
A Comparative Analysis Of The Utilization Of Over-The-Top Platforms Among College Students In Coimbatore Before And After The COVID-19 Epidemic.

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ABSTRACT

Web series have emerged as a popular alternative to traditional television, becoming a key part of India's rapidly expanding entertainment industry. Subscription-based e-commerce platforms like Disney+ Hotstar, Amazon Prime, Netflix, and Sun NXT have played a pivotal role in boosting web series production across the country. However, the creative freedom afforded by these OTT platforms has sparked debates over their impact on traditional Indian cultural values. Notably, young adults are the primary audience for this content, and the variety of genres offered on over-the-top platforms both educates and potentially negatively influences this demographic. Online material consumption was already high before the COVID-19 epidemic, but it was much higher during the lockdowns. When it comes to watching films and web series on over-the-top platforms, there has been a significant uptick. This study aims to explore the rising curiosity and subscription rates for OTT platforms, comparing data from 2020 and 2023. Using a mixed-method approach, including quantitative and qualitative analyses, and incorporating secondary data from the three years (2020-2023), the research provides a comprehensive view of this trend. The findings highlight a significant growth in OTT subscriptions and the positive impact of literacy-related content on young adults in the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu, India.

Keywords: GenZ, Usage level, Online streaming, Over-the-top Platform, Comparison study.

1. Introduction:

1.1. New platform for entertainment

The rapid expansion of smart devices and internet networks has altered how people consume information and sparked the emergence of several over-the-top (OTT) platforms. Web series represent an emerging entertainment platform in the 21st century. The digital natives and the development of the Internet provided the space for new entertainment forums. Web series are typically shorter than movies and more engaging than TV soap operas. Movies are typically accessed through theatres, resulting in higher costs for middle-class families. On the other hand, TV soap operas are telecasted at specific times, making them inaccessible to those with busy schedules. However, the web series containing OTT platforms nullified these problems with the accessible access facilities. With the low subscription cost, one could benefit from more access to movies. Engagement with web series via online streaming platforms concerning literacy interventions is essential for fostering a critical perspective among viewers regarding online content and its relation to the social environment.

Also, OTT platforms don't influence the viewers' time because the audience can access the technology, and the internet can view this entertainment forum anywhere and anytime. Viewers can allocate their time between

travel, leisure activities, and important events. OTT platforms provide the possibility of stopping whenever needed and continuing from where they left previously, which wasn't possible in TV operas. For the younger audience, web series exhibited a higher level of curiosity and engaging content compared to other forms of entertainment. These were the few reasons why web series are more important than other forms of entertainment. Production of web series and usage of OTT platforms increased in India after the digitalization process, and by that time, the audience's intention toward that platform also increased.

Web series may serve as both instructional and entertaining pieces of media. Traveling worldwide exposes individuals to novel concepts not experienced in their local society, thereby enabling them to acquire knowledge about other cultures. The pro-social themes conveyed by web series will have a beneficial influence on the moral conduct of contemporary young people. Nonetheless, these young people are more likely to draw unfavourable conclusions from these web programs.

Young people often mimic and adjust the behaviour of others to fit their own, as they can easily relate to the content of web series. In 2018, The Hindu online site published a report from the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) detailing a case of 'Netflix addiction' in India. The instance concerns a 26-year-old jobless individual in Bangalore who isolated himself at home and became extensively engrossed in Netflix for six months" (Kulkarni, T., The Hindu article, October 7, 2018).

Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic revolutionized and increased the work-from-home culture and online classes all over India, significantly impacting binge-watching behaviour among young adults. Certainly, prolonged exposure to over-the-top platforms for numerous hours each day may lead to various behavioural changes in today's youth, potentially fostering aggression in their behaviour and thoughts.

1.2. Lockdown and Media consumption change on youngsters

An explosion of internet streaming video services is a direct result of the fast-changing nature of entertainment consumption in the future. Compared to other world nations, India's adoption of streaming services has been tardy. Nonetheless, these online services are now within reach of any demographic because of the proliferation of 4G and, soon, 5G mobile networks, which provide limitless bandwidth. The limited availability of recreational resources in home environments, combined with the simple accessibility and affordability of the internet, may lead to binge-watching behavior on OTT platforms (Umesh and Bose 2020).

The COVID-19 lockdown in India in March 2020 led to the nationwide closure of theaters, leaving other traditional entertainment mediums unable to satisfy the audience's thirst for refreshment. In traditional media, boredom and dry content created a vacuum in the audience's entertainment requirements. The availability of high-speed internet and attractive subscription schemes on Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms attracts the Indian audience, satisfying their thirst for entertainment. In 2020, there was a notable increase of 19% in the number of individuals connected digitally. The Ormax audience report on Over-the-Top platforms states that the number of digitally connected individuals increased from approximately 343 million in March 2020 to over 567 million in March 2023 (Ormax OTT audience report, 2023).

Consequently, the OTT industry in India has become highly competitive among developing countries, with over 40 participants, inclusive of various content providers. The proportion of conventional media is gradually diminishing due to heightened digital consumption. While advertising is now the primary driver of India's OTT income, subscription revenues are growing more rapidly. People who are digital natives have a keen interest in using the OTT platform.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly accelerated the Indian SVOD market, increasing to nearly 62 million by the end of 2020, a doubling from 32 million at the end of 2019." (Omdia report on OTT conception, 2021). According to a Landon-based Omdia research agency report, "Disney+Hotstar lead the subscription video on demand (SVOD) market with a 41% share. "Eros Now" comes in second with a 24% share, followed by Amazon Prime Video (9%) and Netflix (7%). ZEE holds a market share of 5.4 % (Exchange4media, 2023).

Mudra Institute of Communications Ahmedabad, also known as MICA's Centre for Media and Entertainment Studies (CMES), prepared the report, which analysed data between April and March 2020 across 26 OTT platforms, such as video, music, and gaming. As per the report, overall, India stood second highest with 8.43 hours of video consumption per week, after the United States, which had 8.55 hours per week. For all the OTT platforms, the consumption of content was the highest by men, the report said. The report, titled MICA Report 2023, was published by The Hindu Business Line in 2023. Confederation of Indian Industry and Boston Consulting Group (CII-BCG) conducted a study in 2021 and released a report named "Blockbuster Script for a

New Decade, which states that by the end of 2021, “India had 70–80 million paid OTT platform customers, an increase from 14 million in 2018 and barely 0.5 million in 2014–15. The sector has evolved from an initial phase to a more developed stage over the past three to four years (CII-BCG report, 2021, Business Today, 2023).

The rise in OTT consumption in India has a strong correlation with this. Not only has it increased subscriptions, but it has also taken Indian content worldwide. According to the research, two out of every three viewers (67%) of series like Sacred Games were from outside India (CII-BCG report, 2021). Also, subscription-based streaming services' investment in original content has seen a significant rise of 30–40%, escalating from a range of 180–200 million dollars in 2017 to an impressive 600–700 million dollars by 2021 (CII-BCG report, 2021). Other than this, the number of hours audiences spend viewing content on OTT platforms has surged by “60-70%, rising from 500-600 hours in 2018 to an impressive 2,400-2,600 hours in 2021. Following the initial lockdown in 2020, approximately 50–55% of all direct-to-OTT film releases have comprised regional titles. Streaming has opened new pathways for exhibition and expanded the array of choices accessible to producers, artists, and technicians (CII-BCG report, 2021).

By 2030, projections indicate that subscription video-on-demand (SVOD) will account for 60% of over-the-top (OTT) revenues. The revenue generated from SVOD has experienced a significant increase in recent years and is anticipated to surpass advertising-based video-on-demand (AVOD) shortly. The big rise in subscriptions is due to a number of strategic initiatives, such as new pricing and bundling strategies, which are all supported by big investments in content (CII-BCG report, 2021).

1.3. Over the top (OTT), the future of entertainment

Yiyi Yin (2016) conducted a study on Chinese web series development and strategy analysis, specifically focusing on the Go Princess Go case study. Yiyi Yin conducted this study using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. We employed convenience samples for the quantitative questionnaire research, which is a descriptive method. For qualitative research, The researcher has conducted a thorough interview with the Go Princess Go purposive sample team. This study concluded that marketing strategies help the future of web series and online media by increasing their viewership. Jennifer M. Kang (2017) published an article in *Another Platform for Television*. The article highlights the emergence of web dramas as a digital culture in South Korea. This article's primary focus is on 29 web dramas that Korea released online between 2013 and 2014. The audience's interest in Korea led to a bias towards traditional TV-based dramas. According to this research, web dramas provide space for new creators. The web series' target audience was primarily young people aged 20–30. Additionally, they use their mobile devices to watch web series for more than a few hours daily. However, web dramas can operate independently because the mobile phone serves as the audience's primary medium. Therefore, web dramas have the potential to become a new digital platform, replacing television.

David C. Oh and Leilani Nishime (2018) conducted a study titled *Imagining the Postnational Television Fan: Counter-Flows and Hybrid Ambivalence in the Drama World*. This article mainly focused on the “Drama World” web drama released in 2016 through Viki.com and Netflix. In *Drama World*, the female lead, a white woman, virtually entered the web drama and travelled through it as if she were a character. Content from non-Western nations consistently reflected the influence of Western content. This article investigated hybrid connections and Western nations' dominance in the realm of web dramas. Whitney Monaghan's 2017 study, “Initiating from Now and the web series to television crossover: An online revolution?” The primary focus of this article was the LGBTQ+ community. Between 2014 and 2016, the Australian web series 'Starting From... Now streaming' became an online sensation. People described it as a drama that revolved around lesbian love. The traditional media did not accept lesbian-based queer content, but the online platform provided colossal space, and the response from the audience to this series was high. Online platforms emerged as an alternative medium to television. Recently, the impact of online audience responses has outperformed that of television.

Aymar Jean Christian (2011) published *Fandom as an Industrial Response: Producing Identity in an Independent Web Series*. In this article, the researcher pointed out that web series fans and anti-fans (film fans) have different minds and approaches to society. The mainstream places minimal importance on women. However, with the advent of the online revolution, content emerged that deviated from the mainstream. The distribution and production of mainstream content was complex, and its reach was not uniform for everyone. Online streaming revolutionized the industry by providing new players with significantly more opportunities than legacy players, and these players are now actively involved in producing numerous new genres and concepts through web series.

In their 1990 study, Kuo-Yi Wu highlighted how TV influences Taiwanese society's perceptions of gender roles, violence, criminal activity, aging, and interpersonal interactions. Parenting and other social factors influence an individual's perception of sex roles and their TV viewing habits. Most people don't mind if their parents watch an excessive amount of Chinese or American TV, especially women and people with better family education levels. In general, they prefer foreign shows over native content. Researchers find a consistent and significant relationship between weekday viewing and a more mistrustful worldview. Another researcher, Kang (1998), conducted a study about the television's influence on cultural and societal values among Japanese students. This study seeks to delineate potential elaborations of the cultivation hypothesis and provide pertinent evidence from a sample of Japanese students. The focused hypothesis of the study posits that increased television viewing correlates with a shift in Japanese students' attitudes regarding certain cultural and social norms, specifically concerning gender roles, relationships within families, and the perceived reality presented by television. The study's findings reveal significant differences between the portrayal of males and females regarding conventional gender roles and values.

1.4. Impact of OTT - Before and after the pandemic

Ronoh and Mugeni (2019) reveal “that various components offered by OTT services, such as convenience, preference, flexibility, and cost-benefit, affect TV providers. Out of this, more than 70 % of the users were students.” Before the lockdown, there were inactive subscribers who did not engage with OTT platforms. However, the lockdown increased usage among these inactive users due to the availability of free time. “The lockdown resulted in a shift in consumer preference from television to OTT platforms, attributed to the convenience and quality of content offered” (Divya Madnani, 2020).

Globalization provided the space for the audience to watch and explore global content, which significantly impacted the Indian entertainment industries to create an alternative form of entertainment—considering the importance and the popularity of web series after the pandemic, which created a scope for analysing the audience interest to subscribe to the OTT platform. In 2020, nearly 29 % of Coimbatore's youth subscribed to any of the OTT platforms; factors such as low prices, FOMO (fear of missing out), and pandemic boredom could potentially increase the audience's interest in these platforms. To determine this, the researcher compared the data collected in 2020 (before the pandemic) related to web series viewing and OTT usage with the data collected after the pandemic (2023).

2. Objectives of the study

- To analyse the factors influencing young Indian audiences to watch web series.
- To know about the platform they prefer for watching the web series.
- To know the craze for Indian-origin web series among youngsters.
- To understand the change in the subscription level of the OTT platform from before and after the pandemic.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data analysis and interpretation of the finding

Sample distribution regarding age

This research study uses an explanatory research design (mixed method approach). The researcher has adopted a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. Based on the objectives developed a closed-ended questionnaire using different scales to understand the audience's cultural beliefs. A comparative table in Fig. 3.1 presents the sample distribution of data related to the age categories of 120 respondents, collected through a paper survey in April 2020. Additionally, the researcher has tabulated data from a Google Forms survey in 2023, including an additional age category (26-30), to facilitate the age category comparison. Because both surveys have a three-year time difference, 25-year-old respondents in 2020 might be 28 years old in 2023. This study collected the data using the purposive random sampling method.

Age of the respondents (Fig. 3.1)								
	Frequency		Percent		Valid Percent		Cumulative Percent	
	Before pandemic	After pandemic	Before pandemic	After pandemic	Before pandemic	After pandemic	Before pandemic	After pandemic
18 - 21	37	6	30.8	10.3	30.8	10.3	30.8	10.3
22 - 25	83	41	69.2	70.7	69.2	70.7	100.0	81.0
26 - 30	-	11	-	19.0	-	19.0	-	100.0
Total	120	58	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0		

3.2. Reliability Test

The researcher conducted a reliability test, or pilot test, for the quantitative research, comparing the data from 57 questionnaires collected before the pandemic with the updated data from 30 respondents after the pandemic in SPSS.

	N		%		Cronbach's Alpha		N of Items	
	Before pandemic	After pandemic	Before pandemic	After pandemic	Before pandemic	After pandemic	Before pandemic	After pandemic
Valid	57	30	100.0	100.0	.847	.741	25	81
Excluded	0	0	0.0	0.0				
Total	57	30	100.0	100.0				

Fig. 3.2

The test deemed data with a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.7 to 0.9 to be credible. For the pre-pandemic study, the pristine value is 0.847. Similarly, Fig. 3.2 yielded a Cronbach alpha value of 0.741 for the post-pandemic survey, indicating the reliability of both research projects.

Fig 3.3: Cross-tabulation representing 'Would you like to watch web series' and gender and age of the respondents. (After pandemic Data)

	Age			Total	Gender		Total
	18 - 21	22 - 25	26 - 30		Male	Female	
Very Often	0	8	2	10	8	2	10
Often	3	17	6	26	19	7	26
Rarely	3	16	3	22	13	9	22
Total	6	41	11	58	41	18	58

Fig. 3.3

One respondent, out of 59 who filled out the Google form, stated that they had never watched the web series, thereby excluding it from the study. Out of the 59 respondents, 19 males and 7 females frequently watched the web series. More than 40 respondents aged 22 to 25 watched the web series, which was higher than other age group categories. Out of 120 pre-pandemic respondents, 83 aged 22 to 25 said they regularly watched the web series. This shows that the web series's primary audience was between the ages of 22 and 25. Due to their time constraints and FOMO tendencies, this age group regularly watches web series and utilizes OTT services.

Fig. 3.4 shows the web series genres the audience mostly preferred to watch. The researcher did not allow respondents to provide multiple answers to this question in the Before-pandemic questionnaire, unlike the After-pandemic questionnaire. Therefore, respondents indicated their most preferred genre for this particular question. In the After the Pandemic survey, 79.3 % of respondents stated that the thriller genre was their most preferred genre. This was a significant shift from the pre-pandemic period. The second most popular genre, comedy, garnered 67.2 % of the audience, closely followed by science fiction, which garnered 63.8 %. Besides this, the horror and animation genre got a 39.7 % response.

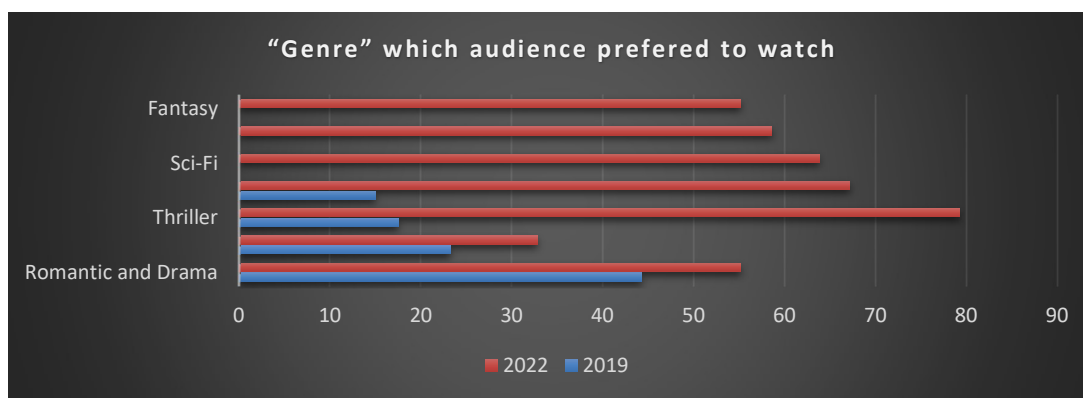


Fig. 3.4

3.3. Web series watching duration – in a week

According to the pre-pandemic data, out of 120 respondents, 42.5 % watched the web series for around 1-5 hours a week, and 25 % watched it for 5-10 hours. The Coimbatore youngsters provided a similar response, indicating that 44.8 % of respondents watched the web series for 1-5 hours on weekdays, while 12 % binge-watched the series for more than 21 hours a week. 5.2 % of binge-watchers watch the web series for over 5 hours daily. Thirty-one % of the respondents watch the web series for 2 to 5 hours daily. On weekends like Saturday and Sunday, 41.4 % of respondents say they watch the web series for 6 to 10 hours, and 20.7 % spend 2 to 3 hours watching it. Apart from this, 6.8 % of binge-watchers spent more than 10 hours watching the web series on the weekends.

Fig 3.5. Comparative tabulation for the preferred duration of a single episode.

Before pandemic Responds	Frequency	Percentage	After pandemic Responds	Frequency	Percentage
5 - 10 minutes	36	30	11 - 20 minutes	13	22.4
10 - 30 minutes	66	55	21 - 30 minutes	20	34.5
30 - 60 minutes	11	9.2	31 - 40 minutes	19	32.8
>60 minutes	1	0.8	41 – 50 minutes	11	19.0
TOTAL	120	100	51 – 60 minutes	9	15.5
			>60 minutes	1	1.7

Fig. 3.5

According to Fig. 3.5, which shows the data collected before the pandemic, 55% of the respondents preferred a duration of 10–30 minutes, followed by 30% who preferred duration of 5–10 minutes, and 5% who preferred duration less than 5 minutes. Similarly, after the pandemic, more than 56 % of Coimbatore youngsters preferred a single episode duration of 11 to 30 minutes, followed by 32.8 % of the respondents who preferred 31 to 40 minute duration.

3.4. Preferable language of Web series content.

Before pandemic Responds (Based on Country)	Frequency	Percentage (Out of 120 samples)	After pandemic Responds (Based on Language)	Frequency	Percentage (Out of 58 samples)
Western	66	55.0	English	53	91.4
Korean	30	25.0	Spanish	18	31.0
Japanese	23	19.2	Korean	24	41.4
Chinese	11	9.2	Japanese	13	22.4
Indian	120	100.0	Chinese	6	10.3

		Tamil	38	65.5
		Malayalam	13	22.4
		Hindi	15	25.9

Fig. 3.6

Fig. 3.6 contains data collected by the researcher prior to the pandemic regarding preferred country web series content. This suggests that 55 % of the respondents favour web series from Western countries, with 25 % expressing a preference for Korean web series. Apart from that, 19.2 % of Coimbatore youngsters prefer Japanese. Over the course of three years, the preference of Coimbatore youngsters for watching web series with English content has rapidly increased to 91.4 %. 41.4 % expressed a preference for watching Korean web series. The preference for watching Japanese web series increased slightly to 22.4 %. In the Indian regional language, 65.5 % of respondents said they prefer to watch Tamil web series, followed by 25.9 % of respondents who prefer Hindi language web series.

For a better experience and understanding of the feelings and emotions of the other language web series, 46.6 % of the youngsters prefer the original sound. Because of the language barrier, 8.6 % of the respondents prefer the dubbed content of the web series. According to their needs, 44.8 % of people prefer to watch web series in both formats. Sixty-nine % of the respondents said that they watch the web series through the OTT platforms, and most of the respondents from the 22 to 25 age group were subscribers to the OTT platforms. This was much higher than the before-pandemic data, where 47.5 % of the Coimbatore youngsters watched the web series through OTT platforms.

3.5. Access to the OTT platform

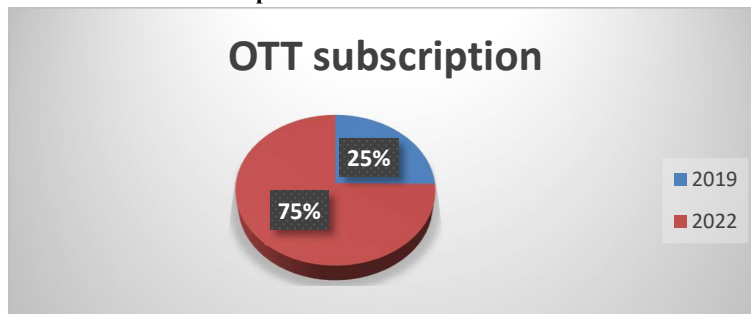


Fig. 3.7

The Fig. 3.7 pie chart clearly shows the massive increase in Coimbatore youngsters' intention to subscribe to the OTT platform within three years. The COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown tribble the number of subscriptions to the OTT platform, making it an emerging new form of entertainment medium for the future.

3.6. OTT platforms and their subscription level

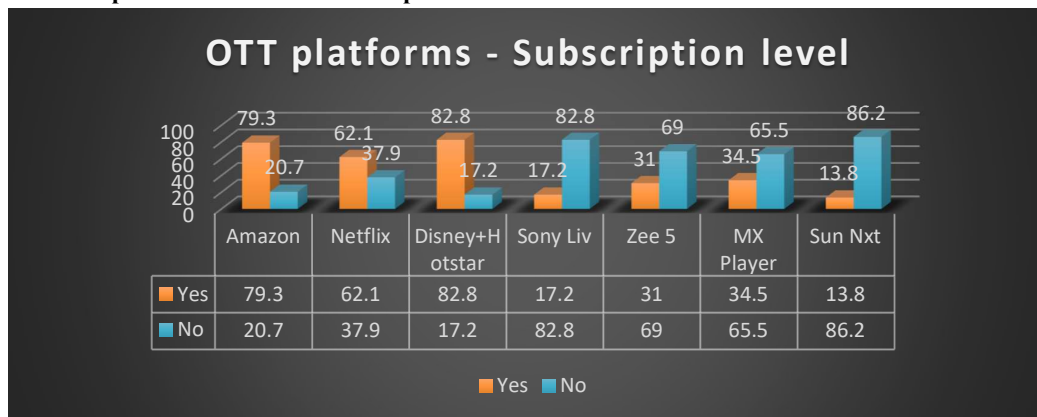


Fig. 3.8

Disney+Hotstar emerged as the most popular platform, surpassing YouTube in terms of consumption. Amazon Prime Video and Netflix, two streaming giants, populated and accumulated the most subscriptions in

India. Creators are increasingly focusing on producing localized content to capitalize on audience trends. (MICA report, 2021) Similarly, Fig. 3.8 illustrates the popularity of Disney+Hotstar among younger audiences due to the availability of streaming sports shows such as cricket, tennis, and other star network television channel programs. Following this, Amazon Prime garnered more attention among young people than Netflix due to its wide range of regional content accessibility. Regional television streaming conquered Sun networks. The OTT app Sun NXT gained only 13.8 % of the response. Other than this, growing Tamil-based new OTT players like Aha and BS Value gained reasonable attention from the youngsters.

3.7. Qualitative analysis

For the qualitative research, the researcher has opted for focus group interviews to better understand the reactions of binge-watchers to the web series, who engage in more than just watching videos. They absorb and experience the content, which could help to strengthen this study. The researcher selected 60 and 30 respondents as focus groups for the Before-pandemic and After-pandemic periods. The respondents had showed four selected web series: As I'm Suffering from Kaadhala (Tamil), Sacred Games (Hindi), Money Heist (Spanish), and Sex Education (English). Further, the researcher analysed the respondents' doubts and mood changes, and explained each factor, such as cultural values and thematic concepts, during the preview. Finally, they received the coding sheet for their documentation.

Before the pandemic, among the 60 focus group respondents, 62 % said that the content in the web series partially influenced their cultural beliefs. Following the pandemic, out of 30 respondents, 60 % reported that the global content of the web series partially influenced their cultural beliefs. Subsequently, 18 % of respondents from before the pandemic believed that web series entirely shaped their cultural beliefs, a sentiment that was echoed by 27 % of respondents after the pandemic. Considering the pre-pandemic data, 48 % of respondents perceived the adult content in the web series as essential to the storyline. In the post-pandemic period, this perception increased by 67 %. Twenty % of the respondents in the pre-pandemic period and 18 % of the respondents in the post-pandemic period, respectively, believe that the adult content in the story was unnecessary and that the skin show was done for promotional purposes. The post-pandemic period saw a decrease of 10 % and 7 % in this regard.

According to pre-pandemic data, 73 % of respondents agreed that an incomplete ending in the web series pattern creates a curiosity to wait for the rest of the story. But after the pandemic, around 83 % of the respondents agreed with the above statement. Before the pandemic, nearly 40 % of the respondents had an opinion that web series were more engaging than television soap operas, which decreased by 23 % after the pandemic. However, prior to the pandemic, only 10 % of the respondents believed that web series' bold content outperformed soap operas, a sentiment that grew to 60 % after the pandemic. Before the pandemic, nearly 40 % of the respondents believed that web series wouldn't create any impact on the cultural beliefs of viewers. The post-pandemic data reversed this perception, revealing that 63 % of individuals believe web series positively influence their audience's cultural beliefs.

4. Findings and Discussion:

Following the digitalization, usage and subscription levels of OTT platforms in India increased. Some network service providers such as Jio and Airtel offer a limited period of subscription access to OTT platforms such as Hotstar and Amazon Prime, which can be accessed by recharging to that network. Due to the work-from-home culture and the boredom of lockdown, young people are increasingly using multi-OTT platforms to escape content scarcity, for entertainment purposes, and to escape the stress of the real world. That shows that 29.3 % of employed and business-making respondents from Coimbatore have two OTT platform subscriptions, and 44.8 % have more than 2 OTT platform subscriptions. Only 25.9 % of respondents have less than 2 OTT platform subscriptions; those are the people who access the web series by downloading the content from other sources.

Eighty-one % of respondents used the OTT platform by sharing with friends and family members to minimise the monthly subscription charges. In this context, 51.7 % of respondents shared the cost of an OTT subscription with friends, while 29.3 % shared the cost and usage of OTT platforms with their family members. 62.1 % of the respondents said they used the OTT platform when bored. The work-from-home culture employed most of the respondents, providing them with ample free time and no oversight from higher authorities. In addition, 57.6% had used OTT platforms for one to three years. This demonstrates that the pandemic lockdown has a significant impact on young people subscribing to OTT platforms for entertainment and time-passing

purposes. For over three years, 22.4 respondents subscribed to and used OTT platforms.

Analysing the qualitative data, the finding shows that, in 2020, fifty-three % of the respondents said that four web series from different languages that were presented to them helped to learn different cultures. The same number of focus group participants replicated a similar response in 2023. In 2020, 22% of the respondents felt that the web series' content disrupted the current culture, a sentiment that grew by 27% in 2023. In 2020, 42 % of the respondents stated that they often compare themselves to the characters in the web series when they resembled their personalities. This trend continued in 2023, with more than 43 % of respondents agreeing with this statement. Based on the 2020 data, 33 % of respondents felt that the web series' sexual content disrupts the perception of traditional Indian culture, a sentiment that dropped to 13 % in 2023. Conversely, in 2020, only 20 % believed it wouldn't influence the audience's beliefs, a number that rose to 50 % in 2023.

5. Conclusion

The study's findings clearly show that the usage level of OTT platforms among Coimbatore youth has increased rapidly. The COVID-19 pandemic played a major role in increasing OTT platform usage and subscription patterns. This study shows that, compared to 2020, usage of the OTT platforms in 2023 became 'behaviour' among youngsters. "OTT has experienced solid growth in India, outpacing other entertainment platforms." In-home consumption of OTT streaming services and gaming will increase. Furthermore, digital subscription revenues could increase in terms of OTT video consumption."

According to 2020 data, the increase in binge-watching behaviour among Coimbatore youngsters shows that more than 60 % of them became addicted to the web series for its unique factors like entertainment satisfaction, relaxation during their travel time, and engagement when they feel bored. 82.8 % of youngsters prefer the web series to escape the stressful situation. More than 70 % of youngsters agree that they choose web series because it requires minimum cost compared to other entertainment mediums. More than 90% of the respondents said they frequently use OTT platforms due to the easy accessibility of multi-language web series and the variety of content available on a single platform tailored to their mood.

Eighty-six % of respondents said they preferred the OTT platforms because of their time flexibility and cost efficiency. Nearly 76 % of the respondents felt the OTT platform provides more privacy because its multi-device accessibility feature allows the audience to access the content in their own space and personal time. 67 % of the respondents agree that OTT platforms reduced piracy issues. More than 75 % of the respondents said they use the OTT platforms because they contain the uncensored version of the content.

The production of regional language web series was initiated by the influence and emergence of regional OTT players, as well as existing OTT players. They dubbed the famous web series for the audience's convenience, improving the viewership pattern. That will, in a way, lead to a rapid shift towards commissioning more original content in Hindi and other regional languages. The OTT ecosystem in India is also responding well to creating business opportunities in regional language markets. Further, the researcher has concluded that OTT platforms earned customer loyalty within three years and adapted to the new normal.

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