

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE GROWTH OF OVER-THE-TOP (OTT) PLATFORMS: A CASE STUDY OF KERALA, INDIA

Ms. Elsa Maria Abraham¹, Sr. Roselet John², Dr. Nimisha C Nair³, Dr. Vineeth Mathew⁴

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Holy Cross College, Kerala

²Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Holy Cross College, Kerala

³Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Holy Cross College, Kerala

⁴Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Holy Cross College, Kerala

Abstract - The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the digital media and entertainment scenario and significantly accelerating the growth of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms worldwide. Lockdown and social distancing due the pandemic restricted audiences to their homes and traditional film viewing habits changed towards digital platforms. The study analyses the impact of covid pandemic on the growth of OTT platforms in Kerala, a southern state in India, highlighting an increase in subscribers, content consumption, and the evolution of user preferences. The Covid pandemic has escalated the growth of OTT platforms due to changes in buyer behaviour, including accelerated demand for remote work and entertainment, as well as changes in government regulations and policies. Covid-19 pandemic has had a considerable impact on the growth and popularity of OTT platforms and these platforms will continue to play a major role in the future of media and entertainment. The study examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the growth of major OTT platforms in Kerala and research employs both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyse the change in consumption patterns, buyer preferences, and factors favours during the pandemic period.

Key Words: Covid pandemic, OTT (Over-The-Top) platforms, Consumer behaviour, Digital content, pandemic effects, Subscription growth, Digital transformation.

INTRODUCTION

The OTT platforms are digital media services which delivers contents directly to customer over the internet. The traditional providers of such content, such as cable, radio, satellite television channels, are passed over by several OTT platforms. It is also been extended mobile phones, which bill all communications as data, preventing monopolistic competition. OTT also refers to a new generation of television networks that offer live streams of channels over the public internet rather than a closed private network of equipment like set top boxes. The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly transformed various sectors inside the digital and entertainment industry and resulted in one of the most major transformations. As lockdowns and social distancing were implemented worldwide, conventional forms of entertainment, such as

watching movies in theater and live events, faced unique challenges. In this perspective, Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms sprung up as an essential source of entertainment, by providing people with access to a vast variety of content from the comfort of their homes in the pandemic period. While considering the growth of OTT platforms, the revenue generated these media is expected to reach 158.84 billion dollars by 2024 which is more than twice the 67.8 billion in 2018. In the pre pandemic period of eight years (2010-2018), OTT media has marked a significant growth in revenues from 6.1 billion dollars in 2010-11 to ten times more than in 2018. Currently, the OTT entertainment platforms are expanding greatly because the technology has become a dominant medium for video consumption rather than usual pay channels and traditional broadcast services. COVID-19 become a stimulus for the growth of OTT platforms, restructuring the competitive environment of the media and entertainment industry to a great extent.

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

The insights from previous studies offer an exhaustive understanding of the factors driving OTT adoption and provide strategic directions for industry stakeholders to thrive in a post pandemic world. User friendliness and content richness as the key drivers of success for OTT platforms and these also underline the growth of smartphone usage have become crucial to the growth of OTT platforms during the pandemic time. Research shows that even though the pandemic has boost the growth of OTT platforms worldwide, real success will be achieved only when the difficulties are solved with and new approaches are adapted to serve the ever-changing digital media network.

OBJECTIVE

To analyse the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the growth of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms in the state of Kerala, focusing on how the pandemic has influenced consumer behaviour and patterns of content consumption in digital environment.

METHODOLOGY

Conduct an extensive review of existing research on OTT platforms, COVID-19's impact on media consumption, and related topics. The study employed a mixed methods research design by incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a broad understanding of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the growth of OTT platforms. Primary data collected using a well-designed structured questionnaire among the OTT users, aiming to collect the details about their usage patterns, preferences, and experiences during the pandemic. Existing studies, industry reports, academic journals, and credible online publications are used for the collection of secondary data. This data will help to support the primary level findings and provide additional data to support the study findings. A stratified random sampling method applied to select and fix the representative sample for the study. The population will be divided into strata based on key demographic variables such as age, gender, and occupation. From each stratum, samples are randomly selected. The sample size will be fixed at 300 participants to provide a sound and statistically significant dataset. To analyses and interpret impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the growth of major OTT platforms, basic statistical tools, like average, mean and central tendencies were used.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

The following section discusses about the survey data collected to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the usage and growth of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms in Kerala. The findings from the survey not only highlight the impact of pandemic on the growth of OTT platforms but also delve into customer satisfaction, preference pattern, and also to the transformation of viewing behaviour driven by unexpected global situations.

| | |
|--|--|
| Age | Based on the data, the age distribution of respondents indicates that a significant majority (70%) fall within the 20-30 years age group, which points out that, young people are the primary users of OTT platforms because they are more inclined to adopt new digital technologies. |
| Awareness and Subscription to OTT Platforms | 100% of the respondents are aware of OTT platforms and also subscribers which demonstrating the larger acceptance and integration of OTT platforms into entertainment life. Majority of them came know about the OTT platforms during the pandemic time. |

| | |
|--|---|
| Preferred OTT Platforms | During the pandemic period, Netflix was as the most preferred OTT platforms (45%) among the respondents and followed by Amazon Prime (20%), Disney+ Hotstar (15%), Zee5 (15%), and others (5%). This preference highlights the dominance of international platforms in the local market, possibly due to their vast content libraries and high-quality original productions. |
| Usage Patterns of OTT Platforms | The highest usage frequency is on a weekly basis (33.3%), followed by monthly (30%), daily (21.7%), and yearly (15%). This suggests that while OTT platforms are a regular part of life for many users during the time of covid 19. The most watched content on OTT platforms at this time was movies (60%) and this indicates that movies remain the primary driver for OTT consumption along with sports (23%). |
| Customer Preference | A majority of respondents (56.7%) subscribe to OTT platforms, highlighting the convenience and flexibility offered by these services during the pandemic. |
| Time Spent on OTT Platforms | A Majority of 58.4% spending 1-3 hours, 35% less than an hour, and 6.6% more than three hours daily. This indicates that while OTT platforms are a significant part of their daily routines, |

CONCLUSIONS

The study provides a comprehensive analysis of the OTT platform usage patterns, preferences, and challenges among users in Kerala. The findings highlight the dominance of youth as the primary consumers in state for OTT platforms with high awareness and subscription rates due to the significant influence of the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Along with that, identified challenges and suggestions can help OTT service providers to modify their services to a better user needs and satisfaction. To conclude that, the experience-based findings show a positive and negative impact on OTT platforms, that they are convenient to use and other case the people lack the big screen experience too. It can be unquestionably stated that the consumption of OTT platforms has increased considerably as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

REFERENCES

➤ Matrix, S. (2014). The Netflix effect: Teens binge watching, and on-demand digital media trends. The

Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures, 6(1), 119-136.
www.doi.org/10.3138/jeunesse.6.1.119.

- Bharsar, R. (2018). The burgeoning digital media consumption: A challenge for traditional television and advertising industries. *Amity Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, 6(2), 56-68.
www.doi.org/10.1002/ajmcs/20180602.
- Sing, P. (2019). New media as a change agent of Indian television and cinema. *Journal of Content, Community, and Communication*, 10(2), 91-104.
www.doi.org/10.4172/jccc.20191002.
- Dasgupta, S., & Grover, P. (2019). Understanding adoption factors of over-the-top video services among millennial consumers. *International Journal of Computer Engineering and Technology*, 10(3), 88-97.
www.doi.org/10.34218/ijcet.10.3.2019.88.
- Patel, M. K. (2020). OTT viewership in lockdown and viewers' dynamic watching experience. *International Journal on Transformations of Media, Journalism, and Mass Communication*, 8(1), 110-125.
www.doi.org/10.3335/ijtmjmc.2020.01.110.
- Gangwar, V. P., Sudhagoni, V. S., Adepu, N., & Bellamkonda, S. T. (2020). Profiles and preferences of OTT users in Indian perspective. *European Journal of Molecular and Clinical Medicine*, 7(7), 580-592.
www.doi.org/10.5159/ejmcm.20200707.
- Tarafdar, T. (2021). On consumers' perception towards over-the-top platforms with special preference of Guwahati city. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Commerce, Management and Social Science*, 9(4), 200-215. www.doi.org/10.5100/ijarcms.20210904.
- Deloitte.(2017).Digital media: Rise of on demand, <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/in/Documents/technology-media-telecommunications/in-tmt-rise-of-on-demand-content.pdf> on 14.11.24.
- Moochhala, Q. (2018). The future of online over-the-top entertainment services in India,https://actionesque.com/research-papers_pdf/QM-OTT-future-2018.pdf on 14.11.24.