Chapter 1
Content Production and Consumption in the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

This comprehensive chapter helps to provide an insight into the transformative era of content production and consumption ushered in by over-the-top (OTT) platforms. The chapter focuses on India's pivotal role in the global OTT landscape, and navigates the post-pandemic surge, revealing shifts in consumer behaviour and the profound impact on storytelling. With an analysis of the unique production practices within the OTT domain, the chapter calls for independent OTT media studies, recognizing the need for academia to explore the evolving nature of this distinct storytelling form. The narrative balances positive aspects, acknowledging OTT's data-driven strategies, while also addressing concerns about potential regulations impacting creative freedom. The chapter not only highlights the global success of OTT platforms but also contributes to the discourse on their transformative potential in shaping the future of entertainment.

INTRODUCTION

Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms have emerged as a production, distribution and consumption capital capital. These platforms along with transforming the way content is produced and consumed globally, it also demand for new methods of studying this digital content independently. One might argue that, the content delivered is similar to already prevailing film, television and other broadcasting structures, however, this chapter and the chapters following this argues and urges for an OTT media theory.

This chapter tries to establish an insightful overview of the content production and consumption trends in the digital age, with a particular focus on India, an emerging market that has seen a remarkable surge in OTT consumption. The rapid increase in popularity of major streaming services is having a massive

impact on more traditional media outlets. OTT Media is the term given to these types of services, which bypass the traditional media sources through an internet connection. The concerns around this booming media industry are coming from multiple directions, including more traditional media providers, publishers and producers, as well as experts attempting to predict how this trend will impact the future of entertainment media industries.

THE RISE OF OTT IN INDIA POST PANDEMIC

India, a diverse and rapidly growing market, has witnessed a paradigm shift in the entertainment industry with the advent of OTT platforms. The availability of affordable high-speed internet, coupled with the widespread adoption of smartphones, has fuelled the surge in OTT consumption. The convenience of anytime, anywhere access to a vast array of content has resonated well with the Indian audience.

OTT platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Jio Cinema, and Disney+ Hotstar have not only capitalized on the diverse cultural and linguistic preferences of the Indian audience but have also played a pivotal role in promoting homegrown content. Indian filmmakers and content creators are now leveraging OTT platforms to showcase their work to a global audience, breaking geographical barriers and reaching unparalleled heights.

The first OTT platform in India, BigFlix by Reliance was launched in 2008 (Dangwal, 2017), it wasn't until Netflix launched in 2016 that the hunger for fresh content grew (Kumar et. al, 2020). The research on content on OTTs is relatively new and there is a need to provide a fresh angle to in this area. Films and TV serials have been studied continuously since they launched in the early 1900s with focus on its evolution, technological advancement, impact on society, cultural values and political economy.

The content produced and distributed in OTT platforms, which are a mix of films, series, documentaries, and all other formats served to the audience on a view-what-you-want, when-you-want kind of menu. This concept is not new (Fairchild, 1996) but still it needs a deeper understanding on a critical reality of platforms, algorithm, technology, production practices, distribution strategies, partnership models and consumption trends. While these seems to be vast and complicated area, a careful study of each will itself help in establishing a new academic area of OTT studies which as mentioned above independent from film and television studies. There are some practical problem with OTT media content as few may see the key differentiator as the lack of governmental control over this medium (Henten and Tadayoni, 2020). While films go through a rigorous censorship through state-controlled body and TV content regulated by an industry body, video platforms are still unregulated. This can be the also reason for why OTT media content is difficult to streamline. When it is not practically defined, it will be more complex to see from a theoretical view.

The mobile market and internet penetration are on the rise in India. TRAI says Indian has the second highest penetration after China with 687 million subscribers (TRAI, 2020). 5G telecom services entering the market, it has been a major disruptor in the way content is consumed. With faster and cheaper Internet services available, Indian smartphone users have potentially become the largest consumers of content in the world (FICCI, 2019).

Uday Shankar, former President The Walt Disney Company, Asia Pacific said:

"The M&E sector is poised to kickstart a new era of growth. Technological disruptions are creating new opportunities for the sector. New age digital media with direct-to-customer (D2C) capabilities are on

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