

# TO UNDERSTAND THE CHANGING MEDIUM PREFERENCES FOR CINEMA VIEWING IN YOUNG ADULTS SINCE THE PANDEMIC

Gaurav Chawla, Dr Manjula Srinivas

## Abstract

India is the world's second most populated country with more than 54% of its population below the age of 25, which makes India one of the youngest countries in the world. As India becomes more globalized, its population becomes more aware of the happenings & popular culture around the world. The purpose of this research paper is to study the changing patterns and preferences of the content consumed by the youth in and around India's financial capital i.e., Mumbai and to examine the reason for the sudden shift in the last few years. This is a Quantitative form of the research paper where a questionnaire is circulated amongst young audiences of the ages 18-24 living around the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.

Keywords: Internet, Globalized, India, Financial Capital, Mumbai, Quantitative, Youth, Content Consumption.

## INTRODUCTION

Film as dream, film as music. No art passes our conscience in the way film does, and goes directly to our feelings, deep down into the dark rooms of our souls.

- Ingmar Bergman

Over 100 years, the nature of films changed significantly.

In Hindi mainstream cinema, during the 20s and 30s, films generally focused on societal matters mingled with various stories of Hindu mythology (Kartorbar Khoon, 1920, directed by Shreenath Patankar, Balika Badhu, 1921, by P.T Shaida, Vikram Urvashi, 1922, by Kanjibhai Rathod.

As the country became free and united, films in the 1940 and the 50s particularly focused upon the idea of national integrity and creating a sense of hope amongst people. Many films also talked about the class disparity in the country during the time, as socialism was on the rise. Films like Kismet released in 1943, directed by Gyan Mukherjee won a Filmfare award for best film. Awaara released in 1951, directed by Shankar Jaikishan became a phenomenon in and around the countries of the soviet bloc as the film's main subject was class inequality in society. The 60s and 70s saw the rise of dacoits in Chambal which hugely impacted cinema. Films like Ganga Jamuna (1961), Jis Desh Mein Ganga Beheti Hai (1960) and Hindi cinema classic Sholay (1975) among others talked about the Chambal situation.

As the national emergency ended in the late 1970s, the era of late 70s to late 80s saw the films which tried to restore the faith of the people in the judiciary. Right from changing the climax of Sholay to films like Don and Aakrosh, the storyline of the films made sure that the judiciary is seen in a good light through the lens of the audience.

The 90s was the time when Hindi cinema delved into other genres expanding its wings. The Slapstick comedy genre became more popular than the romantic wave of the 80s. As the Indian economy liberalized, it hugely impacted the cinema-going experience. Now the middle class and lower middle class had the resources to go to a movie theatre and enjoy films with their family. The footfalls skyrocketed. Going to the theatres, which was once considered a luxury by many, became a source of entertainment for the working class. Films like Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam (1999) and Dulhe Raja (1998) became all-time blockbusters at the box office. The decade saw the rise of new superstars of the Hindi Film Industry.

Indian Cinema saw a paradigm shift in its content in the decade of the 2010s. As international films became more and more popular in India, it made the Indian film producers take risks.

Baahubali (2015 & 2017) was one such risk. The film made on a budget of nearly 500 crores (5 billion rupees) made close to 1200 crores (12 billion rupees) in the worldwide market. The film was a huge hit in the Indian Subcontinent along with China. The success of Baahubali invoked a sense of confidence among the Bollywood producers to invest huge amounts of money in filmmaking.

Bajirao Mastani (2015), Padmaavat (2017), War (2019) were amongst the most expensive Hindi films of the decade. Along with the films with big sets and huge budgets making hundreds of millions at the box office,

there were films made on a relatively tiny budget making it big at the ticket counters. Films like Stree (2018), Badhaai Ho (2018), Andhadhun (2018) made on the budget of fewer than 30 crores (300 million rupees) grossed more than 120 crores (1.2 billion rupees) at the box office. The decade also saw the rise of OTT content in India. Creative liberty, access to foreign content and minimum censorship lead to the rise of OTT content in India.

## OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study is:

1. To examine the kind of content watched by young adults in the urban areas of the country.
2. To study the cinema viewing patterns of young adults.
3. To understand if covid-19 impacted their cinema-going experience and if consumption of OTT platforms had a role in it?
4. To understand what kind of content/films they would like to view in cinema halls.
- 5.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper aims to determine whether consumption of critically acclaimed films and TV shows on OTT platforms changed the preferences of Indian urban audiences for the choice of films they watch in movie theatres and spend their money on.

This is a Quantitative form of research with the use of a questionnaire circulated among the young adults living in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. The study uses primary and secondary sources to reach its conclusion.

The primary sources include information acquired through the questionnaire. The questionnaire helps to understand the psyche of the targeted population for the research.

The questionnaire includes both MCQ and short descriptive kinds of questions which will help to add detail to the analysis. The secondary sources include write-ups, blogs, articles and case studies associated with the topic of research. IBM SPSS Statistics software has been used to analyze the survey.

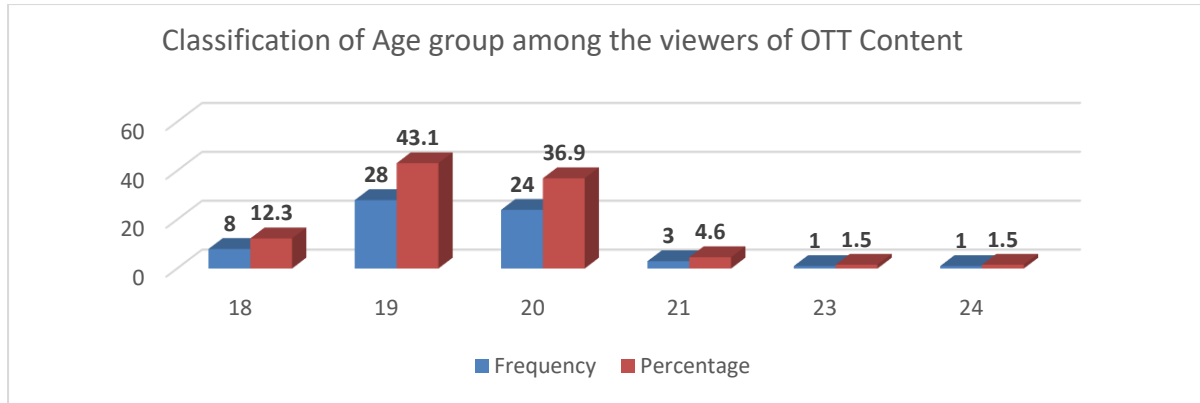
This research also takes into account various media theories. Cultivation theory creates a huge influence in this study since this study talks about the influence of media on the audiences which cultivates certain responses.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Table number 1.1 - Classification of Age group among the viewers of OTT Content

Classification of Age group among the viewers of OTT Content			
		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	18	8	12.3
	19	28	43.1
	20	24	36.9
	21	3	4.6
	23	1	1.5
	24	1	1.5
	Total	65	100.0

Chart number 1.1 - Classification of Age group among the viewers of OTT Content



The study is targeted towards the cinema-going audience from the ages 18 to 24. As per chart number 1.1, the majority of the respondents belong to the age group 18 to 20 (92.3%). However, there is a significant minority falling in the age group of 21 to 24.

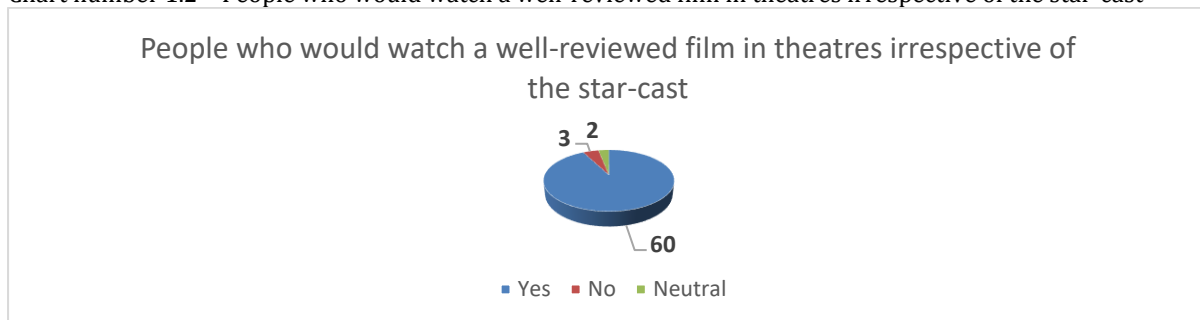
With the help of the questionnaire and through a thorough analysis of the data, we were able to determine and study the following:

1) Good Script and Good Storyline is Priority, Star Cast Comes Second

Table number 1.2 - People who would watch a well-reviewed film in theatres irrespective of the star-cast

People who would watch a well-reviewed film in theatres irrespective of the star-cast			
		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Yes	60	92.3
	No	3	4.6
	Neutral	2	3.1
	Total	65	100.0

Chart number 1.2 – People who would watch a well-reviewed film in theatres irrespective of the star-cast



With the help of a questionnaire and through proper analysis of the data variables we can analyze that irrespective of genres of films, majority of the youth will invest their time and money on films which tell a good story, a good script and an overall well-made film.

Since the early days of Bollywood, the concept of a 'Hero' and a 'Heroine' mattered the most when people went into theatres to watch a film. Hero and Heroine mean the lead actor and actress of a film.

But when asked to the youth, whether they take into account who are the lead actors of the film, before watching it in theatres, approximately 92.3% (Table number 1.2) of them said that the cast of the film doesn't matter if the film has received good reviews. However, 4.6% (Table number 1.2) and 3.1% (Table number 1.2) responded as No and Neutral respectively.

2) Aspects of Content Consumption on OTT Platforms and its effects on Cinema viewing patterns

Chart number 1.3 – Classifying the relationship between people who watched high concept films in theatres and are consumers of OTT content.

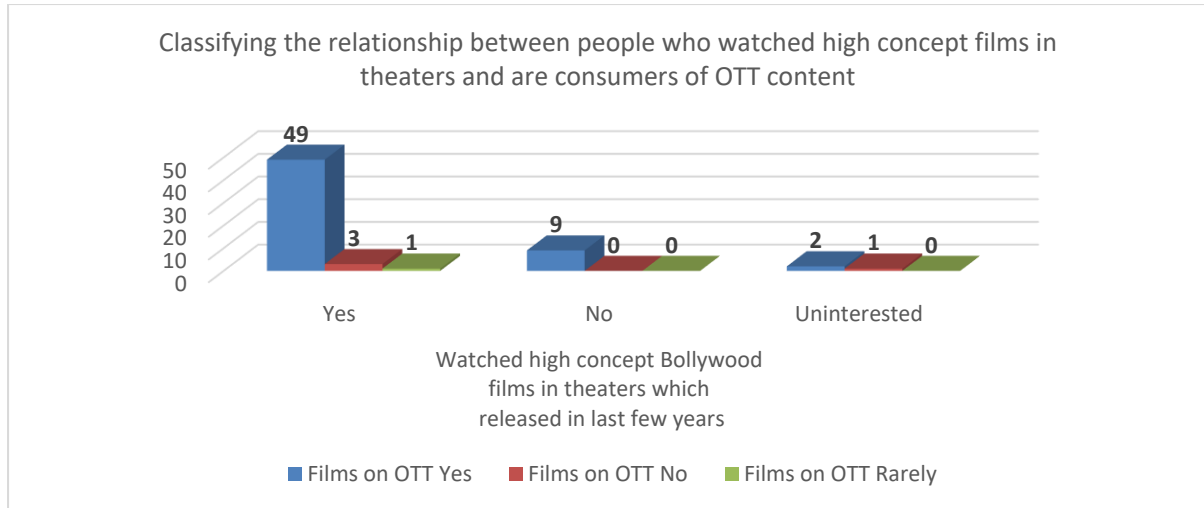


Table number 1.3 – Classifying the relationship between people who watched high concept films in theatres and are consumers of OTT content.

Films on OTT* Watched high concept Bollywood films in theatres Crosstabulation					
Count		Watched high concept Bollywood films in theatres which released in 2017 to 2019			Total
		Yes	No	Uninterested	
Films on OTT	Yes	49	9	2	60
	No	3	0	1	4
	Rarely	1	0	0	1
Total		53	9	3	65

'p' value = 0.322

As per table number 1.3, it is seen that out of 65 respondents, 49 respondents are consumers of OTT content and also watched high concept films which were released from 2017-2019.

The question arises, what changed?

As per the above analysis, a significant majority (75%) of people watched high concept Bollywood films released from 2017-2019. Interestingly this was the time when low-cost high-speed internet was introduced in the country. As internet connectivity penetrated many households across the country, it led to people becoming more and more aware of various concepts and ways of living around the world. Many Indians got introduced to film and television content across the world.

● The Following Table shows some of the Films Released from the year 2017 to 2019 and the ROI on those Films.

Table number 1.4

Films	Year of Release	Budget (₹)	Box Office (₹) (lifetime worldwide)
Hindi Medium	2017	23 crores (230 million)	91 crores (910 million)
Bareilly Ki Barfi	2017	20 crores (200 million)	55 crores (500 million)
Tumhari Sulu	2017	20 crores (200 million)	51 crores (510 million)
Stree	2018	24 crores (200 million)	170 crores (1.7 billion)
Raazi	2018	38 crores (380 million)	190 crores (1.9 billion)
Badhaai Ho	2018	29 crores (290 million)	219 crores (2.19 billion)
Hichki	2018	20 crores (200 million)	76 crores (760 million)
Chhichore	2019	53 crores (530 million)	200 crores (2 billion)

Shubh Saavdhan	Mangal Zyada	2020	48 crores (480 million)	83 crores (830 million)
----------------	--------------	------	-------------------------	-------------------------

-Source: [boxofficeindia.com](http://boxofficeindia.com)

### 3) Determining the priorities of the content consumption

Out of the 65 respondents, 63.1% (table number 1.5) said that they take into account the aspects like Story & Screenplay, Choice of actors as well as the choice of director while watching a film on the OTT platform. The responses also revealed that most of the respondents consider aspects like story and screenplay more than the choice of actors (table number 1.5).

The choice of actors was important for 7.7% of respondents and just 1.5% choice of director mattered the most. It's interesting to see that choice of director doesn't matter for the people as much as the choice of the actor does. However, story and screenplay are the most important (individually) as per the respondents (table number 1.5)

Chart number 1.4 – Favourite aspects of Films on OTT platforms

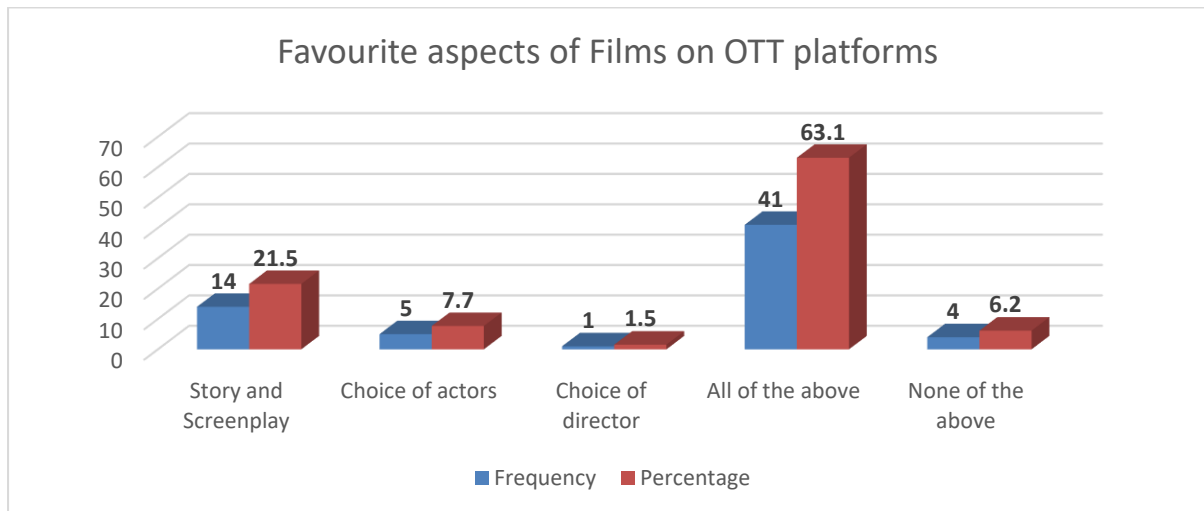


Table number 1.5 – Favourite aspects of Films on OTT platforms

Favourite aspects of Films on OTT platforms			
		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Story and Screenplay	14	21.5
	Choice of actors	5	7.7
	Choice of director	1	1.5
	All of the above	41	63.1
	None of the above	4	6.2
	Total	65	100.0

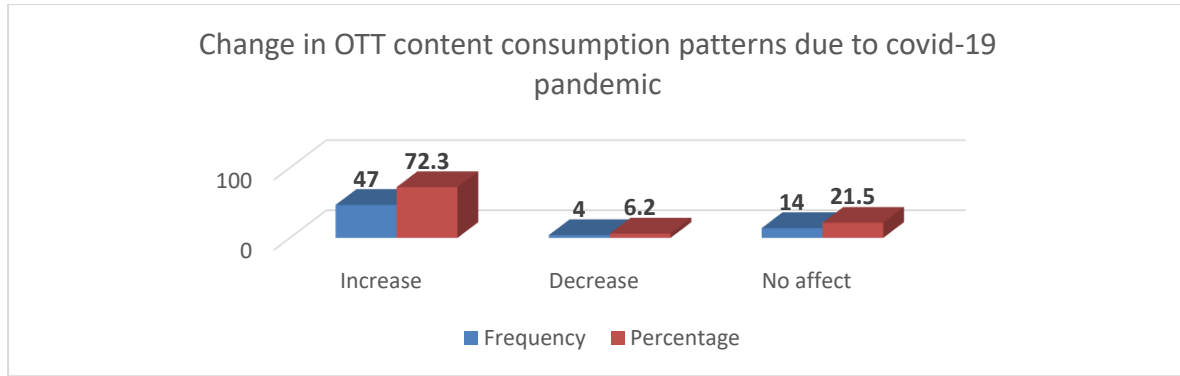
### 4) The Rise of OTT Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic

Table number 1.6 – Change in the OTT content consumption patterns due to the covid-19 pandemic

Change in the OTT content consumption patterns due to covid-19 pandemic			
		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Increase	47	72.3
	Decrease	4	6.2
	No affect	14	21.5
	Total	65	100.0

Chart number 1.5 – Change in the OTT content consumption patterns due to the covid-19 pandemic

<https://www.gapparampara.org/>



The coronavirus pandemic led to the shutting down of all theatres across the world, which hugely impacted the movie industry. Many single-screen theatres in India whose business depended upon a film's performance every weekend went out of business. As people were asked to stay in their homes, the medium of entertainment shifted to OTT platforms for many.

Even the ones who never consumed OTT content in their life moved to the platform due to a lack of other forms of entertainment. When asked the respondents if their OTT consumption increased due to the pandemic, 72.3% (table number 1.6) responded that their OTT consumption increased due to the pandemic. However, 21.5% (table number 1.6) responded 'No affect' i.e. that they spend the same amount of time on OTT platforms they used to before the pandemic. That is subjective and is open to various interpretations such as the profession of respondents, their interest in consuming new and varied content etc. We will focus on the overwhelming majority in this case.

## CONCLUSION

The study is successful in analyzing the reasons behind the popularity of small budget films in Hindi Cinema over the past few years. With the help of the questionnaire and targeted respondents, we figured how youth has gradually gravitated towards the consumption of fictional and non-fictional content on OTT platforms. Many people who cannot afford to buy subscriptions for these platforms tend to go on platforms like Torrent where they could consume some of the pirated content. The study also concluded that as the popularity of these platforms started to see a rise from the year 2017, the change in the kind of films that brought in more profits and return on investments was also evident (ref table number 1.4). As the consumption of OTT platforms saw a huge rise due to the pandemic, with the help of the questionnaire, we can also conclude that this will lead to more content-driven films being produced by Bollywood producers once cinema halls open up. With the help of various statistical data across various websites, it was understandable that people want to invest their money and buy tickets for the film that could promise a good storyline, performances and direction. This also resulted in the rise in popularity of the actors who have been working in the Hindi Film Industry for decades but never got noticed due to star-worshipping culture. The footfalls for the low budget films saw a spike. Many films recorded profits of more than 150% (source- [boxofficeindia.com](http://boxofficeindia.com)). The study also points towards how the development of India over the past decades and the rise of internet accessibility may have played a role in the manner we look at entertainment.

## LIMITATIONS

Although the researchers tried to carry out a comprehensive research study for this paper there are certain limitations to this research. The research is conducted among the people of the ages 18-24 living in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region with the majority of them being the cinema. The research focuses on cinema viewing patterns of the young population in the city. The research also draws a connection between the popularity of OTT platforms in India and the changing cinema viewing patterns of the people. The research sheds light on how the pandemic has affected the target group's content viewing patterns. However, the main focus of this research is to examine whether the pandemic will affect the cinema viewing patterns of audiences.

## REFERENCES

- [1] [https://www.filmfare.com/features/100-best-films-1958-1969\\_-3002-9.html](https://www.filmfare.com/features/100-best-films-1958-1969_-3002-9.html)
- [2] <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/movie-awards/filmfare-awards-winners/bollywood/1970/101>
- [3] <https://www.goldenglobes.com/articles/brief-history-indian-cinema>
- [4] <https://www.indianfolk.com/history-indian-cinema-edited/>

- [5] <https://boxofficeindia.com/>  
[6] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iz2Fa1d1fRc&t=88s>  
[7] <https://www.hindustantimes.com/bollywood/how-indian-cinema-evolved-over-the-years/story-SuCtxRjHCrA748CY7KJNKJ.html>  
[8] [https://censusindia.gov.in/census\\_and\\_you/age\\_structure\\_and\\_marital\\_status.aspx](https://censusindia.gov.in/census_and_you/age_structure_and_marital_status.aspx)  
[9] <https://www.communicationtheory.org/cultivation-theory/>  
[10] <https://www.techcircle.in/2021/02/10/ott-video-consumption-touches-204-bn-minutes-in-india-redseer>

#### APPENDIX

1. How old are you?
2. How many times did you watch a movie in a cinema hall before covid-19 hit the world?
3. Do you watch films & TV Shows on OTT Platforms?
4. Name the shows/films you like on OTT Platforms
5. What do you like in your favourite OTT Shows?
6. Do you want Bollywood to invest money in good scripts like you see on OTT?
7. Did you watch films like Hindi Medium, Andhadhun, Stree, Badhaai Ho in theaters?
8. What kind of films do you like to watch in theatres?
9. If a film has received great reviews but the star cast is relatively unknown, would you watch it in theatres?
10. Do you watch critically acclaimed international shows & movies?
11. Did your OTT consumption increase due to Covid-19 lockdowns?
12. What kind of films would you like to watch once cinema halls open up?