

EXAMINING THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ADOPTION OF OVER-THE-TOP (OTT) SERVICES AMONG INDIAN CONSUMERS

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ABSTRACT:

Consumption habits have altered. In today's technologically advanced and system-enabled culture, people are relying more and more on mobiles and the Internet. Over-the-top (OTT) content is gradually gaining popularity in the current technically evolved world. OTT content has emerged among millennials as a freestanding entertainment philosophy, providing media and consumer consumption autonomy in the digital age where television cannot keep up with material. Viewers can now pick their pricing and content with complete control over the precise type and quantity of information they wish to see. A key change in how people watch television is the emergence of OTT.

Keywords: Over-the-top, video streaming services, internet, entertainment.

INTRODUCTION:

Global watching is possible on OTT platforms. Over-the-top (OTT) entertainment is steadily gaining popularity. OTT has a lot of room for expansion as a still-emerging platform. As more people switch to consuming media online, these clients' reach will increase. Due to the complexity of corporate environments in this global environment, new business models improved global relationships and exchanges, and more straightforward information access has been developed. To take advantage of these novel prospects, businesses must learn how search engines on the internet can be used by businesses to learn more about various products, services, and activities. Many filmmakers are already distributing their films before they wait for theatres to reopen on important OTT sites.

The number of Indian consumers who have adopted it has increased at an unheard-of rate. Internet use and mobile newspapers are getting more and more commonplace. Traditionally, people have watched television using cable or satellite. Customers choose to watch it online since high-speed internet has become more widely available. People can now more easily pursue their favourite types of entertainment. Thanks to the current flurry of technological advances and the increasing rate of internet adoption by transforming the media environment, over-the-top (OTT) media services have advanced. With smartphones and convenient broadband access, a sizeable segment of the worldwide population now accepts OTT. In India, customers are increasingly choosing to watch videos on handheld OTT devices. The primary revenue streams for OTT players are online advertising and customer subscriptions. Netflix, Amazon Prime, Sony LIV, and other international competitors are present on the market. There are several domestic enterprises, such as Hot Star, ZEE5, ALT Balaji, and Eros Now.

OTT services give us the freedom to watch films and TV series whenever it's convenient for us. OTT services like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney + Hot Star, Sony Liv, and Zee5 are growing in popularity even though the majority of people in the nation still watch television. Platforms with a range of information, such as their age, the typical monthly time and money expenditure, as well as their preferred OTT Platform, OTT content, OTT model, reasons for

selecting OTT over TV, degree of satisfaction, etc. Even though some of these services may cost more than television in comparison, they have several benefits that make them a tempting option. The market continues to have players with the entry of new rivals. These platforms continuously develop while sharpening their emphasis on the customer. The majority of Indian customers favor free-to-view advertising models over subscription-based ones, such as those found on YouTube. India's mobile industry is growing quickly; 5G services have just recently been made available there, and it is drawing sizable audiences from a wide range of genres, including movies, television shows, online series, and sports of all types. It has changed into a new parallel market to meet customers' growing consumption needs and to let creators use skilled but constrained performers. On several devices, including phones, computers, and other devices, users can access the enormous library of films and TV episodes available on OTT platforms. These platforms even produce their own original films, web series, and television shows to provide their users with a wholly distinctive experience.

Online platforms that stream content have substantially fewer advertising breaks and breaks than television does. The adoption of OTTs during this period started to become popular. Smartphone availability and the advancement of high-speed internet are two factors that have fuelled the expansion of the OTT sector. The main forces behind the shift are users' preferences for a variety of fresh materials, rapidly growing mobile phone technology, and the rising tide of cutting-edge devices like tablets and smart TVs. Additionally, it is expanding the flow of varied and modern information to Indian audiences through the abundance of OTT video shows. OTT platforms are accessible to viewers worldwide. Many filmmakers are now distributing their films before waiting for theatres to reopen on important OTT. The way individuals consume entertainment is evolving thanks to entertainment through different media platforms.

With improved networks, better internet access, and mobile devices capable of multimedia services, Indian subscribers are becoming more and more prevalent on over-the-top (OTT) platforms. The majority of Indian customers prefer regional language programming on OTT platforms, especially in Hindi. Online advertising and consumer subscriptions are the main sources of income for OTT players. Some OTT players even permit customers to view the content for no charge. Netflix, Amazon Prime, Sony LIV, and others are among the international players in the sector. Hot Star, ZEE5, ALT Balaji, and Eros Now are among the domestic companies involved. Players in this strategic alliance have been competing to lower membership fees, provide new material, and build up a large library of content localization tools. The number of advanced video viewers is growing swiftly due to expanding broadband penetration and more affordable portable information designs. HotStar, VooT, Sony Liv, and Netflix, are a few examples. The purpose of this study is to identify and assess why viewers prefer OTT viewing, uncover the key considerations cited by viewers, and shed insight into the consumer decision viewpoint on OTTs. This study concentrated on the challenges of applying this swiftly gaining popular technology as well as identifying the growing demand for OTTs.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Numerous studies show how the market is growing and how much the variety of material available on OTT platforms is in demand by consumers. Television mostly promotes relaxation and mood improvement. It is projected that accessing information will become interactive in the future, making the medium more dynamic Lee & Lee (1995). The increase

of OTT providers' premium video offerings has accelerated due to the expansion of screen accessibility and broadband penetration. Due to the internet industry's rapid growth and the advent of several distribution channels, consumers began using OTT services to watch high-quality films. **Gonçalves et al. (2014)** claim that OTT services utilize internet protocol to provide content over a public network and are based on the concept of a television set-top box. Younger people are more likely to subscribe to OTT services and watch videos online than older people. Traditional cable companies are under pressure from OTT operators. A major consideration in customer purchase decisions is the membership fee.

Small players may find it challenging to stand out amid fierce competition when content reigns supreme. Through innovation and differentiation, benefits are maximized. OTT market behavior improves scale economies and resource allocation. Size and ferocious rivalry are the driving forces behind the OTT industry growth. Greater interactivity for OTT services is convenient with portable smart tools like smartphones **Lee & et al., (2018)**. Users can watch the broadcast program on computers, mobile devices, and tablets whenever and wherever they choose. The ability to access content anytime, anywhere, across a variety of devices, and at an affordable price are further factors driving the migration to OTT platforms. Video content and entertainment are now widely accessible thanks to the Internet of Things (IoT) and the quick uptake of smartphones, tablets, and laptops. OTT has become a well-liked substitute for satellite and DTH programming due to its use and adaptability. Disruptive technology increases customer happiness and provides limitless options. OTT platforms have gained popularity in the media and entertainment industry because of their accessibility, variety, absence of commercials, and low membership rates. The pandemic has increased subscribers, and the OTT industry is expected to grow quickly. As actors and directors work together across platforms, films, and other media will flourish. Due to the possibility that OTT platforms will replace offline entertainment; businesses will need to adapt. Young people are turning away from television in favor of online entertainment. Inactivity among kids is also contributing to academic decline and health issues. The impact of OTT is strongly correlated with gender and occupation. Customers anticipate the online program to deliver videos of higher quality. Buffering hurts viewers when they are watching a program. The longer buffering times influence all online resources. Consumer interest in various programs is decreased as a result **Dobrian(2013)**.

If different channels broadcast the same television program, the inter-channel relationship between the channels must be measured. The total amount of streaming time for the program is positively correlated with the viewing rate, and it has a positive effect on television distribution channels **Sung & Kwack, (2016)**. OTTs make their services available to a larger, worldwide clientele. English subtitles are typically available for OTT videos. At first a domestic phenomenon, subtitles gradually spread internationally as commercial television usage increased. With the advent of online streaming, it has a global scope. To better serve an area, Netflix, a leading worldwide OTT provider, provides videos in that language. It continues personalization by incorporating local norms Netflix offers videos in Hindi and other regional languages **Punathambekar, (2019)**, and **Singh (2020)**. The first US-based OTT service provider to penetrate overseas markets was Netflix, which also entered the Asian market.

Users accept traditional television even though online streaming fulfils the same needs. However, if they receive clear benefits from and compatibility with an online video platform, they may choose it over traditional television. If consumers believe the online platform offers unique benefits, they will utilize it more frequently. The likelihood of accepting television

decreases due to the distinctive advantages and adaptability of Internet platforms **Cha(2013)**. Because of more screens and better programming, traditional television no longer has a monopoly on video content. Customers want a higher-quality signal with better features at a reasonable price. Players compete fiercely to provide improved services at a lesser price **Baccarne, Evens & Schuurman (2013)**. Due to the ability to download or stream video material from the internet, OTT players are fiercely competing with traditional televisions. The way that pupils watch television has changed because of technology. On their smartphones, they have access to a wide range of entertainment alternatives. Most college students opt to record their favorite shows on digital video recorders and watch TV online. Nowadays OTT media companies are focusing on a younger audience as they are smartphone app users.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To comprehend why customers use OTT services.
2. To investigate factors that influence viewers' associations with OTT service providers.
3. To interpret upcoming trends of OTT platforms.

FACTORS FUELING THE GROWTH OF OTT SERVICES:

The country's video streaming market (OTT), is facing severe competition between domestic and foreign players, with the latter acquiring a more stable footing in the home market. Young people seek out various platforms, sports, or other physical activities to relieve stress. Online streaming platforms, which are popular with young people, use a variety of entertainment techniques. Time is the fundamental factor that makes it possible for internet streaming programs to keep viewers interested wherever they are. Without taking any time to travel or wait in any other areas, individuals may immediately access their mobile phones and navigate to the location of their choice while they are already there. Many international players are refocusing on other international markets, like India, as the American OTT market approaches maturity to fuel their upcoming cycle of subscriber growth. More than half of humanity currently actively uses the Internet.

To fuel their upcoming cycle of subscriber expansion, some multinational businesses are turning their attention away from the American OTT industry as it approaches maturity and towards other international markets, like India. More than half of people on Earth use the internet regularly. India ranks second only to China in terms of the number of Internet users. A significant chunk of rural India lacks access to the internet. As a result, there is still a tonne of sphere for growth, which will aid in the increase of Internet users as a whole. The accessibility of gadgets for watching internet videos greatly impacts how many people watch online videos. The most common streaming video device in India is a smartphone. The make-in-India effort of the Indian government reduced taxation, employment legislation, and other rules. As a result, more affordable models were easily accessible as the smartphone market got more competitive. A few businesses, such as YouTube, also offer transaction-based services, where users pay to access the content of the contemporary marketing landscape. Activities beyond straightforward advertising are needed to attract customers and modify business goals to suit client wants and preferences. People often choose internet

streaming over cable TV for a variety of reasons, including user friendliness and societal trends.

MAINSTREAMING SERVICES IN INDIA:

In the nation's smartphone market, there is a struggle between domestic and overseas consumers. A similar conflict exists in the OTT sector. Domestic market share has steadily increased for local businesses like Jio Cinema and Hotstar. There are numerous reputable streaming service providers in India:

1. Prime Video:

Prime Video is one of Amazon's VoD services that it owns and manages. According to **Jeff Bezos (2019)** founder, and CEO of Amazon, **Jeff Bezos, (2019)**, India is the country where the company has the greatest potential for growth outside of the US.

2. Hot Star:

To access the content and read it without adverts, users can register for free. Hotstar saw downloads surpass 400 million in 2019 thanks in large part to the live broadcasting of cricket events. The platform had 300 million active users during the 2019 Indian Premier League (IPL). In the 2019, ICC World Cup, a record 100 million people watched the match between India and Pakistan, while 25.3 million people simultaneously watched the semi-final between India and New Zealand.

3. Netflix:

Netflix arrived in India in January 2016. They offer a wide variety of unique films and TV shows. Because it initially lacked many titles that were specifically focused on or localized for India, Netflix has three unique, feature-rich subscription plans. Although the entry-level Basic subscription is priced low, HD streaming is not supported. In comparison to all of its rivals, Netflix is much more expensive.

4. Jio Cinema and Jio TV:

Users have access to Reliance OTT apps like Jio TV with the Jio mobile data service, which cater to a variety of consumer needs. The vast majority of the service's material is geared towards Indian viewers. Jio TV provides 647 live TV channels in total, about twice as many as its competitors. Jio Cinema, in contrast, offers access to more than 10,000 films and TV episodes. Jio's website will showcase films and animated shows from Disney as part of a long-term content partnership between Jio and Disney India.

5. Sony LIV:

Sony Pictures Networks operates a VoD streaming service known as Sony Liv. It has a library of more than 40,000 hours of video in many different genres. In comparison to metropolitan areas, Sony Liv grew more quickly in Lucknow, Indore, Patna, and Jaipur. It provides users with access to content without requiring registration or a subscription.

6. Other OTT Players:

Viacom 18 owns the streaming platform Voot. Programming from relevant television networks, such as Colours, MTV, Nickelodeon, etc., is broadcast on it. Under the name Voot

Originals, Voot began creating original television series. The Times Internet (TIL) business acquired the mobile video player app MX Player in July 2018 for 1,000 crores. To take advantage of the 350 million subscribers it has in India, TIL has created a streaming service that is only available online on top of MX Player. The 14 original programs are now broadcast on MX Player. Popular content created specifically for OTT by offering viewers interesting, fascinating content that they want to binge-watch, every VoD platform hopes to boost audience engagement. Binge viewing has become a popular weekend activity for young people. For young people, binge-watching has become the new go-to weekend activity. Accordingly, binge-watching encourages cultural fusion, community, and connection in addition to convenience and customization because it brings people together through a shared experience.

PROBLEMS OF OTT:

Due to the profound changes, OTT has brought about in the market and culture, it is currently a contentious issue on several fronts, including how it will affect current services, the regulatory landscape, and whether it will be a risk or an opportunity for industry investors. Owners of intellectual property are concerned that OTT could lead to an increase in material piracy **Crandall (2014)**. Unauthorized downloads of films and TV series, which may be kept in digital formats, have had a substantial effect on the business. The Information Technology Act of 2000 allows for the blocking or removal of content that the state or a court judge to be objectionable. As a result, they are supported by the government and are subject to rules that promote social welfare. Therefore, it is imperative to regulate OTT platforms for the sake of the general population. The telecommunications sector favors utilizing a one-sided commercial model to provide internet access. Due to their support for the two-sided business model, several major OTT service providers, including YouTube, have split into their respective technical business factions.

FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR OTT:

The telecommunications industry prefers to offer internet services using a one-sided commercial model. Several other OTT service providers, including YouTube, have divided into their technology business factions as a result of their support for the two-sided business model. Even though Hot Star withholds category-specific viewership data, experts in the industry think that the company has a distinct advantage over rivals due to its massive sports content. The bulk of OTT platforms aggressively sell OTT services employing a strategy that entails initially giving clients free usage so they may test the platforms, and then seeking an added premium cost after consumer behaviour is favourable. Partnerships between telecom companies and OTT providers have rapidly developed in India and other countries to gain revenue by providing subscribers to particular telcos. For instance, Vodafone has started providing bundles that include free access to Amazon Prime and its entertainment platform, Vodafone Play. A limited number of internet users were given a free three-month Netflix subscription thanks to a strategic collaboration between Airtel and Netflix. Better content consumption tools for watching online videos, and tablets could replace cell phones. Because tablets have larger screens than smartphones and are therefore preferable for viewing HD video, the low penetration represents a missed opportunity.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The top four predictors of intention to use OTT video streaming services are accessibility, price, value, and availability. The administrators should take into account these ideas and ensure that they will provide clients with more content possibilities in the form of unique series. By comprehending market segmentation, managers can also provide the same material in various local or regional languages. This will assist in drawing more users' attention to OTT video streaming providers. Price value plays a crucial influence in determining the intention to utilize any service. The management must present the value packs and benefits at a lower price to increase the intention of customers to subscribe to the OTT video streaming platforms.

CONCLUSION:

Global market expansion is a strategy used by businesses to increase customer share. People now subscribe to a variety of OTT services for entertainment. Regionalized programming, a greater database of entertainment material, and program differentiation are just a few of the techniques service providers employ to entice more users to use their products. To view live sports events in India, such as the IPL OTT platforms, require a special subscription. Additionally, it provides a thorough understanding of the popularity of OTT services among viewers. It is necessary to comprehend how viewership is changing over time due to changes in technology, service providers' business models, consumer preferences, and cultural trends. The analysis of the OTT market has a broad scope and includes in-depth consumer information that will be valuable to service providers. Major audiences use OTT sites monthly and most subscribers utilize one or two OTT platforms. OTT growth in India will continue to gain ground in India and it will have a significant influence on conventional media, such as television and movie theatres.

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