



A STUDY ON THE CONSUMPTION PATTERN AND VIEWER EXPERIENCE OF OTT PLATFORMS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ERNAKULAM CITY

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ABSTRACT

Over-The-Top (OTT) streaming services distribute online audio-visual content, including music. These platforms don't make use of the typical cable or satellite feeds as traditional television does. Any kind of content can be delivered via the internet and can satisfy the entertainment needs of the viewers. The COVID-19 epidemic increased the level of acceptance for OTT media, even though OTT streaming just became widely used in the last ten years of this century. It evolved into a widely adopted digital trend. Since its debut, OTT has fundamentally altered how consumers access and view content. In this paper, a study is conducted on the consumption of the OTT platforms among viewers and their experience on pricing, usability, and quality of this new generation of digital entertainment. Analysis of the consumption includes determination of the OTT platforms used, time spent on them and their experience.



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1. INTRODUCTION

The OTT (Over-The-Top) media platform is a digital media service delivered directly to audiences over the Internet. OTT platforms revolutionized the world of digital entertainment. Anyone with a stable internet connection and a device like a mobile phone, laptop, tablet, and PC can access these platforms. A larger variety of video content in different forms like movies, web series, documentaries, and sports are available through these platforms.

The OTT allows the viewer to access their favorite video content over time and place constraints.

It provides video on demand. The OTT service providers in India are Disney+Hotstar, Netflix, Amazon Prime, VOOT, and Zee 5. According to a report published by Media Partners Asia (MPA), the Indian OTT streaming video market is currently in its second growth phase with total revenues of \$3 billion in 2022. OTT platforms have captured 7-9% of the entertainment industry's share and revenue. The industry is expanding quickly and consistently with over 40 odd players in all languages. There are currently over 45 million OTT subscribers in India. This figure is expected to reach 50 million by the end of 2023.

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Even though the Covid-19 pandemic boosted the growth of OTT platforms all over the world, it continues even in the post-Covid era. People also adjusted to the new normal. Device flexibility along with convenience made the OTT platform our favorite medium of digital entertainment. During the Covid period, theaters were shut down and people's movements were also blocked, in such a time people are in thirst for new forms of entertainment where the OTT platform opened its arms and welcomed viewers to enjoy the new lights of digital entertainment. It was not over with Covid 19 the viewers were used to the new normal of digital entertainment. The number of viewers who go online for video content has raised well as the time spent on it.

The availability of cheap and quicker internet connectivity changed the lives of Indian spectators and the demand for streaming platforms that provide original video content. Mobile data recharge options available from one day to a longer period and unprecedented growth in broadband connection further enhanced the growth of the OTT platform. The telecom service providers are providing free subscriptions or a subscription at a discounted rate for different OTT platforms along with their mobile plans. Disney Plus Hotstar, Zee5, Amazon Prime, and Voot are offered by telecom service providers. The two giants are catering to each other the customers are also benefited from it. Netflix, Disney Plus Hotstar Amazon Prime, Alt Balaji, Voot, and other web and app-based platforms became so popular in it's all means. The new habit of 'BingeWatching' has been cultivated among the viewers. 'BingeWatching' means a single series with a few episodes have been seen in a single sitting.

In most cases, the first episode of the web series will be free and the rest of them are paid. It is one of the important marketing strategies of OTT platform providers in a way that they are forcing the viewers to subscribe to the OTT platform to watch the remaining episodes. It resulted in the growth of OTT platforms and in network connectivity.

It is expected that the market size for the OTT platform will reach 179.9 billion by 2025 on a global scenario and a 14.3% of compound growth rate is expected for the period.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Different researchers graded India as the highest and most rapidly growing OTT market. The easy availability of worldwide entertainment has been satisfied through these platforms leading to the wider acceptance of OTT platforms. The topic of the research is "a study on the consumption pattern and viewer experience with special reference to Ernakulam city, Kerala. The study will help us to find out the transformation of viewer experience from the traditional mode of entertainment to digital

entertainment. OTT platforms provide viewers with a variety of choices for their entertainment needs

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Objectives are:

1. To identify popular OTT platforms and the content preferences of viewers in OTT platforms.
2. To analyse the customer perception towards the OTT platform
3. To analyse the factors affecting/influencing the use of OTT platforms.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data collection tools refer to the methods used to collect data from different sources. The quality of any research paper depends solely on the data analyzed in it. In this study, data is collected through a well-structured questionnaire. Both primary and secondary sources have been used for the study. Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire through the survey. Secondary data has been collected from articles, newspapers, and websites. The study was conducted among the viewers of OTT platforms in Ernakulam City, Kerala. The sampling method used for this study is simple random sampling. 200 samples were collected and analyzed with the help of different statistical tools.

The hypothesis was formulated based on different factors discussed in the study and data collected from different sources. Non - parametric test χ^2 is used for the testing of the hypothesis. The data collected are converted into tables. The percentage was worked out and analyzed and various findings and suggestions are made. The data was analyzed and interpreted with the help of different statistical tools such as χ^2 test, percentages, tables, and figures.

4.1. Hypothesis

H_0 : The preference of viewers is not affected by the OTT service provider.

H_1 : The preference of viewers is affected by the OTT service provider.

H_0 : The preference of viewers is not affected by factors like price, quality, convenience, and others.

H_1 : The preference of viewers is affected by factors like price, quality, convenience, and others.

4.2. Limitations of the study

This study is limited to 200 respondents so the findings and suggestions cannot be extrapolated to the entire population. Also. the primary data collected may be biased.

5. MAJOR OTT PLATFORMS IN INDIA

5.1 Netflix

Netflix is a worldwide accepted streaming service that offers a wide variety of video content, Netflix originals, TV shows, documentaries, and anime. As per the available statistics, it has more than 189 million subscribers. Netflix subscription plans are basic, standard, and premium.

5.2 Disney+ Hotstar

Disney+ Hotstar is one of the finest entertainment destinations of India. This caters the entertainment needs of the Indian population with live sports, Indian and International shows, and movies to all Disney content like Marvel, Star Wars, Pixar, National Geographic, and Disney originals. Disney+ Hotstar claims that over 300 million viewers are reaching them daily. It has access to all-star-owned channels like Star World, Star Plus, HBO, and more. It provides kid's shows from Disney XD and Disney Junior. The available subscription plans are super plan for one year and, the premium for both one year and one month.

5.3 Amazon Prime Video

Amazon Prime Video is an American subscription OTT streaming and rental service of Amazon. Prime Video service primarily distributes films and television services. The subscription plans of Amazon Prime Video are Amazon Prime mobile year plan, Amazon Prime Monthly Plan, Amazon Prime Quarterly Plan, and Amazon Prime year plan. The subscription allows the member some other benefits also; Free Delivery to eligible addresses, Discounted delivery charges to eligible addresses, Amazon Pay ICICI Bank Credit Card, Prime Reading, Amazon Music, Prime Early Access and Exclusive Deals, Amazon Family offers, and Gaming Offers.

5.4 Sony Liv

The Sony Liv is offered by Sony Entertainment Network. Though these Indian OTT platforms have good access to TV shows, short films, and movies, it is more watched for live cricket streaming. TV channels like Sony SAB, Sony Max, Sony Mix, and Sony Yay are available through the Sony app. The subscription plans are Mobile only for one year, Liv Premium for one year, Liv Premium for six months, and Liv Premium for one month.

5.5 Zee5

Zee5 is an Indian VoD streaming facilitator offered by Zee Entertainment Enterprise. It offers video content from regional languages like Tami, Telugu, Kannada,

and Malayalam. The video audio quality of Zee5 is like many other OTT platforms. Zee5 subscription plans are Premium HD for three months, Premium HD for one year, and Premium 4K for one year.

5.6 Voot

Voot is an Indian VoD and OTT platform owned by Viacom18. Video content is available in multiple languages. This offers high-quality video and allows us to enjoy our favourite shows on different devices. The different subscription plans are Mobile, Gold, and Platinum.

5.7 ALTBalaji

ALT Balaji is owned and operated by Balaji Telefilms, a production company. A subscription to ALT Balaji provides users with access to a wide range of original shows, movies, comedy skits, and music videos, as well as sports and entertainment. The subscription plans are available for one year, six months and two months.

5.8 MX Player

MX Player, developed by MX media and Entertainment Pvt Ltd. It has over 280 million users globally. This VoD app has a library of over 150,000+ hours in eleven languages. The platform presently works on an add supported model. Initially it was launched as a video player on 18th July 2011, but on 20th February 2019, it was relaunched as an OTT platform with the streaming of original content. It has licensed video content from Film Rise, Halcyon Studios, Screen Media, Goldmine, Hungama, Shemaroo Entertainment, Paramount Pictures, Sony Entertainment and Sun Network. In March 2020, MX player launched internationally and made available worldwide.

5.9 Jio Cinema

Jio Cinema owned by Viacom 18, a media company, majority owned by Reliance industries. Initially it was launched as a part of Reliance mobile service provider on 5th September 2016. In April 2022 Jio Cinema was moved under Viacom 18 partnership with Paramount Global for the purpose of streaming. It is provided to Jio plan users.

5.10 Other Indian OTT Platforms

Ullu App, BIGFlix, Hungama, Aha, SheemarooMe, Viu, Mubi, Sun NXT, Yupp TV, TVF Play, Crunchyroll, EROS Now, Discovery Plus, and Jio TV are other OTT platforms in India. The increasing number of OTT platforms and their subscription rate clearly show the popularity of OTT platforms in India.

5.11 The advantages of OTT platforms

Advantages are:

1. Reasonable price: If a viewer has a membership, they can access the high-quality content. Depending on the length, quality, and quantity of devices being utilised at once, the viewer can select a subscription plan.
2. Excellent audio and visual quality: Many platforms offer high-quality audio and video content.
3. Accessibility: The viewer gets access to any content anytime they want. In addition, it offers the convenience of allowing viewers see the same content as often as they would like.

5.11.1 Multiple devices

The content can be viewed on a desktop computer, laptop, tablet, or smart phone. The viewer can receive video content on demand by means of compatible device support and an internet connection. A single subscription allows different hardware to access the content, but the number of devices is limited by the subscription plan chosen by the subscriber.

5.12 The disadvantages of OTT platforms

Disadvantages are:

1. Internet connectivity: Internet connection availability is one of the major drawbacks of OTT platforms. Without net connectivity, a viewer cannot access OTT platforms.
2. Quality of net connection: The OTT platforms provide high audio and video quality. The subscriber can enjoy the same only if it is supported with good bandwidth net connection.
3. Security Threats: The subscription demands your personal details like a Google account, mail id, and phone numbers. This makes the OTT platforms unsafe for viewers rarely.
4. Addiction to internet OTT platforms has boosted the binge-watching habit of viewers leading to cyber addiction, sleeping disorders, and eyesight issues.
4. Lack of censorship: Since it is out of the purview of government control, they are independent to provide original content without any censorship. There is no age and content restriction for OTT platforms.

6. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

Meghan McAdams (2019), "What is OTT- Understanding the Modern Media Streaming Landscape". The study revealed that the OTT apps clearly represent the future of India. In her study the major thing that was concluded that 50% of OTT customers, are experiencing "subscription fatigue", from engaging with so many platforms. It was also

mentioned that the growth of large-scale platforms like Disney plus could impact the prospects for smaller niche services.

Sharma (2020), the on-going COVID-19 crisis has forced the multiplexes to shut down. As a result, the production houses are now releasing them onto OTT platforms directly. This has become a topic of concern amongst the multiplexes as the users might ship the traditional windowing pattern. INOX and PVR both issued a public statement reacting to this issue. According to experts this is a solution to a short-term need of the film industry which getting by financial difficulties. It is a win-win situation for OTT players who need fresh content and the filmmakers who had their production ready but unable to release. However, this will not be a paradigm shift, in the long term, once things return to normal. The cinema generates more revenue for the production houses compared to the OTT platforms. Being this a vital factor, the films will hit the cinemas as earlier, once the market is free from COVID-19 crisis. As a matter of fact, there may be possibility to see a surge in multiplex services for few days after the returning the things to normal.

Menon's (2020) report says that the closure in Covid 19 Pandemic increased the consumption of OTT Platforms in India. Lockdown enforced people to stay indoors and this resulted people to indulge in online activities. Closure of cinemas is what resulted into growing hope of OTT mediums.

Deloitte's (2017) report on "Digital Media: Rise on demand content" emphasis on affordability of smartphones and better internet services which has led to the expansion of online video streaming services, hence people are now spending more time on online mediums rather than the old traditional mediums for entertainment.

ICFAI (2019) report on "Transition of consumer towards online streaming industry" where comparison is done between both OTT giants Netflix and Amazon Prime. This paper highlights the importance of content in entertainment and this paper writes that Netflix has an upper edge among all other OTT Platforms, when talked about content and then comes HotStar. Mann et al., (2015) in report "Digital Video & the connected consumer"- This report says that majority of OTT users are aged between 18-24 years old looking for 22 interesting content and hence OTT platforms targets people of this age group to gain momentum.

Dasgupta & Grover (2019) in the study "Understanding Adoption Factors of Over-the-top Video Services among millennial consumers", researchers highlighted the four major factors that affect consumer adaptation towards different platforms. They are Convenience, Mobility, Content, and Cost.

Manoj Kumar Patel (2020): According to the findings, OTT platforms are evolving and have a significant advantage over traditional entertainment channels. The study claims that the rise of OTT will undoubtedly increase in India due to its cost effectiveness and continual development of content richness, based on an online survey with 95 percent of the primary stakeholders aged 20 to 40 years. Finally, the author believes that the rapid rise of streaming media in India is due to the freedom it offers customers to access information at any time, regardless of location. (Patel, 2020)

Prof. Ripal Madhani and Dr. Vidya Nakhate (2020): The study compares viewing behavior across traditional television channels and over-the-top video platforms in Maharashtra. The article examines the behavioral characteristics of traditional and OTT viewers for a total of 110 persons utilizing a structured questionnaire. In conclusion, the survey found that consumers prefer OTT platforms to traditional television channels because they offer greater convenience in terms of time and location, lower data costs, and instant access to high-quality content. (Prof. Ripal Mandhani, 2020)

Gangwar et al. (2020) studied the preference of OTT platforms in India. Technological advancement and content quality is the major preference that influences the Indian customers to adopt the OTT platform. The study concluded that the millennium is attracted towards the OTT platforms due to foreign content and video on demand facilities.

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Descriptive and Inferential Analysis has been done by using appropriate statistical tools. Since the population does not follow any specific distribution, a nonparametric test χ^2 is used for inferential analysis with n-1 degrees of freedom. Descriptive analysis is done and graphs, and pie charts, are used to describe the data.

7.1 Preference of viewers toward OTT service providers

H_0 : The preference of viewers is not affected by the OTT service provider.

H_1 : The preference of viewers is affected by the OTT service provider.

If the various OTT service providers do not affect the viewers, the same preference for them is expected. That is, we would expect the total of (32+92+52+24=200), to be spread over uniformly for each OTT platform, so that the expected number of customers is 200/4=50. Under H_0 , the test statistic is $\chi^2 = \sum (O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i$

Where: O=Observed values, E=Expected values

Table 1. Table showing the most preferred OTT platform

Particulars	O _i	E _i	(O _i - E _i) ² / E _i
Amazon prime	32	50	6.48
Netflix	92	50	35.28
Disney plus Hotstar	52	50	0.08
Other	24	50	13.52
Total	200	200	55.36

For the level of significance, $\alpha = 0.05$ the tabled value for χ^2 with 3 degrees of freedom, $\chi^2_{\alpha, n-1} = 7.815$. Since the calculated value is greater than the tabled value rejects H_0 : The preference of viewers is not affected by the OTT service provide

7.2 Factors influencing the preference of viewers

H_0 : The preference of viewers is not affected by factors like price, quality, convenience, and others.

H_1 : The preference of viewers is affected by factors like price, quality, convenience, and others.

If the four factors are affected uniformly, the expected frequency will be 50. Under H_0 , the test statistic is $\chi^2 = \sum (O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i$

Where:

O=Observed values

E=Expected values

Table 2. Factors influencing the preference of viewers

FACTORS	O _i	E _i	(O _i - E _i) ² / E _i
Price	20	50	18
Quality	32	50	6.48
Convenience	132	50	134.48
Others	16	50	23.12
total	200	200	18.08

The calculated value of $\chi^2 = 182$.

H_0 : The preference of viewers is not affected by factors like price, quality, convenience, and others

7.3 OTT platforms that have a variety of video content

Table 3. Table showing the OTT platforms that have a variety of video content

particulars	No. of respondents	percentage
Amazon prime	36	18
Disney plus hotstar	36	18
Netflix	116	58
others	12	6
total	200	100

Figure 1 reveals that 58 percentage consider Netflix as the OTT platform having most variety of video content and 6 percentage consider other platforms.

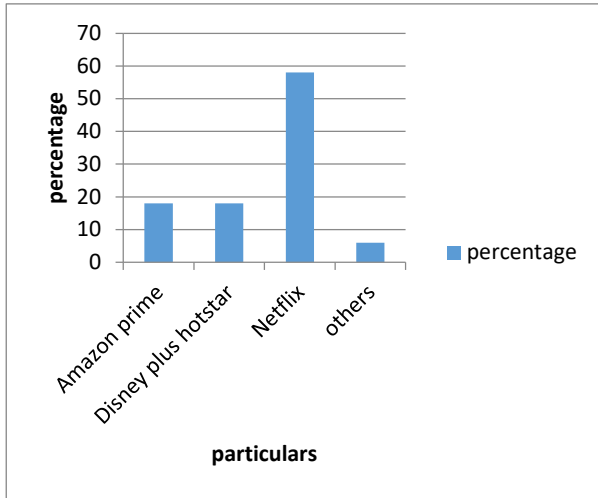


Figure 1. Figure showing OTT platforms that have a variety of video content

7.4 Whether OTT platforms provide worldwide movies and series

Table 4. Table showing whether OTT platforms provide worldwide movies and series

Particulars	No of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	88	44
Agree	92	46
Neutral	20	10
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
total	200	100

The figure 2 shows that 46 percent of respondents agreed that OTT platforms provide worldwide movies and series, and no one disagreed with this statement.

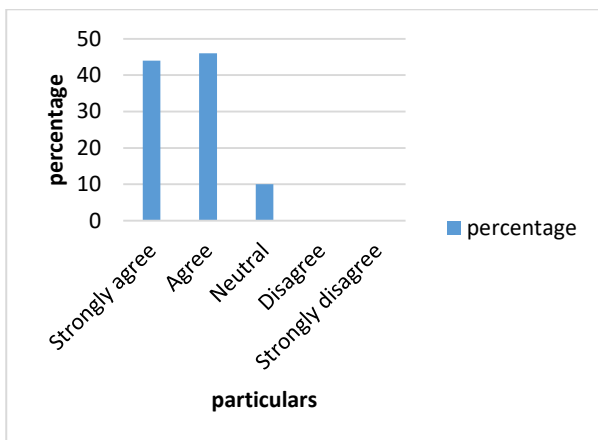


Figure 2. Figure showing whether OTT platforms provide worldwide movies and series

7. 5. Whether the viewers have a subscription to any OTT platform

Table 5. Table showing whether the viewers have a subscription to any OTT platform

Particulars	No of respondents	Percentage
Yes	116	58
No	84	42
Total	200	100

The figure 3 shows that 58 percent of respondents have at least one subscription to watch OTT platforms and 42 percent don't have a subscription to watch OTT platforms.

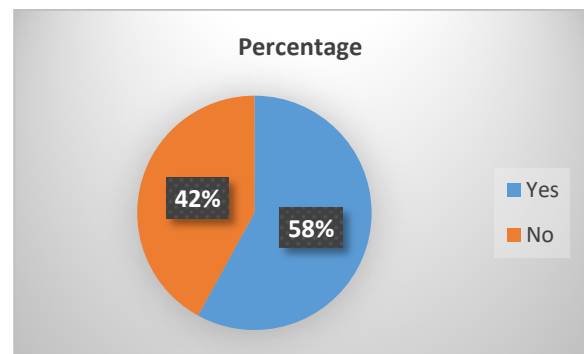


Figure 3. Figure showing whether the viewers have a subscription to any OTT platform

7. 6. Time spent on OTT platforms on daily basis

Table 6. Table showing the time spend on OTT platforms on daily basis

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
Less than 30 minutes	26	13
1 hr	50	25
2 hrs	58	29
More than 2 hrs	66	33
total	200	100

The figure 4 shows that 33 percent of respondents are spending more than two hours on OTT platforms in one day. Only a fewer percent of respondents; 13 percent spends less than 2 hours in a day.

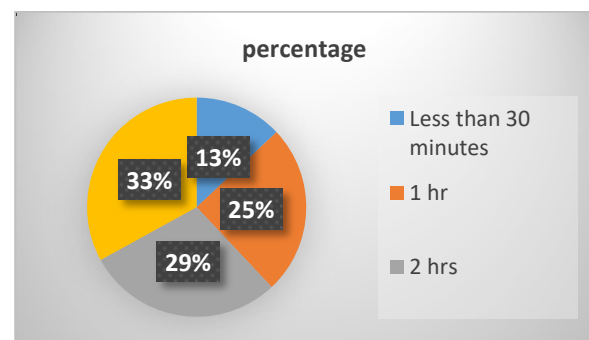


Figure 4. Figure showing the time spend on OTT platform on daily basis

8. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As per the study, the most preferred OTT platform is Netflix which provides a variety of content for all types of viewers. Though all the OTT platforms provide a variety of video content, Netflix dominates the minds of viewers in terms of its originality, global content, and video quality.

OTT platforms are preferred over other mediums of entertainment for many reasons though convenience occupies the topmost position. A viewer can watch anything whenever, wherever they want to do so. Since the OTT platforms render time and space utility to every single viewer, they prefer to follow OTT platforms.

Most of the respondents agreed that OTT platforms have a huge collection of worldwide movies and web series. Traditional mediums like TV channels cannot provide different video content for different viewers. It is based on the principle of mass communication whereas through OTT platforms every single viewer can access different programs at a time. The OTT platforms render the freedom of selection of what a viewer wishes to watch at any point in time.

Most of the respondents have a subscription to at least one OTT platform. In India itself, several OTT service providers render their services. Both free and paid video content are available to the viewers through these platforms. This study reveals that most of our samples have at least one subscription to any one of the OTT platforms.

The study reveals the habit of binge watching among the viewers. Most of our viewers spend more than two hours a day watching OTT platforms. Binge watching habit indicates an alarming state that the viewers are spending too much time on such platforms. It increases the business scope and importance of these platforms along with the internet service providers. The impact of this on the younger generation and society should be discussed and studied further.

9. CONCLUSION

India has witnessed an incredible growth of OTT participants during the last few years. Not only big giants like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney plus Hot star but also lower tier OTT platforms are also blooming. Its scalability and accessibility to cross-cultural global entertainment expanded its horizon. The advent of

smartphones and the availability of internet data at affordable cost created a resource-rich ground for the OTT platform.

A viewer with internet connectivity and a compatible hardware device can dive into the ocean of original video content. VoD is the most attractive feature of OTT platforms from fictional shows and movies to the telecast of live sports matches available in the OTT platforms. The viewer may subscribe to an OTT platform just to watch a live cricket match or some special web series. The viewers are in the middle of a well well-flavored cushion they just need to pick the taste of their tongue.

As per the available statistics, India is ranked as the second country in the world in terms of active Internet users. When compared to India's population it is under 50 percent. According to www.statista.com, the average data consumption per user per month in India was at 19.5 gigabytes in 2022. In the matter of smartphone penetration also India occupies the second position. The introduction of 5G on the internet will boost the same to cloud nine. This clearly indicates that the growth of OTT platforms must cover miles to reach its peak position.

The aim of this study is to find out the viewer's consumption pattern and viewer experience in Ernakulam city. The study reveals that there is a rapid increase in the consumption rate of OTT platforms. The secondary sources of data also depict that the viewer base of OTT platforms is increasing day by day irrespective of different age groups. Though teenagers are showing more interest in these platforms, they are not preferring a subscription at a high charge. Still, they are going for it because of the video quality. The growth rate of subscription of OTT platforms is increasing day by day. The OTT platforms are providing original content which may include violence, sex abuse. The lack of restrictions over the content broadcasting through these platforms makes it more realistic and connects to people who are watching. The convenience of watching movies in our own terms enhances the popularity of these OTT platforms. OTT platforms provides rejoices the sports lovers with live matches. The viewers are enjoying the binge-watching experience of shows on OTT platforms. VoD facility further enhances the rapid growth of OTT platforms in the coming years. OTT may not replace the traditional mode of entertainment but can grasp a major share of it.

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