

Analyzing The Factors Affecting Media Consumer Trends During The COVID-19 Period - The Rise Of Web Series By Different Otts V/S Traditional TV Serials In India.

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ABSTRACT:

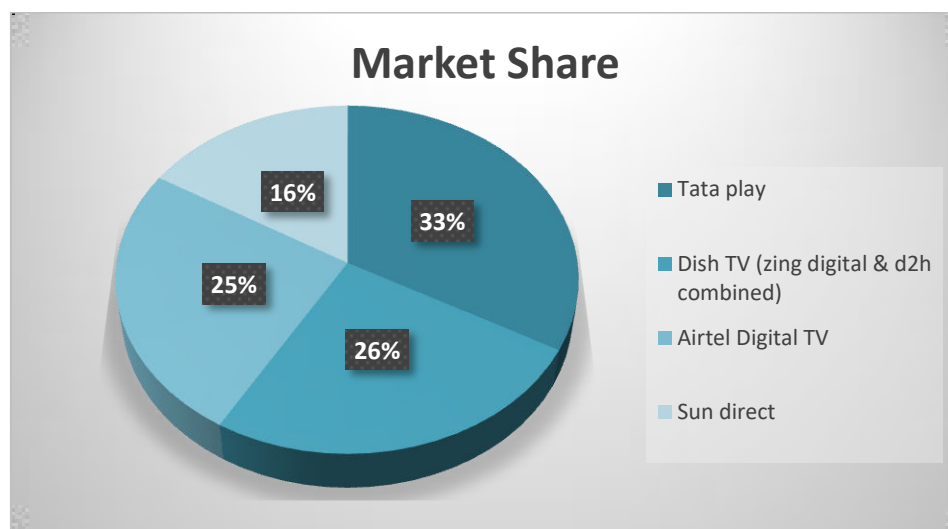
In the recent decade OTT platforms, also known as "Over the top," have seen a tremendous rise in the number of consumers and also gained a huge market share in the entertainment industry. The OTT service most users probably interact with regularly is video OTT. Services like Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar are video OTT services that provide users with a number of programming options, both in terms of a licensed library of TV shows and films and original programming. The study's objective is to carry out a detailed study of OTT (over-the-top) platforms, and how and why OTT platforms are rising in India. This study also investigates OTT platforms at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. We found that recent years have witnessed several films emerging as pan-India hits, and the rise of alternative platforms has only widened the opportunities for actors and filmmakers. This study concludes that there is no competition between theatres and digital platforms filmmakers must up their game. OTT has resulted in more opportunities and redefined viewership patterns. Films and other mediums will thrive together because the same actors and makers are exploring different platforms.

Keywords: OTT, Entertainment industry, Technology, Global market, Pandemic, Theatres, Digital platforms, Filmmakers.

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Traditional Technology DTH:

A Direct-To-Home (DTH) system is a digital satellite service that brings television programming to your home via a personal dish. In November 2000, the Government of India (GoI) approved the reception and distribution of satellite television broadcasts. On October 2, 2003, Dish TV introduced the country's first DTH service. In December 2004, public broadcaster Prasar Bharati launched DD Free Dish, India's first free DTH service. By the number of subscribers, India is the world's largest DTH market. There were 69.98 million active pay DTH users in the country as of December 31, 2019. The Indian market is served by four commercial DTH providers and one free DTH provider as of March 31, 2021.



Market share of DTH operators in India as of December 2020 according to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).

Table 1: Popular Direct-To-Home (DTH) Platforms in India:

Serial No.	Satellite Television/ DTH Operators	Year of Service Launching
1	Dish Tv	2003
2	Dd Free Dish (Formerly Dd Direct Plus)	2004
3	Tata Sky	2006
4	Sun Direct	2007
5	Airtel Digital Tv	2008
6	D2h (Formerly Videocon D2h)	2009
7	Reliance Digital Tv (Formerly Reliance Big Tv)	2010
8	Independent Dish Tv	2018

9	Jio DTH	2020
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(Chopdar & Tarafdar, 2023)

1.2 Over the top (OTT) platforms:

To a considerable extent, the digitalization of technology has helped to the development of enterprises all over the world. Over the last few decades, the world's consumption of content has changed dramatically. The entertainment and media business has experienced unprecedented expansion. Consumers are no longer reliant on television sets for entertainment. On OTT services, a new era of binge-watching is gaining traction. The phrase "over-the-top," or "OTT," refers to film and television programming that is delivered over a high-speed Internet connection rather than through a cable or satellite provider. An OTT platform has a big library of movies and TV shows from across the world that can be seen on a variety of devices such as phones, laptops, Android televisions, and so on. These platforms even develop their own shows, providing a unique experience for their users. It is a media streaming service that may be accessed by anyone with internet access.

Table 2: Popular Over-the-Top (OTT) Platforms in India:

Serial Nos.	OTT Platforms	Year of streaming	Owner	Languages Offered
1	Big Flix	2012	Reliance Entertainment	Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Punjabi, Malayalam, Gujarati, Marathi, Bhojpuri, and Bengali
2	Sony LIV	2013	Sony Pictures Network India	Hindi, English, Telugu, Tamil, Bengali, Malayalam, Kannada, Punjabi
3	Netflix	2015	Reed Hastings	English, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Bengali, Malayalam, Kannada
4	Disney + Hotstar	2015	Star India Private Limited	Hindi, English, Malayalam, Telugu, Tamil, Bengali, Kannada, Marathi
5	Amazon Prime Video	2016	Amazon.com	Marathi, English, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Bengali, Malayalam, Kannada, Odia, Punjabi, Gujarati
6	VOOT	2016	Viacom 18	English, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Bengali, Malayalam, Kannada, Odia, Punjabi, Gujarati
7	Zee5	2018	Zee Entertainment Enterprises	Marathi, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Bengali, Malayalam, Kannada, Punjab, Odia, Gujarati, English.

(Chopdar & Tarafdar, 2023)

1.3 Market Scenario of OTT platform in India:

The creation and huge growth of the OTT platform have been enormous in India. With more than 40 OTTs in India, people are increasingly choosing to watch content online. According to (FICCI & EY, 2019) the market for OTT Platforms in India expanded by some \$113.5 billion a year earlier in FY2019, and it reached some \$24 billion by 2021 the fact that the transition was motivated by data availability and affordability. As well as a Data-saving nation just a few years ago, India is now at the top of the world at 9.8 GB a month when it comes to data-saving. Furthermore, the rise of over-the-top (OTT) platforms has altered the advertising and entertainment landscape. The introduction of OTT technology signified a substantial change in India's media consumption trends from a few years ago, and this rise has revolutionized the way content is created, consumed, and delivered via OTT platforms. The number of OTT platform firms supplying a diverse variety of products is rapidly increasing, and the user experience is immersive and dynamic, with customer behavior changing dramatically. According to the PwC Global Entertainment & Media Outlook: 2020–2024 report, India is the world's largest entertainment and media market. The fastest-growing OTT market will become the sixth-largest market in 2024, with a CAGR of 28.6 percent. The OTT market will surpass South Korea, Germany, and Australia to become the world's sixth-largest.

1.4. Covid-19 pandemic scenario:

The Covid-19 pandemic and the nationwide lockdown have increased the utilization of media, even though money was the greatest challenge. The average time spent by a subscriber on an OTT platform has increased from about 20 minutes to at least one hour during pandemic times. There has been an exponential growth in Video-on-demand platforms in India. The revenues from membership in OTT and Digital media have taken a hike, as homebound customers search for quality-based content, and these platforms not only satisfy their customers but also provide a vast plethora of content made for audiences belonging to different genres. After the lockdown in India, the theatrical release of all major films had been indefinitely postponed. But OTT platforms were buzzing with activity. According to IBEF, The OTT sector in India witnessed a 30% rise in the number of paid subscribers, from 22.2 million to 29.0 million between March and July 2020, due to Covid-19 led Lockdown. The pandemic Covid 19 has contributed a large to the subscription of popular OTT series due to ample free time and the need for edutainment and entertainment during the lockdown. (Numanovich & Abbasxonovich, 2020)

1.5 The factors that could affect the shift of consumers from television to Ott platforms:

1. Convenience:

People nowadays value convenience above all else, and because the internet can be accessed from anywhere, at any time, and on any device, obtaining material on OTT platforms is simple. Another key advantage of OTT platforms is that you are not confined to your couch or forced to wait for nice weather before the game begins. Traditional cable networks, on the other hand, are constrained by physical and geographical restrictions. Viewers will find it quite handy to stream their favorite material thanks to the location independence of OTT services.

2. Cost:

The majority of OTT platforms have relatively low-cost subscriptions. For example, Amazon Prime Video, India's biggest OTT provider, charges Rs. 999 for a yearly subscription that includes access to not only Prime Video but also Prime Music, as well as fast shipping on Amazon-fulfilled items. Similarly, Netflix offers Rs. 199 mobile memberships in India. The overall cost of OTT viewing is determined by the internet data plan selected and, if applicable, the subscription costs for the OTT platforms being watched. The charges are consequently considerably reduced as compared to regular TV cable network charges.

3. Varied content:

Traditionally, networks have been choosy about what they air. Serials, news, live games, movies, and children's programming are examples of this type of content. As a result, the viewer's channel selection, type, quality, and variety of content were limited. OTT platforms provide a diverse range of content, with the majority of them providing both free and paid options. Viewers can become Prime members through subscriptions, but even if they do not subscribe to OTT services, they can watch almost everything on Prime and Netflix, from movies to web series to original shows.

4. Device-independent viewing:

Another important advantage of OTT services is that we are not confined to our television sets. It can be seen on any device, regardless of the network carrier. Furthermore, the ability to watch or post videos from our smartphones allows us to stream live videos anytime and wherever we choose.

5. Time-saving:

Televisions have a lot of advertising, whereas OTT can be seen with or without them, saving time. It can also be used anytime you want, whether it's on the weekends or late at night, rather than having to wait for it to air on television.

6. Availability:

These OTT services can be accessed via mobile apps, smart TVs, laptops, and tablets, among other devices. The only prerequisite is an internet connection; therefore, OTT platforms are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and can be used anywhere. OTT service providers do not require any additional setup, such as a set-top box or an antenna. You're good to go as long as your phone has a working data plan or you can connect to Wi-Fi. This could be a major motivator for people to switch from TV to OTT.

7. Platform for International content:

You can now view movies from all around the world, international sporting events, or as many episodes of Friends as you want without having to worry about waking up at weird hours or incurring additional data expenses. It's no longer a pipe dream to be able to watch whatever you want, whenever you want. Any Indian information posted on these platforms can be read by people all over the world. This allows for a wider distribution of content and talent.

2. Literature Review:

(Fitzgerald, 2019) in their study highlighted the rapid growth of over-the-top (OTT) video services in India, such as Voot, Hotstar, Netflix, and Amazon, and placed their development in the context of the dominant trends and business models at the international level. Although the projected shift toward subscription-based business models implies that the global players will become more and more active in the business of content, this central characteristic of the more mature US market is not yet evident in India. The specific dynamics of platform growth in the country about the interplay between new digital infrastructures, including fiber-optic cables, broadband networks, and smartphones; corporate strategies among small and large, local and international players; and state policy and regulation, which seeks to both address concerns about economic, political, and cultural security.

(Sudhagani et al., 2020) examined that there has been a significant increase in the consumption of media in digital formats around the world. Today's customers can access the media material of their choice at any time. They discovered that the future of OTT platforms will be very bright and video consumption will increase with internet and mobile penetration every day. It is stated in their study that the major shift towards the consumption of old entertainment to new entertainment is due to various factors like cost, service, convenience, variety of content, etc. The present study says that users' profiles and preferences are different towards content. There has been a lot of investment in OTT platforms, but it is very hard to say that OTT platforms will replace traditional TV systems.

(Hu et al., 2017) Examined that the streaming platforms such as Twitch and YouTube Live have been founded and demonstrated unprecedented growth across the world. They also discussed continuous watching behavior intention via a dual identification framework including identifications with streaming broadcasters and audience groups.

(Tang et al., 2016) discovered in the study that in the online and mobile device markets, researchers were also concerned about where the smartphone stood. Connectivity and high portability are features, with smartphones standing out. Though PCs and tablets continue to be popular, smartphones can easily connect to the Internet via some external support, such as Ethernet or WiFi, 3G or 4G open network. Research has shown that viewers who have visited online streaming platforms are concerned with similar details (e.g., the most shared by Facebook or the most rated by Twitter, feedback, comments, critics, etc.) more than the content of the video itself; the position of smartphones among mobile devices; therefore, it is more for the collection of information than for long-hour video viewing.

(Numanovich & Abbasxonovich, 2020) discussed how with the boom in the technical specifications of smartphones and rising usage of the internet, the entertainment industry is performing well with OTT services. According to the researcher, the pandemic COVID-19 has contributed significantly to the subscription of popular OTT series due to ample free time and a need for edutainment. A lockdown as the shooting of TV series and movies was stopped due to lockdown, the consumer shifted towards OTT, and the demand offshoot at a high rate. Now, consumers are more comfortable with OTT services owing to the convenience and variety they offer without advertisements. As the trends are observed, the market for OTT will grow rapidly in the coming years too. The companies will now face the changing preferences for OTT platforms instead of entertainment offline.

(Hart, 2003) believed that high-end possessions in the adoption of OTT and home theatre TVs were discouraging OTT services. They also talked about the customer psychology that customers who want something new follow the many risks and are ready to embrace the OTT service (short battery life, small screens, rights to the content) that conform with OTT services, and some suspicions emerge from some of these threats can hinder the VoD service's success.

(Woo & FOCK, 1999) indicated in their study that the success of online services depends on different variables, such as network coverage and efficiency of transmission. The researcher also did a subsequent analysis of various scenarios of internet-related studies and their applications in the context of India, which indicates that Indians are now accepting different forms of online media streaming platforms, especially OTT platforms like Netflix, Disney+ Hotstar, and Amazon Prime.

(Mann et al., 2015) explained that the rise will be instrumental in a drastic shift of media consumption from traditional to digital. According to the researcher, there has been a decline in the percentage of Indian consumers who prefer watching shows on TV from 47% to 10% over the last year. Accenture (2015)

(Ernst & Young, 2016) wrote a detailed case study on the major factor responsible for the shift from DTH to OTT. The researcher concluded that an increase in the usage of smartphones in India has stirred a new era of video consumption on personal media devices. The researcher also shared the data whereby the penetration of smartphones in India is projected to grow to 520 million by 2020 and broadband penetration will increase from 14% currently to 40% in 2020, which is known to be the main reason for an increase in the shift from DTH to OTT.

(Numanovich & Abbosxonovich, 2020) in their study, discussed various factors that affect the shift of customers from TV series to television. According to them, the customer's preference for watching a series either through the web or television varies with several parameters like gender, age, location, internet access, etc. speed, time spent on the internet, cost, or convenience. The researcher examined that mostly males watch web series and females prefer television series. Youths aged 10–19 years and 20–29 years mostly prefer to watch web series. Customers between the ages of 40 and 60, as well as those over 60, prefer to watch television series. The majority of city customers prefer to watch web series. Users with high internet connections and those who spend more time on the internet prefer web series. Thus, the preference of customers greatly relies on internet speed and time spent on the internet. According to them, price is the only factor lowering the demand for OTT in India as many Indians cannot afford the subscription rates of OTT services. The majority of people are willing to pay less than Rs 100 per month as a subscription fee. Netflix, one of the popular OTT platforms, has the lowest subscription value at Rs 199 per month (Tripathi, A. 2014; Tripathi, A. 2019)

3. Objectives:

- To probe the major players catering to the target audience.
- To discover whether Indian audiences prefer online series or television series by investigating the factors that influenced their decision.
- The research tries to study the rise of the OTT platforms during the pandemic.

4. Research Methodology:

This research was conducted to attain the above objectives of this paper. The methodology adopted in this research is both qualitative and quantitative. The researchers carried out detailed primary research to study consumer preferences and trends regarding OTT adoption.

The research used a survey in the form of a questionnaire for a group of people. The questionnaire was then distributed via social media to a specific group of people. Their answers are logged and analyzed. A thoroughly developed questionnaire with objective and linear scale questions was used in the qualitative study.

The goal of the study was to apply the laddering technique and analyze the root-cause analysis of OTT platform content consumption. This method is typically useful in eliciting reasons and causes through an in-depth discussion of present video viewing patterns, behaviors, opinions, values, attitudes, and practices that may have an impact on their OTT content usage (John B.,2012).

4.1 Sample Size and Techniques:

The data is collected in the form of a questionnaire that the researcher distributes to the target group via social media.

For data analysis, a sample size of 200 persons was used. The research included 200 persons ranging in age from 18 to 40 years old from all over India. The questionnaire was curated using variables such as age, gender, income, and occupation.

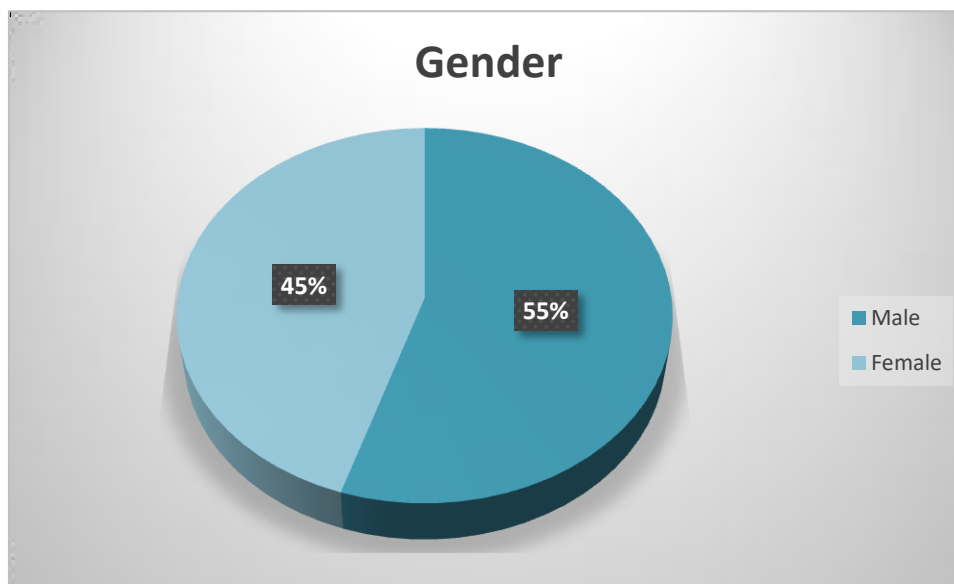
The tool to be used for the analysis is a statistical tool, graphical representation, and chi-square test.

5. Data analysis and interpretation:

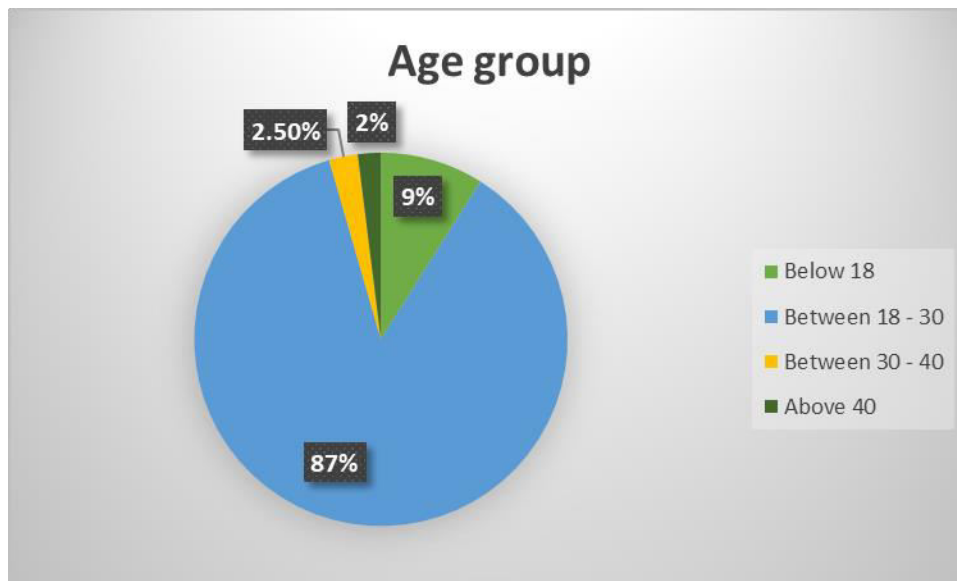
Table 3: Respondents' demographic profile with frequency analysis:

Demographic Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage analysis
Gender	Male	110	55 %
	Female	90	45 %
Age group	Below 18	18	9%
	Between 18 - 30	173	87%
	Between 30 - 40	5	2.5%
	Above 40	4	2%

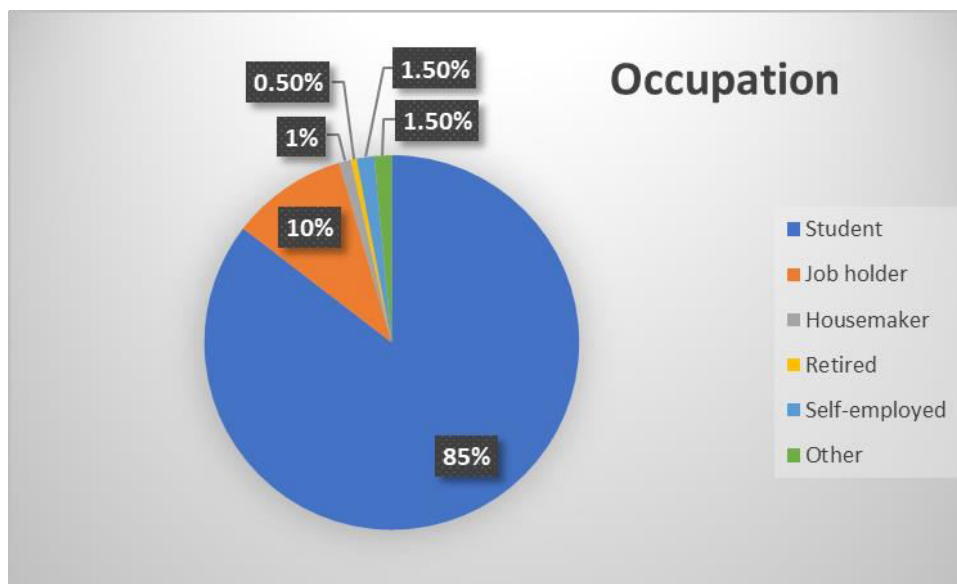
Occupation	Student	170	85%
	Job holder	21	10%
	Housemaker	2	1%
	Retired	1	0.5%
	Self-employed	3	1.5%
	Other	3	1.5%
Income group	Below 2 lacs	29	14.5%
	2 lac - 5 lac	25	12.5%
	5 lac - 10 lac	7	3.5%
	Above 10 lacs	1	0.5%
	No Income	138	69%



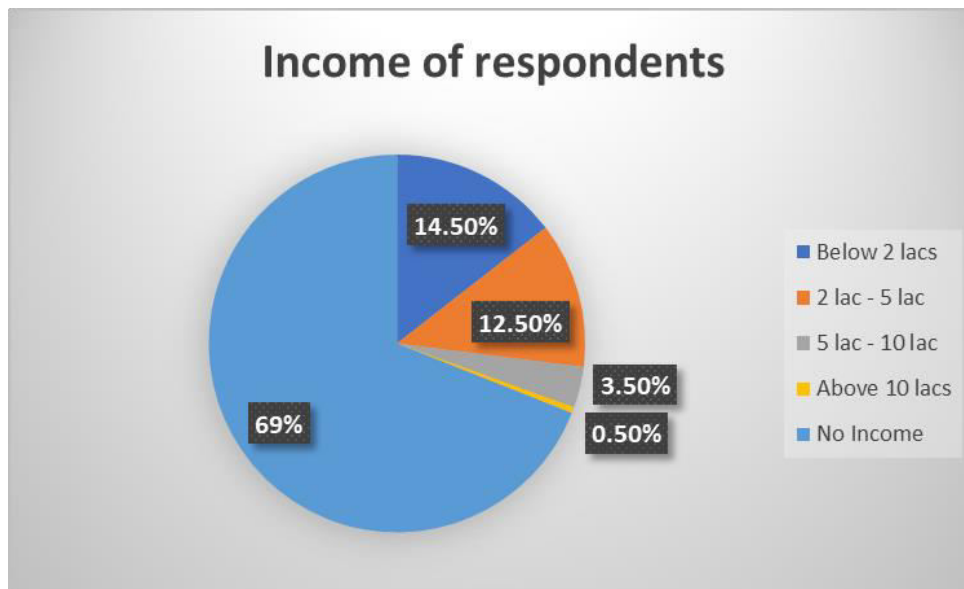
From the above pie chart, when comparing male and female users of the Ott platform, we can see that males account for 55% of users, while females account for 45%.



From the above Pie chart, we see the age group which is showing the most interest in Ott is the 18-30 age group with 87% and after this group, the most interest shown towards Ott is below 18 age group by occupying the 9% in the usage of the Ott platform.



From the above Pie chart, we can see that students have the most interest in Ott, with an overall percentage of 85%, and those job holders have the second most interest in Ott, with 10% of the whole population using Ott platforms.



From the above Pie chart, we can say that the income of users who are using the Ott platforms on a subscription basis is more than 40k and we can also say that the people who are having an income from 20k-more than 40k are willing to pay for the Ott platforms on the subscription basis.

Variables	Preference of Content on OTT platform			
	National content	International content	Regional content	language Total
Below 18	6	9	3	18
Between 18 – 30	54	98	21	173
Between 30 – 40	2	2	1	5
Above 40	1	0	3	4
Total	63	109	28	200

Interpretation – According to the above table, the age group between 18- 30 is in majority with most people choosing international content over all other options.

Interpretation by XLMiner Analysis ToolPak:

	<i>Column 1</i>	<i>Column 2</i>	<i>Column 3</i>
Column 1	1		
Column 2	0.999447	1	
Column 3	0.992625	0.988794195	1

As the output of correlation is positive and the data is correlated to each other. Hence, the study is accurate.

Table 5: Income * How many OTT platforms have you currently subscribed to?				
Variables	Number of subscriptions			
Income	0 - 2 platforms	2 - 4 platforms	More than 4 platforms	Total
Below 2 lacs	82	40	16	138
2 lac - 5 lac	11	7	7	25
5 lac - 10 lac	3	2	2	7
Above 10 lacs	1	0	0	1
No income	18	5	6	29
Total	115	54	31	200

Interpretation- –According to the above table the income group below 2 lacs is in majority with the most people choosing 0-2 platforms over all other alternatives.

Interpretation by XLMiner Analysis ToolPak:

	<i>Column 1</i>	<i>Column 2</i>	<i>Column 3</i>
Column 1	1		
Column 2	0.9966905854	1	
Column 3	0.9692952823	0.9647317055	1

In the above table, Because the correlation output is positive and the data is correlated, As a result, the research is correct.

Table 6: Source of entertainment * What do you think TV channels are lacking behind OTT platforms in terms of youth viewership?						
Variables	Limitations of Television over OTT platforms					
Source of entertainment	Content	Convenience	Availability	International content	Able to download	Total
Television	19	7	13	5	4	48
OTT platforms	58	26	32	17	19	152
Total	77	33	45	22	23	200

Interpretation- According to the table above, OTT platforms are the most popular source of entertainment, with the majority of people preferring content over all other possibilities.

Interpretation by XLMiner Analysis ToolPak:

	<i>Column 1</i>	<i>Column 2</i>	<i>Column 3</i>	<i>Column 4</i>	<i>Column 5</i>
Column 1	1				
Column 2	0.9979590051	1			
Column 3	0.9960701872	0.9883814908	1		
Column 4	0.9993198995	0.9996350271	0.9921268697	1	
Column 5	0.9920645329	0.998068563	0.9770303523	0.996026066	1

As a result, the research is true because the correlation output is positive and the data are correlated.

Table 7: Source of entertainment * Who do you feel is better at providing after-sale services?			
Variables	Customer satisfaction from the source of entertainment by their after-sale service		
	Television	OTT platform	Total
Source of entertainment	48	152	200
After-sales Service	26	174	200

Interpretation- According to the table above, OTT platforms are the most popular source of entertainment, and OTT platforms also provide the most preferred after-sales support when compared to television.

Interpretation by XLMiner Analysis ToolPak:

	<i>Column 1</i>	<i>Column 2</i>
Column 1	1	
Column 2	-1	1

In the above table, Because the correlation output is positive and the data is correlated, as a result, the research is correct.

Table 8: OTT platforms * What is one factor which influences you to choose OTT platforms?

Variables	Consumer preference on OTT platforms					
OTT platforms	Unlimited variety of choices	Portability	Latest quality content &	Cheaper than regular TV	Watching missed shows	Total
Netflix	63	10	39	11	16	139
Amazon prime	60	13	40	11	19	143
Disney+ Hotstar	64	14	39	12	15	144
Apple TV	44	7	23	2	2	78
YouTube	46	7	29	6	9	97
Zee 5	40	7	25	6	5	83
MX player	25	8	23	6	8	70
Total	342	66	218	54	74	754

Interpretation-According to the above table Disney+ Hotstar is most preferred and the reason behind choosing this OTT platform is an unlimited variety of choices.

Interpretation by XLMiner Analysis ToolPak:

	<i>Column 1</i>	<i>Column 2</i>	<i>Column 3</i>	<i>Column 4</i>	<i>Column 5</i>
Column 1	1				
Column 2	0.743884446	1			
Column 3	0.914203475	0.8685299307	1		
Column 4	0.7471016279	0.8748300107	0.9321190995	1	
Column 5	0.7350664934	0.8504333088	0.9449117605	0.9433857231	1

As the output of correlation is positive and the data is correlated to each other. Hence the study is accurate.

Table 9: Frequency analysis of respondent's satisfaction:

Statement	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly dissatisfied
Customer satisfaction from the preferred OTT platform	47	72	38	27	16

Interpretation- According to the above table the consumers are satisfied with the preferred OTT platforms.

5. Conclusion:

Online streaming services have found a new home in the media and entertainment industries. OTT platforms have a bright future, and video consumption will continue to rise as internet and smartphone adoption rises. Because of the convenience, and diversity available without advertisements, international content, and video on demand, the generation is becoming more comfortable and attracted to OTT platforms. The pocket-friendly and minimal subscription charges by OTT platforms these days have greatly influenced their growth because the majority of Indian customers are price-sensitive and a major portion of unemployed youths prefer watching web series through free or low-priced platforms. Due to excessive free time and demand for edutainment and enjoyment during the lockdown, the pandemic Covid-19 has contributed significantly to the subscription of popular OTT series. We found that recent years have witnessed several films emerging as pan-India hits, and the rise of alternative platforms has only widened the opportunities for actors and filmmakers. As per the latest trend, the OTT market will continue to grow fast in the future years. We infer from this research that there is no competition between theatres and digital platforms, and those filmmakers need to up their game. OTT has offered opportunities and impacted viewership patterns. Films and other mediums will thrive together because the same actors and makers are exploring different platforms. Companies may have to deal with changing consumer preferences for OTT platforms rather than offline entertainment.

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