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A STUDY ON PREFERENCES OF CONSUMERS TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL OTT PLATFORMS AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY IN INDIAN MARKET

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ABSTRACT

There are several social benefits generated by digital platforms, including facilitating inclusion. Communication services have been critical in accelerating the inclusion of marginalized users into formal systems, particularly for financial, health, and education services that are enabled by OTT providers. Using OTT platforms places a significant strain on energy resources, services providing music and video streaming have a far lower carbon footprint than traditional physical formats.

Over The Top (OTT) industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. The usageofOTTplatformsinIndiahastremendouslyincreasedafterCOVID19. Thereasonsforthisismobilefriendlyandtheo riginalcontentthattheseOTTplatformsprovide. In India, big international players like Netflix entered and changed the entertainment industry making platform for more international as well as Indian OTT platforms. This study focuses on various international OTT platforms in India and their performance in Indian Market. The study attempts to identify current international OTT platform trends with reference to type of shows preferred by customers & investigate OTT platform success factors in India. The research concluded that majority of the people preferred Netflix, followed by Disney+ HotStar and Amazon Prime Video. The respondent's shows liking towards OTT which focus more on Original Shows and Web Series which gets frequently updating list just like Netflix. It was also observed that Disney+ HotStaris more preferred as they of digital broadcasting partner for big cricket events like IPL and World Cup. The research concludes that localization of content, affordable pricing, high quality picture quality, strong distributorship partnership, good user experience and better after sales services are the major factor for success of international OTT in Indian Market.

Keywords: Over-the-Top service, Consumer decision-making, online streaming, viewership

INTRODUCTION

From RamanandSagar's Ramayana (1987) to Hwang Dong-hyuk's Squid Game (2021), audiences have noticed a seismic shift in terms of quantity and quality of content. With the impact reaching various strata of society, brand marketers are also leveraging in-trend OTT content to drive engagement on digital media. As per the size of the OTT market in India, the minutes of consumption have grown from 181 to 204 billion minutes in 2021. There is no disavowing the fact that OTT is taking over. But what is the reason for this growth, and how does it affect the highly various Indian audience? Digitalization has grown rapidly in the last few years. The pandemic independently led to a massive increase in the viewership of OTT outlets in India, while consumption of the OTT range is most elevated among the 15-35 age groups in India. As per the report prepared by MICA's Center for Media and Entertainment Studies (CMES):

- India will experience enormous growth in OTT subscribers by 2023. Nowadays, there are 350 million users, but it is estimated to attain up to 500 million users.
- Disney+ Hotstar has 43 million subscribers, which makes it the most comprehensive OTT outlet in India,



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followed by Netflix with 5 million subscribers and Amazon Prime with 17 million subscribers.

- Hotstar has captured the OTT market and accounts for 29 percent of the total viewership. The platform's income in 2020 was around 16 billion Indian rupees.
- By the end of 2023, 85 percent of Indian customers will be Internet-ready. The average age group of OTT paying customers is between 35-44 years.
- USD 1 billion of capital is presently being sponsored in the OTT industry by several venture capitalists and business tycoons.
- Recently there has been a two-fold increase in male audiences as compared to females.
- The majority of OTT outlets are highest among the younger generation. Men especially in the age group of 15-30 consume the most OTT content.
- Among women, consumption of OTT content is most elevated in the 25-35 age group, and this digit has grown during the pandemic. Yet, they presented less than 50 percent of total consumption compared to men.

ORIGIN OF OTT PLATFORMS IN INDIA

OTT, refers cable Over-the-top, to content that is provided in addition to networks or You Tube. Reliance Entertain ment introduced BIGFlix, the country's first independent OTT and the country of theplatform, in 2008. The first OTT mobile app in India was released in 2010 by Gurugram-based Digiviveunder the name nexGTv. It provides on-demand and live TV. In 2013 and 2014,nexGTV was the first application to broadcast live Indian Premier League games onportable devices. Since securing the rights to stream the IPL live in 2015, Hotstar hasexperiencedsubstantial development inIndia. Around 2013, OTT gained significant traction in India with the launches of DittoTV(Zee) and SonyLiv. DittoTV was a platform that combined content from several wellknownmedia including Viacom.Zee. DespitethedominanceofHotstarandAmazonPrimeVideointheOTTplatformspace,aggregatedOTTserviceslikeTAT APlayBingehaveexperiencedexponentialdevelopment. More than 16 apps, including Disney+ Hotstar, MX Player, Voot, Zee5, and SonyLIV, are accessible through it. The dominance of Netflix and Amazon Primemay be threatened by the mergers of ZEEL and Sony, Jio Cinema OTT, and Viacom18 Media.

DIFFERENT OTT PLATFORMS IN INDIA

There are now many OTT service possibilities available to Indians. The well-knownOTT providers include Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+ Hotstar, ALTBalaji,Zee 5, Aha, Voot, SonyLIV, Viu, Hoichoi, etc. All of these platforms have differentsubscriptionoptions and devicecompatibility.

OTT Apps	Subscribers
Netflix	189 million
Prime Video	163.5 million
Disney+ Hotstar	61.3 million
Alt Balaji	3.88 million
Sony Liv	18.2 million
VOOT	1 million
Discovery+	24 million
MX Player	200 million
TVF Play	9.2 million
Eros Now	18 million
Ullu App	2.3 million
Jio Cinema	million

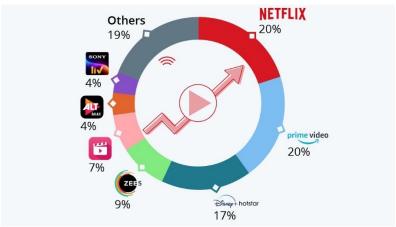
Source: https://selectra.in/compare/ott/top-12-ott-platforms

INTERNATIONAL BRANDS RISE TO THE TOP OF INDIAN STREAMING MARKET

Up until last year, Amazon Prime and Netflix were still playing catch-up in the Indian market. Now, the coronavirus pandemic seems to have accelerated the often-seen scenario of international players pushing out local

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pioneers. According to JustWatch, Netflix and Amazon Prime captured a fifth of the market each in Q2 of 2020, while the cooperation of Disney+ and local player Hotstar reached 17 percent. As recently as 2019, Hotstar alone still had a market share of almost 30 percent while Amazon Prime and Netflix captured only 10 and 5 percent of the Indian market, respectively. The Indian small screen has also been attracting attention during the COVID-19 pandemic as a place where new Bollywood productions have been released – either as original material or as a last resort while cinemas remain shuttered. According to the BBC, Netflix has released 18 Indian-made originals this year, while Amazon Prime is looking at bringing out 14 in 2020. Disney+ Hotstar, in a different approach, has said it would host seven movies that were originally headed for the big screen. Despite the newfound dominance of international players, the Indian streaming market remains fragmented, with a slew of local brands still taking up nearly half of the market. The new Disney+ Hotstar service stands out as a brand which combines Disney's global streaming endeavor with Hotstar's Indian programming and cricket league broadcasting rights. Hotstar's parent company, Star India, has actually been owned by Disney since 2019, when Disney purchased 21st Century Fox. Hotstar streaming was launched in India in 2015, around a year before Netflix and Amazon Prime dropped their services.



Source: Just Watch via Quartz India

INTERNATIONAL OTT SUCCESS FACTOR IN INDIAN MARKET

Several factors contribute to the success of international OTT (over-the-top) platforms in the Indian market. Some of the most important include:

- Localization: Offering localized content and features, such as subtitles and audio tracks in regional languages, can help attract and retain Indian users.
- Affordable pricing: Many Indians are price-sensitive, so offering competitive pricing plans or free trials can help attract users.
- High-quality content: Having a diverse range of high-quality content, including popular Indian movies and TV shows, can help attract and retain users.
- Strong distribution partnerships: Having partnerships with major telecommunications companies and device manufacturers can help increase the visibility and accessibility of the OTT platform.
- Good user experience: Offering a user-friendly interface and fast streaming speeds can help attract and retain users.
- Strong marketing and promotion: Having a strong marketing strategy in place can help attract and retain users, especially in a crowded market.
- Good after sales service: Having a good customer service team can help attract and retain users.

THERE ARE SEVERAL BARRIERS TO INTERNATIONAL OTT SUCCESS IN THE INDIAN MARKET, INCLUDING:

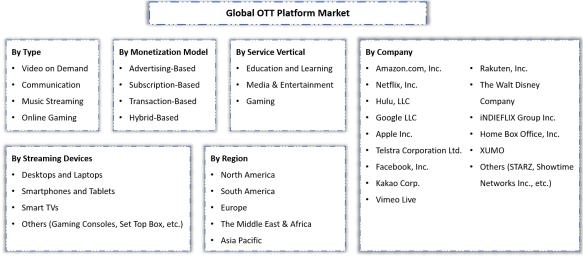
- Local content: Indian consumers have a strong preference for local content, which can make it difficult for international OTT players to gain a foothold in the market.
- Regulatory environment: The Indian government has implemented strict regulations for OTT players,



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including rules on content censorship and data localization, which can make it difficult for international companies to comply.

- Competition: The Indian OTT market is highly competitive, with a number of local players already established and vying for market share.
- Language: Indian consumers prefer content in their local language. International OTT platforms may have difficulty providing localized content in different languages.
- Payment and service infrastructure: Many Indian consumers may not have access to credit cards or other forms of online payment, which can make it difficult for international OTT platforms to monetize their services.
- Internet and Mobile connectivity: India's internet infrastructure is still developing and may not be able to support the streaming of high-definition video content in some areas.



Source:https://skyquestt.com/report/over-the-top-ott-market

FUTURE OF OTT IN INDIAN MARKET

The future of OTT in the Indian market is expected to be positive, driven by factors such as increasing internet penetration, rising disposable income, and a growing middle class. Some key trends in the Indian OTT market that are likely to shape its future include:

- Localization: As Indian consumers continue to prefer local content, OTT players will need to focus on creating and distributing more localized content to attract and retain customers.
- Consolidation: As the market becomes more competitive, it is likely that we will see consolidation among OTT players, with larger companies acquiring smaller players to gain market share.
- Regional Language Content: With more than 22 official languages in India, it is expected that OTT players will start creating more content in regional languages to cater to the diverse audience.
- Advertising and monetization: As the OTT market matures, players will increasingly look to monetize their services through advertising and other revenue streams.
- Original content: As OTT players look to differentiate themselves from their rivals, original content will become more important and it will become the key differentiating factor.
- Virtual and Augmented Reality: OTT platforms are expected to adopt new technologies like Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) to enhance their viewer's experience.
- Overall, the Indian OTT market is expected to grow significantly in the coming years, driven by increasing internet penetration, a growing middle class, and changing consumer preferences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Users subscribe to OTT platforms for their wide content selection, ease of use, and continuous show schedule. India has 700 million smartphone users, according to Deloitte. Video content's insatiable demand drives growth. The author also found that millennials and Gen-Z consume OTT content due to peer pressure (Swati et. Al, 2022). High-speed internet, new smartphones, and better technology boosted the OTT sector. Covid 19 helped Generation



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X adopt OTT services and make content the king of retention. Each platform competes for market share. Each OTT platform has unique shows, but they try to reach as many viewers as possible. Millennials and Gen-Z bingewatch shows, so OTT platforms need to make better ones 2. (Saatvik S., Pushkar P. 2022). India has 40 national and international OTT platforms. The report predicts that India will be the 6th largest OTT market in the world by 2024, with a CAGR of 28.6% over the next four years. OTT platforms now mentor youth and comfort the lonely. The author expects an impartial regulatory body because content review is important. (Sapana, Nandita S., 2022). OTT is in transition in India. Low data prices have increased rural and urban smartphone and internet use exponentially. This OTT service meets the content needs of a diverse population platforms must embed. Virtual platforms with more customer touch points are more reliable in the future. Big production houses are using these platforms to launch movies without waiting for Fridays. OTT platforms are smart alternatives to cinemas and TVs that prioritize audience comfort and consumer-driven relationships (Sumitra S, V., 2021). Domestic and international OTT video streaming platforms have changed entertainment subscription behavior. The authors sought to identify OTT platform subscription factors. Content, convenience, features, price, and quality kept customers. The authors even said the above factors inversely affect price. Demographic factors like age, occupation, and education also influence OTT subscription and resubscription decisions (Samala et al., 2021). The author examined why customers were switching from TV series to web series and whether it would ever replace cable TV as the main video consumption platform. Web series are so tempting that viewers don't have time to finish them. To avoid such situations, they don't prefer web series first. Superior content and 24/7 availability drive platform growth. Wordof-mouth and digital marketing promote web series. Pricing is also important because many people think OTT is too expensive(Pramit Gupta, 2021) (Pramit Gupta, 2021). The internet is transforming industries. Since the target audience is well informed and familiar with new technology and trends, the entertainment industry has changed greatly. This drives global OTT platform growth. Indians are familiar with the content on different OTT platforms, and the platforms are successful in capturing the popularity of salaried and young people, who make up the majority of total viewers viewership. Even COVID-19 helped this platform grow because target audience had lots of free time to watch new shows. OTT's convenience and variety with few ads are still its biggest draws (Kaneenika Jain, 2021). The authors say OTT platforms have grown due to regional content, lower subscription costs, and better 4G access with 5G coming soon. Netflix, Amazon Prime Videos, Hotstar, Voot, and AltBalaji gained nearly 6 million subscribers during Covid. The study found that boredom, excess time, and new content drove the rapid growth of OTT platforms, creating a better market for international OTT platforms to enter India (Shaurya P, Tushar J, 2021). In this digital age with easy internet access, Covid caused people to spend their free time on screens. Due to the nationwide lockdown, cinemas not operating, and film releases postponed multiple times, OTT platforms gave customers a new viewing experience, which could change the movie-watching experience in cinemas and reduce footfall. The authors argue that today's generation can't wait for TV shows and movies to air. Smartphone penetration, better content, and global collaboration have also increased OTT user engagement (Manoj, 2020). Netflix, Hotstar, and Amazon Prime Video have disrupted the Indian entertainment industry. OTT players have entered mainstream media, influencing global audiences. Internet distribution and creation have changed. Customer content consumption trends interested the author. She discovered that once a luxury has become a commodity as paid subscribers increase. Most subscribers access the platform via smartphones and believe OTT has changed their TV and movie habits (TriptiKumari, 2020). Hotstar and Jio Cinema are gaining market share in the digital entertainment industry, competing with Netflix and Amazon Prime Videos. In India, people are streaming OTT platforms on TVs instead of smartphones. OTT platforms in India are becoming popular, so even small ones can raise funding from global investors. OTT is growing, but cable TV is still popular and will remain so. Cable TV is cheap—Rs 120 per month in some Indian states—which is why it's popular (Sundaravel E., Elangovan N., 2020). In 2020, 376.1 million Indians used social media, making digital marketing an essential part of strategic planning. OTT platforms do promotions too. Using AIDA and 4A marketing models, the authors found that digital marketing activities in mobile apps trigger acceptance, affordability, accessibility, and awareness, which influence OTT subscription decisions. AIDA model says social media promotions convert purchase intent to purchases (Sonal K, Aruna, 2020). Digitalization connects us more than ever. Telecoms also connected us, making the world a village. WhatsApp and Skype eliminated long-distance calls and SMS revenue, hurting telecom companies. OTT platforms' success could help telecom companies start making money again if they partner with them. Internet-connected services could generate more revenue. Telecoms could offer OTT bundles (Muhammad Farooq, Valliappan Raju, 2019). Online video streaming is rapidly changing the entertainment industry worldwide. OTT platforms launched late in India but have grown rapidly compared to other industries. India is pricey and culturally sensitive

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(QureshMoochhala, 2018). Netflix entered India in 2016 to expand globally. Netflix India's low subscription cost was the author's focus. Netflix should come up with a better pricing strategy as India has high income parity; content enrichment with more regional content to engage more customers; smartphone focused, designing subscription plans specifically for app targeting non-metro based audience; more payment options in addition to credit cards as debit cards are highly penetrating the market and e-wallets are rising; and smartphone focused (Virender Khanna, 2017).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study and understand current international OTT platform trends with referencetotypeof shows preferred by customers
- To investigate OTT platform success factors in India

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

OTT is one of the fastest growing industry in India. Therefore, this research focusing on understanding the consumer buying behavior of international OTT platforms ubscriptions, the kind of content they prefer, critical reasons for success of this platforms and how they differed their marketing activities for India when compared to the marketing strategies they follow in other countries.

- Research method used: Descriptive
- Sourcesofdata: For this research project, the researcher have used both primary as well as secondarydata. Primary data is used to get the current trends and user information as to whichfactors, they prefer more while choosing the platform and secondary data is used tounderstand the type of shows available on various platforms and gathering the pastdatatocompareitwithcurrentdatareceivedfromprimaryresearch.
- Datacollectionmethod: Data collection method used for collecting primary data was survey. For surveying, used questionnaire approach. The questions formed would be useful for findingthe factors influencing customer buying decision and also to understand the currenttrends.

Talking about the sample size, sample chosen was of 163. This sample size was chosen using Morgan table. The sample were collected from Ahmedabad Urban area from September 2022 to November 2022.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDING

	Row Labels	Count of Gender	Frequency	Cumulative Freq	
Gender	Female	75	46.01	46.01	
	Male	88	53.99	100.00	
Age Group	15-25	68	41.72	41.72	
	26-35	65	39.88	81.60	
	36-45	30	18.40	100.00	
Occupation	Student	74	45.40	45.40	
	Business	48	29.45	74.85	
	Job	35	21.47	96.32	
	Prefer not to say	6	3.68	100.00	
Daily Viewership	3-6 Hours	65	39.88	39.88	
	6-9 Hours	39	23.93	63.80	
	1-3 Hours	35	21.47	85.28	
	9-12 Hours	21	12.88	98.16	
	12+ Hours	3	1.84	100.00	
OTT Subscribed	Amazon Prime Video	94	20.66	20.66	



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Netflix	94	20.66	41.32
Disney+ HotStar	83	18.24	59.56
Voot	73	16.04	75.60
Zee5	60	13.19	88.79
Sony Liv	51	11.21	100.00

There responded were 88 men manifest and 75 women. The age range was as follows: 68 between 15 and 25; 65 between 26 and 35; and 30 between 36 and 45. There were 74 students, 48 businesspeople, 35 people with employment, and 6 people who declined to comment in the sample. The two OTT services with the most subscribers in the chosen sample are Amazon Prime Videos and Netflix, followed by Disney+ HotStar, Voot, and Zee5. Of the evaluated OTT platforms, Sony Liv has the fewest subscribers. 65 users spent between three and six hours each week on OTT platforms, 39 users between six and nine hours, 35 users between one and three hours, 21 users between nine and twelve hours, and four users between twelve and more hours. The majority of people have Netflix and Amazon Prime Video subscriptions, then Disney+ HotStar. Which the majority of consumers chose, followed by Disney+ HotStar, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+. The fact that most people prefer to watch stuff in English may be the cause of Netflix's appeal. Additionally, the public favors the often updated OTT Original Shows and Web Series on Netflix. According to replies, people now prefer to watch movies on OTT platforms over watching them at theaters and on television, so adding more films to the platform may help an OTT platform attract more customers. Movies can therefore provide OTT platforms with a strong customer base. The second most popular OTT platform by sample selection is Disney+ HotStar, which served as the digital broadcasting partner for significant cricket tournaments like the IPL and World Cup. This may be because people are viewing sports on OTT platforms. Amazon intends to appeal to this market by acquiring the broadcasting rights to the India New Zealand tour. Any OTT platform that wants to succeed in gaining additional subscribers must focus on these aspects. For an OTT subscription, the respondents are willing to spend somewhere between 150 and 200 Rs. Top OTT platforms currently offer plans that are almost in this price range, such as 200 rupees for Netflix and 179 rupees for Amazon Prime. An important factor in the promotion of OTT platforms in India was Covid 19. According to the responses, the majority of respondents boosted their OTT usage during lockdown, and many even started new OTT platform subscriptions. On an average, majority of the respondents gave 4 and 5 stars out of 5, rating their overall experience. This shows that people are liking OTT platforms and it seemsthatOTT is going to stay.

RESULTS OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alphaa	No. of Items
0.812	14

H0: There is no significant difference in the level of perception towards international OTT platforms among Male & Female respondents

H1: There is significant difference in the level of perception towards international OTT platforms among Male & Female respondents

Independent Sam	ples Tes	t							
	Levene's for Equ Variance	ality of		for Equali	ty of Mea	ns			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		the



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	Equal variances assumed	2.782	.097	1.061	161	.290	146	.138	418	.126
SE1	Equal variances not assumed			1.133	121.840	.260	146	.129	402	.109

Since p < .001 is not true less than our chosen significance level α = 0.05, we can accept the null hypothesis, and conclude that There is no significant difference in the level of perception towards international OTT platforms among Male & Female respondents

H0: There is no significant difference in the level of perception towards OTT platforms among various occupation of the respondent

H1: There is significant difference in the level of perception towards OTT platforms among various occupation of the respondent in various programs.

ANOVA					
SE1					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.491	3	1.164	1.738	.161
Within Groups	106.473	159	.670		
Total	109.963	162			

Since p < .001 is not true less than our chosen significance level α = 0.05, we can accept the null hypothesis, and conclude that There is no significant difference in the level of perception towards OTT platforms among various occupation of the respondent.

SUGGESTIONS

- Indian culture and themes: Indian customers appreciate content that reflects their culture and societal norms. OTT platforms can create or acquire content that is set in India and deals with Indian themes.
- Tailored pricing: OTT platforms can offer different pricing options for Indian customers to make their services more affordable.
- Offline viewing options: Many Indian customers have limited internet connectivity, OTT platforms can offer offline viewing options for them to enjoy the content even when they are not connected to the internet.
- Improved streaming quality: OTT platforms can invest in improving their streaming quality to ensure smooth playback for Indian customers.
- Local payment methods: Indian customers may prefer to pay for the OTT services using local payment methods such as UPI, PhonePe, or Paytm. OTT platforms can integrate these options to make it more convenient for Indian customers to pay.
- Targeted advertising: OTT platforms can use data analytics and customer segmentation to target their advertising efforts to specific demographics and interests.
- Influencer marketing: OTT platforms can collaborate with popular social media influencers to promote their content and increase brand awareness.
- Content partnerships: OTT platforms can partner with production companies, directors, and other content creators to produce exclusive content and attract more customers.
- Cross-promotion: OTT platforms can cross-promote their content across different platforms like social media, TV, and streaming services.
- Free trials: OTT platforms can offer free trials to attract new customers and give them a taste of what the service has to offer.
- Promotions and discounts: OTT platforms can run promotions and discounts to attract new customers and

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retain existing ones.

- Creating buzz: OTT platforms can create buzz around new releases, new seasons or upcoming movies, by releasing trailers and teasers, sneak peeks and behind the scenes footage.
- Interactive content: OTT platforms can create interactive content and features that engage customers and encourage them to spend more time on the platform.
- Community building: OTT platforms can build a community of fans and followers through social media, forums, and other online platforms. This can help to create a loyal customer base.
- Personalization: OTT platforms can personalize the customer experience, by using data analytics to provide personalized recommendations, watchlists, and viewing history. This will increase customer satisfaction and retention.

CONCLUSIONS

The OTT market in India is currently experiencing a significant growth and is expected to continue to grow in the future. The number of internet users in India is expected to reach around 600 million by 2023, and this will lead to an increase in the number of OTT customers. The Indian OTT market is projected to reach \$5 billion by 2026, driven by increasing digitalization, rising disposable incomes, and growing smartphone penetration. The increasing popularity of OTT platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney+ Hotstar, and others have led to a shift in the way people consume entertainment. The OTT platforms offer a wide range of content including movies, TV series, live sports, and web series, which is not limited by the constraints of traditional TV channels. This has led to a significant increase in the production of web series and original content, which has in turn created new opportunities for Indian content creators. The growth of OTT platforms has also had a positive impact on the Indian entertainment industry, by providing a new revenue stream for film and TV production companies, and increasing the demand for actors, writers, and other industry professionals. In the future, OTT platforms are expected to continue to grow and diversify in India, by introducing new features and services, and expanding their content offerings. The use of data analytics, machine learning, and personalization features will become increasingly important in order to retain and attract customers. The future of OTT in India is promising, however, the industry is also facing challenges such as lack of regulations, low penetration in rural areas, and limited internet connectivity, which need to be addressed to ensure sustainable growth.

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