important for the age group of 35 years and above, as they need to relax their minds, and consume some source of entertainment from various modes such as TV news channels, theaters and community gatherings, with COVID-19 coming into the scenario, this age group had no choice other than using OTT platform services for consuming content and bring a few moments of entertainment their life. With easy access to internet, OTT platforms were bound to gain the competitive advantage in this era of modernization. The unprecedented pandemic led to enforcement of OTT platforms into the households, with the educational institutions and business being shut for a longer period of time, this was the ideal time for the demand for OTT content to rise significantly, and so has been the scene in the past two years. The rising demand for digital content and this being the only source of entertainment in the closure of the world shows the attitude and perception of consumers towards OTT as source of entertainment. The Indian audiences have turned to OTT content

primarily because of easy accessibility, lower price plan and availability of regional content on all OTT platforms, that too across genres. Also, the old age group of Indian population , have shifted their mindset of consuming content which is more of personalized rather than whatever is made available to them. OTT platforms are looking forward to filming a new horizon, the trend of TV channels as source of entertainment t will not be outdone, considering the re-opening of the world and everything coming back to normal.

V. ANALYSIS

Basis the primary consumer survey conducted across the regions of India, keeping in mind the age group of 35-60, the researchers have tried to understand the trends in OTT content consumption. Ranging from content preference to understanding the sudden shift amongst the age group defined above. Following are the important implications of our study:

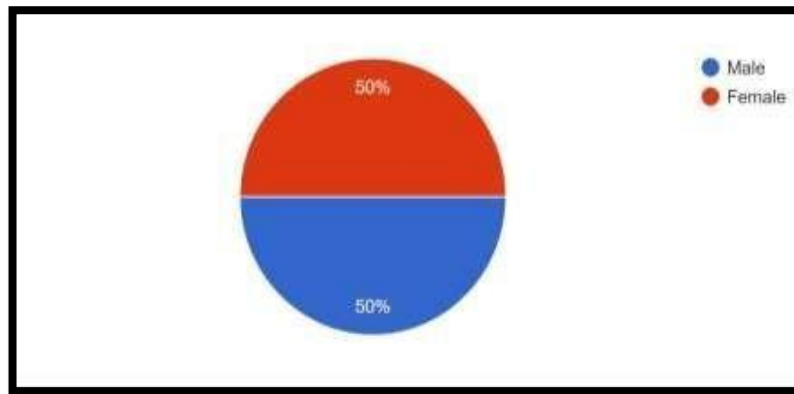


Figure1

1. A survey was circulated to 100 respondents, out of which we received an equal number of responses from both genders.
2. This data consists of both employed and unemployed groups of respondents.

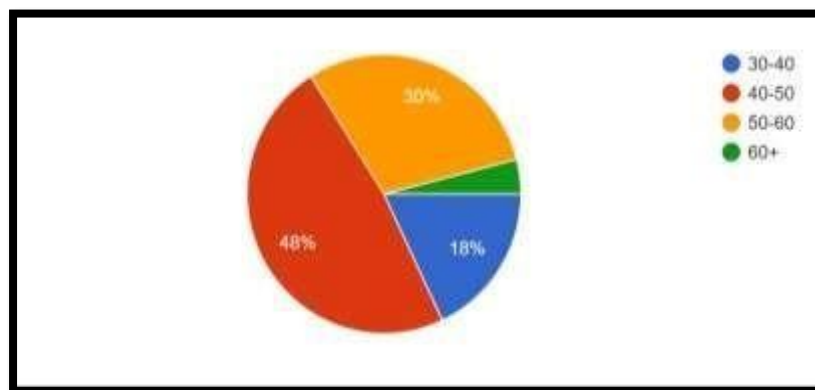


Figure 2

1. Following age groups were primarily targeted for our study of research.
2. This particular parameter was an important aspect.

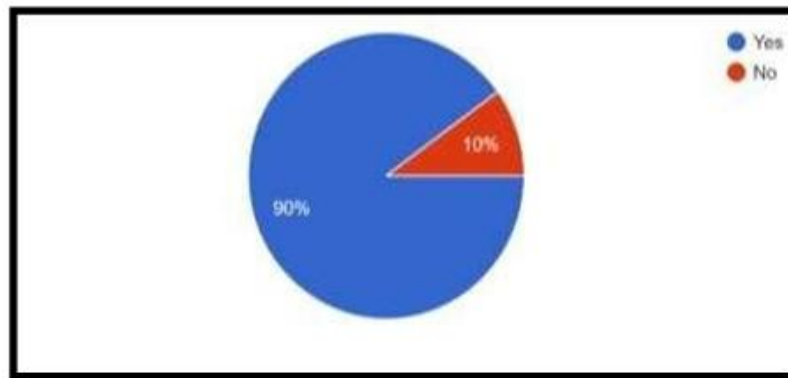


Figure 3

1. The above chart depicts the awareness amongst the targeted age group about OTT media platforms.
2. This data helps us to further investigate the topic, by considering various other variables.

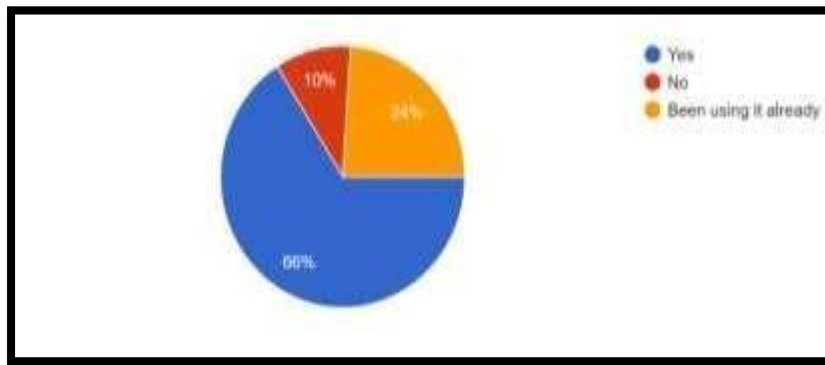


Figure 4

1. The above chart shows what percentage of the targeted age group has been exposed to OTT platforms pre- pandemic or post-pandemic.
2. The closure of multiplexes and theatres could also be one of the major variables, for the sudden rise of OTT platforms amongst the targeted age groups.

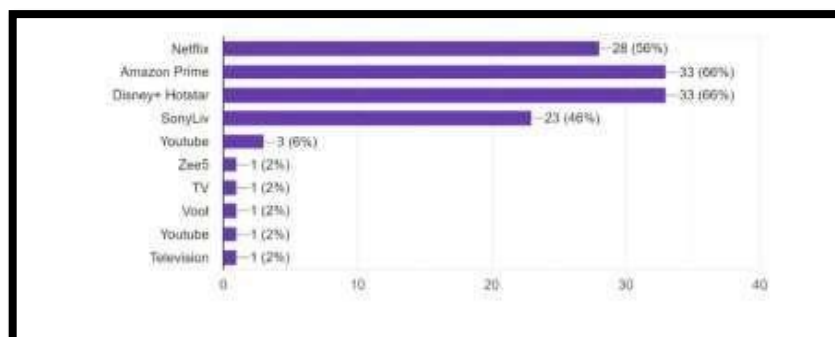


Figure 5

1. The most preferred OTT platforms amongst the age group defined are Amazon prime and Disney+ Hotstar. This could be due to the availability of more regional content on the following platforms.

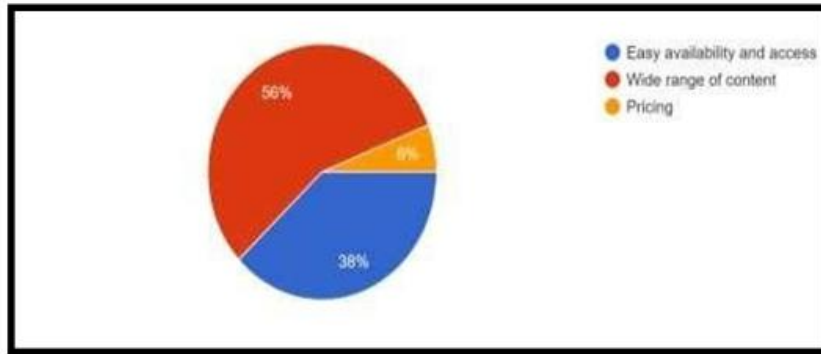


Figure 6

1. Amongst the different parameters, easy accessibility of content is of the primary reasons for the rise of content consumption through OTT platforms.
2. This shows, that no matter what, people prefer convenience, even before the quality of the content.

Table 1:

Row Labels	Easy availability and access	Pricing	Wide range of content	Grand Total
30-40	3.42	0.54	5.04	9
40-50	9.12	1.44	13.44	24
50-60	5.7	0.9	8.4	15
60+	0.76	0.12	1.12	2
Grand Total	19	3	28	50
	0.821854811			

The p-value is 0.821. This is a finding of two different variables viz, age group and different parameters for choosing online streaming platforms, this shows that there is no significant relevance between the two variables.

Table 2

	Easy availability and access	Pricing	Wide range of content	Grand Total
Female	9.5	1.5	14	25
Male	9.5	1.5	14	25
Grand Total	19	3	28	50
		0.502		

The p-value is 0.502. This is a finding of two different variables viz, gender and different parameters for choosing online streaming platforms, this shows that there is no significant relevance between the two variables.

Table 3:

Row Labels	Amazon Prime	Amazon Prime; Disney+	Amazon Prime; Disney+ H	Amazon	Amazon Prime; Youtub	Amazon	Disney+	Disney+	Netflix	Netflix;A	Netflix;A	Netflix; A	Netflix; A	Netflix; D	Netflix; D	SonyL iv	Television	TV	Youtube	Grand Total
30-40	0.36	0.18	0.36	0.36	0.18	0.18	0.72	0.54	0.18	0.72	1.08	2.34	0.18	0.36	0.18	0.18	0.18	0	0.54	9
40-50	0.96	0.48	0.96	0.96	0.48	0.48	1.92	1.44	0.48	1.92	2.88	6.24	0.48	0.96	0.48	0.48	0.48	0	1.44	24
50-60	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.3	1.2	0.9	0.3	1.2	1.8	3.9	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.3	0	0.9	15
60+	0.08	0.04	0.08	0.08	0.04	0.04	0.16	0.12	0.04	0.16	0.24	0.52	0.04	0.08	0.04	0.04	0.04	0	0.12	2
Grand Total	2	1	2	2	1	1	4	3	1	4	6	13	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	50
							P-value	0.5118												

The p-value is 0.5118. This is a finding of two different variables viz, age group and different streaming platforms, this shows that there is no significant relevance between the two variables.

Table 1, 2 &3 shows that this study needs additions of some other different parameters to at least get some relevance between the various variables and parameters.

VI. FUTURE SCOPE

The pandemic increased the consumption of material on OTT platforms, which in turn increased the development of regional content, resulting in the adoption of OTT platforms among varied Indian households. With the increase in the regional content, there has been the adoption of OTT among the elder generation in Indian households.

The OTT platforms have also started allotting big budgets to produce regional content, also amid the pandemic; OTT platforms were one of the options to consume fresh content.

This study was conducted with various characteristics in mind, such as pandemic, affordability, ease of access to content, and boredom from traditional modes of communication. The future scope of the research could include performing research where pandemics are not a prominent factor and analyzing how these OTT platforms will be used by the elderly age group of 40+. Is it safe for production houses to invest heavily in creating regional content for OTT platforms if consumption of regional material was fueled by the pandemic or if there was a sudden rise in consumption of regional content?

VII. CONCLUSION

Indians for years have been exposed to a variety of content, through different media forms. In the initial years of entertainment, a common family was restricted to limited channels, too with no exposure to different variety of content, this imagination was tapped and explored by the rise of OTT players optimally during COVID-19 and gave accessibility to a range of content across different modes. OTT has been perceived as a luxury aid by the older generation. Considering the huge penetration of smartphones and the availability of smaller plans, the shift from being a need to a necessity shows how old age groups have been ready to accept the changes in the pattern of content consumption. On the other hand, no matter how the technology is evolving and the trends in consumption of content are changing, we cannot ignore the fact that any content related to the news industry would be consumed primarily through traditional methods viz are radio, newspapers, and television media, even if the OTT platforms start offering content related to the news. The world as we knew it will have changed, possibly for the better, but the way the media scenario plays out will primarily depend on the economy after the lockdown, in addition to consumer views.

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