



EVOLUTION OF OTT PLATFORMS IN INDIA: A SECONDARY DATA-BASED STUDY OF INDUSTRIAL GROWTH, CONTENT STRATEGIES, AND VIEWER TRENDS

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Abstract: The development of OTT platforms in India is a revolutionary change in India's media and entertainment sector. With the advent of digital revolution, increased internet usage, and evolving consumer tastes, OTT platforms have become powerful contenders in the field of content dissemination. In this paper, secondary data will be used to explore the industrial growth of OTT platforms, changes in their content policy, and the evolving trends of viewership in India. It is found that OTT platforms have grown rapidly owing to innovations and investments made in producing original and regional content. Moreover, viewership behaviour has also changed to demand personalized and on-demand viewing experiences.

Keywords: OTT Platforms, Digital Media, Industrial Growth, Content Strategies, Viewer Trends, India, Streaming Services

1. Introduction

There has been a drastic change in the Indian media and entertainment industry because of the rise of OTT platforms which allow viewers to watch digital content using internet-based devices. OTT platforms are unlike the regular broadcasting systems as they offer users the opportunity to access content anytime, anywhere. Films, TV series, Web Series, Documentaries, etc., are some of the forms of content available through these platforms. The rise of OTT platforms in India has occurred at a time when the digital infrastructure of the country has witnessed significant changes owing to the availability of affordable data plans, increased use of smartphones, and enhanced internet connectivity. The emergence of international players such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video, alongside indigenous platforms such as Disney+ Hotstar, has only further added to the competition in the market. Moreover, the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic has catalysed the growth of these platforms due to people relying more on digital platforms for entertainment during the lockdown period.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the industrial growth and expansion of OTT platforms in India using secondary data.
2. To analyse the content strategies adopted by OTT platforms to attract and retain audiences.
3. To study changing viewer trends and consumption patterns in the Indian OTT ecosystem.

2. Research Methodology

The current study is founded on the principle of qualitative research methodology which involves use of secondary sources. Information in this case will be obtained from reports prepared by companies like IBEF, PwC, and KPMG, academic articles, books and other trusted sources available in the online space. The study will make use of insights derived from market research reports and media analytics for better comprehension of trends within the industry and the behaviour of its audience. The data obtained will be analysed with the use of thematic approach that emphasizes the following three dimensions: industrial growth, content strategies, and audience trends. Hence, there is no need for primary data collection.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

OTT platform development in India can be explained with the help of numerous theories. Uses and Gratifications Theory reveals the motives behind users' choice of OTT platforms for their gratification and entertainment purposes. Media Convergence Theory demonstrates how traditional and digital media converge in OTT platforms that combine numerous types of content into one digital media environment. In addition, the concept of Disruptive Innovation Theory can explain how disruptive innovations of OTT platforms have impacted traditional media industries.

2.2 Review of Literature

The literature on OTT platforms in India indicates an increase in interest in the study of how OTT media impacts media industries and viewers' habits. Lobato (2019) underscores the global expansion of the streamers' services and their influence on media delivery infrastructure. Athique (2019) touches upon the socio-economic elements that affect the introduction of digital media to developing countries, pointing out low costs and availability as major aspects. The development of OTT platforms in India is considered by Kumar (2020), who underlines technological innovations and the young population as critical components of the process. Rayna & Striukova (2016) maintain that the digitalization of media platforms has led to democratizing the content creation and distribution industry by allowing newcomers to challenge existing competitors. Dasgupta & Grover (2019) investigate viewing patterns, specifically binge-watching, which became a typical characteristic of OTT media use. In turn, Mehta (2021) focuses on the effects of OTT platforms on traditional TV, indicating that OTT media services facilitate innovation in the industry while shaking up its conventional structure. Finally, reports prepared by PwC (2024) and IBEF (2026) indicate the

dynamic growth of the OTT market in India caused by increasing internet penetration and higher content demands.

3. Industrial Growth of OTT Platforms in India

The industrial growth of OTT platforms in India has been remarkable, characterized by several developments that have resulted in their expansion. The entry of low-cost mobile internet data has led to lower costs of accessing the internet, which has enabled millions of people to interact with digital content. In addition, the penetration of smartphones and smart television devices has made it easy for consumers to gain access to streaming media. OTT platforms in India have received massive funding from both local and foreign investors, spurring more competition and innovations in the industry. Different models, such as subscription and advertising, have been developed to meet the needs of varying consumer demographics. Also, collaborations between telecommunication firms and OTT media have helped disseminate digital content in the region.

4. Content Strategies Adopted by OTT Platforms

Content strategies prove important for the success of OTT platforms as they significantly impact audience engagement and retention. In India, content strategies adopted by OTT platforms include producing original web series and films, providing content in regional languages, and experimenting with different genres. In this regard, the strategy of producing original content is an important one as it helps OTT platforms differentiate themselves from their competitors and develop their unique brand identity. Another important content strategy adopted by OTT platforms involves providing content in regional languages so that a larger number of people are catered to. OTT platforms also make use of big data and AI in understanding audience behaviour and making content recommendations to users. In addition, OTT platforms have collaborated with filmmakers and production houses to increase diversity in terms of content offerings.

5. Viewership Trends and Consumption Patterns

Viewership trends in India have witnessed a major transformation owing to the evolution of the OTT market. There have been several lifestyle and technology-based transformations in the way viewers consume media content today. Viewers nowadays tend to favour on-demand content as they get to watch what they want when they want to. Binge watching has emerged as a trend among the younger demographic in particular. There has also been an inclination towards viewing regionally relevant content, which has enabled OTT players to reach out to customers beyond the cities. Multi-screen usage of the internet-enabled devices has become common as well, as viewers can access content through smartphones, tablets, laptops, and even the latest smart TV devices. Recommendation based upon viewing preferences adds to the appeal of these platforms.

6. Discussion

The development of OTT platforms in India is indicative of the wider changes taking place in the media and entertainment industry, which is fuelled by technological innovation and the changing nature of consumers' preferences. The fast-paced industrialization of OTT platforms in India has paved the way for innovative opportunities and strategies for content producers and distributors, yet at the same time, it has increased competition in the industry. Strategies of content production based on originality, diversification, and localization have been critical in terms of audience acquisition and engagement. Nevertheless, the emergence of new trends among viewers signals a change in their consumption practices, which is more individualized and flexible than ever before.

7. Conclusion

The development of OTT platforms in India can be described as one involving rapid industry growth, innovative content strategy, and evolving consumer behaviour. The rise of OTT platforms has brought about significant changes in the production, distribution, and consumption of media content, resulting in greater diversity and accessibility of media. While there may be threats posed to conventional media industries by OTT platforms, there are also opportunities for innovation and convergence in the media landscape.

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