

Digital Environment: A Study on Subscribers preference to OTT Platform and An Impact on the Usage Rate of OTT Platforms during the Pandemic with reference to the Subscribers of Mangalore City

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ABSTRACT: Over The Top (OTT) media service is the streaming service provided by various platforms directly through the internet. With the decrease in the cost of an internet in India these OTT platforms have gained lot of acceptance from its subscribers. There is a significant difference in the usage rate of OTT platforms during the unpredicted situation of pandemic. With reference to this, an analysis over the usage rate of OTT platforms is considered to be a relevant one. With the enormous increase in the internet users the future of Non OTT Medias are challenging. The survival strategy of Non OTT entertainment platforms is also questionable because of high competition thrown by OTT platforms. It is also unknown fact that why a particular subscriber prefers to buy a subscription from the particular OTT platform. The benefits and disadvantages associated with the subscription of OTT platforms is also needs to be studied. This paper is an attempt to study the consumption pattern of OTT subscribers and how they react to the contents available in the OTT Medias.

Key Words: Over the Top Streaming Media, Subscriber, Content, Subscription, and Survival Strategy

I. INTRODUCTION:

There was an Era when Movies and theaters were the only way to have an access to an entertainment. But the time has changed. With an access to affordable internet services Entertainment now a days is not a costly affair. The exponential growth of smart phone usage is an added advantage

for many OTT Medias to come into the picture. With the increase in the smart phone penetration in India many of the consumers prefer for OTT media since it provides the Content with various language and various genres. India is an emerging market in Asia itself and recognized as a mobile first market. Since there is a larger portion of young population they are all exposed to online contents. As the market for OTT Content continues to grow it is assumed that subscribers of OTT content are likely to grow to 105 million by the end of 2020.

OTT is a subscription based model where the consumer pays for media streaming. Most of the media platforms run on subscription basis and there are few OTT streaming Medias which are offering free subscription. In fact according to recent report by PwC, the OTT market is booming and is set to grow at a rate of 22 percent to reach Rs 12,000 crore in the next four years. The soon-to-arrive 5G networks will only work as a shot in the arm for the market. As a result, platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney-owned Hot star and Zee5 are vying for the Indian audience. With the competition getting fierce in the market, there is the problem of the plenty.

OTT Platforms are less subjected to censorship. So it helps to bring socio political contents to the common man, which otherwise are censored in the mainstream media. Because of its strong language and content OTT platforms have retained high subscriber engagement in its platforms. With the minimum subscription fees Subscribers also not feeling a burden higher amount that has to be paid for access of

entertainment. It's evident fact that consumer freedom over access of content is very high in the case of OTT media which is not there in general entertainment Medias. Because of Democratization of the content it helps in accessing regional films around the country and globally.

In order to analyze the competition level and marketing strategy among various OTT platforms it's important to know the satisfaction level of consumers who are using the OTT platforms. Consumer's preference to the particular platforms may be based upon the cost effectiveness and quality of the content. It is also observable fact that many of the OTT platforms simply fail because they won't provide the quality in the content and the cost for subscription also too high. With these aspects Study regarding consumer's preference towards OTT platforms gains the importance.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Concept of Over The Top (OTT) Platforms becoming successful. Thanks to the revolution in internet. With a cheap access to the internet connectivity OTT represents the future of the media. It is also true that access to the entertainment is in fingertips because of OTT platforms. But the question here is that why the people prefer to have subscription to the OTT platforms? What is the behavior of the consumer while choosing the OTT platforms? What are his top most priorities while choosing the OTT platforms etc., needs to be answered. It is also required to study is there any changes in the behavior of the subscriber after he subscribes and get an access to the OTT contents. It is immediate requirement to study positives and negatives of OTT platforms and its influence on subscribers of the platform.

III. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Tatcha Sudtasan and Hitoshi Mitomo:

Over-the-top (OTT) services are changing internet consumption behavior and drive demand for bandwidth and speed internet connection. Assuming mobile network as a basement of internet access, this study examine the influence of OTT services to consumer's willingness to pay for optical fiber broadband connection. The study was more concerned with the relationship between the demand for speed internet connection and preference for OTT. The results of this study imply that movie over internet service is the only OTT service that directly drives consumers to pay for optical fiber broadband network. It can be said that

movie over internet service can directly contribute to the revenue of optical fiber broadband operators.

Benjamin Burroughs and Adam Rugg "Extending the Broadcast: Streaming Culture and the problems of Digital Geographies". His article examines the recent move by many television sports broadcasts of streaming their content online behind geographically restricted "geofences". It was also mentioned, that streaming has become a cultural practice regardless geographical setup. This practice often rejects the restrictions and stipulations of digital broadcasting in favor of a globetrotting, station-hopping exercise of content hunting.

Arturo Gutierrez (2018), made a study on "Switching Culture in Streaming and TV Is Now a Thing". In his study he found that TV customers looked for special deals and promotions to switch from their current providers."Streaming apps are persistently growing in the market"(HBO announced last week it grew from 2 to 5 million subscribers in the past years).and such a growth can bring the lot of differences. The future of OTT medias are Promising.

IV. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

Present research is an attempt to achieve the following objectives

1. To know why consumer subscribes to OTT streaming media and what are his priorities while subscription
2. To evaluate the changes in the usage rate of subscribers towards OTT before and after the pandemic
3. To find out the impact on the behavioral aspect of the subscriber after subscribing to the OTT content
4. To make a comprehensive study about various OTT platforms and their strategies of survival
5. To identify OTT platforms which are leading in subscription
6. To find out the top most concern of the subscribers regarding OTT Platforms.

Scope of the Study

The present study is about Subscribers preference to OTT Platform and An Impact on the Usage Rate of OTT Platforms during the Pandemic with reference to the Subscribers of Mangalore City

Methodology of the Study

The study is concluded with the help of primary data. The study is conducted through survey method. A detailed questionnaire is prepared and distributed amongst 200 respondents of different age group ranging from 20 to 50 years. The analysis of the responses received is done with the help of tools like table's charts and graphs.

Some questions rose to reach research objectives followed by answering the same:

1. What are the major concerns of subscribers towards OTT content since OTT's are free to stream obscene content with strong language
2. Whether habit of streaming contents through online kills the productivity and are there any behavioral modifications that can be caused by the OTT contents.

3. Whether the pattern of usage of OTT Medias have been increased during the pandemic lockdown. If it increased what may be the possible cause and to what extent it has been increased.
4. Whether it requires having some sort of censorship to the contents in OTT platforms?

Limitations of the Study

- The area of the study is confined to the subscribers of Mangalore city. Results may change when the population differs.
- This study was limited to 200 respondents
- Time constraint

V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data collected through questionnaire was analyzed using tables and figures.

Table 1.1 Demographic Profiles of the Respondents:

Demographic Profile		No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	76	38
	Female	124	62
Age	20-30 Years	112	56
	30-40 Years	48	24
	40-50 Years	40	20
	50 Years Above	Nil	Nil
Qualification	Graduate	146	73
	Post Graduate	54	27

N=200

Source: Field Survey 2020

Interpretation:

From the above table it is clear that 38 % of the sample is Male respondents and 62% of the respondents are Female respondents. A good majority of the respondents are belonging to the age group of 20 to 30 Years. So it is evident that youths are more into the OTT platforms. 24% of the respondents belonging to the age group of 30 to 40 years, remaining 20% of the respondents are belonging to the age group of 40 to 50 years.

According to the classification of the table, the level of education of the respondents was categorized into two categories. 73% of the respondents were completed their graduation and remaining 27% of the respondents completed their post graduation. It is hereby confirmed that all the respondents were degree holders.

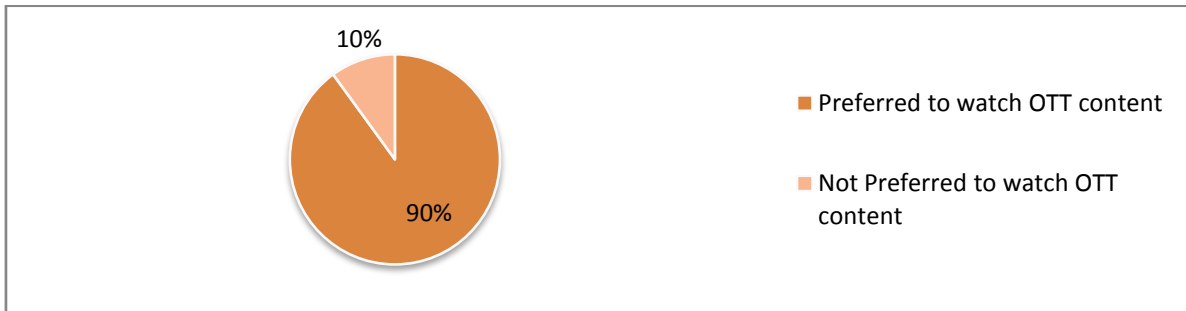
Table 1.2: Percentage of respondents preferring to watch OTT contents through OTT streaming media.

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Preferred to watch OTT content	180	90
Not Preferred to watch OTT content	20	10

N=200

Source: Field Survey 2020

Figure 1.2: Percentage of respondents preferring to watch OTT contents through OTT streaming media.



Interpretation: From the above figures it is evident that most of the respondents i.e., 90% preferred to watch the content from OTT streaming media. However remaining 10% of the respondents opined that OTT contents are worthless to watch and kills the productivity.

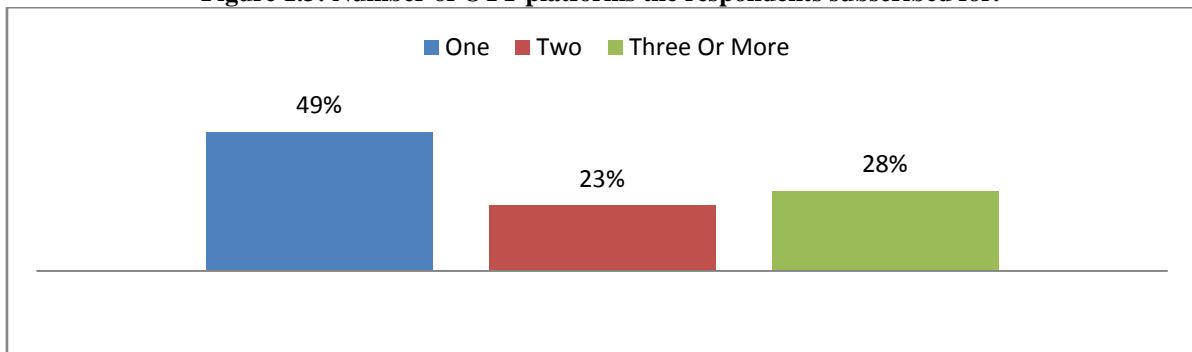
Table 1.3: Number of OTT platforms the respondents subscribed for.

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
One	98	49
Two	46	23
Three Or More	56	28

N=200

Source: Field Survey 2020

Figure 1.3: Number of OTT platforms the respondents subscribed for.



Interpretation: From the above figures it is clear that Majority of the respondents are the subscribers of One OTT platform and it is also unavoidable fact that some of the respondents use to stream contents from more than one OTT platforms i.e., 23% of the respondents use Two OTT platforms and 28% of the respondents use to stream contents from Three or more OTT platforms.

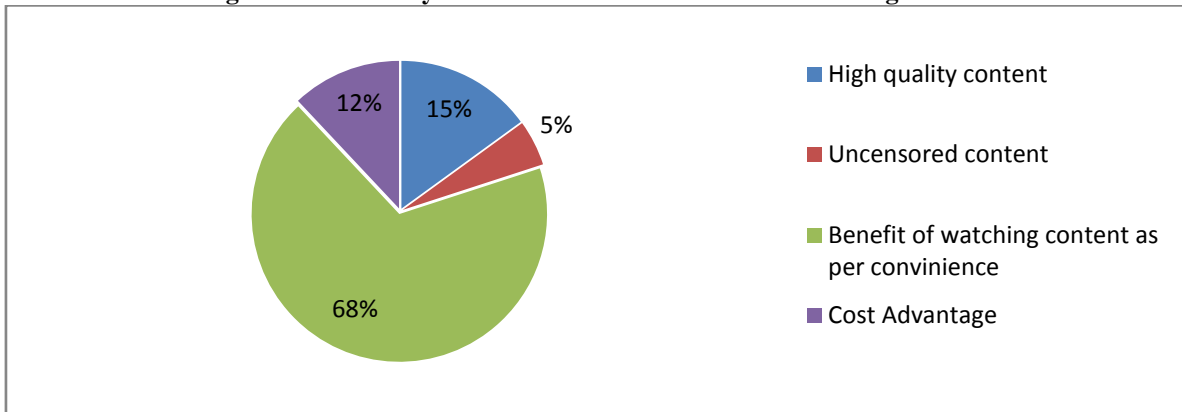
Table 1.4: Primary reason for the use of the OTT streaming Medias

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
High quality content	30	15
Uncensored content	10	5
Benefit of watching content as per convenience	136	68
Cost Advantage	24	12

N=200

Source: Field Survey 2020

Figure 1.4: Primary reason for the use of the OTT streaming Medias



Interpretation: Benefit of watching content as per convenience is the more acceptable reason behind the usage of OTT streaming medias. According to that majority 68% of the respondents opined that the primary reason for the use of OTT streaming media is to watch content as per the convenience,

15% of the respondents watch OTT streaming medias since it gives High quality content, 5% watch the OTT streaming media to get an access to the uncensored content, and remaining 12% of respondents watch OTT medias because of cost advantage.

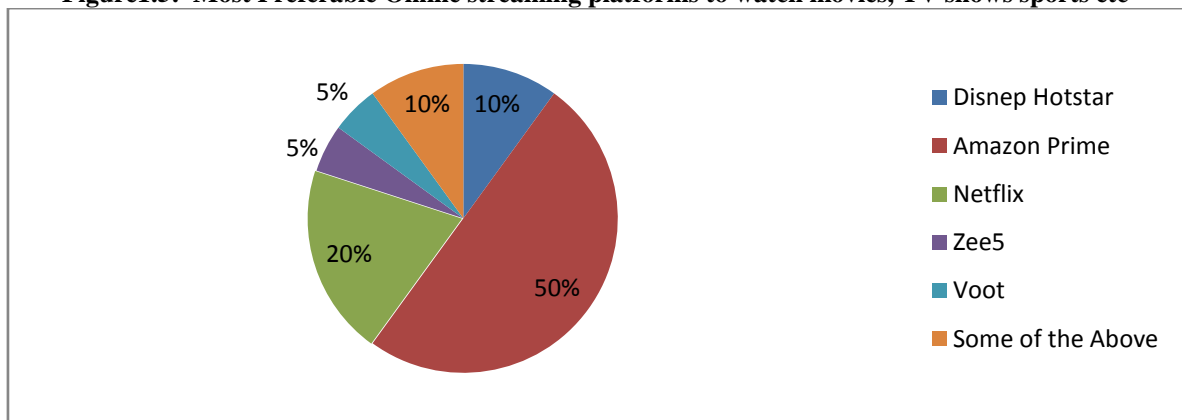
Table 1.5: Most Preferable Online streaming platforms to watch movies, TV shows sports etc

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Disnep Hotstar	20	10
Amazon Prime	100	50
Netflix	40	20
Zee5	10	5
Voot	10	5
Some of the Above	20	10

N=200

Source: Field Survey 2020

Figure1.5: Most Preferable Online streaming platforms to watch movies, TV shows sports etc



Interpretation: From the above data it is evident that half of the respondents subscribed to Amazon prime, 20% of the respondents subscribed for Netflix, 10% of the respondents preferred Disnep

Hotstar, 5% of the respondents preferred to have Voot, and remaining 5% collectively subscribed for more than one OTT media platforms.

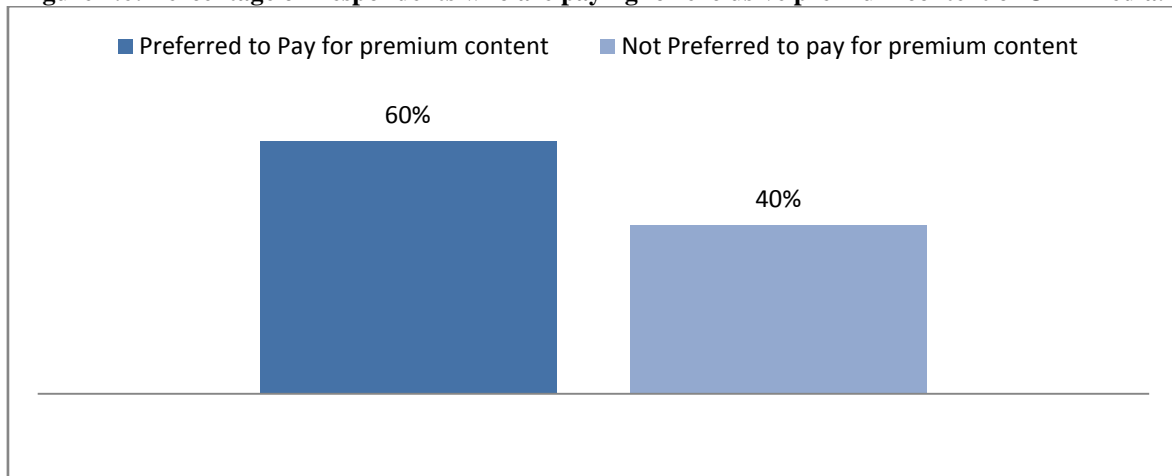
Table 1.6 Percentage of Respondents who are paying for exclusive premium content of OTT media.

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Preferred to pay for Premium content	120	60
Not preferred to pay for premium content	60	40

N=200

Source: Field Survey 2020

Figure 1.6: Percentage of Respondents who are paying for exclusive premium content of OTT media.



Interpretation: From the above data it is clear that 60% of the respondents prefer to pay for the exclusive premium content and other 40% of the respondents are not preferred to pay for exclusive premium content

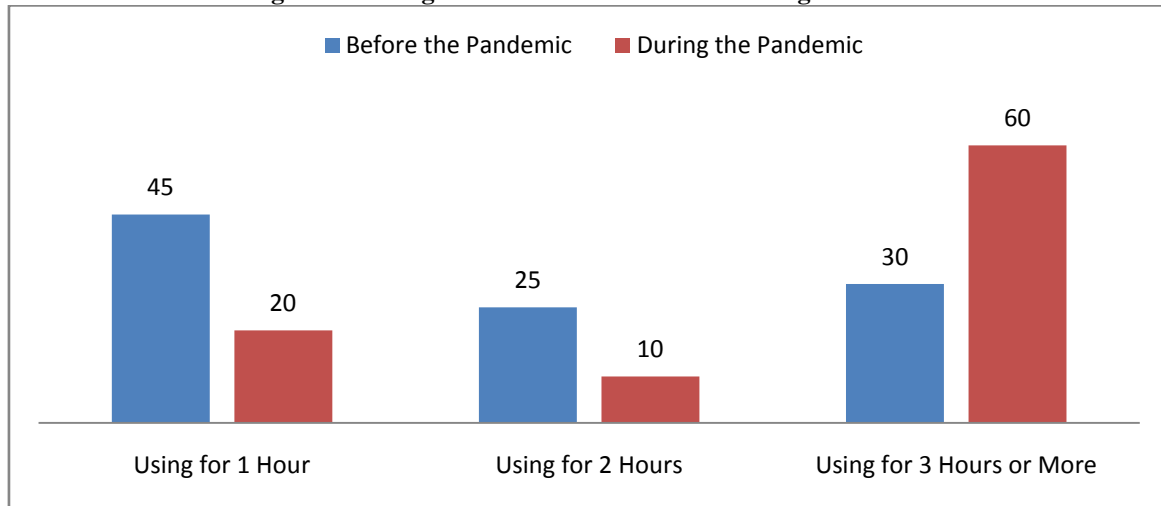
Table 1.7 Usage Rate of OTT before and during Pandemic

Response	Usage Rate before Pandemic		Usage rate during/after pandemic	
	No. Of Respondents	Percentage	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Using for 1 Hour	90	45	40	20
Using for 2 Hour	50	25	20	10
Using for 3 Hours or More	60	30	120	60

N=200

Source: Field Survey 2020

Figure 1.7: Usage Rate of OTT before and during Pandemic



Interpretation: It is hereby witnessed that there is a drastic increase in the usage rate of OTT media during the pandemic. The percentage of respondents who were using the OTT media for 1 hour before the pandemic was 45, and during the pandemic is 20%. Percentage of respondents who were using the OTT content for 2 Hours was 25%

before the pandemic and 10% during the pandemic. The Percentage of respondents who were using the OTT contents 3 hours or more before the pandemic were 30% however the usage rate has been drastically increased to 60% during the pandemic.

Table 1.8: Respondents opinion towards various aspects of OTT platforms

S.N	Perception towards OTT Media and contents	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Contents in OTT gives relaxation	20	120	Nil	40	20
2.	Subscription to OTT is a better option to spend the time	40	140	Nil	20	Nil
3.	Usage rate of OTT has been increased during this lockdown	140	40	10	10	Nil
4.	OTT streaming programmes can be enjoyable with friends and family	40	46	54	36	24
5.	There should be some sort of censorship and control by government on web series.	95	90	05	10	Nil

6.	Habit of watching web series kills the productive time	115	35	30	05	15
7.	Strong language, Censored content may bring negative impact on behavior of an individual	80	45	25	29	21

N=200

Source: Field Survey Data 2020

Interpretation: It is the belief of the respondents that Contents of the OTT gives the relaxation to some extent since it can be enjoyed with family and Friends. Subscription of the OTT is a better option to spend the time but it is also evident from the responses that OTT contents kill the productivity. When it comes to the aspect of censorship to the OTT media contents majority of the respondents opine that there should be some sort of censorship

prevailing in the country for the OTT media contents. It is also evident fact that, Strong language, censored content may bring the negative impact on the behavior of an individual. It is also unavoidable fact that usage rate of OTT has been increased drastically during the lockdown period. Subscribers of OTT platforms are more used to it and subscription rate has also increased during this period.

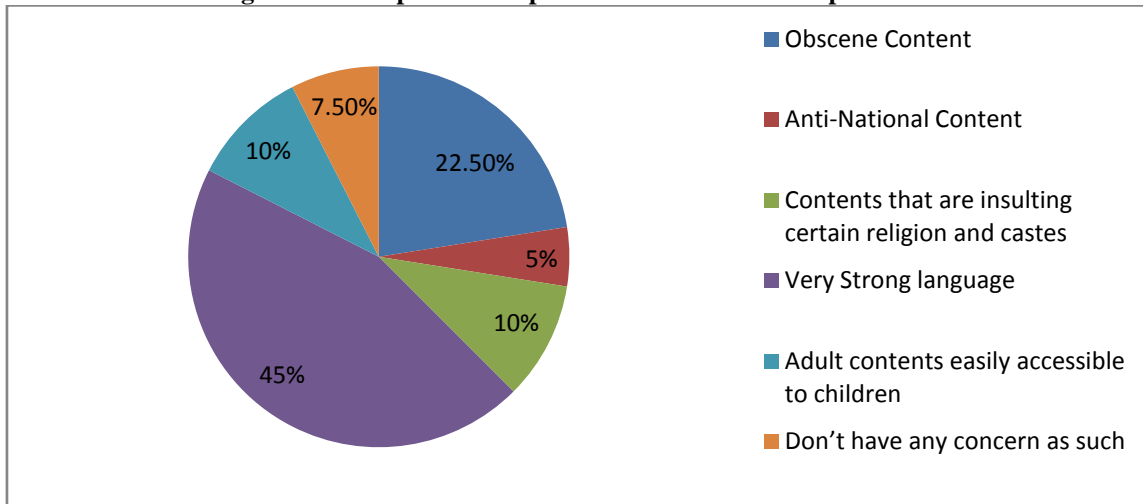
Table 1.9: Respondents top most concern with OTT platforms

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Obscene Content	45	22.5
Anti-National Content	10	5
Contents that are insulting certain religion and castes	20	10
Very Strong language	90	45
Adult contents easily accessible to children	20	10
Don't have any concern as such	15	7.5

N=200

Source: Field Survey Data 2020

Figure 1.9: Respondents top most concern with OTT platforms



Interpretation: It is hereby clear that the subscribers of OTT platforms concerned more about Strong language and Obscene content of OTT media. However there were certain respondents who opine that they were concerned about Anti-national content, content which are insulting certain religion and castes and some of the respondents don't have any concerns about the OTT contents

Findings of the Study

1. It is evident from the study that subscribers prefer to have OTT media streaming to spend the time but they also opined that spending more time in OTT streaming medias kill the productivity of an individual and once the individual used to it, there may be chance of developing habit
2. Majority of the respondents prefer to have one or two OTT streaming media subscription and it is also evident fact that most viewed OTT platform is Amazon prime and Netflix
3. It is evident from the study that Subscribers are most concerned about the strong language and censored contents which are in the OTT media platforms. So they try to avoid such contents from their watch list. They also suggest that there should be certain sort of censorship with regard to OTT content.
4. During the COVID lockdown the usage rate of OTT contents have been increased drastically. The subscriptions to OTT media contents are increasing just to kill the time. Youth prefer to spend more than 3 hours a day by watching the OTT contents.
5. The option of having entertainment at any time in finger tips attracts the subscribers

towards OTT contents. There is an option to view the contents at a convenient time

6. Premium contents available in the OTT platforms grab the attention of the subscribers. People are ready to pay for the contents which are exclusive, knowledgeable, entertaining and informative. According to that the companies like Amazon Prime, Netflix, Disnep hotstar, Voot, Zee5 etc fix the rate of subscription.
7. The fact that OTT contents may influence the behavioral patterns of the subscribers is unavoidable. Strong language, obscene content etc may bring the negative impact over the behavior of the individual. Of course majority of the respondents opined that. Cost effective internet and easy access to adult contents have lot of adverse affect on the behavior of the individual
8. The most demanded Contents in OTT platforms are exclusive web series and short films. People prefer to watch that shows which are thrilling, exclusive and new to them.

Suggestions

1. Currently the OTT platforms are charging high subscription rates to the subscribers of the platform. But they can adapt to other monetization model and can charge the subscribers less. Monetization model which contains the mixture of advertisement and subscription based revenues can reduce the burden of the subscribers. And it will be win-win situation for both OTT platforms and Subscribers. Subscribers can get an access to OTT media contents with minimum subscription rate and OTT media can grab more attention of the subscribers.

2. Effective distribution of quality content can give lot of advantage to the OTT platforms. OTT platforms should analyze the need of the different regions accordingly. If they know what the consumer needs they can achieve guaranteed success since the future of the OTT platforms are very promising one.
3. Currently there is no restriction for the contents available in OTT platforms. So there should be at least some sort of censorship for the contents so that it won't create any harm
4. From the respondents point of view they should avoid certain contents which has strong language, nudity, obscene content etc so that there will not be impact on the behavioral aspects of the individual

VI. CONCLUSION:

OTT Medias are the future of the Entertainment services. The genres available in the platforms attract the subscriber so easily. Subscription model, premium HD quality content, Accessibility of the content in convenient time etc are the major benefits of these streaming Medias.

It is unavoidable fact that these streaming media have become the part of the daily life. But each aspect will have two sides. One is positive side and one more is negative. But it depends on the subscriber who chooses the content to watch. If he tries to access content with strong language of course it will have a negative influence on the behavior of that subscriber. With these aspect in mind subscriber has to prefer the contents and subscription of OTT media.

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