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## **"Rise of OTT Platforms: Effect of the C-19 Pandemic"**

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### **Abstract**

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way the Indians consumer consume entertainment. While previously cinema theatres were synonyms to hangout places and movies nowadays consumers are more interested in Netflix-n-Chill. For more than a year now, the pandemic has caused consumers to stay indoors and hence search for more adaptive ways of entertainment. This has naturally propelled the rise of the OTT platforms which were at a very nascent and struggling stage before the pandemic. Previously unknown platforms such Disney+Hotstar, Netflix, Amazon Prime etc have become households. Right from the youngest to the oldest member, these OTT platforms have something to offer to everyone. This research tries to study the rise of OTT platforms during the pandemic. It is important to know the extent of increase in the popularity of OTT platforms during pandemic to know their future scope. It is evident that since their launch OTT platforms have only observed an upward curve in their popularity and usage but, due to the pandemic there has been an exponential increase in its popularity due to the change in consumption patterns of people for entertainment through various media platforms. This research analyzes the opinions of people regarding OTT platforms, their consumption patterns, and it's comparison with cinema to see if OTT platforms were slowly taking over the most popular conventional medium of entertainment. It was found that people used OTT more than any other platforms out of TV and YouTube to pass their time or for entertainment. Most of them experienced an increase in their consumption times and were looking forward for movies to be released on OTT at the same time as in cinemas. People were also okay with watching movies on OTT rather than cinema. But for some it depended on the movie. This research has shown that there is a huge scope for OTT platforms in the future and the pandemic has played a major role in it. The research methodology used in this study is descriptive in nature. A questionnaire was administered to the relevant target group to analyze their behaviour. Basic statistical tools were used to analyze and generalize their behaviour. The target audience considered relevant for this study was between the age group of 14-45. Since, OTT platforms cater to all age segments, this particular TG was considered to be apt for the study. Apart from that, consumers belonging to this age category were also able enough to

give their valuable opinion regarding the OTT platforms.

### **Introduction**

The study deals with the emergence and consumer behavior in the era of pandemic towards a particular sector i.e. OTT, over the top services. This belongs to a very vast industry, The Entertainment Industry. Entertainment in layman's terms means having fun and enjoying ourselves with either one's own company or maybe with their loved and close ones. In today's world entertainment is one of the most leading industries, which includes the sub-fields of theater, film, fine art, dance, opera, music, literary publishing, television, and radio.

With the day by day development in technology these industries are being improved at a fast pace. There have been both, cases of cut-throat competition and cases which showed that companies which want to create goodwill in the market. The entertainment industry is unpredictable as the main profits depend upon the TRP of a particular television channel, or the box office collection of some movie, etc. for example, if a movie fetches more than 100-200cr. It is assumed to be a blockbuster and hit movie, whereas sometimes other's which couldn't reach this bar at the box office, are assumed to be average, in spite of the fact that those movies might have an amazing script or direction, etc.

There are so many ways, (as mentioned above) as how this entertainment can be perceived in various forms. Now a day even the advertisers have understood this concept and are adamant in creating new and eye-catching advertisements for the same. Consumers seek for creativity and out of the box ideas which please them and then make think and remember a Brand or product in a particular way. For example, usually when we see two domino dices, we get reminded of the pizza chain – Dominos'. Similarly, when we see three parallel vertical lines indict towards the brand Adidas.

The number of OTT players increased from just nine in 2012 to 32 in 2018. In 2017, the OTT industry in India achieved phenomenal growth of 160 per cent, as the top 16 OTT platforms saw their user bases grow from 63 million to 164 million between August 2016 and August 2017.(Rajat kathuria, 2019)

India is the second-largest subscription TV market in the Asia Pacific region in terms of the number of subscription in TV households, which reached 154.3 million in 2016. This is expected to expand at 1.6% CAGR to reach 166.9 million by 2021. (alpana kakkar, 2019)

The technology is changing with clicks. From online banking methods to e-wallets and what not, with one click everything is available at your doorstep. The upcoming young generation take advantage of the same and recharge their online data packs and download videos and other possible internet based applications.

OTT has been enabled by technology advances such as smartphones, super-fast IP networks, open source platforms, innovative services, cutting edge functionalities and shift in consumer preferences towards their "freemium" based business models are seeing an ever increasing adoption rate. (joshi Sujata, 2015) This freemium concept lures consumers. They fail to understand that nothing is free. Firstly, we have to pay for the internet packages and then only something can be surfed upon on the internet. So, ultimately, until and unless the consumer pays for the internet data, he/she won't be able to use any of the applications, which include data

connection, for example, Netflix, amazon, etc.

From the above, it has concurred that with the advancement in technology there is a gradual shift in the medium of advertising. TV advertising still assumes an essential job for the advertiser since it evokes various feelings in the buyer. Impulsive buying is one such emotion. This research will focus on considering the achievement of the system that induces such conduct

### **Literature Review**

Keeping in mind the objectives of the research, the review of related literature is organized in the following way:

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 fierce market where content rules but more consumers can be dragged if they focus on providing curated 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 bread 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 promises to provide the services, taking one of the above mentioned factors, are more likely to attract a big crowd for their subscription.

Article (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 analyzes 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

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

## **Research Methodology**

### **TARGET GROUP SELECTED**

The respondents selected for this research study was consumers of OTT platforms who belong to the age group of 14 to 45+. To be a part of the study the respondents were presented with a screening question. This particular category of respondents were chosen because all OTT platforms cater to all segments of consumer's right from kids to toddlers to adult content. Apart from that, consumers above the age of 14 are assumed to have formed opinions of their own and hence would discuss about the same.

### **Objectives**

There are 3 main objectives associated with conducting this research study. The questionnaire was designed to arrive at possible answers on the following three objectives:

1. To find out and understand the increase in consumption of OTT platforms during pandemic.
2. To understand the future scope of the OTT platforms.
3. To study the shift in consumption from old entertainment to new.

### **Research Design**

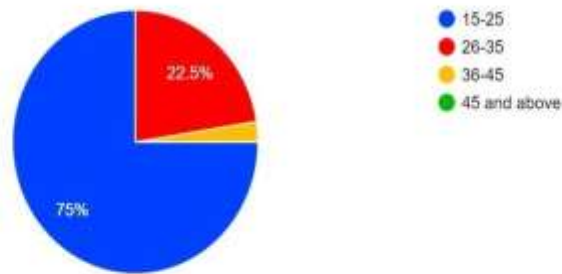
The data collection was primary in nature where a questionnaire was floated to the relevant TG. The data was analyzed using basic descriptive statistical tools. The total sample size for this research study was 100 respondents. The questionnaire was divided into 2 major sections segments: demographics and OTT consumption behavior which included questions related to OTT usage, earlier patterns and their views.

### **Findings and Analysis**

1. Age of respondents

IN WHICH AGE GROUP, DO YOU BELONG?

120 responses

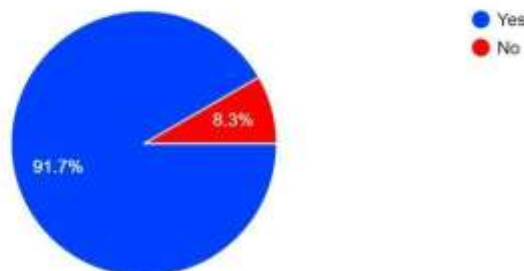


The above chart shows that most of our respondent who are a part of our research study belong to the age category of 15-25. It is usually assumed that consumers belonging to this age category are more in touch with the latest happenings in OTT platforms and hence have provided valuable inputs in the making of this research study.

2. Screening question

DO YOU USE ANY OTT SERVICES?

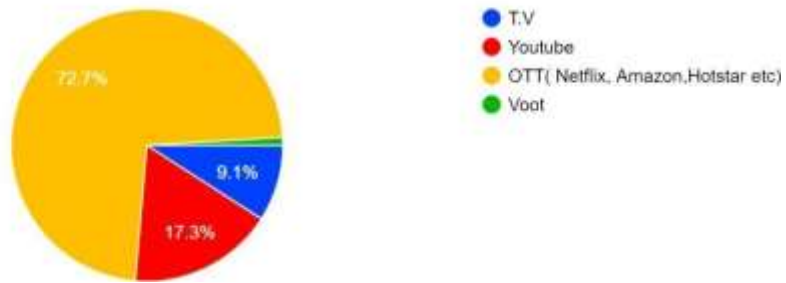
120 responses



The above question was used as screening test for the respondents. 91.7% of the respondents have used either of the OTT platforms and hence were deemed fit to be part of the research.

3. Entertainment consumption pattern during the lockdown.

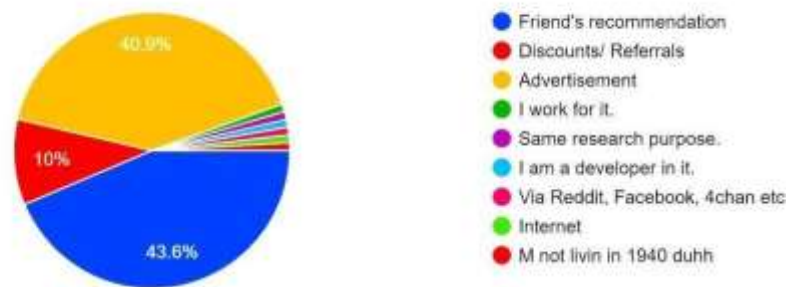
Out of these what do you use the most for entertainment in lockdown?  
110 responses



The above question aims at understanding our respondents entertainment consumption pattern during the lockdown. As can be inferred, consumers find their source of entertainment in the OTT platforms in comparison to the traditional entertainment channels. This indicates the rising popularity of OTT platforms during the lockdown phase.

#### 4. Awareness of the medium

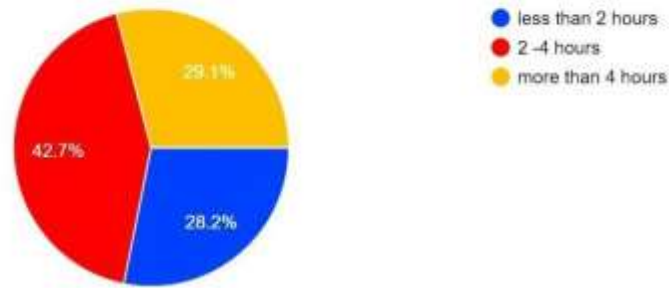
How did you come to know about your current OTT services?  
110 responses



The above question aims to understand the source of information of their current OTT services. The question aims to understand which source has the highest influence on the consumers with regard to OTT platforms. As can be inferred, social recommendations followed by advertisements is what gets the message across the consumers of OTT platforms.

#### 5. Hours spend on OTT

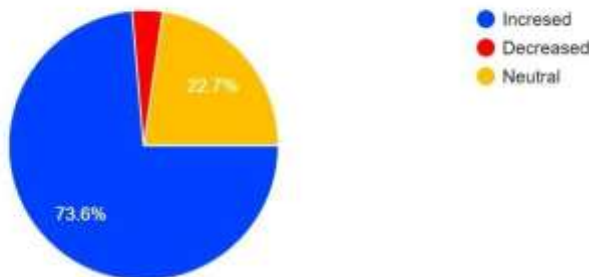
How many hours do you spend on OTT platform per day?  
110 responses



From the above question, we can infer that on an average, consumers spend roughly 2 to 4 hours consuming content available on the OTT platforms. i.e out of the total respondents 42.7% of the consumers spend their at least 2 to 4 hours logged in to OTT platforms.

### 6. Impact of lockdown on OTT

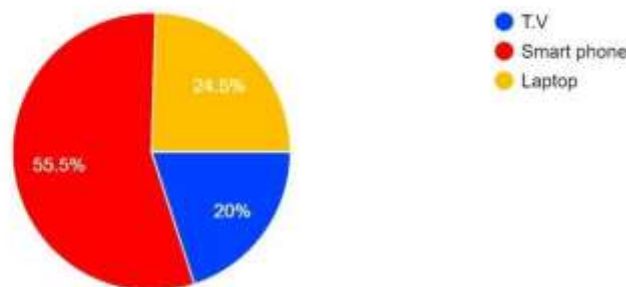
Is there any change in your OTT usage since the lockdown?  
110 responses



The above question once again aims to understand the consumer’s consumption pattern of OTT platforms in the lockdown. It can be inferred that approximately 74% of the respondents have experienced an increase in usage of OTT platforms.

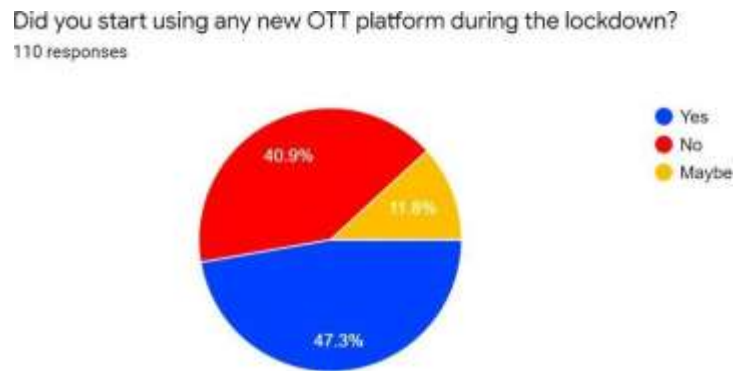
### 7. Mode of consumption

How do you consume OTT most of the time?  
110 responses



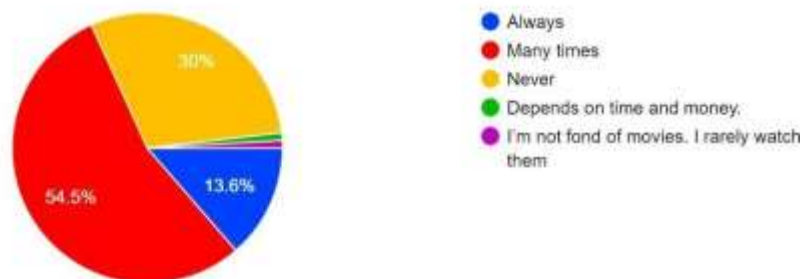
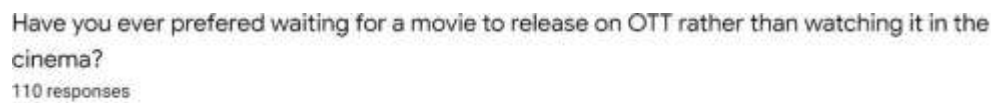
With wider availability of smartphones and internet penetration, consumers have better access to alternate modes of entertainment. The above question aims to understand which medium is the most popular wrt OTT platforms. From the above data, we can infer that OTT platforms are most viewed on smartphones followed by laptop and television.

### 8. Started using a new OTT platform



The above question aims to understand the timelines for the popularity of OTT platforms. From the above data we can infer that of the total consumers, 48% of the consumers started using new OTT platforms during the lockdown. This indicates that the lockdown was one of the propellers for the rise of OTT platforms.

### 9. Waited for a movie to launch on OTT platform.



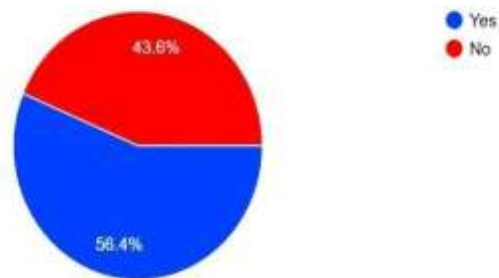
The above questions dwells deeper into OTT platforms and its entertainment capacity. This question aims to understand if consumers have ever preferred waiting for a movie launch on an OTT platform versus waiting for it to release in the cinemas. Surprisingly, 55% of the respondents in the study preferred waiting for a movie to release on a n OTT platform instead of it releasing in the cinemas.

### 10. Movies release on OTT



Do you think mainstream movies should be released on OTT before or along with cinema?

110 responses



In alignment with the above question, this final question aims to understand if consumers are comfortable with the parallel functioning of OTT platforms and traditional cinema. From the above data, we can infer that consumers ie 57% of the consumers would prefer mainstream movies to be released on OTT before or along with cinema.

### Conclusion

The over-the-top videos streaming services explosion in India has led to the emergence of distinct patterns of content consumption over the past few years. For one, content consumption has become rampant outside the house, where until recently because of the Covid 19, the majority of video consumption occurred inside and that too on a very high scale. The information gathered by the researches shows that over 91.7% of respondents are aware of the OTT medium, from the following we can derive that OTT is a wide spread medium in India. Due to the current situation of the lockdown people are constantly consuming different kinds of media for their entertainment. Majority of the people (72.7%) resort to OTT for entertainment followed by YouTube (17.3%) and T.V (9.1%). OTT platforms are quite popular among the users as a considerable amount of users 42.7% spends 2 to 4 hours consuming it. 29.1% people spend more than 4hours on it and only 28.2% consumes it for less than 2 hours.

Considering this, on an average user spends approximately 3 hours on the medium. The lockdown has let to a change in consumption patterns of the users. The researcher found out that 73.6% of people experienced an increase in their daily usage of OTT consumption. Users on an average experienced 3 to 4 hours of increase in their consumption during the lockdown. This proves the first hypothesis H1. Along with this it also shows that OTT is the go to platform for entertainment for majority of people during lockdown as they chose to spend more time using OTT rather than any other mediums. When it comes to the mode of consumption people prefer smart phone (55.5%) over laptop (24.5%) and T.V (20%). It is safe to say that due to the lockdown more people have started using T.V for OTT consumption. 59.1% of people started using a new OTT during the lockdown. This shows how lockdown has given a push to OTT for generating new customers. When asked about if the users ever waited for a movie to be released on OTT than watching it in cinema, 70% said yes. The researcher discovered that 56.4% were positive and wanted for movies to be released on OTT platforms on the same date

as in cinemas.

Although 44.6% were still negative about it. Furthermore when asked if a movie would release in OTT and cinema both, what would they prefer, 48.2% said cinema and 45.5 chose OTT. Still there were a few responses who said that decisions is based on the type of the movie. This data implies that although still a majority of people (48.2%) would prefer watching a movie in cinema over OTT (45.5). The day is not far when the people will see OTT as an equally popular platform for watching movies. OTT and cinema are two distinct platforms and provide distinct experiences to their customer and they cannot replace each other but the data shows that majority of people want movies to be released on OTT on the same date as in cinemas.

The data collected from the questionnaire survey was interpreted and analyzed in the previous chapters. Based on the analysis the research on the topic 'The emergence of OTT platforms during the pandemic and its future scope' has been successfully completed. Since people have started consuming OTT more and more in the lockdown. The statement that OTT platforms have experienced a substantial inorganic growth by taking up the market share of other platforms has been proved.

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