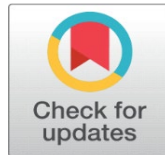


# MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN'S WITH RESPECT TO OTT PLATFORMS IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

With the rapid advancement of ICT over the past 10 years, the proliferation of over-the-top (OTT) platforms has given Indian viewers access to a vast universe of information. With the help of these web-based streaming services, viewers can make custom movies and TV shows. Platforms used by Over the Top (OTT) to deliver streaming content to users via the Internet. OTT streaming platforms like Zee5, Hotstar, Netflix, Amazon Prime, Alt Balaji, and others are readily accessible in India with the use of the internet on smartphones via applications, smart TVs via websites, and personal desktops or laptops via websites. In the last few years, there has been an increase in the representation of women on OTT stages. These stages are now hosting a number of successful shows and films that demonstrate how much the audience enjoys female-driven narrative. Exceptional female Netflix viewers increased to 40% in 2019 from 26% in 2018, according to data from Comscore. This year, a female producer or director was involved in almost half of the Netflix films that were released in India. The situation in India reflects a global trend where more women are involved in the creation of streaming content specifically for women. The study has a particular focus on the representation of women, difficulties, and government regulations in the Indian OTT platforms.

**Keywords:** Media, OTT, Women, India, Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hotstar, Social Media

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Women's representation has never been without controversy or contradiction in India. With Indira Gandhi, the first woman elected to the parliament in 1959, as an example, women have been powerfully represented in media, law, art, and politics. However, India also has some of the most ingrained gender inequalities, including violence against women, workplace and domestic discrimination, etc. Despite the fact that India has long been associated with the feminine identity of "mother India," which glorifies women as mothers and goddesses, it occasionally fails to depict women in roles other than those of mothers; such is how women are portrayed in the media.

Kid's cartoons and comic books, theatre, puppetry, dance, and music are some of the most prevalent ones, along with TV, radio, movies, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, and modern technologies like the Internet and email. The public is entertained and informed by the media. The media is a conduit for information, concepts, beliefs, and viewpoints. It has a significant impact on how individuals see a range of topics. The media is an important tool for education and socialisation and can influence women's positions and ideas in both positive and bad ways. Even though the media has contributed in increasing awareness of women's concerns, also it had an adverse effect by promoting violence against females through pornography and portraying women as a feminine body that can be purchased and sold. Overall, women are treated unfairly in the media, which perpetuates limiting gender stereotypes and the idea that women's duties are limited to those of wife, mother, and servant to men. Particularly in advertising, this is true.

With the rapid advancement of ICT over the past 10 years, the proliferation of over-the-top (OTT) platforms has given Indian viewers access to a vast universe of information. With the help of these web-based streaming services, viewers can make custom movies and TV shows. With constant competition from linear TV, the future of OTT services around the world is bright. TV has begun innovating by utilising the newest digital platforms to connect with viewers in an effort to keep up with the changes. The traditional linear television industry made OTT platforms a cornerstone of their survival plan over the past few years. Women are now being represented more frequently on OTT stages than in previous years. These stages are now hosting a number of successful shows and films that demonstrate how much the audience enjoys female-driven narrative. The situation in India reflects a global trend where more women are involved in the participation and creation of streaming content specifically for women. The study's main concern is how women are portrayed on Indian OTT platforms.

## **2. WOMEN AND MEDIA**

In the past ten years, advancements in information technology have made it possible to establish a global communications network that crosses national boundaries. This network has an influence on government policy, personal perspectives, and behaviour, particularly among children and young generation. The media has a lot more potential to help the global growth of women. Although more women are choosing career in the communications sector, very few of them possess directorial positions or member of organisations or councils that determine the policy of the media. The limitations of public and private local, national, and worldwide media entities to erase gender-based stereotypes serves as an example of a lack of gender sensitivity in the media.

## **3. OTT (OVER THE TOP)**

The number of video streaming apps has increased by an astonishing 140% in India, thanks in large part to well-known online entertainment platforms like YouTube, Netflix, and Spotify. The expanding user base shows that OTT service providers have a good chance of making money off the popularity of digital media as a channel for communication.

The consumption of media has transformed as a result of Global digitization. A rise in web access, improved sharing resources, scientific advancements, and the affordability of smart gadgets have all contributed to the establishment of new OTT media. These elements have helped to make resources available to users directly

over the internet. Due to the anticipated 45% growth, India is predicted to surpass the US to hold the second-biggest OTT market (with an estimated value of 138 billion) by the end of the financial year 2023. OTT services are probably going to abandon traditional media distribution channels in the future.

Web-based services that offer streaming video and audio content are known as over-the-top platforms, or OTT platforms. For the OTT services, you can purchase the kinds of content you wish to view. There is no need to interact with a broadcasting platform, satellite connection, or any cable company. OTT services the finest features that make over the top (OTT) more favourable than conventional watching include accessibility and subscription-based services.

#### **4. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

- To Study the future of OTT platforms in India.
- To Study the Women representation at various platforms of OTT in India.

#### **5. OTT PLATFORM: PRESENT AND FUTURE IN INDIA**

OTT platforms have supplanted movie theatres in the two years since Covid-19. Any streaming service that provides content online is referred to as "Over the Top" (OTT). OTT platforms come in a variety of forms, such as Picasso, Disney+, Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, Pluto TV, Peacock, Curiosity Stream, etc. Famous actors and directors have been urged to join in the web shows, short films, and other productions produced by this medium. OTT Platforms cost less money. Watching movies at home is more comfortable than doing it at a theatre, where it is possible to do so discreetly.

OTT Growth Factors India - India, which is now has the fastest-growing OTT industry after China, is anticipated to surpass China as the 6th-biggest market across the world by 2024. The market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 28.6% during the subsequent four years and generate \$2.9 billion in revenue.

Population urbanization and westernization, having access to technological gadgets and better bandwidth/net connectivity thanks to improved infrastructure are some of the crucial elements which caused these expansions.

#### **Women Representation in OTT Platforms in India**

- In order to raise the bar for the entertainment industry by including more women-centric roles, it is urgent to have diverse cinematographers, storytellers, writers, directors, and actors share their unique perspectives. Women make up a significant portion of the audience for the Indian entertainment industry.
- According to Monika Shergill, vice president of programming for Netflix India, more than half of the movies on the streaming service that were launched in India in 2019 had a female producer or director. From 26% to 40% of all Netflix users last year were women, up from 26% in 2018.
- All six of Amazon Prime Video's original films released in India in 2020 had women in prominent roles, but more than half of Netflix movies featured a female producer or director, signalling a fundamental shift in the business.
- A further advantage of streaming platforms is the potential for lower financial risk as compared to modern methods. Producers are therefore willing to experiment with personalities and use their creative freedom.

- The popularity of well-written and female-portrayed female characters appears to be on the rise as OTT platforms continue to spread around the globe.
- Some of the famous woman characters and stories which gain popularity in OTT platforms-
  - 1) A motivated, self-assured lady Damini Rizvi Roy 'D' in Four More Shots Please! who breaks down all barriers. She teaches all ladies that they don't require anyone's approval in order to perform the task they are passionate about.
  - 2) Vartika Chaturvedi in 'Delhi Crimes' playing role of a Police officer. Many ladies who balance job and personal life could relate to her role.
  - 3) Dr Mira Anand in 'Hostages' every single one of us learned from her role how to approach potentially life-changing crises with clarity in their mind and action.

Other than this other characters like Zarina Malik in Inside Edge, Dr Meera Kapoor in Out of Love, are some of the women centric web series which gives new dimensions and fresh content to the viewers in OTT platforms. Sony Liv, ZEE5, Alt Balaji, and even Hoichoi like regional OTT platforms have been focusing on creating a program that casts female as a main character, initiating from YouTube to Netflix to Amazon Prime. In the last year, series like "Karenjit Kaur," "Lust Stories," "Four More Shots Please," and several more have attracted record numbers of viewers. Streaming platforms this year have given us some really amazing tales and female characters, and programs and movies like Aarya, Fabulous Lives of Bollywood Wives, Bulbbul, Guilty, She, Mirzapur 2, Masaba Masaba, and Bhaag Beanie Bhaag have given some incredibly gifted performers a chance to shine. Due to their enormous potential, the diversity and plurality of what it means to be a woman in India have been made evident via OTT platforms.

We can hope that content producers resist the urge to compartmentalize women into simple to "manage" boxes and instead extend the boundaries and broaden the opportunities of female-driven storytelling.

## **6. OTT RULES AND REGULATIONS BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

New regulations for over-the-top (OTT) telecommunication companies and multimedia providers in India have been issued by the Indian government. The name of the novel regulations is 'Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code'. According to the revised regulations, OTT platforms like Amazon Prime, Netflix, and Zee5 will have to automatically categorise their content into five age-based groups: A (Adult), seven and above (U/A 7+), above thirteen (U/A 13 years), and sixteen plus (U/A 16 years). Additionally, by defining their material in accordance with the new regulations and using parental control methods, they compel the platforms of OTT to create their matter safer and related to kids. India's publishers will need to set up a three-tiered complaints procedure. The first degree of self-regulation in a framework like this would be carried out by the creators, and the next phase will be carried out by the self-governing bodies of the owner. However, the third stage will be a monitoring system.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Broadcasting video is currently among the most widely used methods across India for watching material. Global investors are backing even the smaller OTT platforms, which have a significant market impact. 'The Ormax OTT Audience Sizing Report 2022' by Ormax Media states as follows: There are currently 423 million over-the-top (OTT) users in India. Additionally, there are 30% of OTT users in the country, which implies that 3 out of 10 people watched videos on OTT platforms at least once in the previous month. Being a young country, India, these figures are sure to rise in the next years, and OTT businesses are investing significantly to take this market share. The majority of writers and directors producing women-focused on-demand videos on OTT platforms have been successful in breaking down gender stereotypes. The platform has produced and supported more content featuring women in the past years than mainstream film has in the previous five years, and this trend will continue in the years to come.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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