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OVER THE TOP (OTT) VIDEO STREAMING SERVICES AND IT'S IMPACT DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

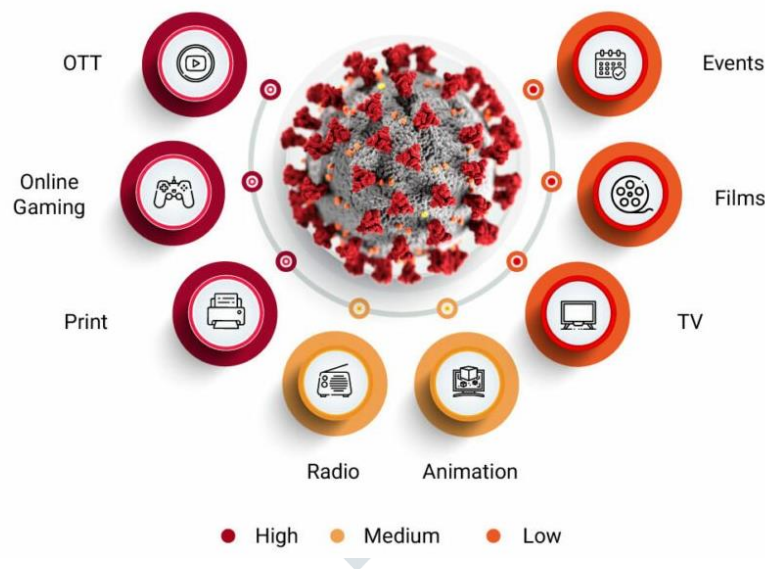
Advances in the field of “Information Communication Technology (ICT)” have resulted in the development of new technologies, one of which is Over-The-Top technology, which was particularly useful during the Covid - 19 pandemic. This innovative technology enables the distribution of digital content and services at a minimal cost. The primary goal is to investigate the popularity of OTT services, as well as the factors that influence their adoption, usage, and long-term viability, as Indians continue to buy smartphones in the hundreds of millions. The issue was chosen because, with the growth of online platforms, there has been a significant movement in people, particularly youth, away from traditional television viewing. A sample size of 200 populations was chosen for the study. The objective's data was collected from UG and PG graduate students in and around Bangalore. The descriptive study is the sole foundation for the research investigation. OTTs are increasingly popular among not only youth, but also homemakers, working men, businessmen, and children. The content on these platforms strongly appeals to the public, resulting in increased demand and popularity. At the conclusion of the study, it was determined that online streaming services had an impact on the study group. Due to COVID-19 epidemic, there has been a surge in the use of OTT platforms. According to the findings, OTT services have a bright future in India, with both current and non-users intending to utilise them in the future.

Keywords: Over-The-Top, Consumer, Lockdown, Pandemic,

INTRODUCTION

Because of its dynamic character, the global telecom industry has experienced a constantly changing business and technological environment during the last half-century. The industry has come a long way since its beginnings with the telegraph and early voice telephony. They appear to have been caught off guard by the newest threat to their income, Over The Top (OTT) service providers, since the introduction of cellular mobile communications in the 1990s. The OTT service providers have grown through the traditional operator's and transmit the entertainment with the help of internet like audio, video and other source of media. In India the access of Netflix, Amazon prime, Hotstar and many more OTT services has thrown the entertainment business into a big reach during covid. OTT players have now become part of mainstream media, influencing consumer viewing habits all around the world. The contemporary relationship among internet network as well as the entertainment has created information delivery along with creation content of content naturally. "OTT players are commonly referred to as "Over-The-Top" (OTT) applications since they do not require any business or technology ties with network operators in order to provide such services".

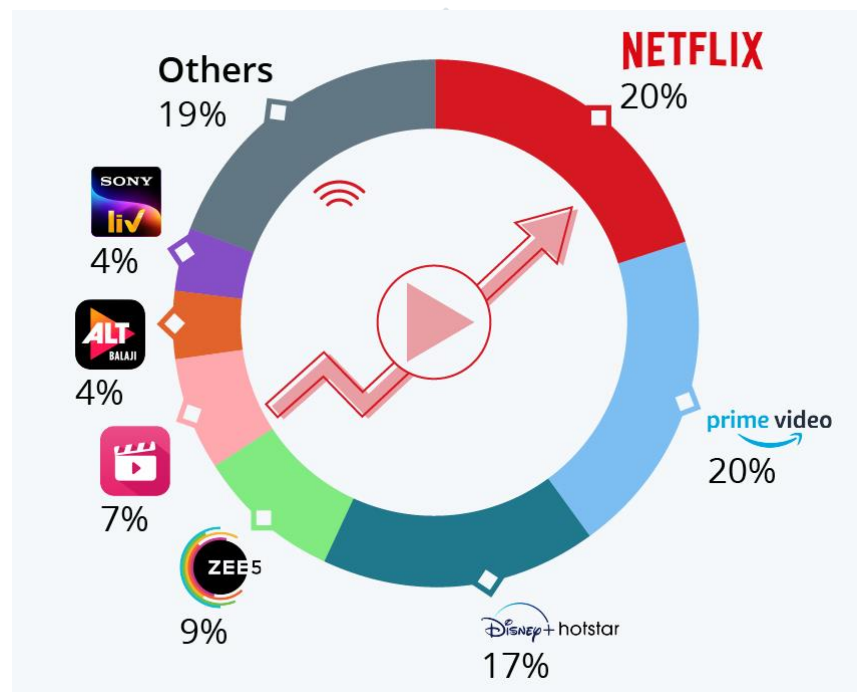
Fig: 1 Usage of Telecom Industry:



OTT platforms are becoming more demanding as a result of the pandemic crisis. People are increasingly turning to the Internet for entertainment, shopping, education, and information. This OTT platform has shifted the new dawn's patterns. All of the OTT platforms, such as Disney Hotstar, Amazon Prime, Netflix, Sony live, Zee-5, and others, are now available. The concept of shrinking the entire world and bringing it all together with the help of OTT services. To protect themselves against the coronavirus, citizens rigidly adhered to lockdown and social separation. As a result, OTT platforms were the final remaining avenues for people to communicate with the rest of the world.

Users' perspectives have shifted as a result of digitalization. Users of OTT platforms that easily provide better and good services via the Internet have increased as a result of technological advancements, device availability, and network accessibility. When comparing Indian consumers to users in other countries, we can claim that India has the second-largest OTT user base after the United States of America, with a projected value of 138 billion by the end of 2023. According to a forecast by the FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry), the number of people using OTT platforms would reach 30-35 billion by 2021. All OTT platforms, such as You tube, Amazon Prime, Netflix, and Hot star, are represented in this data. All of these apps are now the most popular among customers.

Fig: 2 Usage of OTT platforms:



We used to all go to the movies and other things at the cinema and on television. Cable TV and mobile services had been established by the time technology had progressed. As a result, it was simple for everyone to connect with the rest of the world and to watch these shows, movies, and other media. Following that, DTH (direct to home) technology and mobile phones were developed, resulting in a desire for high-range or high-quality services among consumers; as the coronavirus spread over the world at the time, it was difficult for everyone to connect or communicate with the rest of the world. Meanwhile, OTT platforms have been developed to entertain consumers. The advantages of these platforms include the fact that they are suitable for viewers of all ages, with no constraints imposed by any sensor board. There are a variety of shows available, including web series, movies, TV shows, news networks, Discovery Channel, and more, all of which have excellent sound quality, are visually clear, and provide excellent service to viewers.

People's choices, technological advancements, convenience, and other factors have all influenced the creation of Over- The- Top platforms. However, the breakout of Covid has resulted in a sharp surge in the use of OTT platforms. In the year 2020, March, the pandemic began in India. Because of the pandemic, everyone was forced to stay at home. The implementation of lockdown supplied a lot of individuals with free time, which led to more people watching television and using online streaming services.

Over-the-Top services market - India

According to "Boston Consulting Group's (BCG)" report, "Entertainment Goes Online," the Indian OTT service sector will be worth \$5 billion by the year 2023. For prominent OTT providers, India is a crucial market. The growth in consumers will not be limited to metropolitan regions, but it is also extending to rural India. The expansion of OTT services in India has been aided by affordable data, an increase in the number of mobile users, and the production of regional content. "The arrival of OTT players, both domestic and international," says Sony Music Entertainment Inc. President India and the Middle East Shridhar Subramaniam, "is providing consumers with many alternatives around content consumption." Consumer attitudes are shifting away from content ownership and toward having fast access to a vast library from any time and location.

Review of Literature

The entertainment industry has never remained static. Every decade has seen a shift in entertainment in terms of both 'form' and 'format'. Today's entertainment services format are considerably changing from previous formats, and it is always changing. The term "over-the-top" (OTT) is now trending in the entertainment industry. It is a symbol of enjoyment that may be found anywhere. Scholars from several disciplines have attempted to investigate the OTT services on communication industries like., (**Fowora et al., 2018**) the author considers the perspectives of the regulatory board, communications operators, and consumers when it comes to this technology. The impact of Over the Top technologies on the Nigerian economy is examined. Over-the-Top services do not have their own network system; instead, they rely on telecommunication operator networks and other Internet Service Providers to supply their services, with no policy or lease agreement in place with these companies. (**Ramasoota & Kitikamdhorn, 2021**) The economic, technological, and cultural ramifications of Netflix in Thailand on local content companies and regulators are examined in this study. It also looks at how the industry and government reacted to as OTT services the Netflix's entry into a tiny market like Thailand. Netflix has had a significant impact on the value chain of both TV and movies, according to the report. Meanwhile, the country's regulator is looking for ways to bring overseas OTTs like Netflix under its control, and it may implement a reward-based programme while also boosting the local content business through capacity-building and promotional efforts. (**Cebeci et al., 2019**) The traditional media ecosystem is being disrupted by advances in information and communication technology. Many digital platforms, such as Netflix, have sprung up as a result of new media. Netflix has been extremely popular

around the world in recent years. As a result, based on the technological acceptance paradigm, the goal of this article is to uncover the drivers of intention to use Netflix. As a result, new technology producers should be mindful of technology anxiety's detrimental effects. Furthermore, consumers should be told that they will not have any problems as a result of this technology, that they will feel comfortable using it, and that they will not be anxious. **(Devaki R & Babu D, 2021)** The massive surge in subscription rates of Over the top (OTT) platforms was a big windfall in the film business during the Covid 19 pandemic. A quantitative poll of 350 OTT platform subscribers is done and the replies are examined in order to anticipate the future of these platforms when the pandemic is finished. This study also speculates on whether new cinema directors and producers who created tiny works have a future in the business. During India's nationwide shutdown, many low-budget art and commercial films are published over OTT platforms. Many of these films are well-liked by the general public. As a result, it's clear that fans are eagerly anticipating more of their favourite works of art. **(Gopi et al., 2021)** The need for material has increased among consumers, and OTT channels have seen a surge in viewership. For big-screen movie fans and fan groups, OTT releases have a tremendous impact on visual and auditory experiences. It also had an impact on marketing efforts, particularly for big-budget films. This study will aid the film industry in determining how Indian fans feel about OTT releases. **(Saini, 2020)** According to the report, the use of OTT content platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Voot, Disney Hotstar, and others has increased, particularly among younger age groups. The attractiveness of the content stems from its entertainment value combined with information, as well as the global fascination that content from many cultures provides to knowledge seekers. There has also been a noticeable increase in the popularity of series as opposed to movies. This pattern indicates an increase in OTT content demand as well as the popularity of OTT video-on-demand services. **(Deshpande et al., 2020)** Online platforms are a new type of content medium with fewer restrictions on adultery-related content. With widespread agreement that the Jio revolution has had a significant impact on the whole entertainment sector, fueled by cheap data pack offerings, new channels for digital material have opened: Online Streaming. The objective's data was collected among peer groups in and around Navi Mumbai, as well as its suburbs, with a focus on colleges where the most data could be acquired. This goal was studied with a sample size of 150 people. At the conclusion of the study, it was determined how online streaming services may have affected the peer group. As a result, academics might conclude that online streaming services have an impact on kids and that these platforms have a significant impact on their lives.

Objectives

The goal of this study is to look at the factors that influenced to adopt OTT platforms during the COVID-19 outbreak, in order to figure out what factors influenced consumers to use “Over-The-Top platforms during the pandemic. The goal of this study is also to figure out how consumers in India are sustaining with the consumption of goods and services after the introduction of Over-The-Top (OTT) platform services.

Research Methodology

For analysing the influence of such online streaming services on pupils, researchers used both primary and secondary data collection methods. The company's website, books, and journals were used to gather secondary data. The research conclusion was reached through both primary and secondary research. The type of research design employed in this study is Descriptive Research. For the survey and questionnaire, the target audience was chosen from UG and PG graduate students in and around Bangalore. The sample size for this research study was 200 respondents, which was obtained through the use of a random sampling technique. A questionnaire was used as a tool to collect data for this study.

Analysis & Interpretation:

The factors that influence customers' decisions to adopt OTT platforms during a pandemic. content availability, pricing, features, convenience of smart phone & internet connection, experience, social inclination, perceived usefulness, perceived enjoyment, and many other factors all contribute to OTT streaming platform adoption.

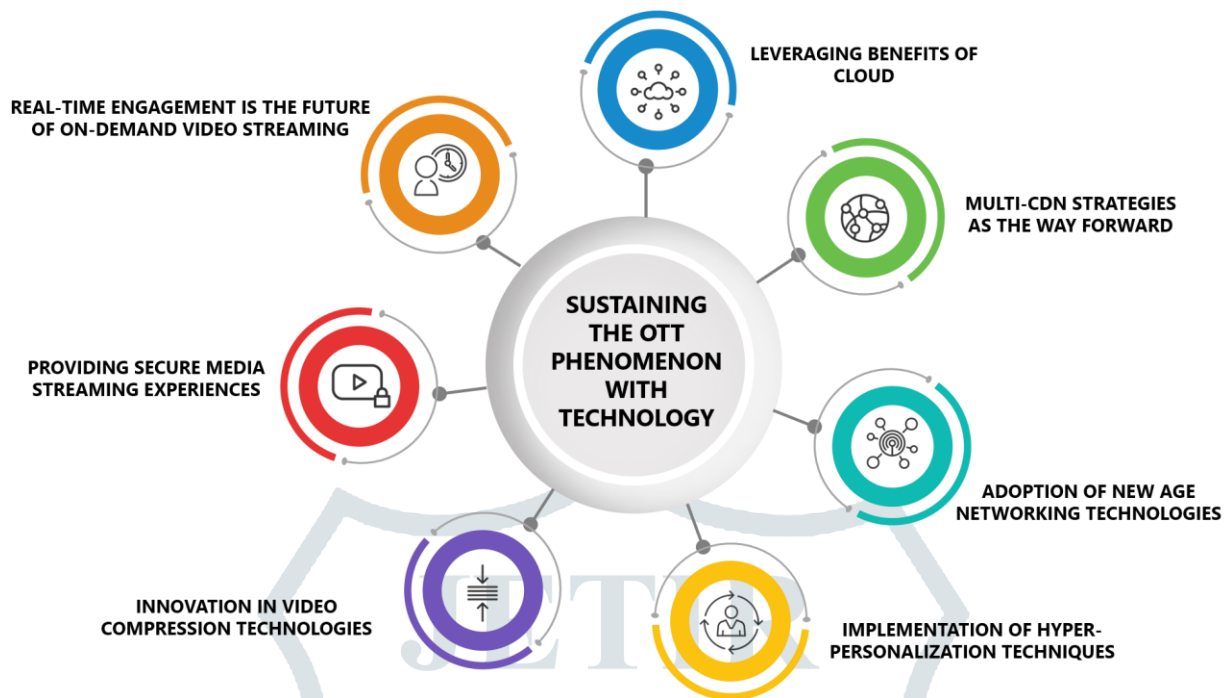


By combining all of the components described above, the factor of Overall Experience may be comprehended. Finally, what counts to customers, particularly millennials, is that the OTT platform to which they have subscribed is affordable, provides good and unique content, and has the best audio and video quality. Finally, there are few or no advertising during video streaming. Marketers of OTT platforms should focus on providing consumers with a perfect package of all of these characteristics in order to establish brand image and maintain dominance in this market segment.

Sustainability of OTT Players

OTT players' viability is not confined to phone and messaging services; it has resulted in an exponential increase in their data traffic, causing significant congestion. COVID's long-term viability has an impact on TV viewership, including OTT. If the 1980s were dominated by Door Darshan and the 1990s by private broadcasters, media and entertainment experts predict that the 2000s will be dominated by technology-

enabled entertainment beyond television screens – there will be a greater uptake for 'content on demand,' which includes not only the genre and nature of content but also the choice of time, place, and device.



OTTs aren't just for audiovisual material; the audio-only market accounts for a sizable portion of this business. While platforms like StoryTel and Audible are gaining traction, creative products like Graphy (by Unacademy, a domestic edtech unicorn) are still classified as OTTs. Needless to say, this industry is constantly bustling with new solutions and products. Players are leaving no stone unturned in their efforts to pique the consumer's interest, expand their user base, and keep each customer for longer than before.

In light of these complexities, it is clear that OTT adoption has increased significantly as a result of the COVID lockdown in India and around the world. This shift in consumer behaviour is fascinating to study and assess since there are several layers to this purchasing pattern that must be unravelled and understood from various perspectives. Aspects such as the type of material consumed, consumption timings for various genres, consumer age and content consumption patterns, TV channels vs. OTT providers, the impact of the medium on advertising patterns, innovative bargains and discount packaging, and so on.

People were forced to stay at home and operate from restricted locations due to the lockdown and limits on social mobility. As a result, people's options for leisure and news consumption grew more limited, as they avoided buying a physical newspaper from local sellers in favour of audiovisual news consumption. According to the findings of the poll, over 87.3 percent of respondents believe their screen time has increased individually and as a family as a result of COVID, while 9.5 percent did not notice a major change. Nearly 3.2 percent of respondents were unable to make any significant observations in this area and hence could not say whether or not their screen usage had grown.

Conclusion

Over-the-Top (OTT) services have revolutionised data transmission by allowing consumers to access digital material at a low cost. Because of the low cost of delivering digital information, people choose to take advantage of the benefits of using Over-The-Top services. According to the findings, especially during the pandemic lockdowns there is massive increase in usage of OTT platforms, as well as a shift in consumer preferences that could become the "new normal" post-COVID. During lockdown, people who work from home spend more time on OTT platforms. According to the KPMG India research "Media and Entertainment Post COVID-19," the increased usage OTT platform will continue even after the lockdown, and this "lockdown behaviour" will lead to habit development.

OTT is a service technology which has a combination of internet services along with the entertainment business. The reasonable pay for internet connections have fueled the expansion of OTT services across India, but viewers are hesitant to switch to OTT platforms due to a low awareness and content openness on particular OTT service availability. The OTT industry is self-regulatory; however various government entities have expressed interest in regulating it. Overall, the research indicates that OTT services in India have a bright future, with viewers likely to use them in the future.

Future Scope

COVID-19's unprecedented scenario has several intricate and critical consequences for internet streaming services, which require additional investigation. In light of the scenario, academics suggest that a more in-depth study be conducted as part of future research on the subject. For this topic, the current study might serve as a pre-COVID-19 scenario, with the association discovered by examining the influence of online streaming services on kids following COVID-19.

In terms of management, this research will aid upper management in understanding COVID-19's impact on OTT platforms and customer needs analysis. They may better prepare for the future by tailoring OTT platforms to the tastes of their users. The surge in bandwidth consumption can even be predicted by telecoms companies. Theoretically, this report will assist OTT platform executives in anticipating future views and subscriptions, as well as tactics for retaining customers and increasing income. It will also assist in determining a user's preferences so that they may tailor their content properly. In terms of economics, this research will assist legacy network operators in rethinking their companies and making the necessary investments in fiber-based infrastructure.

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