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Globalization propelled technology often ends up in its micro-localization: Cinema viewing in the time of OTT

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Abstract

Connectivity among societies has increased manifold in a globalized world. Media, mainly digital media, have emerged as an exciting player in the globalization process. It simultaneously augments the globalization process and also fuels ultra-localism- a complex socio-cultural phenomenon.

In India, growing smartphone users have been changing the pattern of media content consumption. In the last three years, with the availability of cheap internet data, the Indian audience is consuming more and more online media content. In the entertainment sector, media consumers are showing a significant change in their consumption behaviour. Traditional cinema viewing is gradually being replaced by watching cinema and shows on Over The Top (OTT) media platforms like Amazon Prime, Netflix and other service providers.

This paper probes how Indian millennial audiences, mainly the 'Digital Mainstream' has been watching cinema on OTT platforms and why are they switching to mobile devices rather than sticking to the big cinema screens. Are they satisfied with watching the content on a smaller screen or are there still craving for watching on a bigger screen? Is the content different? Is the experience different?

Applying the method of survey and in-depth interviews, this exploratory paper attempts to find an answer to these research questions.

Since the entertainment media content creators including the director and producers of cinema are adapting themselves to the behaviour of the audience of the OTT platforms, this paper may throw more light on the behavioural pattern of the young audience so far as taking to the new medium is concerned.

Keywords: OTT, Digital Media, Digital Mainstream, Cinema

Introduction

In this age of revolution in media technology and the advent of smartphones, even in the remote consumer market in India, the consumption pattern of the media content has drastically changed. The behavioural change witnessed across every genre of the media. The consumption pattern of entertainment-related content has especially undergone a drastic change.

Cinema has been one of the significant sources of entertainment in India since the day the first movie Raja Harishchandra released on April 21 1913 (Mishra 2009). India considered to have world's most significant film industry, and Bollywood termed as the country's "dominant cultural commodity" serving both the rural as well as urban India (Thussu 2008, Virdi 2003). From the first decade of the twentieth century till the last- cinema in India witnessed a spectacular growth- both in the counts of films produced, not only in Hindi but also in several Indian languages (over 30 languages) and genre of films (Raghavendra 2008). Though the number of screens per head has been far less than in the USA or China- the Indian Film industry became a behemoth. It continues to grow- added by technological innovations and favourable government policies- for example, it was given Industry status in 2001. By 2017 the film industry earned a total revenue of Rs 13,800 crore ($2.1 billion), and it had grown at a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) going beyond 10% in the last few years as per a report by PHD Chamber and BnB Nation, as reported in ET, dated October 7 2017. It expected to gross revenue of Rs 23,800 crore ($3.7 billion) by 2020.

The 1990s have been a paradoxical period for Indian cinema. With new economic policy liberalizing the Indian market in 1991, the effects of globalization started percolating in Indian culture as well as in the Indian cinema. India has witnessed social and cultural change since then (Sharpe 2005). At the same time, it was in the 1990s that the Indian Film Industry started adapting itself to technological advancement. The digital sound had made an entry to the industry. Special effects, especially 3D effects and digitized media, gradually were being used in the film-making. The industry expanded its reach and made the films available among the international audience, especially the Indian diaspora. The corporate sector increasingly took an interest in the industry, and there was a collaboration between Hollywood and Bollywood with both investing in each other (Thussu 2010). During this time, the Indian Film Industry gradually became a global player in the entertainment sector, and Bollywood made an entry to the 'political economy' of the world (Sen 2010).

On the other hand, from the 1990s, the globalization process in Indian media changed the scenario altogether. From just Doordarshan, the only television channel and that too a public broadcaster, India witnessed the emergence of multiple private television channels (Thussu 2010, Ranganathan and Rodrigues 2010). With the growth of private television networks and the available options of watching movies and other entertainment content on multiple channels had moved the audience from the cinema halls to the television sets. This change in the consumption of entertainment content, including movie viewing pattern, had caused the decline of the single-screen cinemas. In the initial years of globalization, in India, in the semi-urban and rural areas group viewing of television and watching a film in the makeshift 'video halls' were still prevalent. Soon the habit withered away as the television entered almost every household. Introduction of video cassettes and later DVDs had caused more damage to the cinema halls. People glued to the TV set watching soap operas, a new genre of entertainment programmes (Athique and Hill 2007). Madhu Jain (1990), had attributed the shift of audiences' choice from cinemas to TV and Video, well before the globalization process initiated in India, to class consciousness. She wrote, "the gentile class had retreated to the comfort of television and video', leaving cinema halls to 'the children of the mean streets (Jain 1990)." The habit of going to cinemas was brought back with the introduction of the multiplex in the urban area (Athique and Hill 2007). The film viewing in the multiplex has been considered more like packaged entertainment rather than just watching a film. The package comes with ‘going out’, ‘being cool’ and ‘eating out’.

The world entangled in the World Wide Web. As the scholars of globalization (Robertson 1991, Featherstone 1990) would argue that communication has been the flagship instrument in turning the globe into a single entity, the internet and the World Wide Web had integrated the world of entertainment as well. The growth of the internet and various illegitimate methods of downloading movies and the rampant piracy had also impacted the percentage of the movie-going audience. The film-buffs preferred to sit in front of their desktops or laptops. As the cheap internet data and smartphone have become readily available, the consumers found the option of consuming entertainment content, including movies in their private zone. World Wide Web provided more options than the TV channels to the consumers. This also provided the flexibility of choosing the media content and timing of consumption. While Youtube has been the central platform of dishing out such entertainment content free of cost, soon the concept of Over The Top (OTT) media channels crowded the market tapping the new media consumption habit of the new generation (Verma 2019).

OTT is nothing but streaming content to its consumers directly through the internet. It refers to the process of bypassing the traditional channels of media content distribution like telephone networks or cable TVs. This is why it called as 'chord cutting'. Anyone with an internet connection, either broadband or mobile, can enjoy the content at their own time and leisure. To some media-pundits, this new channel of media content delivery determines how the entertainment industry is going to function in the future. It is just beginning to grow. It is also to noted that OTT not restricted to the entertainment content alone. It may refer to ‘video-on-demand’ platforms, but it includes audio streaming, messaging services or internet-based voice calling services.

However, as things stand now in India, OTT is mostly used for streaming entertainment content- which includes films, exclusive web series and television shows and serials.

OTT channels like Netflix, Prime Video, Zee 5, Hotstar and several others caught the imagination of the first generation digital media consumers termed as Digital Mainstream. Most of them are first-generation smartphone users and consuming entertainment content only on mobile devices.

A section of the audience, estimated to be 190 million in 2018 (KPMG 2019) may still view the programmes of the OTT service providers streaming on their television set. However, a large section, estimated to be 310 million, (KPMG 2019) of the audience seems to prefer watching the OTT media content on the mobile devices on the go and through bundled plans provided by the telecom companies.

This paper tries to probe into the changing behavioural pattern of the consumers of the entertainment content, especially of cinema and the reasons behind the change in the manner in which they consume the content in this age of OTT.

Literature Review

Globalization considered to be a continuous process by which the economies, societies, cultures integrated. This integration is possible through a globalized network of communication, transportation, business and use of advanced technology (Featherstone 1990, Friedman 1990, Robertson 1991).

The economic liberalization process has influenced the Indian economy and the culture in a big way. According to Matusitz and Payano (2011), Bollywood has transformed to make its footprint into the global entertainment sector. It had got an 'inward connectivity' by connecting the Indian diaspora and 'outward connectivity' investing into the Hollywood and shooting outside India (Lorenzen and Mudambi 2010). Thereby the Indian Film Industry brought in a lot of concepts, ideas, technologies from the West, mainly from North America (Ibid). The Indian audience was also highly influenced by Western products.

At the same time, the entertainment programmes on the private television and telecast of Bollywood films on TV set had changed the Indian entertainment consumption culture (Athique and Hill 2007). As far as the technological development that happened in East Asia, new devices had also penetrated the Indian market. In the early days of globalization, India had witnessed the entry of Japanese Walkman, Video Record Player, Video Cassette Recorder, among others (Du Gay et al. 2013, Epstein 2006, Wasser 2009). These devices had changed the audience' entertainment consumption pattern. This was possible due to the open market propelled by globalization.

The entertainment media changed its landscape in India with the viewing pattern of the Indian audience since then. The change that started in the 1990s through the globalization process and introduction of private television, VCR, VCP, later DVD and online pirated streaming culminated in Over The Top (OTT services) (Athique and Hill 2007, Verma 2019). The West also influenced this service via globalization process). The concept of OTT had been introduced in the West long before it reached the Indian audience. It all started with video rental services. Amazon had launched its business in 2011, and Netflix was a DVD-by-Mail rental company set up in 1997. Gradually both the companies became the largest provider of streaming film and television shows (Cunningham and Silver 2013).

According to the ABI Research (2014), OTT defined as "online video from services and operators that distributed over several channels including fixed (e.g. to computers, connected computer equipment, tablets) and mobile (e.g. smartphones and tablets) broadband - not associated with a pay-TV service provider subscription."

The OTT content consumption is quite high among the millennials who are gradually shifting from traditional TV to the OTT platforms as fast as the changing technology. According to EMarketer, as quoted by Verma (2019), by 2022, 55.1 million entertainment-consumers only in the United States will not consume entertainment content through traditional pay-TV. Verma (2019) attributes this change in the consumption pattern vis-a-vis OTT content to:

-Streaming of unlimited audio and video content

-Reasonable subscription models, either on pay-as-you-watch or ‘freemium’ (allowed to watch a certain amount of free content) or completely subscription

-Availability of content on a wide range of devices that may include smartphones, tablets, desktops, smart TV or set-top boxes.

-Easy entry and exit from the subscribed platform

- Availability of original web series or recently-released moves on the platform

-On-demand availability of content without waiting for a stipulated time of a TV show or airing of movie as in the case of TV

This service requires specific devices and elements on the part of the OTT companies. According to Verma (2019), the bare essential components are Encoders, Content Delivery Network (CDN), Content Management System, Digital Rights Management (DRM), Recommendation Engine and Analytics Engine. However, on the part of the audience smartphone and internet connectivity is what the bare minimum device and element required (Ibid).

Nevertheless, this state of affairs in the consumption pattern of the audience has not changed suddenly. There has been a gradual shift in this pattern over the decades. Since the invention of cinema and then television, the technology or the medium has undergone a sea change. There is a perennial debate if the technology or the innovations in the medium have forced the consumers to change their behaviour or the change in the societal framework and related behavioural patterns have forced the producers of the entertainment content to change. Waterman et al. (2013) would argue that it is the broader socio-economic forces that have caused the changes in media consumers' behaviour and not just the technology.

Long before Netflix had emerged as a popular OTT platform in India and even in the USA, they had surprised many by bagging Emmy nominations in 2013 for their original creations such as *Arrested Development* and *House of Cards* (Curtin et al. 2014). The concept of a streaming platform producing original content and competing at the prestigious award ceremony caused disruptions in the creation, distribution and consumption pattern of the media content.

Earlier, cinemas produced keeping the big screens in mind. With the advent of television, the established movie production companies were not worried about losing their audience or revenues. They ignored the changing viewing pattern of media consumers. Instead, they were confident that the consumers would be bound to watch the movies, they were producing for the big screen. The production and distribution companies were attempting to make a profit through multiple channels of distribution like releasing the films in cinemas, launching the same content in the form of digital video discs (DVD) and premiering it on television after a certain period (Curtin et al. 2014). Interestingly this strategy had to bow down to the technological revolution and changed viewing and behavioural pattern.

It was the cable television networks that changed the whole ball game. The consumers were given more choices among hundreds of channels. So they did not have to wait for the next release. They enjoyed films and other entertainment content sitting in the comfort zone of their drawing room or the bedroom. The TV channels gradually started producing original and innovative content (Ganz Battler 2004) targeted at the audience, who would watch them at home. The technology companies invented new devices like Video Cassette Players (VCP) to tap this 'touch-friendly' audience. The consumers enjoyed the comfort of home while watching movies in VCPs. It had challenged the basic principles of film and television (Du Gay et al. 2013, Epstein 2006, Wasser 2009). The new disruptions had forced mergers of different production and distribution companies and the cable television companies. The premier companies went into strict contracts with the top talent in film, television, music and publishing. At the same time, according to Tryon (2009) and Klinger (2006), they reluctantly reacted to the changes in the audience behaviours in the initial stage.

So, the audience reduced their screen size in the process of shifting from the big screen to the small screen. In India, the impact of this behaviour felt after the globalization in the decade of the 1990s. First, the private cable and satellite television channels crowded the market taking away the monopoly of the state-run Doordarshan. The original entertainment content produced by the TV channels had attracted the middle-class audience and India was a large consumer market for advertisements.

So the Indian audience reduced the 'screen size', won over the authority of viewing the programmes of their choice, and gradually there was a massive drop in movie-going audience as the single screen. The long-running films in the cinema halls were no more the prime attraction for the Indian audience. They had a lot more options available on the multi-channel small screens. Additionally, the audience enjoyed the films on VCPs.

In early 2000, with the emergence of computers, the traditional video cassettes were replaced by digital video discs (DVDs).

The issue of piracy had caused much damage to the film industry as Burkart (2010) suggested that despite strict legal provisions and stricter technical methods, the consumers have always found their way of consuming the content bypassing them. The video cassettes and later the DVDs duplicated and the peer to peer sharing of the same content made this business less profitable. From the mid-1990s in the USA and early 2000 in India, a few companies started with the video-on-demand and online video distribution service (Cunningham and Silver 2013). The companies like Netflix had started in the USA with the concept of DVD rental business. Amazon started its service in 2011, whereas Netflix started as a DVD-by-mail rental company in 1997. Later, by the year 2013, Netflix positioned itself as the biggest streaming service company which streamed film and television content and also started producing original content.

At the same time, it is to notice that despite the screen size going smaller, the Indian audience did not deviate much from their habit of 'social viewing'. Either they watched the entertainment content at home with family and friends, sometimes with the neighbours or in social gatherings, especially in rural or semi-urban areas.

The emergence of the world wide web and the internet in India from the late 1990s slowly started changing the whole entertainment ecosphere. The audiovisual waves were "digitized, compressed and multiplexed" (Epstein 2005), which eventually helped in augmenting the speed and volume of delivery of the media content.

The change happened fast, as the technology developed. Entertainment content was more comfortable to avail and consume. With the growth of bandwidth and cheap availability of the data, the new audience began to consume entertainment content online. Many of them started enjoying the content almost free of cost, either through illegal means like using Torrent or social media sites like YouTube where the User Generated Content (UGC) dominated by the illegal uploads of various movies (Burgess et al. 2009). The audience also shared the content either in the form of discs or online, among their group of friends. It severely impacted the business of the film industry. It also did another thing. According to Marshall and Venturini (2012), the cloud storage, digital delivery avenues, improved gadgets, starting from desktops to the mobile phone provided more power to the audience, and they demanded: "anytime, anywhere access to the content."

The OTT streaming platforms attempted to fill up the demand space and plug the loss in the business by adopting a different revenue generation model. Platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime changed their model of business to tap this new media audience. This digital disruption compelled the creators and distributors of entertainment content, especially cinema, to be innovative in their distribution strategy and utilize digital platforms like OTT and social media. As Du Gay (2013) suggests, this disruption mainly confined to the distribution strategy, and it hardly changed the way the creators and the actors worked. Instead, it considered the second phase of the digital age, where the creative people had to invest more time and energy without being adequately compensated.

Television channels and production companies were first off the block. They either tied up with the OTT platforms or launched their own OTT services. For example, the Zee Entertainment Company launched Zee5, the Star India started streaming their content through Hotstar, and many other legacy channels took the same way. At the same time, the production houses like Balaji Entertainment company launched its own OTT platform like Alt Balaji and started producing original content for the OTT consumers.

What happened with this change was that the consumers of the entertainment content reduced their screen size further as they shifted from large screen to TV to desktop or laptop to smartphone.

The viewing pattern also underwent a gradual change. From community viewing (in cinema hall) to family viewing (watching TV with family members) it became individual viewing (in the screen of a mobile phone). The content creators had to change the way they produced OTT platform-specific exclusive content.

There has been much research on the quantification of the mobile audience and the production of the entertainment content suited for the millennial audience. However, there has not been much research, especially in India, on why the millennials are shifting to smaller screens, what is their viewing pattern and what do they want to watch-.

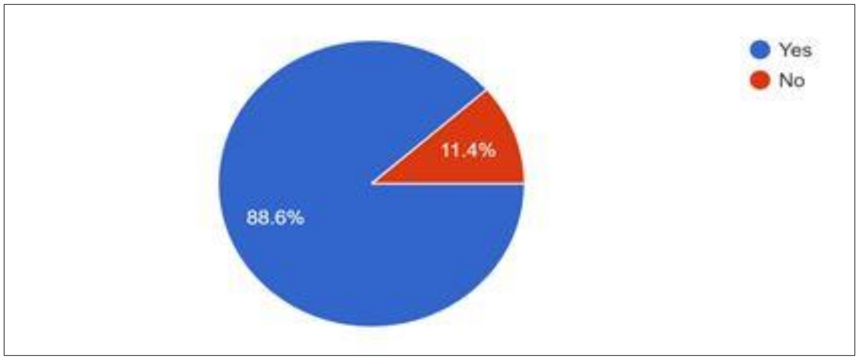
The research tries to probe into this shift in the cinema viewing pattern of the digital mainstream in Indian urban areas in the globalized world and find out why they are making these choices.

Methodology

In order to find out why the entertainment media consumers prefer small screen to big screen, this research has adapted a 'mixed method' (Jhonson and Onwuegbuzie 2004) combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. A small survey was done with 70 respondents responding to a set of questions on the choices they make and the reasons behind those choices while watching cinema content on a small screen. Here the numbers tell a strong story about how the audience which is mostly in the age group of 18-35 are shifting their base from the big screen to the small screens. While the numbers are significant, the qualitative methods give importance to the words using deductive methods (Bryman 2016). Semi-structured interviews were conducted among the viewers of the entertainment content on OTT platform to decipher a broader picture of the recent trend among the urban audience.

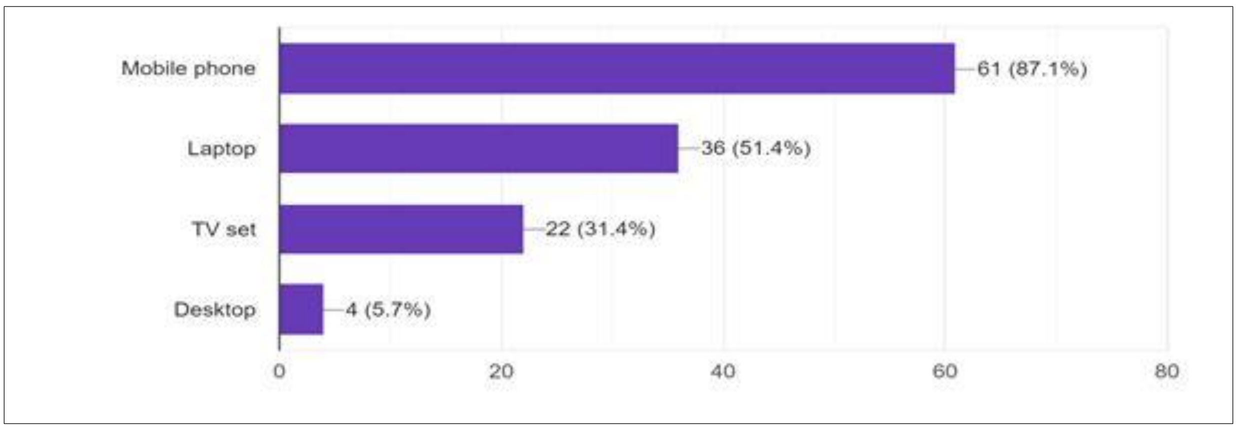
Findings

The survey that conducted to understand the urban audience and 7 out of 10 respondents were in the age bracket of 18 to 25 years, and almost 65 per cent of them were female respondents. About 20 per cent of people surveyed were above 35 years. An overwhelming majority of them, nearly 89 per cent watch films on OTT platforms like Amazon Prime Video, Hotstar, Netflix, Zee5, etc.



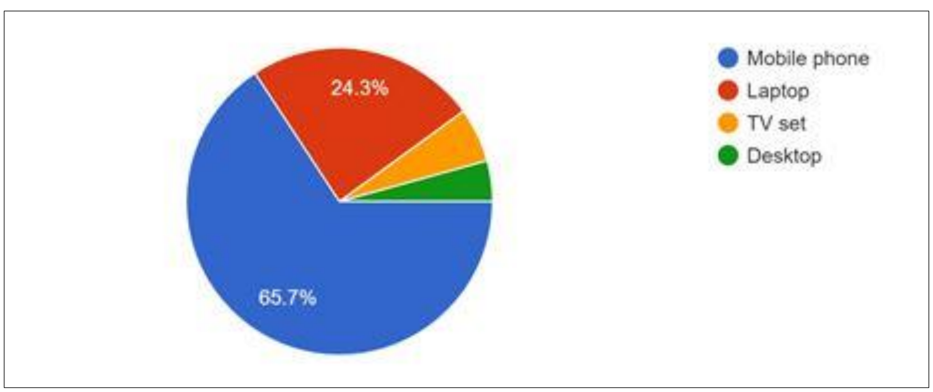
1. Do you watch films on OTT platforms like Netflix, Prime Video, Hotstar, etc?

Among them, 87 per cent use mobile phone devices to watch the OTT content followed by 51 per cent who watch it on the laptop as well. A little less than one-third of the respondents watch OTT content connected to their traditional TV set and a meagre 6 per cent use desktops.



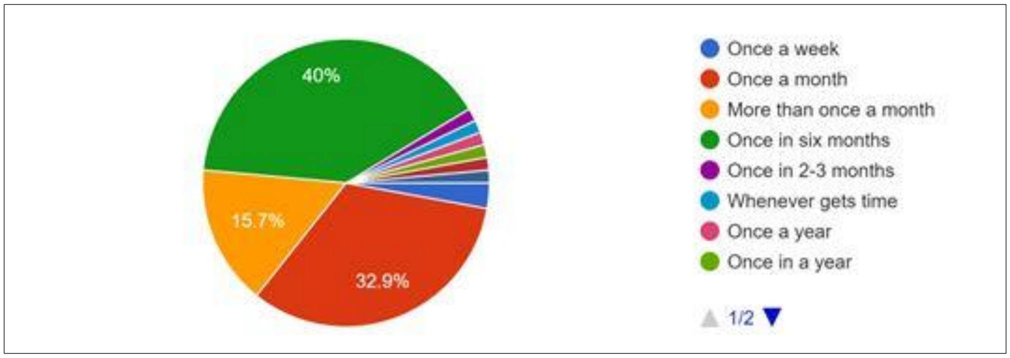
2. Which are the devices do you use to watch OTT content?

There was overlapping use of mobile and laptop devices for watching the OTT content. Among the devices, 66 per cent, respondents prefer mobile phones, while 24 per cent prefer a laptop.



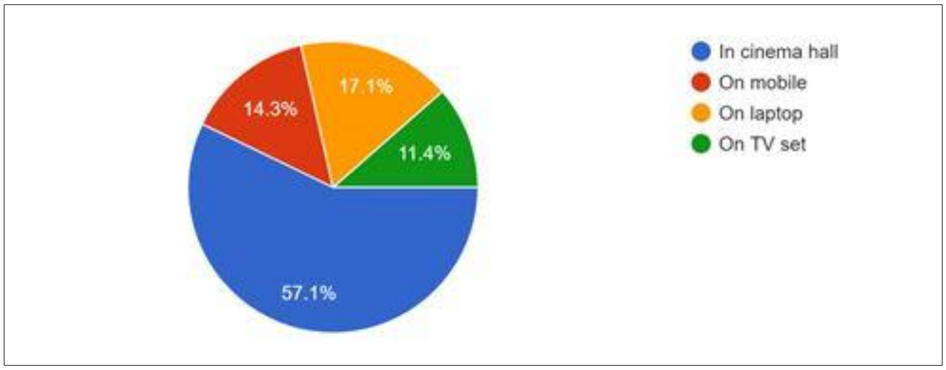
3. Which is the device you use the most to watch OTT content?

Forty per cent of the respondents go to the cinema hall to watch a movie only once in six months while about 33 per cent go to watch a movie in a theatre once a month and only 16 per cent go to cinema hall more than once a month.



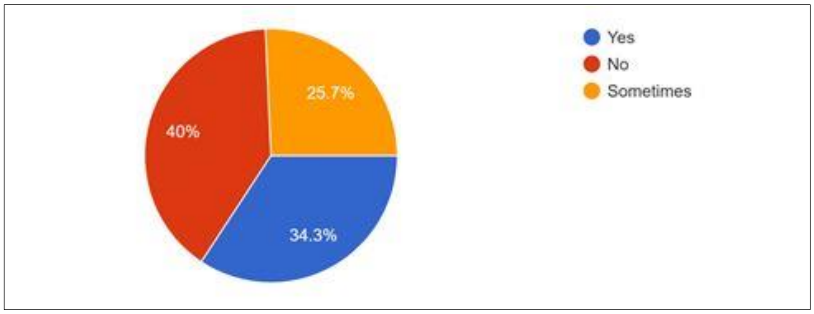
4. How often do you go to the cinema hall to watch a movie?

A majority of 57 per cent of respondents enjoy watching movies in a cinema hall, 17 per cent on a laptop while 14 per cent of the respondents enjoy watching it on mobile devices.



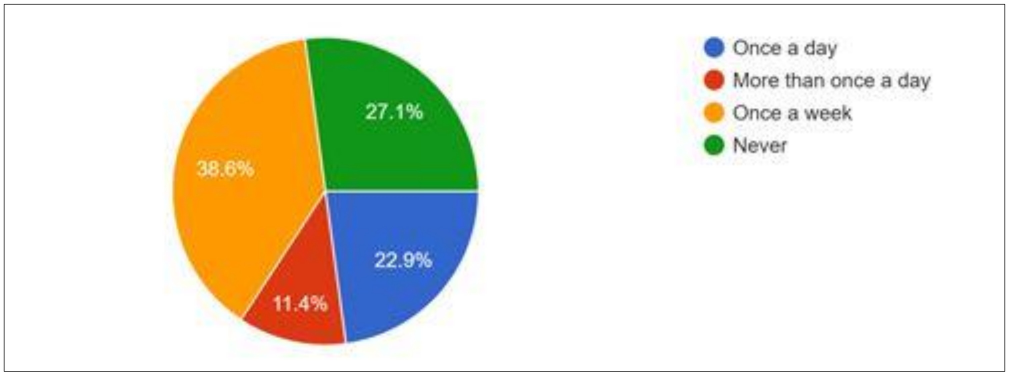
5. Where do you enjoy watching a movie the most?

Forty per cent of those surveyed do not watch TV channels on mobile devices, followed by 34 per cent who watch TV channels on mobile devices.



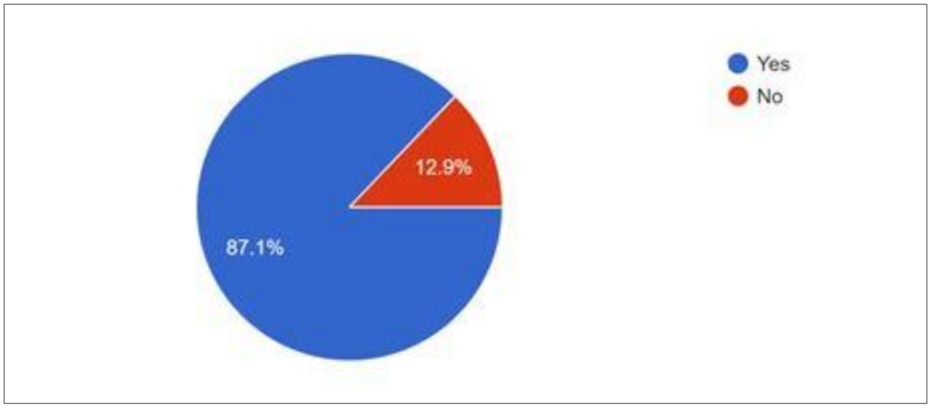
6. Do you watch TV channels on mobile devices?

Among those who watch TV channels streaming their programmes on mobile devices, 39 per cent watch it only once a week while only 11 per cent watch it more than once a day.



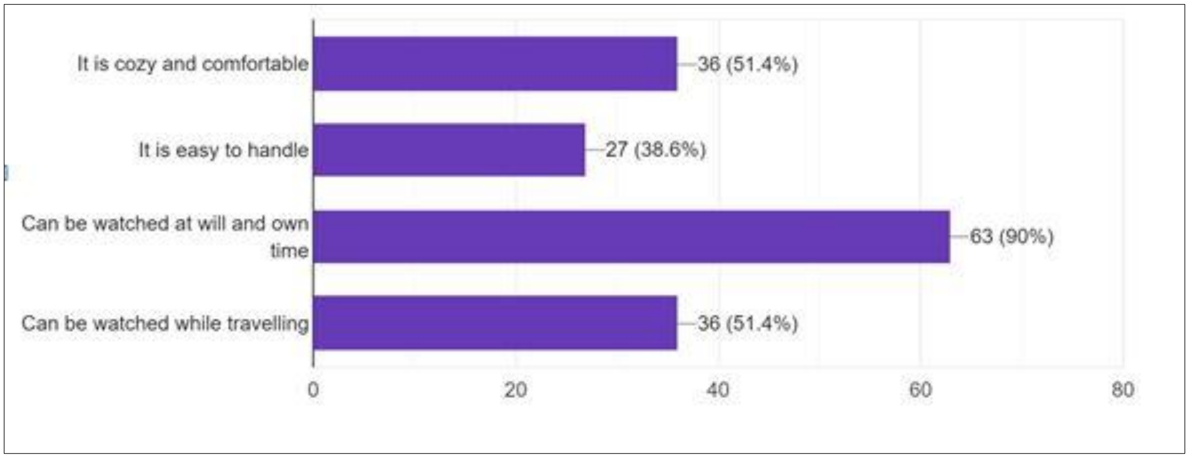
7. How often do you watch the content of the TV channels on mobile devices?

An overwhelming 87 per cent of people surveyed agree that OTT platforms have more options for content than TV channels.



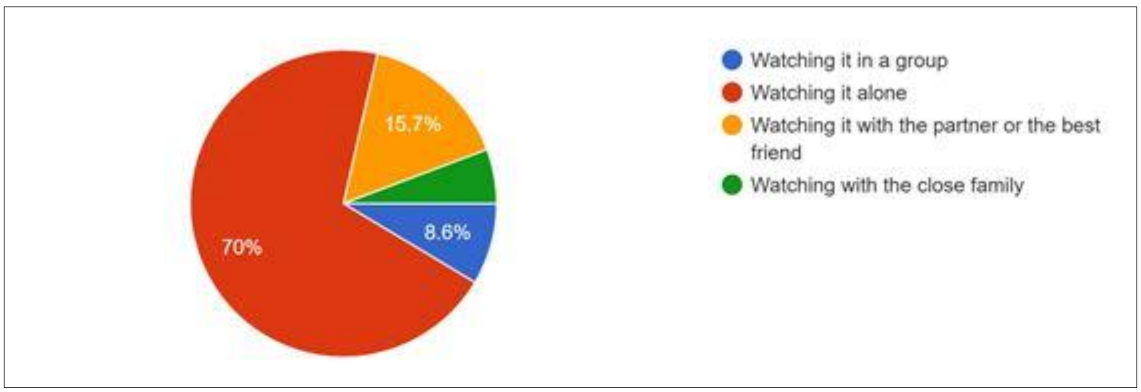
8. Do OTT platforms have more options for content than TV channels?

Ninety per cent of the respondents prefer watching OTT content on mobile devices or laptop as it gives them the freedom to watch the content at their own will and time. More than half of the respondents feel cosy and comfortable in watching it on mobile or laptop devices, and they can watch the content while travelling.



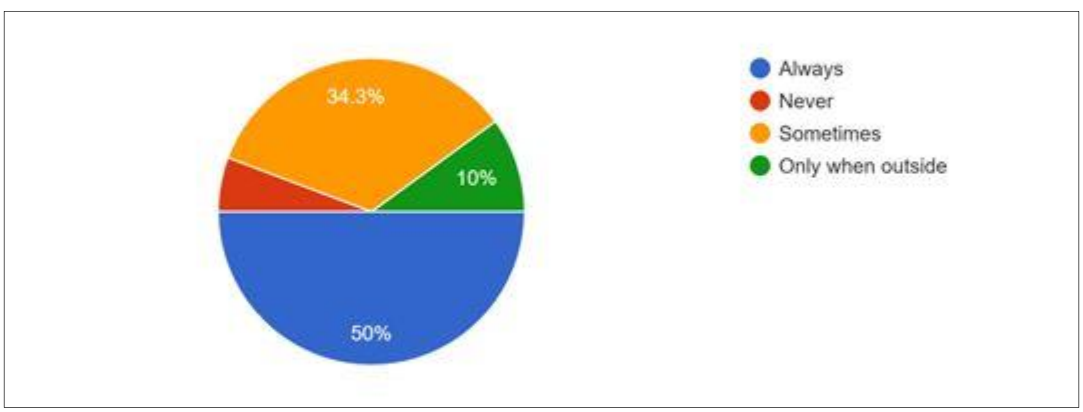
9. Why do you love to watch OTT content on mobile or laptop?

Seventy per cent of the respondents love to watch the OTT content alone, and only 16 per cent prefer to watch it with the partner or the best friend.



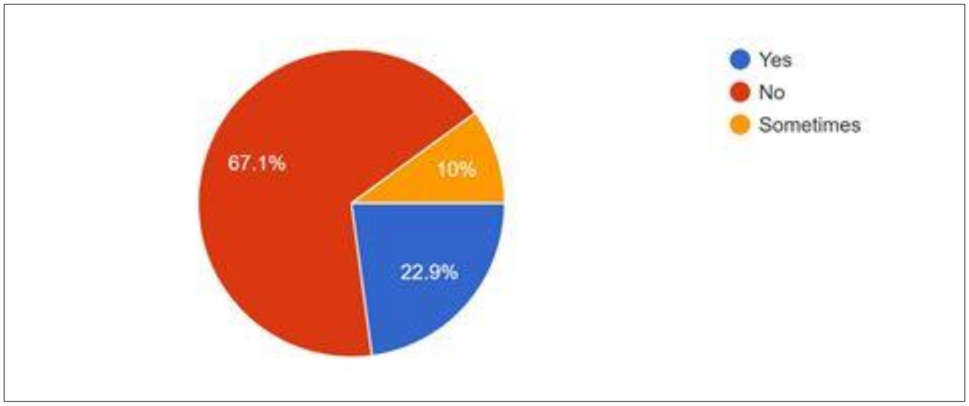
10. Which one do you prefer the most while watching a movie or OTT content?

Fifty per cent of the respondents always watch headphones or earphones while watching OTT content on mobile, and 34 per cent use it sometimes while only 6 per cent never use it.



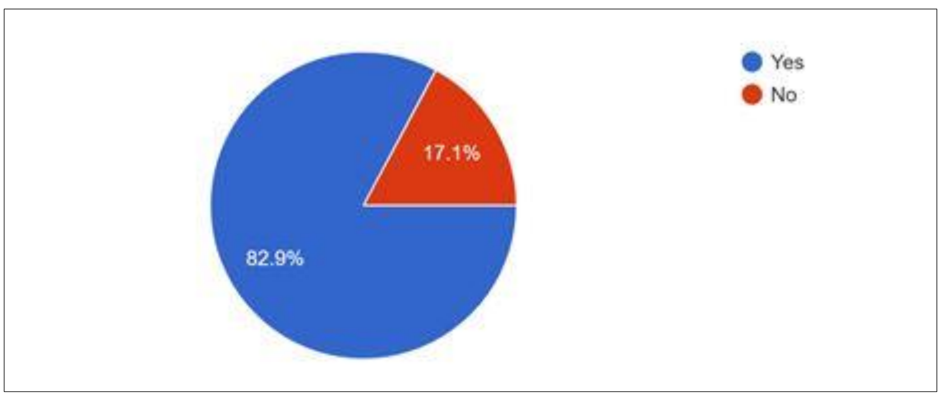
11. Do you use headphone/earphone while watching OTT content on mobile?

Nearly 7 out of 10 respondents do not find it challenging to watch content on a big screen after watching it on the smaller screens.



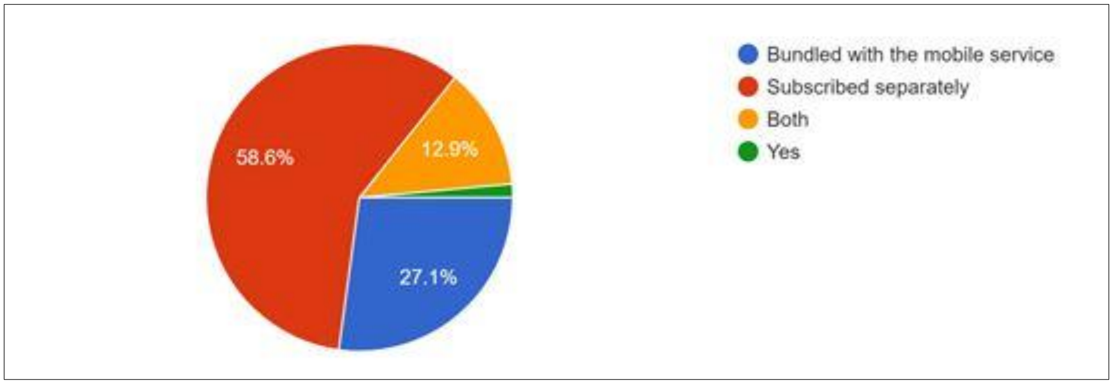
12. Do you find it challenging to watch content on a big screen after watching it on the smaller screens?

Eighty-three per cent of respondents subscribed to OTT platforms, and among them, nearly 40 per cent has subscribed to at least one OTT platform. In contrast, 27 per cent subscribed to more than two OTT platforms and nearly 60 per cent have subscribed to them separately compared to 27 per cent who are enjoying it as a bundled service of the mobile service providers.



13. Have you subscribed to any OTT platform?

Half of the people surveyed are ready to pay for selective content, while 29 per cent say they do not want to pay for the OTT content.



14. Does your subscription come bundled with your mobile service or have you subscribed to it separately?

Discussions

a) Going mobile

This study reveals that an overwhelming 90 per cent of those consuming OTT content is accessing it using a mobile phone device followed up by laptops. It seems the laptops which were the primary device for many during the initial years to the launching of OTT platforms replaced by mobile phones.

Despite the 'mall culture' and the craze about multiscreen cinema halls, popularly called multiplexes, the consumers of cinema are gradually decreasing their visits to the cinema halls. Only 16 per cent of the people surveyed say they generally visit a movie hall to watch a film more than once a month. Majority of them go once every six months.

b) Love for the big screen

Here comes an interesting fact that even though the consumers of the entertainment content are moving away from the cinema halls, nearly 60 per cent is claiming that they enjoy watching a movie the most in a cinema hall. It seems that the consumers are not still not done with their preference for a big screen. Their preference for going to cinema halls corroborated by the findings of the survey that the majority of the respondents state that they like big screens more than the mobile screens.

While there is a complicated preference over the screen size and going to the cinema halls as far as watching movies is concerned, there is a clear statement over television from the respondents.

c) Traditional TV's lost battle

Majority of them do not watch TV even on their mobile devices. Among a quarter of the respondents who are still watching TV channels on mobile devices also watch it once a week on average. Again a majority of them do not watch cinema on TV at all. The simple reason that gets revealed from the survey is that they get more options in the OTT channels rather than in the TV channels.

d) Isolation in mobility

So why are people preferring mobile devices? The most pressing reasons for the people shifting towards smaller screens despite their not-yet-lost-love for big screens found when the persons surveyed replied to the question about why they love to watch OTT content on the mobile devices or laptops.

Their discretion and authority over choosing their own time to watch content come both with the platforms and mobile devices. More than half of them also find it cosy and comfortable to use the device to watch the OTT content, and it used while travelling.

An exciting trend in the behaviour of the consumers of the OTT content has come into the fore in the survey. As high as 70 per cent of the respondents have opined that they prefer to watch the content alone and only 16 per cent want to watch it with their best friend or their partner. The young OTT generation is cutting the family and common chords as they are shrinking to their own comfortable 'alone' zone from the spheres of social viewing.

As the study suggests, half of the respondents disconnect themselves from the people around them as they always use earphones while watching OTT content. One respondent, while being interviewed, confessed that she would love to watch the content of her choice and let her partner enjoy the content he wants to watch lying on the same bed. After all, their choice may not match, and they may choose not to conflict with which cinema should stream. This finding supports Barkhuus’ (2009) argument that younger consumers are highly personalizing their media consumption experience and consider this as a good sign. This process of personalization has created different fragments of the audience which was the earlier uniform mass audience in the age of traditional TV.

e) Pay or get it free

As far as the subscription issue is concerned, it is perhaps typical for the urban media consumers to subscribe to the OTT platforms as about 35 persons out of 100 are subscribed to at least two OTT channels. Even though the internet service providers are offering OTT services bundled with their rental or pre-paid subscriptions, As high as almost 60 per cent of respondents reveal that they have subscribed to the OTT channels separately. At the same time, half of them are not hesitant to pay for the selective content even though about 30 per cent of respondents do not like to pay for OTT content.

f) Glocal Content

OTT has offered the viewers a unique opportunity to view global as well as local content. This has created a situation- where the content impacted in either way. It could be in a language that the audience is comfortable with, but the storyline, treatment, use of expressions influence the foreign content. The OTT platform subscription patterns show people are interested in both Indian and foreign content.

Conclusions

The debate over if the technology drives the changes in the behaviour of the media consumers or the consumers force technological innovations is a never-ending one. It seems both complement each other. This probe into the consumers' behaviour in connection with the OTT content and television and film viewing vis a vis the technological changes, shows the consumers prefer OTT content due to not only technological evolution but also due to the socio-economic and behavioural changes influenced by globalization. Among the young media consumers, the love for the big screen and social group viewing may remain intact, but they still prefer to be glued to the small screens in their isolated comfort zone at their own time and will.

Even if Jones (2009) defines the changes with the prism of a ‘social disconnection’, there are other scholars like Cusumano and Summa (2011) who argue that despite the digital mobile entertainment consumers' preference revolves around private, 'disconnected-from-the-world-around-them', the audience connects with their peers and friends to discuss the content over virtual social media spaces. They connect to a more significant global communication network. According to them, there may be changes in social dynamics, but it may not mean that the entertainment content consumption patterns of the youth have become 'less-social'. Platforms like Facebook have launched a 'watch party' for a virtual group viewing of the videos available on their social platforms. However, that cannot replace the traditional social group viewing of cinema.

Several established filmmakers are creating content exclusively delivered by OTT platforms. According to the filmmakers, there is not much difference in the making; the only thing that needs keeping in mind is the short attention of the audience. Therefore scenes are short and taut. Noted film director Anurag Kasyap, who also makes content for OTT said in an interview: With no censor and fewer budget constraints, they provide more opportunities. (The Hindu, April 3 2020)

However, there is another issue. As there is no censorship (till the time of writing this) in the content meant for OTT-graphic violence, prurient scenes and expletives abound. This might impact viewers of impressionable age, as mobile phones are ubiquitous and children are likely to have access to these contents. Absence of censorship might help the creative filmmakers to have their freedom of expression. However, it could also impact the children, and to some extent, our cultural and behavioural norms of the society.

The process of globalization brings in new technologies and services to countries that do not have them. Often these come with content which also has a cultural construct of the originating country. It has the potential to impact and get into the culture of the country where it reaches. However, this study finds a different phenomenon with OTT services. In the initial days, OTT services might have brought content and along with it cultural constructs from other societies to the Indian societies, but with time they have changed their shape, both in content and in terms of its impact on the cultural behaviour. It has developed indigenous cultural constructs through localized content. Gradually the content and form are being micro-localized.

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