

The Effect of Covid-19 Pandemic on Indian Cinema: The Rise of OTT Viewership

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Abstract:

The Indian cinema industry happens to be biggest producer of films in a variety of languages that entertain millions of audiences across the globe. It has shown an impeccable record of recognition and quality entertainment that is being delivered for decades and is now a cultural element that is embed within the country's heritage and pride. Although, the year 2020 put a striking hit on this industry's golden era of rejoicing it's religious followers with a global pandemic that is caused by a respiratory virus called as the Corona 2 (SARS-CoV-2). This virus had not only impacted the overall wellbeing of the populace but also has disrupted economies and industries. One such devastated industry happens to be the Indian cinema industry that has faced massive downfall on its overall growth due to the lockdown shutting down theatres causing millions of workers from this industry to lose their livelihoods. Although, one industry in specific that is the OTT industry bloomed and took over the opportunity of self-isolation and rose to show it's true potential in the Indian market which has indeed stuck and taken over the true essence of Indian cinema by affecting the number of theatre-going audiences even today. This empirical paper examines this very thought and highlights the understanding of how the global Covid-19 pandemic has changed the Indian cinema industry and the studies the mindset of Indian audiences to see if the culture of visiting the theatres still exist as the OTT platform is on its exponential rise. The study uses a descriptive analysis tool in order to analyses and identify patterns to categories the data collection process and provide conclusions and recommendations on the effects the OTT platforms has on the Indian cinema industry as the collective OTT viewership rises.

Keywords: Indian Cinema, OTT, Global Pandemic, Viewership

Introduction:

The 21st Century has seen financial changes as well as stability in economy. The Indian film industry however is also likewise seeing a force development due to the rise of technological

advancement in India. Innovation in particular to the web and smart cell phones are also adding onto this ever changing film industry but one of the most notable advancement is where films are now available in extremely fast speed. The Indian film Industry is biggest in entertainment world as far as the film creation is concerned and over 1000 films a year are consistently being produced in India. The Indian film industry is popularly known for its Hindi films which implies Bollywood and Bollywood has to be the biggest patrons in the Indian entertainment world. South Indian film industry is in the second position when it comes to revenue and industry value. Other language film like Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi, Bhojpuri and Gujarati are likewise also well known in a few locale of the country.

These variables draw in worldwide corporates for venture and coordinated efforts to utilize this potential. Open doors in TV and film industry and mechanical progressions in India which are drawing in public and worldwide players to put resources into this area. These media head honchos are putting resources into new innovations of TV and film industry. Films beyond theatre viewing is one of those innovations and this is innovation is brought to us in the form of Over the Top platform (OTT) where it is moreover focused to be as a video web based filmography. Request of over the top applications and content has shot up after less expensive internet options that were let out by Jio. Thus, causing an overall boom in the usage of internet and social connectivity in India. More than one dozen over the top specialist organizations have begun their administrations in most recent two years as it were. Due to the less expensive and quick assistance of 4G web and presence of in excess of 400 million cell phones, the Indian Film Industry was seeing fast development. As per a report in business standard, more than 80% of the on the web video is watching through cell phones. Netflix and Amazon are significant global player in web based streaming media in India, both have begun their business in 2016 in this country. These global players are consistently filling in India. Netflix has cooperation with Airtel in which they are giving three months free membership with each Airtel post-paid association. Indian entertainment industry though loses around Rs. 50 billion each year because of theft that is in the form of piracy and so India is on top for sharing pilfered content. These computerized stages of malpractices are diminishing since film watching has now become very reasonable due to its availability online through OTT platforms and so these businesses saw a striking development in India. More than two dozen OTT specialist organizations have started their operations in India and entrants such as Hotstar, Zee5, Jio television, Alt Balaji and JioFilm were the native players who had begun their businesses most recently. The coordinated efforts between Hollywood and Bollywood is also additionally seeing gigantic development because of these web-based stages.

Though the OTT platforms have surfaced to be an addition to the way Indians view films, it however, seems to lack an important aspect of the Indian cinema industry which happens to be the theatre going experience that added to be a major chunk of how Indians used to spend their leisure or entertainment time on. The main variable which had energized this fast development of OTT platforms was the Covid-19 pandemic since it force shut all public and social activities of every individual for over 2 years due to its easy and contagious spread. This automatically led to the decline of theatre-goers and the rise of OTT platforms. In addition, majority of the Indian households before the rise of OTT had spent their weekends or planned their leisure activity around theatres which is one of the main reason as to how the cinema industry had

grown to be so big but currently, OTT platforms are diminishing the opportunities of a film producer to make a film that is dedicated to the theatre-goers due the lack of profits and the interest that's being shown by the audiences. As a matter of fact, film producers seem to have moved on from the industry to look for other profitable investment ventures as releasing a film on the OTT platform is just not as fruitful as releasing a film in the theatres ever since the global pandemic. Thus, in the midst of the pandemic, high end motion pictures even in the USA had been pushed to not long from now. Essentially, in India, the dramatic arrival of all significant movies has been endlessly delayed. This led to the producers to deliver motion pictures straightforwardly on to the OTT channels instead of Film theatres and so many films debuted solely on Amazon Prime Video, Netflix and Hotstar as an OTT exclusive. Hence, the Covid-19 pandemic had destroyed the very essence of the Indian cinema industry and had indirectly contributed towards the rise of OTT view ship amongst the audience due to its low prices and comfortability of sitting at home and watching video on demand.

Review of Literature:

The author focuses on the use and extensive outreach of OTT platforms during the health crisis. The release of movies and TV content through high-pace internet connection instead of cable or satellite providers. The findings shows aggregate demand for OTT has increased viewership not just have positive impact rather negative repercussions on viewers. (Gopi, (2021).) The author emphasis OTT extant during the crisis. Pandemic disrupted the entertainment ecosystem but the rise of Over the Top brought in competition, sharpened consumer habits and behaviour. Hence, the resilience of OTT which is subscription based internet entertainment mode during the pandemic had to be addressed. The case study method and a semi structured google survey method was used to draw conclusion. (Sharma, (2022).) With the advent of new technology and digital era especially during pandemic has given rise to on demand video streaming services. There has been an upward movement in usage of OTT platform among viewers. The author examines the shift from traditional entertainment modes to the most modern online and on-demand video screaming. Also determine the factors influencing viewers shift in entertainment mode. The results found are price, accessibility and convenience factors were the root cause of the shift. Post lockdown, corporates and few firms encouraged work from home, also contributed to the shift. (Dutta, (2021).) The author explores the future of OTT after the pandemic in India. A quantitative survey is conducted to check comparison between theatre going and OTT viewing. A random sampling technique was used by providing questionnaire. The study also aims to target directors and producers for low budget, art and small commercial movies launched during pandemic gained success. Of all the players Amazon Prime Videos lead the competitors among subscribers. (Revati Devaki, (2021).) The author explains the impact of COVID – 19 on OTT platform in India as it reshaped the preference of consumers to content viewing. The study used focus group and survey to collect primary data. The result found clarifies the number of viewers for OTT has significantly increased during the lockdown. The novelty of this paper is to identity the consumers need and their satisfaction level. (Madnani, (2020).) The paper through light on the evolution of digital era for entertainment from physical hangouts to screens within the four walls. The study found OTT has something to offer to everyone from youngsters to old aged there by making it the

most sought after entertainment modes. Considering the various competitors emerged strong after the rise of OTT, every player has seen an exponential growth thereby making the entire OTT platform viewing a grand success. The upward shift in the demand for the platform is mainly due to the change in consumption pattern of viewers during the COVID, (Patnaik, (2021).) The author explains the undeniable surge of OTT during the pandemic. Owing to the demand for choice based video streaming and the variety of features made available for consumer needs explored the market of OTT and the surfaced trend for online. The study show cased psychographic impact on various age groups like children, adult and elderlies. The methodology involved in drawing a study conclusion was both qualitative and quantitative to extrapolate the data. Including a primary data collection to map and analyse. (Nijhawan, (2020).) New source of entertainment in India mostly dates back to 1950s with the advent of television. With time the trend also has changed from watching predefined or prefixed entertainment episodes be it movies, series, shows, music and news in a crowd with neighbour sharing a single television to the most personalised scope of viewing entertainment through OTT platforms. Earlier literally no fee or payment but, currently entertainment comes with a huge cost that is Subscription Video-or-Demand (SVD) and paid OTT Video Streaming services. COVID hitting the country changed consumer's pattern for consumption, media usage, marketing techniques. Hence, the author explain the overview of the usage of OTT during the pandemic. (Brindha, (2020).) The author signifies the scope and outreach of Indian Cinema in the paradise of entertainment. The number of movie produced in India stands to on top in the world. However, the catastrophic impact of pandemic on Indian Cinemas was extremely worse. The study says the ways and means undertaken by India cinemas to reach out to public during the pandemic and explains the key challenges faced by the industry. The study was done collecting secondary data through industry reports, publications and various official website. (Selvalakshmi, (2022).) The OTT includes Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney + Hotstar, Zee5 etc., made a huge impact on the consumer content viewing. With the available break through high pace internet and digitalization, generation X have made the best use of the scenario. The pandemic has paved the way for more number of subscribers and viewers subscribing to all most all the competitors' plans. The study was an exploratory research comparing the two variable relationship. The subscription and the increased consumption of Video streaming online content by generation X. The survey method was conducted through questionnaire and used a liner regression method to establish a correlation between the variables. (Sridhar, (2022).) The unprecedented global pandemic gave rise to media consumption for entertainment a way different approach. There rose the OTT a digital well accepted and appreciated platform for generations all across the age. The result of the wide range of cost effective online streaming surfaced as mental and physical health of viewers amongst all generations. The due reason being lesser censorship on the content made a significant impact on the mental health of the viewers. Primary care physicians are the vital role players to address such issues as the first point of contact being physicians. The gap is identified by the author and addressed well with the help of few such other related papers. (Panda, (2022).)

The Covid-19 Global Pandemic:

The Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. While probably the soonest realized cases had a connection to a food market in Wuhan, some didn't. SARS-CoV-2 spreads basically by beads created because of hacking or wheezing of a SARS-CoV-2 contaminated individual. They additionally don't build up any indications since it has an asymptomatic property. SARS-CoV-2 beginnings as a long illness yet can later influence the whole body. The spread of the infection was fast accordingly driving it to turn into a worldwide pandemic with over 66.7 million cases alongside 65 million passing's worldwide as of December 2020. With the rising instances of Coronavirus - 19, the public authority of India proclaimed cross country lockdown beginning from the 25th of March, 2020. At first, it was for 21 days but due to the spread being uncontrollable it went on for months. This happens to be the world's greatest and longest lockdown to date. The private and public workplaces as well as transport workplaces shut down and limitations were placed on activation of individuals. This impacted great many individuals. Yet, at same time the lamentable Coronavirus pandemic has demonstrated gainful for some businesses, for example, the OTT industry, drug, IT, E-learning, Computer generated reality, and so on.

Indian Cinema:

India was among top ten nations in world in absolute film industry from 2011 to 2018. In the midst of the plenty of entertainment channels of medium accessible to the Indian crowds, films have stayed the most famous ones. The atmosphere of the theatres and cinema halls has hypnotized the Indian crowd since the times of their beginning in India. Though before the pandemic, albeit the total functionality that is overseeing the media space have now gone through an ocean change with privatization and globalization, film has held its prominence.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Indian Cinema Industry:

The global Corona virus pandemic had forcefully shut down many industries and hindered the functioning of many. One such industry like that happens to be the Indian cinema industry that caters the most number of films being produced globally. The pandemic required every individual to isolate and loose contact with the outside world. No individual were allowed to step outside which was one of the main requisite to enjoy the true essence of the Indian cinema culture. It was to go visit the theatres but since the theatres/cinema halls happen to be an enclosed space with over 100 audiences sitting together and breathing under the same roof along with the air conditioning made this whole situation to be a hotspot for the corona virus to breed and spread. This led to the long lockdown on theatres and cinema halls in specific which happened to play such a major role in every individual that works or is part of the Indian cinema industry. The coronavirus lockdown has given a significant difficulty to film and media business as same like different enterprises since the business was not ready for the lockdown. Apart from this, a large portion of the video content displayed were rehashed as shoots were prohibited due to expanding Coronavirus cases. During that period, just television and OTT stages were accessible for diversion. Indeed, even in the wake of resuming the normalcy, the film makers are hesitant to acquire new movies film and bring them to the theatres. A portion of the movies were delivered carefully yet a few makers are as yet holding with their huge

delivery and standing by to standardize what is happening so everybody can watch the film as it is a single open door window. Thus, leading to reports of Indian producers and theatre owners are ending it all by committing suicide which is on the rise because of their financial crisis. They are still staggering under the effect of the lockdown and to date large numbers of them are fighting monetary pressure and emotional wellness issues.

Understanding OTT Platforms in India:

Referred to usually as OTT or Over the Top, is an innovation that empowers content proprietors to deal with the most common way of conveying video content across various gadgets utilizing the web. OTT is rapidly acquiring fascination as a suitable option in contrast to customary satellite TV programming. The OTT caters a variety of options when it comes to visual media such as movies, documentaries and web-series which are now a hot topic amongst the gen-z's and the millennials. This platform has been in the limelight for its controversial, raw and insensitivity towards portraying vulgar content that speaks to be the truth of how and what things are as it is in the world. Although, the word OTT is the buzz currently, it did not always have the same spark. As a matter of fact, the OTT stages began in India with BigFlix. Sent off by Dependence Diversion in 2008, BigFlix turned into India's most memorable OTT stage. Ultimately, OTT began flourishing in India in 2013 after the send-off of Zee television and Sony Liv. Disney Hotstar came into the OTT world in 2015. Watchers of Disney Hotstar are expanding since its send off. Today, it has become one of the most-watched OTT stages. Afterward, Netflix started offering its support in India from the outset of 2016 and contending with the stages like Amazon-Prime Video and Disney+Hotstar. Netflix, the top video web-based feature on the planet, began by delivery DVDs to clients via mail and its change in business model shows the current trend of OTT viewing. Presently it consumes in excess of 15% of the world's web transmission capacity and has endorsers in excess of 190 nations which is considered to be a stepping stone for today's OTT Platforms.

An Overview of OTT Viewership in India:

As of now, India is the world's quickest developing OTT market. According to the India Brand Value Establishment report the OTT area in India saw a 30% ascent in the quantity of paid supporters, from 22.2 million to 29.0 million among spring and July 2020. With the rising number of web clients this number will increment in future. India is presently second just to China with regards to web clients. It is seen that 75% of web clients have a place with the age gathering of under 35 years. Today is assessed that around 325 million Indians transfer online video — either promotion upheld or paid. By 2024, the business is expected to arrive at Rs. 3 Trillion at a development pace of 9%.

The Rise of OTT Viewership:

Just like the few industries that got a boost out of the global Covid-19 pandemic, the OTT industry did too. With that opportunity, ventures like OTT players likewise got a chance to develop beneficiary business because of more interest for amusement as individuals got additional time in their grasp. Many individuals during this difficult stretch were at end because of movement boycott, certain individuals were in ordered self-quarantines after their movement

and some were following social removing measures and they were away from their friends. It was when OTT acted the hero as other diversion channels I. e. Television slots/motion pictures neglected to give more assortment to watchers. A large number of the OTT applications had shown the developing pattern in 2020. It is additionally seen that the majority of the new supporters are enrolling from Level II and Level III urban communities. With film lobbies shut for close to 12 months, a significant number of these OTT stages even delivered motion pictures carefully. Digitalization has had huge outcomes in the realm of film and the moving pictures with regards to content as well as approaches to watching moving pictures. With its modest and adaptable membership charges and assortment of video library OTT is becoming well known for individual watcher in India. Indian entertainment world loses around Rs. 50 billion every year because of robbery. India is on top for sharing pilfered content. These items are currently accessible on OTT at better costs and new form of visual media arose from the OTT platforms that is the web series caught the new watchers. The configuration of web series, its story telling, cast and topics are unique in relation to television content which drawn in a large portion of the watchers. The watchers incorporates housewives, representatives telecommuting and youngsters gaining from home through e-learning applications. Individuals understood that without getting out of home considerably more imaginative substance is accessible effectively in their grasp through PC or cell phones since it is accessible whenever and anyplace. It is said that television is a mode of family diversion while, OTT is a mechanism of individual diversion. One can partake in the OTT content 24 hrs daily as media administration is accessible whenever. In this way, individual gets more decision for choosing media. It is seen that young and grown-ups too are staring at the TV uniquely in contrast to the manner in which they did before.

Research Methodology:

The methodology and study is based on surveys and reports. To show the following data in the most raw and approximate form a questionnaire has been prepared which was then shared with a diverse set of people rising from different biological, physical, mental and economic backgrounds as OTT platforms and theatre going audiences also seem to be so diverse yet indulge in the same pleasure of consuming entertainment though visual representation. These surveys were conducted through online means and the responses that have been recorded will be used to understand and reach our final objectives as stated below:

Objectives:

1. To study the current age of India cinema industry and the sudden rise of OTT viewership that was triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic
2. To investigate the future of OTT platforms while co-existing with the theatre-going essence of Indian cinema

Research Design:

The design is twofold, one being the data collection and the second being report analysis. This is achieved through a descriptive statistical tool, mainly percentage. As the statistical tool describes, summarise and compares between the parameters. This study specifically calculates

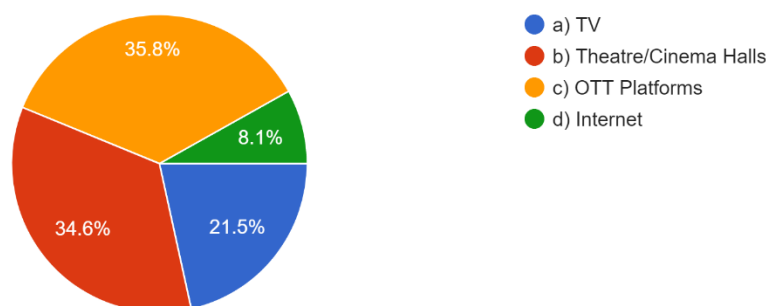
through the results of the respondents to calculate percentages. As the method of data collection has been specified. The data collected is through random sampling which is a simple and convenient form of data collection. The collected data is then briefly analysed, grouped based on the number of response and the type of responses taken from different categories of consumers that vary in age, gender and their occupational status which then are grouped in terms of similarities, these responses in return help come to a conclusion this providing answers for the aforementioned questions.

Data Analysis:

The following data is collected through random sampling method with the help of a research questionnaire as seen in the enclosure. The data collection consists of data from 260 respondents of different categories of gender such as male, female, and others. The respondents age category ranged from 15-45+. However, majority of our respondents happen to be from the age category of 15-25 years old. The data collected would contribute towards reaching our objective with respect to the decrease in theatre-going audiences which takes away the essence of Indian cinema while also understating how the pandemic assisted the OTT platforms viewership to rise which also indirectly effects the footfall in theatres/cinema halls.

Chart 1: Medium Of Channels Used To View Content Before The Covid-19 Pandemic

260 responses

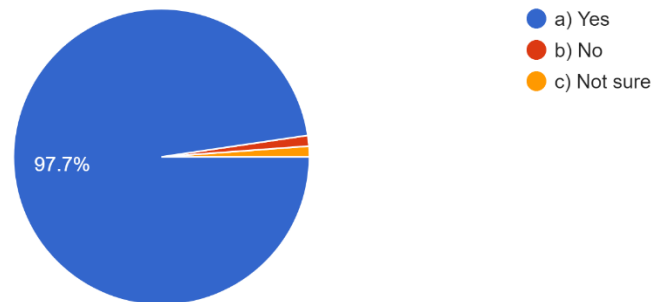


The evolution of entertainment has been a steady progress over the years. Over the many years, the building of this revolution has led to a variety of technological options that are being provided to our audiences. Television and theatres were the only primitive and age old tradition of consuming one's everyday dose of entertainment. Although, entering the age of digital era has completely shifted the audiences mindset where they have gotten adapted to the new age variety and technological advancements. One such advancement is the entry of OTT platforms. As per our data collection, the current audiences claim to have been viewing content on both OTT platforms as well as the theatres majoritely. Where we have, the OTT platform users of 34.6% being active even before the Covid-19 pandemic had hit us. Theatres/Cinema Halls happen to be the next preferred medium of channel when it comes to viewing channel as the

craze for films are truly best experienced in this medium of channel that also happens to be an age old tradition that keeps the essence of cinema alive.

Chart 2: Awareness About The Term OTT Platforms

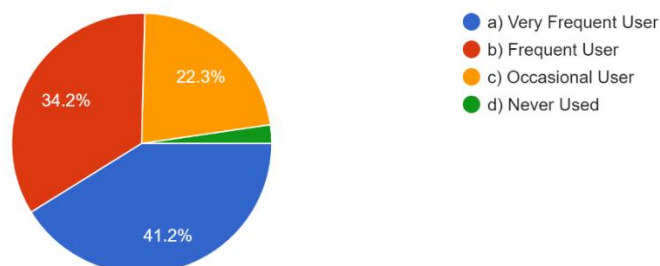
258 responses



The term OTT has only come into usage recently and it recieved a huge boost with the COVID outbreak ever since then the term OTT has been widely used among people as we can see from the pie chart that 97.7% of the people are aware of the term OTT as everyone likes to be upto date with all the terms the Generation Z use and whereas only 2.3 % are unaware of the term as they might belong to the Baby Boomers generation that is basically people who were born between the years 1946-1964.

Chart 3: Types of Users

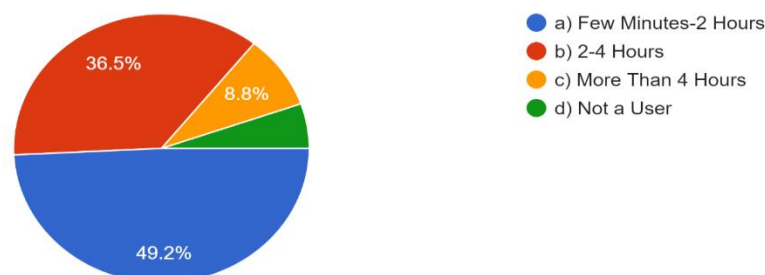
260 responses



To properly analyse the results that were required, here is the data that identifies how frequently one uses any of the OTT Platforms, so that is why our questionnaire follows up with the question, for which 41.2 % (the majority) stated that they use OTT Platforms very frequently. Followed by 34.2 % which says frequently but not very frequently this might be due to the amount of work load people can have or their habit of seeing digital devices, next comes occasional users who make up to 22.3 % of the pie chart. This marks people who are on and off OTT platforms very occasionally. Finally the category of people who has never used any of the OTT platforms which round up to 2.3%, this can either be due to their lack of knowledge of OTT platforms or due to their preference of theatres over OTT platforms.

Chart 4: Daily Average User Time on OTT Platforms

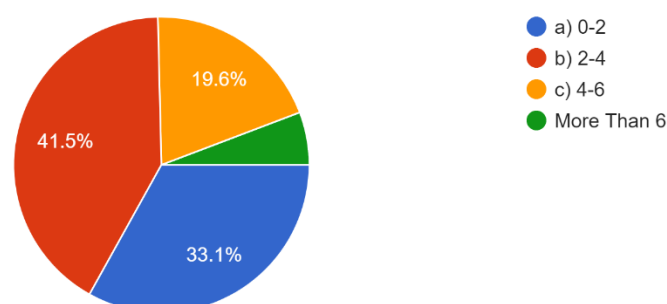
260 responses



Due to solace amount of time one spent during the Covid-19 lockdowns, there has been a drastic change in the content viewing behaviour of the audiences. Especially with the change in viewing habits, many OTT platforms demanded more content during this time but since the lockdowns were restricting filmmakers to continue with their shoots. Thus, leading the OTT Platforms to move ahead with the production under their own banner as originals. Hence, we had multiple OTT platforms bringing content of their choices in various forms such as films, shows/series, documentaries and even games. Some of the OTT platforms that had gone ahead with this model of production were Netflix Originals, Disney+Hotstar Originals and even Zee Originals. This increased the daily average user time on the OTT platforms, leading to over 49.2% of the audience spending few minutes-2 hours on an everyday basis. This means a user would typically consume an episode of their likeable show/series or even a Hollywood film on most of the days. Followed by next, there are over 36.5% of users that spend around 2-4 hours a day consuming entertainment in a day. Lastly, there are 8.8% of users who are consuming more than 4 hours a day which is an alarming amount of content that is viewed by one in a day. Both these categories have one main reason behind this excessive consumption habit and this is due to the term, binge-watching. Binge-watching refers to an activity where an individual would consume entertainment of any form for a prolonged period of time without taking a break. This constitutes to an additional behaviour and is on the rise due to the audience being extremely hooked onto a content they are watching.

Chart 5: Average Number of OTT Platforms Being Subscribed By Viewers

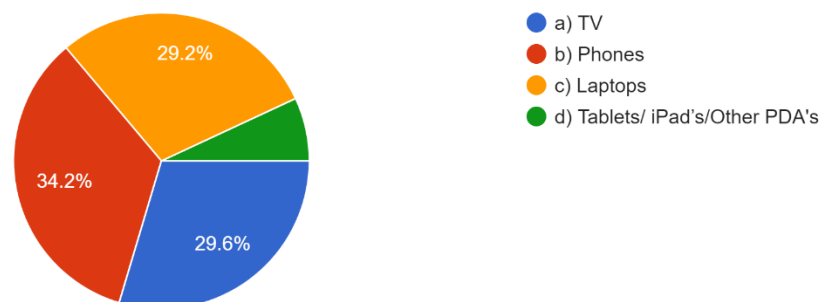
260 responses



Since one of the most important reason that contributed to the rise of OTT platforms during the Covid-19 pandemic was the content that was being offered by the OTT platforms. Since OTT platforms do not have a regulatory body to monitor its content, the platforms were pushing extremely vulgar and sensitive topics which could not be seen before by the audiences at theatres or on TV's. This boosted the selling factor for every OTT platform since the number of subscribers rose depending upon the content that the OTT platform marketed. As one may see in the chart above, on an average there's even 5.8% of users have subscribed to more than 6 platforms. While, 19.6% users have subscribed to 4-6 OTT platforms due to the said the reason and 41.5% users have subscribed to 2-4 OTT platforms to more than enough content to view on regular basis and lastly, 33.1% of users are subscribed to at least 0-2 OTT platforms on an average.

Chart 6:Viewers Preferred Mode of Viewing OTT Content

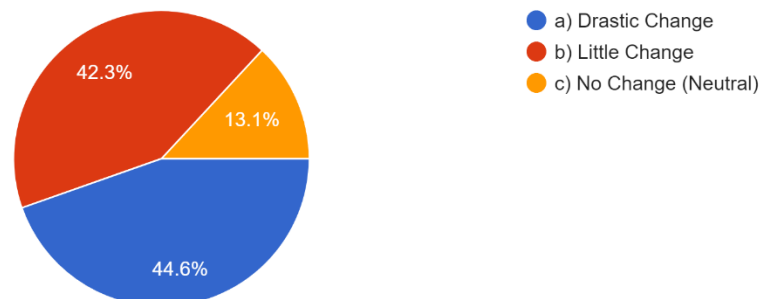
260 responses



It is getting clear that people are starting to spend more and more time in OTT platforms as it is considered very easy way of viewing digital content at your own comfort in any smart devices that one my own which is a very appealing benefit that is offered to the viewers. Most of the users that is 34.2% of the total responses have chosen phones as their comfort device, it is due to the phone's compact size and its portable nature that makes it the most accessible and easiest to view content on, almost anywhere and everywhere. The rise of smartphones are also highly predominant in India in recent years as the market now offers very cheap and pocket friendly smartphones are almost abundantly available to all. Next comes a close one between TV which has 29.6 % of the total responses followed by Laptops with 29.2 % this might be due to a TV's big size and the comfort of their own house and laptop's portable nature but is little heavier and bigger considering a phone thus being 3rd in line. Last, comes tablets and other devices with 7% having the least amount of preference among the bunch.

Chart 7: Change In The Amount of OTT Consumption By Viewers Post The Covid-19 Pandemic

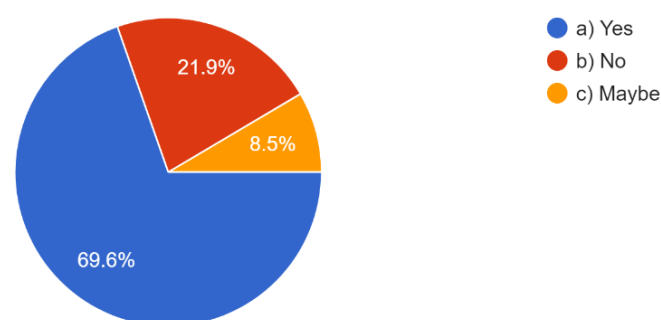
260 responses



The responses for the change in the amount of OTT consumption by viewers post Covid-19 Pandemic clearly states that 44.6% the majority of people from the survey has said there has been a drastic change with the amount in OTT consumption post Covid-19 as it is evident that the pandemic has shaken the whole world and instilled fear within everyone thus making it hard for people to gather in crowded areas, one of them being theatres, hence the drastic changes in OTT consumption due to safety reasons. Next comes 42.3% of people who responded with little change, this could be due to the experience they get visiting a theatre that still has them going to theatres despite the pandemic and the minority of people that responded no change which makes up to 13.1% of responses, this may be due to the people's lethargic nature or their love for theatres that makes them ineffective to the pandemic situation.

Chart 8: Whether Respondents Subscribed To A New OTT Platform During The COVID 19 Pandemic

260 responses

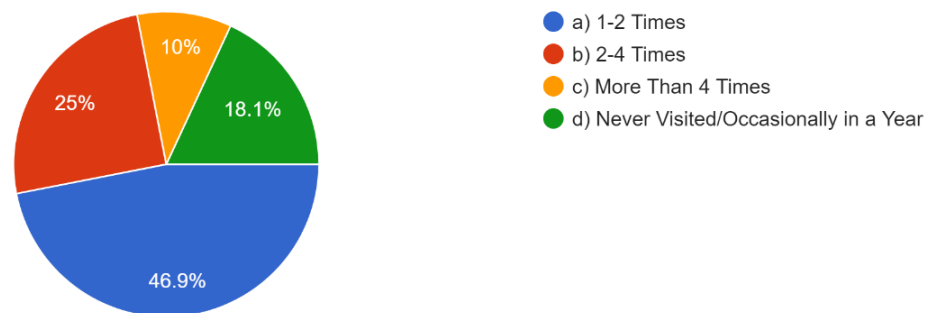


With the lockdowns and restrictions, staying at home was becoming harder than it usually was thus to liberate themselves of boredom people started to subscribe to many OTT platforms during the Covid-19 lockdown phase, so to analyse the number of people who subscribed to a new OTT platform during the pandemic resulted with 69.6% of the total responses saying yes to have subscribed followed by 21.9% of the total responses with no, this may be due to the lack of interest in OTT platforms or due to the mind-set of people to spend time more wisely

doing other activities with their family rather than viewing content. Finally the minority of people which sums up to 8.5% of people who responded with maybe, this may be due to their lack of awareness or their lack of remembrance.

Chart 9: Number Of Times Audiences Visited The Theatres To Watch A Film
In a Month Before The Covid-19 Pandemic

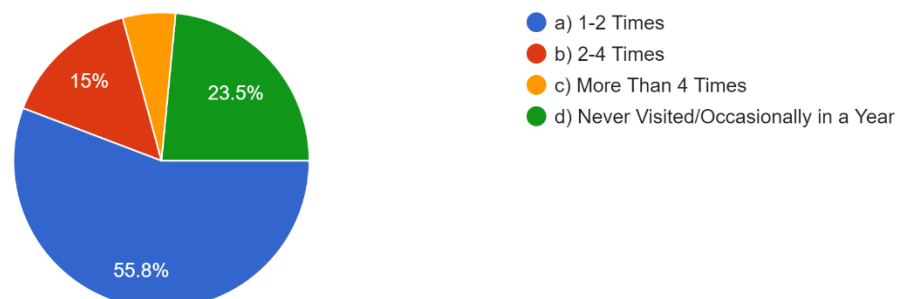
260 responses



It is evident that one of the most popular form of entertainment and content viewing was movies that usually played in movie theatres thus the number of people who visited theatre to watch a film before Covid-19 was nothing like how it is post Covid-19, to analyse the number of times people that visited theatres before Covid-19, the results from the survey is taken into consideration which shows that 46.9% of the responses which is the majority has mentioned that they visit theatres 1-2 times in a month, followed by 25% of people who say they visit the theatres 2-4 times in a month. Movie lovers/ people who visit the theatres more than 4 times a month constitute about 10% of the total responses and finally the people who occasionally visit the theatre in a year which sums up to 18.1% of the total responses.

Chart 10: Number Of Times Audiences Visited The Theatres To Watch A Film
In a Month Post The Covid-19 Pandemic

260 responses

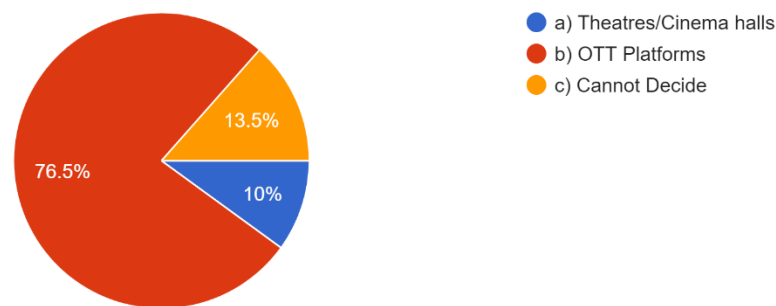


It goes without saying that Covid-19 has played a major role in the boom of OTT platforms which may lead to the downfall of movie theatres, to analyse this aspect, the result from this survey was taken into consideration to check the change in the number of people visiting

theatres post Covid-19. Coming in at first with the majority of responses is 1-2 times which shows that more people are visiting theatres in a month post Covid-19 due to the feel of missing out on the theatre experience during the Covid-19 era, followed by 15% of the total responses that say they visit the theatres 2-4 times in a month post Covid-19, then Comes people who visit more than 4 times in a month that constitutes up to 5.7% of the total responses. Finally the percentage of people who did not visit the theatre or visited occasionally in a year is 23.5%, it is safe to say that the number of people who rarely visit theatres has increased post Covid-19 as it is evident by comparing Post and Pre Covid-19 analysis.

Chart 11: Mode of Film Viewing That Audiences Find to Be Cheaper And Convenient

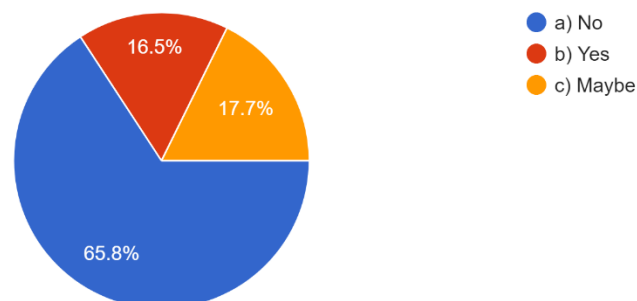
260 responses



OTT viewership has solely grown to its peak due to the pandemic that shunned the public from all social indulgence but these conditions that we were put are not ideal. Yet, the OTT platforms rose and that is because these conditions which went hand-in hand with what the OTT platforms are offering and pulled the public out of suffocation. The OTT platform were primarily marketed to be the cheaper and safer alternative during the Covid-19 pandemic. When in comparison to theatres/cinema halls, the public automatically found OTT platforms to be cheaper since they need not have additional costs such as traveling when compared to watching a movie at the theatre by buying a movie ticket. The ease of not even having to move or get dressed to go enjoy a film also added as benefit especially in the lockdown periods as no one was allowed to step outside their homes. Thus, leading to our 76.5% respondents finding OTT platforms to be the cheapest and convenient method of film watching when compared to theatres/cinema halls which only 10% respondents found to be.

Chart 12: Number Of Audiences That Feel Viewing Content on OTT platforms
Give The Same Level Of Film Viewing Experience In Comparison To A Theatre

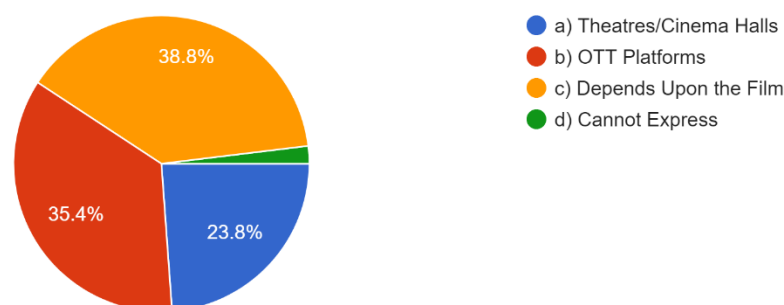
260 responses



Clearly, the experience of visiting and watching a film is nowhere near as to what one would experience watching at their homes through an OTT platform. This is firstly due to the lack of resources that one may find in a theatre such as high-end sound systems such as Dolby Atmos/Surround/Digital, a real-time theatre-sized projector where now theatres have started to even provide XL-screens or even comfortable recliner seats along with theatre food. Through this, it is understood that a theatre does not just sell a film but rather an experience to its audience. Every show is different in its own ways. For example, IMAX which happens to provide heart pounding audio through advanced technology where there is pitch-perfect tuning, endless sweet spot making no seat in the theatre a bad one and pin-point accuracy in audio alignment. To add on, the IMAX claims to provide awe-inspiring visuals with the help of dual-projection, hand-crafted remastering and high-end realism which makes you be part of the film. Thus, for this reason 65.8% of the respondents believe OTT platforms cannot give you the same film viewing experience as the theatres while, 17.7% respondents claim it might give the same experience though they are not unsure. Lastly, leading to 16.5% respondents saying viewing films on OTT platform does indeed give them the same experience as the theatre.

Chart 13: Mode of Viewing a Film If It Was Released Simultaneously In Both
OTT Platforms And The Theatres On The Same Day

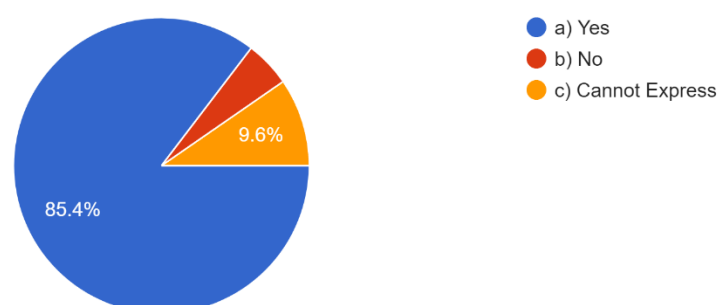
260 responses



A traditional feature film made in India at least in the current age cannot foresee a future where the film would release on both theatres and the OTT simultaneously and this is because of the window period. The window period refers to the gap between the film's date of release in theatre and the date of release of the same film in an OTT platform. Most of the filmmakers and theatre owners would obviously want a longer window period in order to make profits as the viewer must visit the theatre to watch the film within this timeframe. Making this time frame shorter would mean, a viewer would have relatively shorter time to catch the film in the theatre. The window period is actually extremely critical to filmmakers and theatre owners as this is their highest revenue streams and so the longer the gap, the more time the filmmakers and theatre owners get in order to find way to lure viewers. However, on the other hand, OTT platforms also find this window period very important as viewers in the current age do not like waiting and grow restless as days goes by which eventually leads them to go watch the film in the theatre. OTT could lose these potential prospects if they are not vigilant about delivering exciting content on time. Thus, both OTT platforms, filmmakers and theatre owners are in constant conflict when it comes to setting this window period that could mutually benefit all. Although to a viewer's eye, this could not mean much as one would like to just truly indulge in enjoying the content that is being proposed to them and so, 38.8% respondents believe their choice of viewing a film if it releases on both the medium of channels simultaneously, it will purely depend upon the film that will be released. This is because certain films are meant to be experienced in the theatre and are made with excellent craftsmanship that has to be celebrated while a few films would not be made in a high budget that necessarily shows craftsmanship but rather focuses on more casual genres. Next, there are 35.4% respondents who have voted to choose OTT platforms to view the film and this could be because they happen to like the comfort and cheaper viability that OTT has to offer whereas on the other hand, 23.8% respondents have claimed that they would view a film in the theatre only if it was released on both OTT and the theatres. This could be since they belong to the elite group of theatre-going audience who are loyal and prefer to watch any sort of film in the theatre majority of the time. Lastly, we have minority respondents who are unaware as to which they would choose since they do are not able to express or decide upon.

Chart 14: Respondent's Views On OTT Platforms Becoming A Collective Habit Of The Future Generations

260 responses



OTT platforms have somehow managed to pave their way into the watching behaviours of the Indian audiences. The viewership of OTT platforms was indeed on the rise during the pandemic yet this is not going to slow down anytime soon. With subscriber count on the rise, the OTT industry is definitely meant to grow bigger than ever while giving a tough competition with the traditional mediums of channel. This is something that is automatically embedded within the mind-sets of Indians now that they have become extremely clingy towards OTT platforms since it is a cheaper option for them in comparison to the theatres/cinema halls and also the fact that, they can view video-on demand. Thus, leading to 85.4% have responded in belief that OTT platforms are indeed going to influence the future generations through making OTT viewership a collective habit. However, 5% respondents have disagreed while 9.6% respondents find themselves to be in a situation where they cannot express their thought or in a dilemma if we would be witnessing this in the near future.

Conclusion and Suggestions:

To truly see the concept of the different mediums of channel we have for entertainment in India, we need to first and foremost admit the ever changing environment and the social space that we have given for entertainment providers. Due to this very reason, the OTT platforms which was not so predominant in the earlier days took the win as the conditions that prevailed during the lockdown gave it a competitive edge over the traditional mediums of entertainment such as the theatres/cinema halls. The long and prolonged effect of Covid-19 pandemic had gotten the audiences adapted to the lockdown surroundings and hence, built this loyal and strong community of OTT audiences as opposed to the theatre-going audiences. Audiences of the OTT platforms are not willing to step out of their homes irrespective of whether they want to experience the same satisfaction a theatre viewing experience provides or not. This is solely due to the fact that OTT platforms have made this comfortable blanket of cheaper and at home convenience of viewing any form of content along with it being video on demand. No wonder the OTT market is filling exceptionally quickly in India. In the coming years, it is for sure that the OTT's will emerge much bigger than what it is now, with much more imaginative content in all of India's local dialects which will additionally help them in the diversion of their industry.

Although, this does not mean the end for theatres/cinema halls since there is a literal shift in the type of audiences that visit the theatres post the Covid-19 pandemic. This did not exist in the pre-pandemic era. The audiences in fact that visit the theatres are completely different in nature when compared to the OTT viewers. An average OTT preferred community would consist of behaviours where a viewer is impatient and wants to have a wide variety of new content to watch on regular basis while it should also be available 24/7. The current age category of viewers fall under this and they do not have the persistence to trust if a film is worth the watch at the theatre. On the other hand, we have a set of loyal theatre-going audiences that purely visit the theatre to have a complete experience that comes as a package while one visits the theatre or a cinema hall. Here we have a set of crowd that would go to dedicatedly spend a more than a few hours to full immerse themselves in the movie watching experience, from picking the right seats to get the best view, paying higher for recliner seats, to ordering their favourite snack to munch on while they take a sensual trip as they watch the film with highly

advanced sound systems that make them a part of the film. This is the essence of cinema that our industry was built on and practically has over millions of fan followings that had legitimately turned into a cult within our country. This is not only fuelled by the industry but rather also by the hardship and toils of those who put their lives dependent on this. A single small budget film requires hundreds of cast, crew and technicians and so in a country where thousands of films release every single year, imagine the number of people that are dependent upon this industry for their livelihoods. To add on, if you take the South Indian Film industry, every actor, actress or even a director is worshiped as their deity. It is so extreme and bizarre to even witness what one would do for their idol and the fact that every individual celebrates the release of every single movie of their deity then it must really reflect as to how Indian cinema and its true essence of theatre-going experiences has become a vital factor in a viewer's life.

Now to conclude, the impact of Covid-19 has been rather been a boon to the OTT industry but has also majorly striped down the long and hard built regime of Indian cinema that was purely dependent upon theatre-going experiences of the audiences. As much as we must welcome newer technological advancements to this ever growing industry of cinema in India, it is necessary to understand that this would have a drastic impact on the overall productions and quality of films that will come out in the near future. Producers are backing out from the industry due to the lack of common ground between OTT platforms and the producer's terms. The OTT platforms are more reliant on self-profits and do not see the craftsmanship that is being put behind these films. With the audiences also demanding same day film releases on both OTT platforms as well as the theatres, the gap between profit making and breakeven is becoming non-existent for filmmakers. Hence, leading them to leave the industry behind in order to find better and sustainable investments. Having only a wide range of OTT originals would kill the creative space that the industry once believed in, making filmmakers a vital component in this scenario. So, finding a common ground and building an environment where co-existence with mutual benefits, respect and understanding amongst filmmakers and OTT platforms are highly recommended else the industry being tarnished is most likely on the brink. While, OTT and theatre-going audiences have their own choices in the current age, there is likewise an impact in the future footfalls of theatres/cinema halls as this becoming to cater a niche market. Catering to a smaller set of market when compared to the pre-pandemic environment, actually would lead to the closing of many theatres in the near future. However, there might or might not be increase in the amount of theatre-going audience as everything relies upon the type of films that will come out in the near future along with some cost cutting resolutions by theatre owners which could potentially change the mind-set of the watchers who are still in predicament about this. Further scope for enhancement of the study can be done as the current study is mostly related to specific audience which unfortunately does not include people from film industry or entertainment industry. Therefore, the impact of pandemic on cinema industry can be well understood. There is definitely a huge scope of enhancement of the content and the study.

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