THE FACTORS EFFECTING SHIFT OF INDIAN CUSTOMERS FROM TV SERIES TO WEB SERIES- THE FUTURE OF OTT SERVICES IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT
The study investigates what factors made Indian consumers to shift towards web series from TV series. It also discussed the future of OTT services in India and gives an idea about India's acceptance of web series as a primary video consumption platform. This study was conducted before the lockdown period and does not have its effects on its result. It gives answers to several questions like OTT's capability of replacing Televisions in India. The study will also contribute to marketers in getting connected with the consumers promoting the OTT services. The study was executed by using quantitative methodology of research. Using the questionnaire research method, a survey was conducted to a target group of 120 people from all over India irrespective of gender, age and place of stay. Their responses are carefully analysed and interpreted followed by a conclusion.

KEYWORDS- *OTT- Over the top Services, Media, Subscriptions, Piracy, webseries*

INTRODUCTION

We are living in the Internet world. Everything is possible with the help of Internet and mobile gazettes. Peoples are more addicted to Internet and Mobile gazettes.

Over-The-Top (OTT) content is becoming a big buzzword in today's technology and systems enabled environment. In this digital era, Over the Top (OTT) content has emerged among millennial as the new standalone digital multi-media platform where multi-cable or direct broadcast satellite television do not distribute or control content, leading to media and consumer autonomy of consumption. Viewers will now have complete autonomy in terms of choosing their own content and pricing, keeping in mind the exact type and amount of content they want to view. Another major trend emerging in television content viewing is the emergence of OTT platforms by individual media houses. This trend is primarily fuelled by increase in the number of devices that support these platforms along with tremendous rise in the number of internet and mobile data subscribers. The rise of OTT platforms has also seen growth with the steady but positive increase in the number of people who are wanting and demanding both 'Produced-for-TV' as well as exclusive freshly brewed content on demand anytime of the day, thus making it one of the biggest opportunities in the

video and content sector in the entertainment industry.

Currently, India has more than 11 OTT platforms with the major one's being HotStar by Star Network, VooT by Viacom18, Sony Liv by Sony, Spuul, Netflix, Eros Now, and Hooq. Factors like digitization, reduced mobile data costs, high speed internet, and multiscreen penetration across geographies and classes and fixed line broadband growth, forecast huge potential in the sector of OTT services in India, which is likely to grow manifold in the coming years.

The aim of this research is to understand and analyse the reasons why Indians have a trend to shift towards web series from traditional tv series. It would also find out the realistic situation of India towards accepting web series as a replacement of Television series.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Television series dominated the Indian market as a source of daily Entertainment starting from Hum Log in the early 1980s with many popular hits like Buniyaad, Ramayan, Mahabharat, Shaktimaan, Kyu ki Sash Bhi kabhi bahu thi and many more. The streets remained deserted while those tv series were telecasted in those days with millions of viewers. But we have seen with the emergence of OTT platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Alt Balaji etc web series

have become immensely popular in recent years starting from 2015 onwards.

So here the objectives of my study are: -

- To find the reasons for the popularity of web series
- To find what Indians are preferring Web series or TV series
- To explore the factors that made Indian Consumers to shift towards web series from TV series
- The future of Over the Top(OTT) services in India
- To learn the limitations of web series to reach the total audience of India
- To discuss effective Marketing and Promotional strategies of the web series

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In India, the digital revolution in India is largely driven by smart phone penetration, the roll out of 4G, reducing data costs and thereby increasing time spent on mobile phones. Digital advertising is thus expected grow at a faster clip as against the traditional media over the next three years.

An increase in the usage of smartphones in India has stirred a new era of video consumption on the personal media device. The penetration of smartphones in India is projected to grow to 520mn by 2020 and broadband penetration will increase from 14% currently to 40% in 2020. (Ernst & Young, 2016). This rise will be instrumental in a drastic shift of media consumption from traditional to digital. There has been a decline in the percentage of Indian Consumers who prefer watching shows on TV from 47% to 10% over the last one year. (Accenture, 2015).

The global mobile traffic is expected to increase nearly sevenfold from 2016 to 2021. As per the data available till February 2017, mobile devices accounted for 49.74% of web page views worldwide with Asia and Africa leading the pack. (Statista).In India, 59% consumers watch advertisements in digital media than TV commercials.(Deloitte, 2017). The share of digital advertising in India is projected to double in the next 3 years from 12% currently to 24% in 2020. As per the data available till January 2017, mobile devices accounted for 79% of web page views in India. (Statista). Internet access is mainstreaming among Indian consumers and the use of mobile is intensifying. More people spend more time online using a variety of digital tools and sites for content consumption. India at present is the third biggest country in terms of internet users in the world with as many as 121 million Indians accessing internet. There has been 25% growth in Indian internet users over a year. 59% of the Indians access the internet via their mobiles. The average time spent

on social media is 3 hours and 70% of Internet users watch online videos. (Statista). An average mobile web user in India consumers 6.2 hours of media daily which includes102 minutes of mobile media and 79 minutes of online media consumption. Social media and entertainment including both music and video. 21 % of the total time is spent by youth on audio and video entertainment. (Deloitte, 2017).

Among the Social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter account for 47% and 42% of overall videos watched online. The remaining 11% belong to OTT services like Hotstar, Netflix, Amazon Prime video, Jio TV and VOOT. There are 24 million OTT users in India. According to a report on digital advertising by Dentsu Aegis Network, the Indian digital advertising industry, currently pegged at around Rs 8,202 crore, is slated to see a growth at 32% CAGR to reach Rs 18,986 crore by 2020. The report also forecasts that digital media spends, currently contributing 15% of the total advertising pie, will reach 24% of the entire market by 2020 according to an EY report, 'Digital Opportunity: India Media and Entertainment.' Also, the digital video market is expected to be worth Rs 160 crore by 2022, according to Media Partners Asia. This shows the possible growth potential of brand placement on various digital platform including web series. Currently, the share of in digital is less than 5% of the total digital ad spends in India.

According to Kureshi (2010) product placement research in traditional media like television and film is decreasing as product placements appear in newer media like computer, video, digital, online, and simulation games. Earlier examples of product placement were more focused on the mediums of film and television earlier and now on world web platforms. García-Pujadas (2010) states that are a tool of brands to connect and relate with different publics.

But is web series the future of entertainment in India? According to outlook India the projected numbers definitely point in that ¬direction. India is set to be among the world's top 10 OTT video markets by 2020 with revenue of around Rs 5,595 crore. And there are big names such as America's Netflix and Amazon Prime Video, production houses like Balaji Telefilms's ALTBalaji and Eros Now, along with broadcast networks like Star India's Hotstar and Sony Entertainment Television's SonyLIV. In 2017, Erricson Consumer Lab predicted that by 2020, about 50 per cent of all TV and video viewing would take place on a mobile screen— ¬tablets, smart phones, laptops—an ¬increase of 85 per cent since 2010. Additionally, virtual reality would also become mainstream with one in three consumers becoming a VR user by 2020. Driving this boom will be the young Indian.

Now here we have to see and analyse why Indians are shifting towards web series from

television series. Does India ready to accept digital platforms totally. What are the limitations of Digital platforms to reach mass audience in a country like India where 66% is the rural population. This report would answer to all that questions and give a fair idea of the future of OTT services in India.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted from just before lockdown. The methodology adopted in this research is qualitative in nature. The research used survey in the form of questionnaire to a group of people. The questionnaire was then forwarded to a certain group of people through social media like WhatsApp and Facebook. Their responses are recorded and analysed. In-dept interviews are also conducted in some cases. The requirements of the research was to use laddering technique and understand the root-cause analysis of consuming content in OTT platform. This method is usually helpful in obtaining reasons and causes through an in-depth conversation on current video viewing patterns, behaviours, beliefs, norms, attitudes, and practices that might have influence on their OTT content usage. The tool of qualitative research was a carefully prepared questionnaire consisting of ice breaking, generic and specific questions. The points in the questionnaire helped the interviewer to converge the research to a certain direction. Here deductive research approach is being followed. The findings and analysis justified the research questions and the objectives of this research. The research design used here is conclusive.
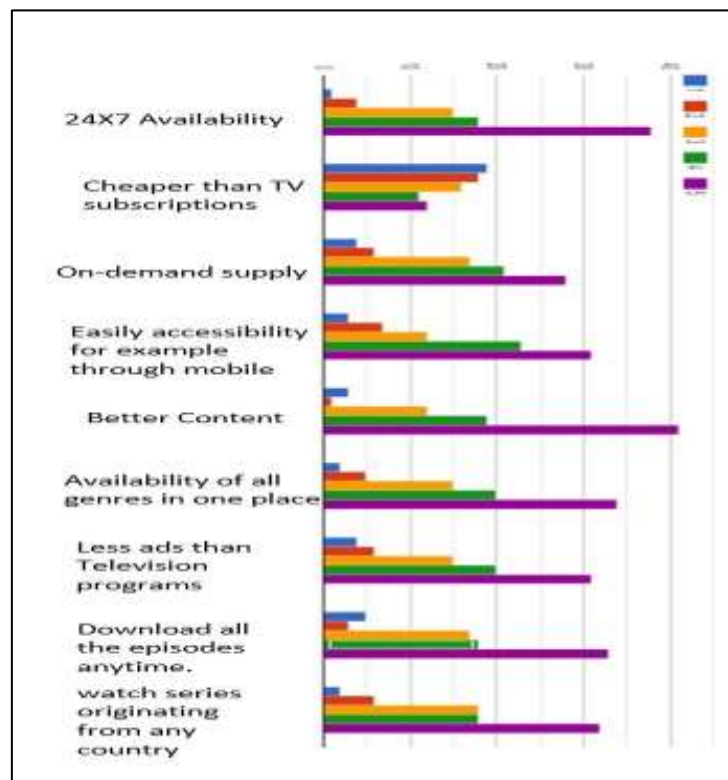
SAMPLE SIZE AND TECHNIQUES

Data is recorded in the form of questionnaire given by the researcher through social media to the target population.

A sample size of 120 people has been taken for data analysis. Those 120 people from all over India residing in cities, towns and villages.Their age group ranges from 18years to above 60 years.
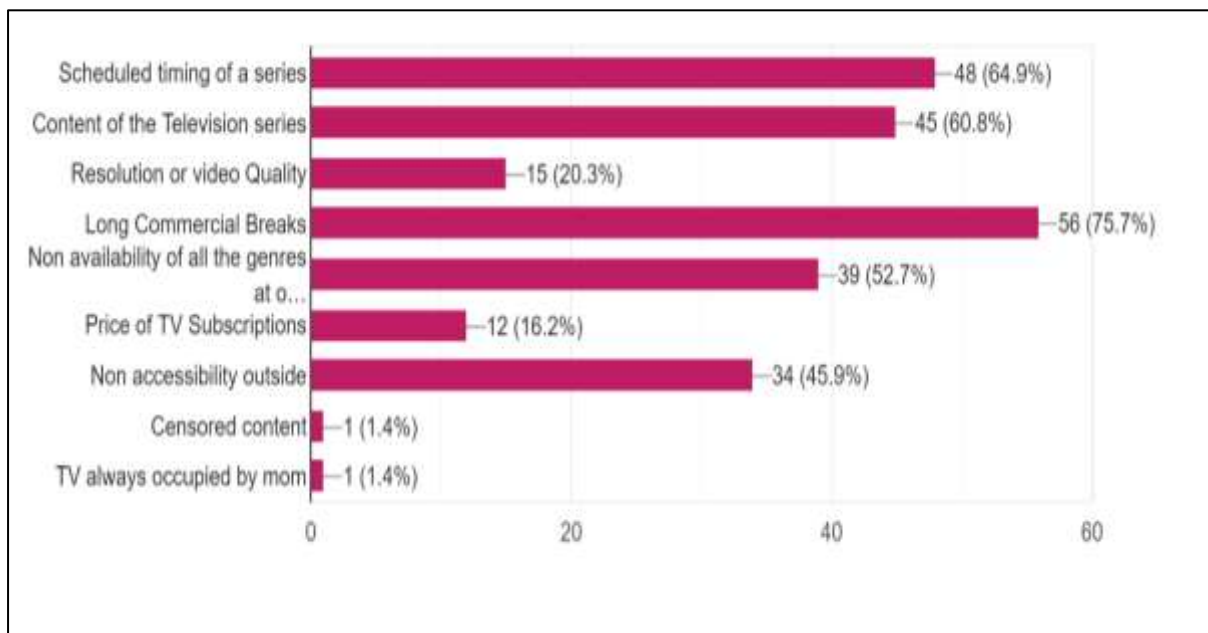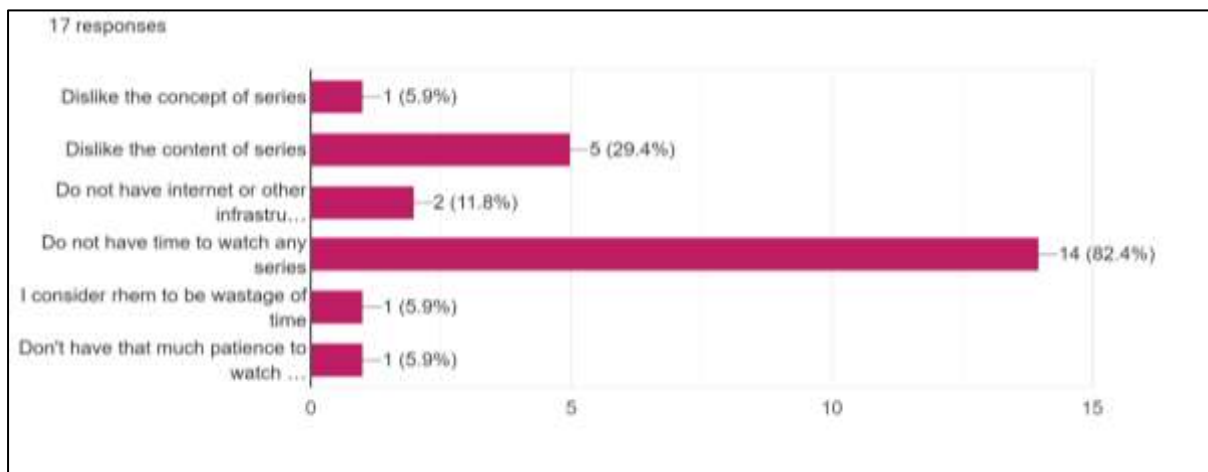
RESULTS

Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3

Analysis of the features of web series which the respondents thinks better than TV series

Fig 4

Interpretation: This the correlation between different features of web series which the respondents believe are greater than that of TV series with their significance values. It is to be noted that mostly all the features like 24X7 availability, on demand supply, easy access from mobile, content, availability, option to download all episode and able to see foreign series are positively correlated to each other. It means that most people give higher ratings to these features. Only the feature cheaper than TV subscriptions has negative correlation with all the other features. It means that people do not believe that web series has cheaper subscription rate than TV series. It is also clear with the above picture of Rotated component matrix that two factors have been formed with the factor analysis (PCA with varimax rotation). All the above features except cheaper option is one component and the cheaper option is another component. Hence, we can say Factor 1 comprises the positive feature of web series and Factor 2 which has an opinion about cheaper subscription is the negative.
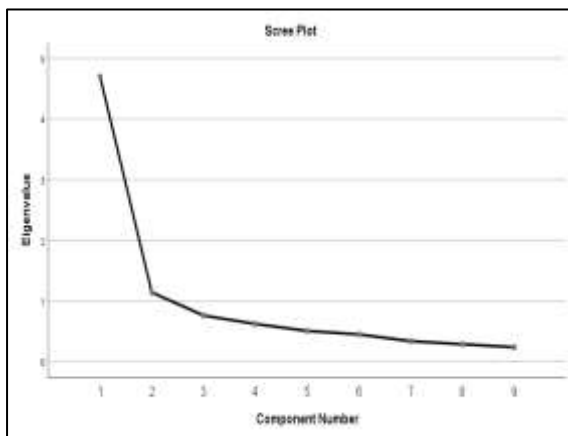

Fig-5

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component	
	1	2
Option_foreign	.847	
Option_availability	.842	
Option_24X7	.823	
Option_content	.782	
Option_Easyaccess	.724	
Option_lessad	.713	
Option_downld	.688	
Option_Ondemand	.649	
Option_Cheaper		−.921

Fig-6

ANALYSIS OF THE REASONS OF STICKING WITH TV SERIES FOR THE CUSTOMERS WHO PREFERS TV SERIES

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.231	44.614	44.614	2.231	44.614	44.614	2.040	40.790	40.790
2	1.470	29.397	74.011	1.470	29.397	74.011	1.661	33.221	74.011
3	.717	14.348	88.360						
4	.582	11.640	100.000						
5	-3.117E-16	-6.233E-15	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Fig 7

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component	
	1	2
Yes_Price	.864	
Yes_Love	-.845	
Yes_Operate	.630	
Yes_content		.870
Yes_Norisk		-.756

Fig 8

Interpretation: The respondents ranks the features according to their likability on TV series. Factor analysis has been done with PCA method. It is seen from the above diagram that cumulative variance became 74% in two components. So two factors are been extracted. The rotated component matrix shows the factor loadings. It is noted that one factor has features like price of the TV subscriptions, easy operations and love to watch in presence of family. Factor 2 has content of the tv series and No risk of online theft. The factor loading of feature price is highest (.864) in Factor 1 and Factor loading

of content (0.87) is highest in Factor 2. Love to watch tv series (-0.845) and no risk of online theft (-0.756) has lowest loadings. It means that customers mostly prefer tv series because of the content and cheaper price of TV subscriptions.

DISCUSSION

After doing analysis and interpreting the results it is been found out that customer's preference of watching a series either through web or television varies with several parameters. Gender and age is one of such factors. It is seen that gender and preference has significant relationship with Males watching mostly web series and females mostly prefers television series. Age is also one of the factors having significance with the preference. Youngsters with age ranges 10-19 years and 20-29 years mostly prefers to watch web series. Senior customers of age 40-60 and above 60 prefers to watch television series. Only 14% of the respondents do not prefer to watch any series. Also, other parameters like location, internet speed and time spend on internet has significant relation on customer's preference. Mostly customers from cities prefers to watch web series. Users with high internet connection and who spends more time in internet prefers web series. Thus, preference of customers greatly relies on internet speed and time spend on internet. Majority of respondents () prefers watching web series followed by people preferring TV series. A small portion of people does not watch any series. Major reason of not watching web series is that they don't have any time to watch.(Refer fig 3) Among the OTT services most people prefer Netflix followed by Amazon prime. Hotstar is most popular Indian OTT platform. From the pricing point of view customers generally look for lower price subscriptions of below Rs 100 per month. This is one of the reasons which people dislike web series in terms of pricing.(Refer fig 6) and is the reason behind sticking towards TV series.(Refer Fig 8) In case of piracy web series are pretty popular. It is found out that 40% of the respondents download and watch web series through piracy for example downloading through torrent. There is a significant relationship between the amount willing to spend by the respondents and their piracy rate. People who are willing to spend less than Rs100 per month for web series subscriptions do not have a legitimate subscription account on OTT and they download web series through torrent sites. When questioned about privacy most users have a neutral view on the fact that they watch web series because it would guarantee more privacy than tv series. But interestingly a major portion of the respondents also believe the fact that web series had more privacy to watch than tv series. It is observed that most users have been watching web series for about 1-2 years proving the booming popularity of web series in these two years. Most people frequently watch web series in a month and words of mouth from friends and online advertisements are the popular promoters of spreading web series names among the viewers. The viewers who prefer web series believe that content of the web series and its 24X7 availability is more advantageous and superior to television series. (Ref Fig 1). The respondents also like the features like on demand supply, ability to download all the episodes at one time features of web series. .(Ref Fig 1) Most people disliked the long commercial breaks in the television series and the schedule timing of television series.(Ref Fig 2). 91% of the people recommend their favourite web series to others giving evidence of effective marketing through words of mouth. The respondents who watches Television series believes that content of television series is better than web series. But they also highlighted the fact that lower price of TV channels also is one of the reasons for their likings towards TV series. A majority of these people also keen to watch web series in smart televisions. People who do not watch any series stated that time is the major constraint for them not to watch any series. But interestingly when they were asked what would they prefer if they watch any series in future majority of them votes for watching web series thus ensuring a better future for OTT platforms.

CONCLUSION

This research is an attempt to study not only the reasons of shifting of Indian customers towards web series but also to discuss about the future of Over the Top (OTT) services in India. The study was conducted over a group of 120 people irrespective of their gender, age and places of stay. The study was conducted before the lockdown so it has no effect on the result. Out of 120 people, 76(63%) prefers web series followed by 27 people preferring television series. Youngsters are very much keen on preferring web series in contrast to middle agers and seniors preferring T.V series.

The superior content of the web series and its 24X7 availability triggered the people to shift towards web series. Also, majority of people like OTT's ability to download all the episodes of web series at a time, on demand supply of series and its accessibility to anywhere. People find these features missing in TV series. The long commercial breaks and scheduled timing of television series are mostly disliked by the people. Majority of people also believes that the content of TV series is far inferior to the web series. These are the factors that mainly motivated the Indian people to shift towards web series.

The promotion of web series mainly takes place through word of mouth and through online advertisements. YouTube trailers are also one of the major players in promotion. More than 90% of the respondents recommend their favourite web series to

others. The marketing strategy of the web series should be to make exciting trailers for YouTube in order to create curiosity among the viewers.

Now coming to the pricing feature of web series. Unfortunately, many Indians cannot afford the subscription rates of OTT services. Majority of people willing to pay less than Rs 100 per month as a subscription fee. Netflix, one of the popular OTT platforms has lowest subscription value of Rs 199 per month. This results in increase of piracy of the web series through torrent which could be a hindrance and alerting situation for the OTT services. On the contrast one of the popular reasons of watching T.V series by a section of people is the cheaper subscription rate of TV channels. So, OTTs must need a proper pricing plan in order to sustain in the competition.

We see that customers from the cities mostly prefers to watch web series. But in the larger picture if we consider the scenario of whole country the picture is different. The number of television viewers in India is 836 million in 2018 in comparison with Hotstar (the leading OTT service in India) having 60 million subscribers. So, there is a huge difference. Yes, web series are gaining popularity over the last few years in comparison to 30 years history of Television but still there is a lot more to go. All of this study has been done before lockdown period. And the lockdown has sparked the viewership of OTTs which is definitely a good sign. The future of OTT services lies mostly in the hands of internet penetration rate which is 25% in rural areas. Considering the fact that most Indian population (65%) resides in rural areas, the OTT services should have to wait for long time to reach there. It is also proved from this study that people from the rural areas are still preferring TV series. In conclusion, with the internet and mobile penetration increasing by the day, the future of OTT looks bright. Although a section of people has started investing a lot of time and money on OTT platforms, it is difficult to say that it will replace television as a primary video consumption platform for the whole country in near future.

Managerial Implications

The majority of Indian customers are price sensitive and a major portion of unemployed youths prefers watching web series through piracy. They are not willing to pay higher subscription rates. So, the OTT companies should make the price reasonable and affordable. Strict regulations should be there in order to protect from piracy. Proper market survey should be there where new businesses would like to happen. Penetrations to rural areas and catering their preferred series is also recommended for the OTT companies. A joint venture with broadband companies with subscription offers is recommended as a tool of promotion.

Scope of Further Research

This research currently only covers the consumer's point of view in terms of the consumption of video on the OTT platforms and Televisions. Also, this research was done before lockdown so definitely perspective of consumers have also changed. Lockdown sparked the viewership of webseries many folds. A lot of research work can be done for example on what type of genre Indian people are liking in this contemporary time- which content should be more acceptable and enjoyable for the Indian people. For that purpose proper segmentation should be done with different clustering methods in order to segment the market and target the customers. Advertising model analysis can be done for sales promotional strategies and different quantitative marketing decision models can be formulated in this OTT sector. Research can also be done to find some innovative and creative ideas for an OTT service to adapt in order to attract customers, finding ways to convert senior people to shift from TV to web, penetration to rural India etc.

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