OTT Platforms: Reshaping Viewing Pattern Of Cinema In India

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The research study delves into the profound impact of media, particularly OTT platforms, on shaping societal norms, cultural values, and viewing habits in India. It underscores the pivotal role of media in not just disseminating information but also in influencing behavioral patterns and fostering cross-cultural exposure. Through a comprehensive analysis, it elucidates how the emergence of OTT services like Netflix and Amazon Prime has revolutionized the entertainment landscape, offering a diverse array of content to Indian audiences. Furthermore, the research article delineates the various business models adopted by OTT platforms to generate revenue, ranging from Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD) to Advertising Video on Demand (AVOD) and Hybrid models. It highlights the dynamic nature of media consumption, with a significant emphasis on the preferences of the younger demographic. **Keywords:** OTT, Cinema, Entertainment, Mass Media, Consumer, Movies, Web series

Introduction:

Media can play a significant role in shaping society or a nation as a successful and developed society or nation. It is an integral part of our lives and society; it can generate a great deal of popular interest and debate about controversial issues. It upholds not only the social-economic, political development conditions but also modifies the human resource development by providing a prosperous platform of information. It is a medium to disseminate information, knowledge, and education among the masses about important issues (Gangopadhyay and Dutta, 2010, p.526). Newspaper, radio, television, cinema, mobile, books, magazines, computer along with internet are medium of getting information, called mass media. With the advancement of technology in the 20th century, the world is shrinking, and geographical barriers are being broken because of bombard television programs throughout global media channels (Gautam, S.K., 2019).

Nowadays, People are surrounded by digital mass media. Radio, television, mobile phone gadget, newspapers, the internet, movies, recorded music, and books saturate our everyday lives. Today, media especially television plays a significant role in everyone's life in India. It reflects cultural values, and also influences culture. Shows like Ramayana and Mahabharata developed the practice of community viewing in Indian society. Nearly two decades ago, when the first soap opera arrived based on the relationship between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law, Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi, it struck a chord with the television audience. Everyone was watching them, the housewives, the working women, housemaids, nobody ever missed them. Television became a family experience. Today, India has more than 800 channels, and television is the cheapest and most accessible form of entertainment, where people still live incredibly challenging lives. Television and its viewing experience have undergone various innovations over the years, and it has become a necessity rather than a luxury for most households.

The viewing habits of Indian consumers have changed a lot in the last few years. Smartphones with affordable data have also brought the audience from Tier 2, 3, 4 cities online and created a massive opportunity. It was unleashed by Over-the-top (OTTs)/streaming media services such as Disney+ Hotstar, Amazon Prime Video, and Netflix, the space is seeing many local and regional OTT players, such as SonyLIV, Voot, Zee5, Eros Now, ALT Balaji, Hoichoi and Adda Times, has provided Indian audience with a plethora of online content. On one hand, short-form video content consumption on smartphones and social platforms has been on the rise, binge-watching shows on various OTT platforms have also become more common on the other (India's OTT

industry to be worth $15 billion by 2030: Report, 2021). An attempt has been made in this article to understand OTT platforms and its presence in India. The research study also explored and analysed OTT business model in India. In addition, the research article has also tried to understand impact of OTT platform on audience.

OTT Platforms and Its presence in India
According to the Regulatory Framework for Over-the-top (OTT) services, the term over-the-top (OTT) refers to applications and services which are accessible over the internet and ride on operators' networks offering internet access services such as social networks, search engines, amateur video aggregation sites etc, (Consultation paper on Regulatory Framework for Over-the-top Services, 2015). With the OTTs such as Netflix and Amazon, providing overseas content in India, it has become easier for youth to view cross cultural content. A continuous access to overseas or foreign (intercultural) content not only orients the youth with an altogether new culture but also lead to behavioral change. Millennial are much more open to contemporary ideas such as gender equality, live-in relation, LGBTQ, love marriages, divorce, etc.

In 2010, Netflix entered into streaming media. After few years, Netflix started content production under the name of "Netflix Original". Eight years back Netflix was started by purchasing two seasons of "House of Cards" for 10 Carors USD, is today making more television than any network in history.[1] In India, Netflix was launched in January 2016 (Sharma et. al, 2017).

In a study conducted titled as 'India OTT Video Content Market Consumer Survey', it is found that young Indians, under the age of 35 years, accounts for 89% of the total Indian are OTT video content platform users. Among young users, the age groups of 16-24 and 25-35 contributed equally to the overall market (Bhatia, 2019).

According to a study (Unveilling the digital video consumer, 2019) conducted by KPMG India and EROS now, India will have more than 500 million online video subscribers by the financial year 2023, turning the country into the second largest online video market in the world after China.

OTTs provide with wide variety of local, national and foreign content for audience to view. One of the factors for popularity and adoption of OTTs among youth may be the lack or absence of censorship on the platforms. Explicit content like, violence, on-screen sex, abusive language, consumption of drugs is shown on the OTTs without any kind of censorship.

OTT business model in India
OTT or Smart platforms are a medium to watch movies, web series, television serials and other videos by using internet enabled gadgets such as smartphones, laptops, computers and other devices. The best thing about the OTT platform is the ease of customization, controls and binge watching. A subscriber does not require a cable operator service to watch the content of his choice. There are several OTT platforms available in India. These OTT platforms are Netflix, Amazon Prime, Zee5, Sony Liv, Eros Now, MX Player, Disney+ Hotstar, and so on. These OTT platforms work and generate revenue on the following business models:
1. Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD) is a dominant model of OTT platform. In this model, the OTT service providers generate revenue through the subscription that is paid by the users to view media the content. The subscription value may defer from OTT platform to platform. In this model, advertisements are not broadcast during programs. This model is adopted by online streaming giants like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Sony Liv and so on.
2. Advertising Video on Demand (AVOD) is an advertisement based model. It allows the subscribers or users to view the content for free. In this model, OTT service providers broadcast programs along with frequently advertisements during whole programs. These OTT platforms generate revenue through the Ad revenue model, where they charge brands and companies for posting ads on their platform. This model is adopted by Voot & MX Player.
3. Hybrid Model is a combination of both SVOD and AVOD. In this model, the OTT service providers offer both free and paid subscriptions to its users and generate revenue through both models. This pattern of OTT platforms is followed by Hotstar plus, and Zee5in India.
4. Transaction Video on demand (TVOD) model also comprises online steaming options that can be chosen by the subscriber as per their needs. The subscribers are charged on the basis of pay-per-view. This kind of revenue model is followed by Sky Box Office, Apple's iTunes, and Amazon Video Store (How OTT Platforms Earn Money: Netflix, Amazon Prime, ZEE5 and More, n.d.).

Impact of OTT platform on the traditional video platform
The force of globalization that has spread all across India can be witnessed through the changing lifestyle of Youth through the way they dress, eat, live, make choices and consume media. Millennial are the one most affected by the effect of globalization in every aspect all over the world. Indian youth today are caught between the traditional culture that the parents emphasize and the culture they are exposed to through local and international media, especially the Internet and social media. The external cultural are creating modern

values such as democracy, importance to science and technology, minority rights, gender equality, material consumption, individualism, achievement, pleasure, etc (Rao & Thombre, 2015). They also argued that urban middle class Indian households revolves around the maintenance of traditional cultural values and practices and rejection/accommodation/assimilation/transformation of newly introduced one.

Jandt (2016) in his book titled "An Introduction to intercultural communication: Identities in a Global Community" says that cultures in which little of the meaning is determined by the context because the message is encoded in the explicit code are known as 'low context'. Cultures in which less has to be said or written because more of the meaning is in the physical environment or already shared by people are known as 'high context'. For example, while meeting a stranger, your verbal communication with that person is highly explicit- or low context-simply because you have no shared experiences. One cannot assume anything. However, when you communicate with your sister or brother with whom you have shared a lifetime, your verbal communication is less explicit because you make use of your shared context. The concept plays very important role in inter cultural or cross cultural communication. High context cultural content will be more popular rather than low context culture. Context plays a vital role while watching cross cultural content on OTTs.

Hodkinson in his book titled Media Culture and Society (2017) observes that culture include literature, music, art and theatre etc. It also refers to the way of life of a society or group, including values, meanings, identity, traditions, norms of behavior and ways of understanding the world. He further points out that the media conglomerates control the substantial portions of the culture most of us consume by controlling the most significant and influential forms of content, and the social media that most of us communicate through. Theories of media, culture and society focus on the ways media destroy social and culture difference. Some highlight the relationship between media and a singular 'public' or nation while others flag the potential of media to construct a universal culture. Media is a homogenizing and uniting force that eradicates cultural difference. In his work, he also suggests that a culture industry even more adapt at promoting new styles, symbols and crazes offers little opportunity to form genuinely distinctive communities, leaving youth to pick and mix from the plethora of pre-mediated options.

Another book titled Platform power and policy in transforming television markets (Evens & Donders, 2018) states that both traditional television and online video platforms are not same in terms of gratifying entertainment and fulfillments of viewing needs. This may be the reason of increased total viewing timing of the audience. As far as entertainment and relaxation is concerned, traditional broadcasting outperforms online video platforms, whereas OTT provides the flexibility of time and choice of content; and facility of binge watching and mobility.

Matrix (2014) in his study titled "the Netflix effect: Teens, Binge watching, and On-demand digital media trends" points out that as a larger share of young television audience consumes more television shows via Netflix and Other OTT services. Some critics argue that such consumption practices interfere with the cultural unification effects that bond people through shared, mass-mediated experience. Along with the changes in television viewing patterns, OTTs are also affecting family dynamics in terms of the time that they spend together. OTTs provide with the mobility of time and place that was not in the case of television which forced the families to sit together.

Wallenstein (2015) in his article titled "the OTT view-niverse: A map of the new video ecosystem" observes that streaming services allows subscribers to watch as much content as they want in exchange for a recurring fee, monthly or annually. Traditional content companies are also entering into these spaces by producing an exclusive content for OTTs and releasing it there only. But if they are not careful, these services are at the risk of cutting the cord among the 100 million pay-TV homes. He argues that streaming media services are developing into possible threat to traditional TV by rapidly capturing the market and increasing subscribers.

Effler, Costa & Calif (2016) in streaming video satisfaction study sponsored by Global marketing information services provider, J.D Power examined overall user satisfaction. The study included Netflix, HULU, VUDU, Apple ITunes and Amazon Video. They formulated six different key factors, viz., performance and reliability, content, cost of service, ease of use, communication, and customer service. On a 1,000-point scale, he found that Netflix ranks highest among all OTT service providers with an overall 829 score. The study also found that Netflix topped in five of the six key factors, performing particularly well in performance and reliability and in customer service.

Gabriel (2018) in her article pointed out that the OTT giant, Netflix was investing more and more in creating series like Sacred Games that broadcast over OTT platform. The series is an authentic representation of Mumbai in all its paradoxical glory. Poverty, violence, corruption, caste prejudices are all portrayed, along with the other standard elements that make Mumbai the city of dreams. This shows how Netflix are producing culturally authentic content to cater it globally and achieving success in terms of gaining worldwide viewership.

Hughes (2019) in his article says that Netflix is a leading and dominating the online streaming media platform. Netflix suggests what to watch next on the basis of the subscriber's past viewing details. Netflix also gave viewing suggestions to the director or actor on the basis of programs that the subscriber had watched the most. The viewing pattern also affected the way of new content creation for the OTT giant. In turn, the new content was produced on the themes that were more popular among the viewers. The viewers' could also keep watching the content on the theme they liked.

In his article, Srihari (2019) opined that in the age where production giants only wanted to fund superhero movies, while Netflix was funding award worthy movies. It also criticized for the same. Not only Netflix, rather other OTT giants like Amazon Studios ware also producing movies like *Manchester by the Sea, You Were Never Really Here, Cold War and Honey Boy.*

Fokkema (2016) in his study titled "Television content vs. Netflix content: A content analysis regarding to the storylines and character development in house of cards" found that television was a dynamic medium that changes through time. Besides television, there were still developments that could further influence peoples' behaviour. Nowadays, the invention of internet enabled smartphones and other online streaming devices played prominent role in shaping peoples' viewing behaviour. The arrival of steaming devices caused more and more people to 'cut the cable'. He observed that since Netflix was producing its own content, as a service, it was detached from the television set even more than other streaming devices and this might contribute to the dying of television. The so-called 'Netflix effect' changed the way television was written, produced and consumed. This phenomenon raised the question if because of the changing reception and production the content of 'television' programs had changed as well.

Sharma, R. (2016) in his study 'The Netflix Effect: Impacts of the Streaming Model on Television Storytelling' found that Netflix realigned the way people think about television. On February 1, 2013, Netflix premiered its first exclusive original series, *House of Cards*, and initiated a new concept of original productions for streaming platforms. The show also received 14 Emmy award nominations and won three Emmy Awards in 2013. This success, both in terms of viewership (moneywise) and awards established Netflix as the preeminent streaming platform. Netflix releases all episodes of the entire season at once, a strategy that promotes binge watching at viewer's comfort in terms of time and place to access the show. Once, just a distributor of television, Netflix has now become television itself, offering a platform to creators for innovations. He also found that the innovations were also reaffirming and redefining the changing face of television. Netflix had not become a replacement of television yet but it had surely created TV disruption to an extent.

Conclusions

It is found that emergence of OTT service providers such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Eros Now, MX Player, Sony LIV, Disney plus Hotstar and many more provided a plethora of video content for entertainment to Indian audience. Due to which it has become easier for youth to view cross cultural content. A continuous access to overseas or foreign (intercultural) content not only orients the youth with an altogether new culture but also lead to behavioral change. Millennials are much more open to contemporary ideas such as gender equality, live-in relation, LGBTQ, love marriages, divorce, etc. The study concludes that globalization has affected the lifestyle of Indian youth in terms of, dressing, eating, consumption of media, and other life choices. Urban middle class Indian families are caught up between the maintenance of traditional cultural values and practices that are introduced through international media and internet.

The study also finds that there are four OTT business models exist in India. These models are Subscription video on demand (SVOD), Advertising video on demand (AVOD), Hybrid model, and Transaction video on demand (TVOD). All OTT service providers generate revenue by using these OTT business models.

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