

USE OF FOUL LANGUAGE AND VIOLENCE IN WEB SERIES: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY**Vandana Yadav**Research Scholar, Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, Manipal University Jaipur,
Jaipur, Rajasthan**Dr. Vaishali Kapoor**Associate Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Manipal University Jaipur,
Jaipur, Rajasthan**Adarsh Kumar**Assistant Professor, School of Journalism & Mass Communication, Noida International University,
Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh**Abstract**

It is considered that whatever a person sees is what he thinks too. And what he thinks reflects in the way he talks. Thus, whatever a man watches or whatever he is shown is important. Slowly, the type of tendency which is imbibed by a person, also flourishes in the society. These days, OTT is emerging as a rapidly growing alternate for entertainment. It is defined as Over the Top Media Platform. It's the means for entertainment that's available easily on internet.

Previously, cinema was considered to be the only means for entertainment. Before the emergence of cinema, drama, circus, etc. used to be the means for entertainment. Then, televisions came and then came the cable operators. These days, OTT is the best option for entertainment. Until a couple of days earlier, Netflix was the only OTT platform. Then came Voot, MX player, Disney Hotstar, Zee 5 and many more. Many more brands are entering this domain of OTT platforms.

Keywords: OTT, over the top platforms, Netflix, Hotstar, web series**Introduction**

In past few years, online entertainment segment has witnessed a major growth in India. It's been possible due to altering lifestyle of viewers in India, a prominent change in content and different types of online platforms for streaming videos (Ahuja, 2020). Some people advocate the freedom for expression very strongly. However it is very important for people to realise that the rights come along with a particular responsibility and they need to be mindful of it. It is not possible to specify any specific web series or a show but people do object very strongly to abusive language and violence hurled in these shows and series. The violent scenes are sometimes scary and some people stop the episode right away. Most of these shows can't even be watched with family or with kids and this is one of the biggest challenge of these platforms.

The producers of web series and shows do so because of freedom for expression in our country. The arguments about people not watching some particular content in case they have some issue with it is not what it is now. The first thing is how come these offensive web series are produced in the first place. There has to be a mechanism for reporting offensive language and content right away to some specific platform and it is most important for the government to take necessary actions against them. A lot of web series and shows are opposed by people and protests happen or banning them as they depict some religious deities in objectionable manner of they hurt the religious sentiments of a particular group of people and that is why people protest against them. The makers of the show or the series apologise and delete the objectionable content from these series or shows (PTI, 2021).

The main reason why these OTT platforms are gaining so much popularity is that general audience has the freedom of watching anything from anywhere from the convenience of their smartphone. One of the biggest worries is that the web series released on these OTT platforms have a lot of violence, pornographic scenes, vulgar language, etc. So anyone watching such scenes would definitely have bad effect on his or her mind, especially the teenagers and kids. The producers of these web series are only looking at making money and that is why they add a lot of pornographic content into these shows. The supporters of the OTT platforms say that for making the story look original, sexual intimacy, violence, vulgar language, etc. are important and it is not possible to not show them. But, to what extent these things should be shown still remains to be the biggest question. Is it so important to display vulgar language, pornographic scenes, violence, etc. to make a web series hit and successful and for the sake of originality? People supporting the OTT platforms and web series even say that these programs and web series can't be watched with family. Every member of the family watches it alone.

So, in case we go by reasoning of this support that the web series may be watched alone, should we allow our family members to watch it? Should we allow them to pollute the minds of our teenagers and our kids and to what extent? Answer for this would definitely be a no. Some kind of reasonable control should be exercised on displaying this kind of adult content. These days' people have completely stopped visiting the movie halls due to the COVID situation. Under such circumstances, OTT platforms have become really popular (Verma, 2020). In coming future, the OTT platforms are likely to gain even more popularity. Cable Television and movies cannot show adult content. Teenagers cannot watch any adult movie in the movie halls and even cable television can't show such content. However, sexual content is available very easily on their mobile phones. Teenagers watch the sexual content without any kind of restrictions. Since everything is easily available on their smartphones, the parents also can't keep a control over what they watch or they cannot restrict their screen time. It is practically not possible and that is why it is important to restrict the display of content itself. This is what most of the journals and researches have concluded. The producers use harsh and provocative language so that people think that the show they are producing is daring (Bajpai, 2019).

The producers of the web series which are released on the OTT platforms have completely gone rogue. They cram up their production with these kind of violent and execrable content which even the ardent seeker of the artistic freedom might yearn for leash. Specifically the profanities fly completely free leaving many wondering if it is important to put some control over the producers of the web series. It is

not surprising that voice in government is slowly rising in favour of putting a censor control over the content of these web series and OTT platform and it's unlikely to go long before the series and the movies on the OTT platforms get bowdlerised(**Verma, 2020**). These OTT platforms used to follow the self-regulatory code of conduct under IMAI (Internet and Mobile Association of India). However, after a couple of complaints and protests, Ministry for Information and Broadcast, strained at least for regulating at best times and it's now ready to come forward and wield shears. It is extremely important and now has become unavoidable for them to keep mum. There is absolutely no control over the producers of these web series who are producing anything and everything and are displaying it took over the OTT platforms(**Upadhyay, 2021**).

When there is absolutely no control over displaying this type of sexual content, abusive language and violence on the OTT platform, the minds of the younger generation may be corrupted with the feelings of violence or sex. It's high time that our government intervenes and formulates some kind of laws or rules for the content which is displayed on these OTT platforms or else it could have quite harmful effect on development of character of the younger generation of today.

Literature Review

The OTT platforms are becoming the best and the most preferable option for the purpose of entertainment for most of the people. It is not only for shows. Since the movie halls are being shut everywhere since past several months, the big ticket films are also being released on the OTT platforms. Movie halls are not opening because of the COVID situation and thus the OTT platforms are the new multiplex now. The viewers of the OTT platforms are not just the millennial anymore. Recently, Netflix became one of the leading streaming service for entertainment in the world and it launched the user interface even in the Hindi language. Although there are several other OTT channels too including MX player, Disney Hotstar and the like (**Suman, 2021**). It has been estimated that approximately 12 million viewers have initiated into this whole universe of web shows and series in Hindi lingual markets during this lockdown period. The whole world of consumption of video is rapidly changing. The television viewing habits are also being redefined and innovative models of business are opening the new markets. As per a report, the users in India are spending about 12% additional time in streaming the online platforms than what they did earlier (**Mohanty, 2021**). However you might have recently come across terms like "Controversy around these OTT shows", insufficient regulations, etc. This kind of a description even in some publication opposes stringent rules for the streaming services (**Deep, 2021**). Even Netflix has been able to fall into controversy because of its national and international shows (**Indianexpress, 2020**)

This is in spite of the fact that the total numbers of viewers switching to online platforms is going up and up day by day. The players in the industry are also catering to the taste and preferences of the audience and vying for the attention of the public. Viewers are expecting a robust background of stories which are different and suitable for the different moods of the viewers. Sometimes, the viewer's just wish to relax and watch some delightful comedy series and other times, they just wish to enjoy some pulse pounding thrilling story which takes them on edge of their seats.

There are much more viewers and shows than ever before in the expanding universe of entertainment. The creators of these web series and shows are now looking up to these top online platforms. The streaming services have not done so well earlier. The questions about the performance of these OTT platforms has become even graver since this pandemic outbreak. During the lockdown, these OTT platforms were the only mode of entertainment for people stuck inside their homes. All the theatres were shut, and there was no other place where people could go to entertain themselves. While the traditional media such as television, radio, press, movies, etc. have been constantly regulated by government since a very long time, the OTT platforms and digital media have managed to escape the scrutiny. All the OTT platforms have signed earlier on to the self-regulator conduct for best practices under aegis of IAMAI however there's no official policy by the government for it. But, it might change very soon. At present, the OTT platforms which are streamed digitally come under domain of IT (Ministry of Information and Technologies). The government is now rethinking about the whole situation as has been indicated by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Recently, the web series, Taandav had once again sparked the debate as to whether the OTT content needs to be censored in India or not. While a large group of netizens do support this idea, others still wonder if this would be the best solution (IANS, 2021).

The issue about regulations of the OTT platforms and a need to develop the level playing fields for different types of creative media has been raised. The ministry is proposing that the content being released on the OTT platforms should come under preview of the Information and Broadcasting. Convergence of the ministries is very important here. The Ministry for Information and Broadcast is also working on light touch regime of regulatory. It would bring different sectors within the domain of entertainment and media including radio, television, print, digital media, etc. under single governance umbrella, allowing level playing fields. However, the interference of the government is not likely to be welcomed by the viewers and the producers of the OTT platforms content. The viewers and the creators of OTT platforms content consider that it would curb the creativity of content makers who are as of now enjoying the freedom of showcasing their ideas that wouldn't have been otherwise possible conventionally.

Art is considered to be the gateway for interpretations and the major source for depicting the reality. These days the OTT platforms are considered to be the best space to showcase the fearless and bold artistic content without taking any queries. They also don't have to be censored. India is the culture driven nation and our adaptation as well as acceptance for art is completely different as compared to the countries in the West. The visual content has affected Indian citizens in more than one ways and people generally accept it.

People also feel that there should be any kind of censorship on the OTT platforms since no one is being compelled to see the content. It just depends entirely on us what we want to see. Also, the censorship binds, the directors with limited options of creativity. As there is no censorship, the filmmakers are able to make movies freely, without any kind of restrictions. In case the censor board does want to take an action, it should make some rule for the issue of piracy which will not threaten the freedom of speech of the makers of the shows and the movies.

A study suggests that in the past couple of years, the unconventional content which is available on the OTT platforms and several other local platforms is on a rise. Even when some of the content might call some kind of forge related restrictions, bypassing it for getting an access would not be difficult at all. Recently, controversies started flaring up over the misinterpretations which alleged the communal content. Often, the directors and the producers tend to quit in front of the sentiments of people and as a result edit the content they upload after the release for saving themselves from any kind of legal actions.

The OTT platforms take the benefit of having a very strong viewership which is growing increasingly accustomed to consume the entertainment content with the help of their smartphones. The platforms for online streaming have swooped in for taking their own market share. Since the content, feature and the context of the online content streaming differs appropriately from the conventional television content, the challenge of investigating how far the theories of traditional methodologies and media may inform research about changing audience as well as their pattern of viewing. It is also important to note here that some of the most popular OTT platforms have millions of viewers from the rural and the urban areas. A number of studies have stated that there is a direct or an indirect impact of binge viewing online content or web series on youth. According to a study, binge behaviour is considered to be related closely to strong negative feelings. A lot of studies offered examples of the research journals which offer a correlation between body dissatisfaction, binge watching, depressive symptoms, academic loss, low self-esteem, etc. Some researchers have also assessed the effect of binge watching on the academic and social lives of the college going students. It mentions that for most of the participants, rhythm of the day they have is built around binge watching completely. For the study the respondents scheduled a specific time for binge watching the web series and then even awarded themselves for the accomplishments. While they downplayed and were also not aware about the effect of the new experience of viewing, their grades were impacted heavily, they ignored their social lives and their schedule was also determined to a certain extent by the habit of binge watching. It was also considered that binge viewing was related with loneliness as well as depression amongst the respondents belonging to the age group of 18 to 20 years ([Nigam, 2020](#)).

Objectives of the Study:

1. To explore about the popularity of web series on OTT platforms.
2. To ascertain the viewers 'opinion regarding the use of abusive language and crime scenes in Web Series.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Survey Method has been used for this study. The research records the views of audience who are the residents of Delhi-NCR. The below data has been accumulated from 113 respondents at Delhi and NCR.

The questionnaire was circulated to 150 respondents but 113 responses were successfully recorded (Response rate of around 73%).

Questionnaire:

1. Do you watch Web series on OTT platforms?
2. Do you like to watch web series?
3. Do you watch women centric web series?
4. Do you believe that most of the web series are full of abusive language?
5. Do you feel that web series portrays a lot of crime scenes unnecessarily?

4.1 GENERAL PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 1 shows the general profile of the respondents include the personal questions like age, gender, occupation etc. There are 77.88% males and 22.12% females those who have responded the questionnaire on language used by news anchors and sensational issues in Hindi News channels.

Table 1 Profile of Respondents

Variables	No of Respondents	% Age
Gender		
Males	88	77.88
Females	25	22.12
Total	113	100.00
Age		
20- 30	25	22.12
30-45	41	36.28
Above 45	47	41.59
Total	113	100.00
Education		
Graduation	36	31.86
Post Graduation or Above	52	46.02
Professional course	25	22.12
Total	113	100.00
Occupation		
Government Job	15	13.27
Private Job	87	76.99
Self Employed	11	9.73
Total	113	100.00

Marital Status		
Married	82	72.57
Unmarried	31	27.43
Total	113	100.00

Results: 53 out of 66 respondents who are between the age 20 to 45 feel that in web series abusive language is being used at large scale and 49 out of 66 respondents feel that violence becomes the most important component of web series.

Conclusion:

As the result of survey shows that most of the people who are between the ages of 20 to 45 feel that web series are only known for abusive language and violence. The OTT platforms began with the clutches of sexually explicit content and broke with sensual syndrome as they moved ahead towards the real stories and moving to deal with the issues which used to be considered to be a taboo in the Indian society. Different topics including the sexual desire to stories of depression, crime, etc. streaming on different channels reaped the jackpot for the makers. With the new look, new programs and new themes, the streaming industry in India also plans to offer the youth some stories from India which are bigger than life, fascinating, colourful as well as bold. The fame of the shows such as Sacred Games state that they are considered to be the best for the youth of India. After assessing different aspects, it may be stated clearly that online content and web series have a big impact on youth of India. The content which is being produced and offered on these OTT platforms have been easily able to grab the attention of the youth and move them from conventional soap operas of today. The content which is displayed on the OTT platforms has abusive language, sexual content and violence along with heavy use of drugs and alcohol which causes psychological effect on youth of India where they agree to suffer from problems of depression, insomnia as well as insecurities in life. Also, the youth witnesses heavy academic losses and also become prone to certain health problems. On the contrary, the preference for binge watching affects their relationships with their family members and friends.

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