

A Study of the Shifting Viewership of Movies from Theatres to OTT Platforms in Mumbai

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Abstract: *OTT (over-the-top) platforms which offer movies and series on the go are becoming mainstream with a rapid growth rate. Causing the audience of theatres to shift their attention towards watching movies on OTT platforms. The reasons for this shift and their after effects were studied during this research. With a sample space of movie audience from Mumbai, a survey was conducted. The findings from the survey indicated that the main reasons for the shifting viewership are the cost effective rates of OTT as well as the comfort of watching movies on the go. It was also concluded that theatres have no threat of becoming extinct as there are features that OTT can't replicate. There is also a possibility of audience moving back to theatres if one of these platforms plan to change their rates.*

Keywords: Movie Theatres, OTT, Digital Streaming, Cinema, Audience, Industry

I. INTRODUCTION

Today, the advancements in technology have made it possible to watch movies and series online. Almost all the movies are available to watch on OTT platforms whenever we want. To the point that movies are exclusively released on OTT platforms instead of theatres. But even so, movies are still being released in theatres as they used to. This begs the question as to why the audience is choosing to watch movies on OTT platforms rather than going to the theatres.

According to Global Web Index Report, India's streaming market is one of the biggest and fastest growing in the world. Platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Zee5, Hotstar, etc. are buzzing with activity from Indian Audience. Indian movies like Bell Bottom and Ram Setu are being released exclusively over OTT platforms and getting viewership which rivals that of the theatrical releases.

This study analyses the release patterns and viewership reports of movies in India and also explores the movie watching habits of the Indian audience. Finally, the paper is concluded with the effects of this viewership pattern on the release platform of movies in the future.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the factors leading to the shifting of viewership of movies from theatres to OTT platforms in India.
- To study the difference between watching experience of movies at theatres and OTT platforms for the audience.
- To highlight the effects of this viewership pattern on the future of movie releases on both theatres and OTT platforms.

Research Question

What are the factors leading to the shifting of viewership of movies from theatres to OTT platforms in India?

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to a study by Jain, "**The Rise of OTT Platform: Changing Consumer Preferences**", the internet has significantly altered how media businesses operate. Due to the growing online usage of their target audience, media outlets are confronting exceptional challenges in their sector. This situation is especially suitable for the development of



OTT platforms. In fact, even niche demographic groups in India are well versed with the films, shows and other genres offered by various OTT platforms.

A study by Aishwary Gaonkar, titled “**OTT vs. Cinemas: The Future Trend in the Movie and Entertainment Sector**”, observed that OTT platforms have an edge over Cinemas due to their strengths like variety of content, genre diversity, choice of language and viewing convenience at a comparably low price. Regarding sustenance, cinemas don't have a threat of becoming non-existent, unlike other types of media like radio. They still have respectable coverage, much like the televisions, and they have advantages from which they may start attracting people and once again claim a strong position in the market. However, given the current viewership pattern, it will be more difficult for them to compete against the features that OTT has begun to offer.

For the young audience in India, OTT platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney+ Hotstar, Zee5, and others are becoming incredibly well-known. Cinemas have been shut out of a carefree market due to the growth of the OTT business. It's noticeable how the attitude of audience is changing towards theatres and OTT platforms due to these various reasons. One might say that people tend to watch movies mostly on OTT platforms and occasionally in theatres. Despite the general public being into the idea of accessing content in the comfort of their homes, a recent study by BookMyShow revealed that 54% of Indians are still looking forward to leaving their homes to watch movies in theatres once more within the short period of fifteen to ninety days of the lifting of the lockdown restrictions (**Nagendra, 2020**). This highlights the fact that OTT still lacks some features that are advantageous to theatres, assuring the survival of theatres in this OTT-dominant media.

Hypothesis

Movie watchers are gradually shifting from watching movies in theatres to watching them on OTT platforms because of the convenience and budget-friendly rates of OTT platforms.

Research Methodology

The purpose of this research is to study the consumer behaviour patterns in the movie industry with respect to theatres and OTT platforms. The overall aim is to analyse the factors responsible for the shifting of the viewership from theatres to OTT platforms. To summarize all the mentioned key factors, quantitative data will be collected. The data collection method will be an online survey directed towards movie watching audience. The sample will be chosen by Simple Random Sampling.

Survey Questionnaire

1. Age Group

- Under 18
- 18 - 20
- 21 - 23
- 24 & above

2. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Other

3. Occupation

- Student
- Employed
- Unemployed
- Other:



4. Income Group

- Less than 10K
- 10-20K
- 20-30K
- More than 30K

5. Which medium do you prefer for watching movies?

- Only Theatres
- Only OTT Platforms
- Mostly theatres, sometimes OTT platforms
- Mostly OTT platforms, sometimes theatres

6. How much time do you spend on OTT platforms per day?

- Less than 1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- 2-3 hours
- 3-4 hours
- More than 4 hours

7. How frequently do you watch movies in theatre?

- Weekly
- Monthly
- Once in 3 months
- Once on 6 months
- Occasionally

8. Why would you prefer watching movies on OTT platforms over theatres?

- Convenience
- Variety of Content
- Binge Watching
- Less Expensive
- Less Censorship

9. Why would you prefer watching movies on theatres over OTT platform?

- Experience like 3D, 4DX, etc.
- Audio and Video Quality
- Less Expensive

10. If OTT platforms start to charge money for every movie with the same rates as theatres, will you shift to theatres?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

11. If theatres started to offer monthly subscription plans with the same rate as OTT platforms, would you be willing to subscribe?

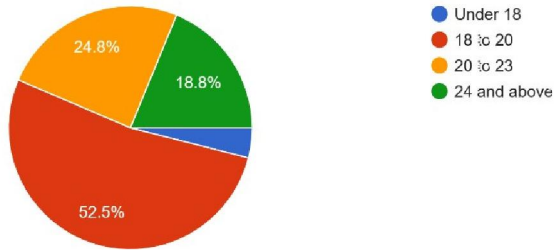
- Yes
- No
- Maybe



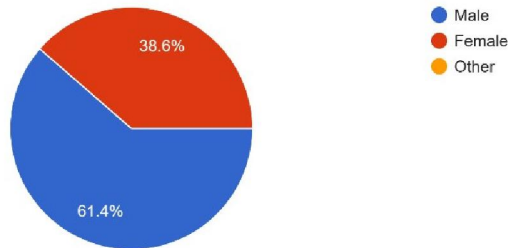
III. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

The following are the responses to the survey by 101 respondents chosen as per the sampling method mentioned above. Findings were derived from these responses.

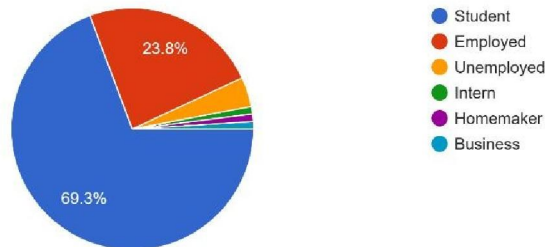
Age Group
101 responses



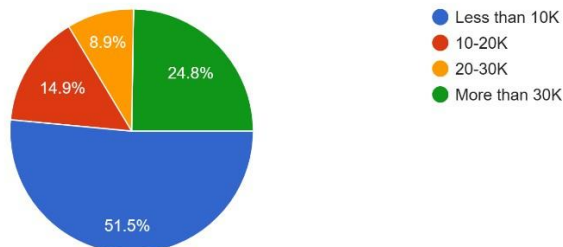
Gender
101 responses



Occupation
101 responses



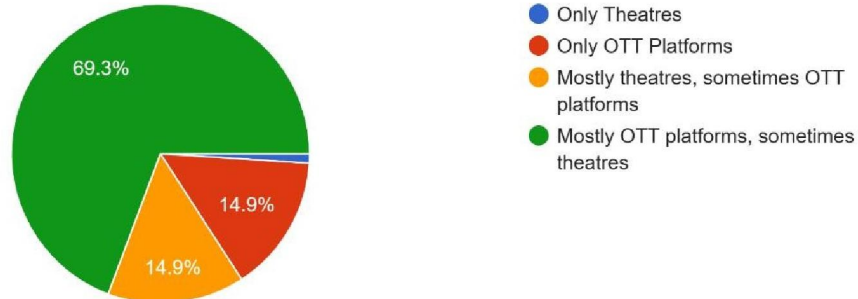
Income Group
101 responses





Which medium do you prefer for watching movies?

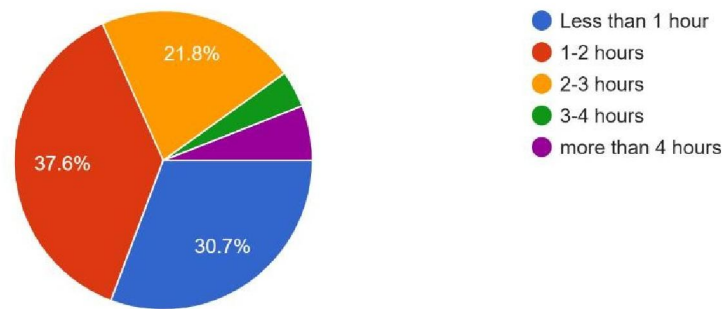
101 responses



In response to this first question, although there are people who responded that they watch movies only on OTT platforms, no one from the sample voted that they watch movies only in theatres. This already tells us that some viewers have already shifted towards OTT. Still there are 69% of people who sometimes go to theatres despite being regular users of OTT.

How much time do you spend on OTT platforms per day?

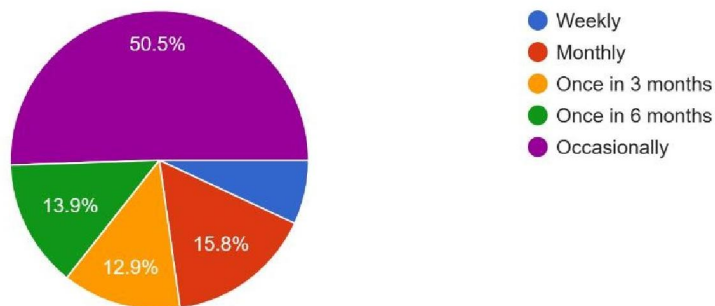
101 responses



This question shows that around 69% of the people watch at least 1 hours of OTT platform per day. Which can translate to 1 movie worth of time per day. There are also people who watch less than 1 hour of content per day which can mean that they watch web series episodes which are comparatively shorter than movies

How frequently do you watch movies in theatre?

101 responses

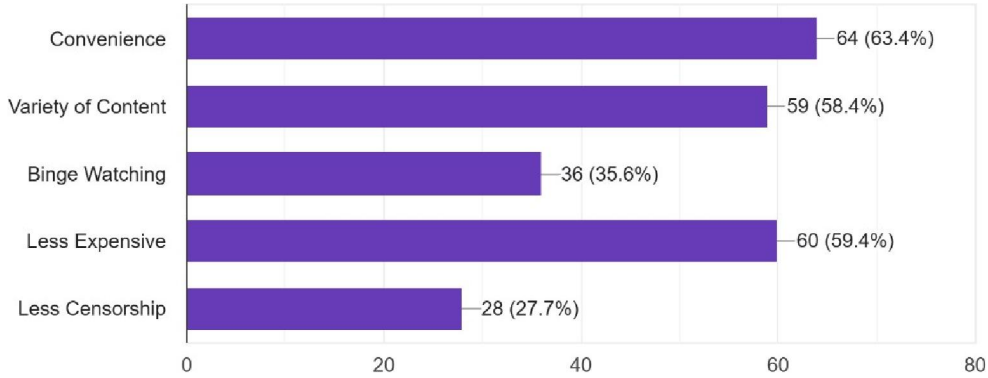


Most of the respondents have said that they watch movies in theatres occasionally. Where only 7% of people said that they go to the theatres every week.



Why would you prefer watching movies on OTT platforms over theatres?

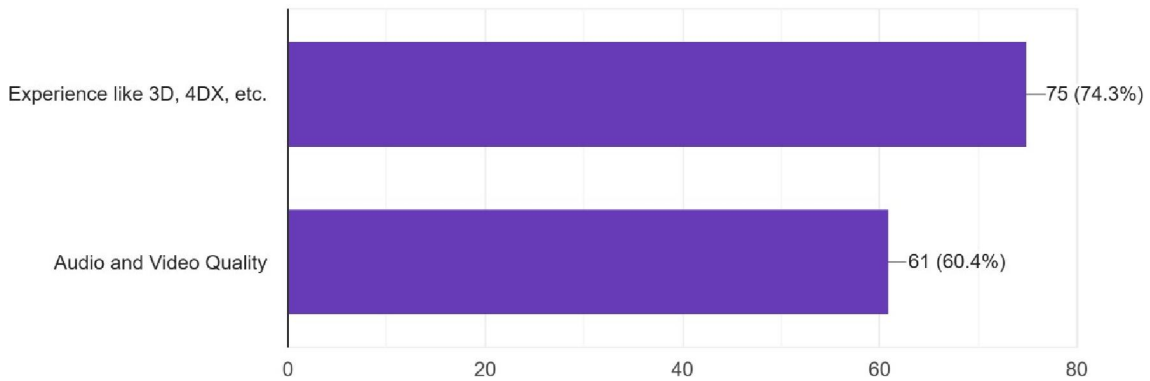
101 responses



More than 60% of the people said to have preferred to OTT because they get a wide variety of content with lower price than theatres as well as more convenient experience

Why would you prefer watching movies on theatres over OTT platform?

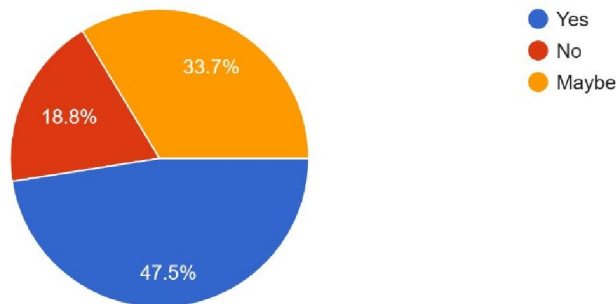
101 responses



Although the audio-video quality is also a differentiating factor of theatres, the main reason that almost 75% of people prefer theatres is because they offer experience like 3D and 4DX, which OTT platforms cannot.

If OTT platforms start to charge money for every movie with the same rates as theatres, will you shift to watching movies theatres?

101 responses

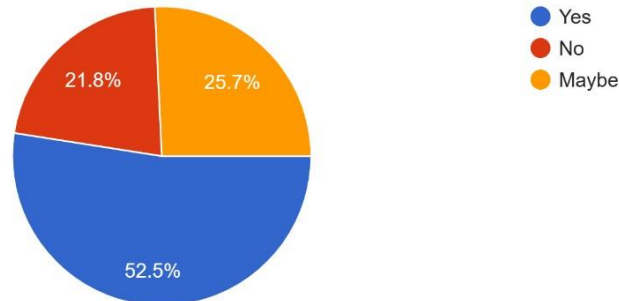


Up to 80% of people are willing to shift to theatres if OTT platforms start charging money for every movie watched, just like theatres



If theatres started to offer monthly subscription plans with the same rate as OTT platforms, would you be willing to subscribe?

101 responses



More than 75% of people are considering shifting to theatres, if they provide monthly subscription plans like OTT platforms where you can watch any number of movies you want for a fixed monthly rate.

IV. CONCLUSION

The findings of this research reaffirm the fact that most of the audience base of movies has shifted from theatres to OTT. The reason for this shift has been observed to be the strengths OTT has over theatres such as the variety of content, ease of access and cost efficiency.

Despite having these strengths, there are some features that OTT cannot provide, i.e. the experiences like 3D and 4DX. These experiences and the screen size that theatres offer, are the reason many people still watch movies in theatres monthly or even weekly. From this, we can conclude that theatres won't be getting diminished in the foreseeable future. On the contrary, there is a chance that theatres might put up a subscription format with the same rates as OTT platforms to gain the upper hand against them. The chances of this might be slim, but in an event where OTT platforms hike up their prices and start charging money after every movie, majority of the audience will eventually switch to theatres.

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