A study on factors leading to adoption of OTT services among millennial consumers in India

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ABSTRACT

In today’s era OTT (over the top video) has become big buzzword when we talk about Digital media and availability of latest video content among consumers, especially the Generation Y category. There was an era when all the family members sit together in the evening to watch traditional shows on TV like Ramayana, Mahabharata etc. But since 2013 OTT platforms have gained significant growth and it is estimated that this video streaming content shall exceed $332 billion by 2025. However this research is about understanding various factors which lead to adoption of OTT services among millennial consumers. Due to 5G technology and advancement in IT sector the future of OTT platform will be bright because upcoming generations will have greater capacity to cope up with highly advanced systems like delivering users the experience of virtual reality in high definition video quality. Hence the users will enjoy better services in this industry. The biggest audience for OTT businesses will be the millennial consumers who are grown up as digital natives and they don’t have patience to wait for movies, TV shows etc to air on television. They want to watch the content just like preparing maggi noodles which is massaale-daar, instant and on demand. Therefore this research is attempt to understand why millennial consumers are addicted to binge watch video content on the OTT platforms, what benefits they enjoy while watching video content on OTT platforms etc. This research paper will also help companies to look at the bigger picture of adopting OTT services in their business models. As the paper will brief them about the reasons for consumer preference for this service and ways to induce repeated purchase and final adoption of OTT platforms in India.

In this research the factors will be evaluated with the help of primary and secondary data.

Keywords

Binge watch, over the top (OTT), video on demand (VOD), Millennial, machine learning

INTRODUCTION

OTT stands for over-the-top. It is called so because the OTT devices go over the cable box unlike traditional TV to give access to video content to end-users. In OTT platforms content is
delivered through via internet connection instead of through a traditional cable or broadcast/provider. Many people often get confused between video and the content shown in OTT platforms. OTT is a kind of different channel where video content is delivered to end users. In order to subscribe and watch video on demand on OTT platforms user’s are required to pay certain amount for its subscription on Monthly basis. Many OTT platforms provide consumer’s a 30-day free trial for example Netflix. OTT has become one of the biggest opportunists in the video content delivery and the entertainment industry. The major players in this segment are Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hotstar, Voot , Zee cinema etc. Due to increasing demand of subscription of OTT platforms, big media companies like Disney, Marvel, Pixar, are joining the streaming marketplace to deliver their content to consumers. Disney + hotstar has become one stop destination where consumers can watch all their favorite shows of popular Disney characters such as Mickey mouse, Donald duck , goofy etc. Apart from this many OTT platforms have segmented their business model like VOOT kids and VOOT select also they have introduced some special schemes like Hotstar VIP and hotstar premium. This increasing trend to watch video on demand on OTT platforms has provided users cinematic experience at their living. The growth of OTT services has also generated revenue for other businesses especially manufacturing of Smartphone’s. The upcoming Smartphone’s will have latest 5G technology with unlimited data and powerful processor. Therefore consumers will eventually enjoy watching video on demand on OTT platforms due to better network , speedy download of content , minimum latency , better video quality etc. So it can be said without any doubts that OTT platforms clearly represents the future of media and everyone should become part of this.

Who are the millennial consumers

Millennials are those people who are born between 1980 and early 2000s. They represent a large segment of population and are consider target market for many consumer companies. Millennial consumers are grown up as digital natives so they have the ability to command to technology which can do anything they don’t like feel getting up to do. Many millennials conduct a research online , seek out honest reviews, test in stores etc before buying any product. While many are unemployed and burden with student debt today, but in near future millennials will be richer over time, thus for marketers and consumer companies there is more scope of having young talents. (Page, 2020)
Classification of video on demand on OTT Platforms

- Transactional video on demand (TVOD): Here the users are required to purchase separately in order to watch movie or episode of TV shows, the most common example is iTunes and Distrify.

- Subscription video on demand (SVOD): This is the most widely used online streaming system across the world. Here the users can access to watching unlimited high quality content like TV shows, movies, web series, sports etc by paying a nominal fee. The time period of service depends upon what kind of subscription have you availed like standard, premium, VIP etc. OTT platforms which comes under this category are Netflix, Disney+Hotstar, Amazon prime video etc.

- Advertisement video on demand (AVOD): This is also very popular among consumers, here the users enjoy watching movies, TV shows, sports etc without availing any kind of subscription plans. However as the name explains in this viewers will get to watch short ads during the streaming of video. These ads are precise which means it will cater users interest. OTT platforms which uses this kind of system are Youtube, Voot etc.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Why millennia’s are ditching TV for online content?

**New Delhi:** Pooja umesh is a 22 year old Bangalore-based engineer. She discontinued watching TV because she did not prefer to watch TV shows which are telecast on a particular period of time. Online streaming of videos provides her flexibility of watching movies, TV shows of her interest at any point of time as per her convenience. “Internet gives me a lot of options," she says, adding “if I download from Torrent, I can watch shows and films instantly". She watches Indian shows and films on Amazon. For international shows, she prefers Netflix. and Hotstar to watch regional language. (bansal, 2018)

**Mumbai:** Shubham agarwal a 25 year old freelance musician, much like pooja he doesn’t care about watching TV shows either. He is not a regular subscriber to Netflix and Amazon prime, but he is fond of standup comedy so he watches popular comedy shows like stranger things, mindhunter. He buys subscription of Netflix and Amazon prime whenever a new season of the series mentioned above is available. (bansal, 2018)

**Binge watching addiction**

In 2013 Netflix stated that binge watching refers to normal behavior among humans where an individual sits at one place and watches several episodes of the same show in a day. This kind of behavior produces dopamine into the brain which makes us feel so good about it over time. It also happens in other kinds of addictions like gambling, smoking, getting high on drugs etc. Since 2013 the rate of binge watching has increased from 61% to 75% according to latest deloitte figures. It is observed that millennia’s exhibit stronger binge-watching behaviors as compared to other generations. The psychology of majority millennia’s behind binge watching is that they want to keep the storyline ongoing. (Mosacho, 2018)

It is estimated that more than 3-5 hours is considered as the average time to binge watch. Majority of millennials consider binge watching a harmless pleasure rather than a harmful addiction. The act of binge watching builds a community around the show known as “shared cultural space” This helps viewers to establish beneficial social connections. This beneficial social connections strengthens relationships as people share mutual interest and they can spend easy time together. Binge watching makes a show more fulfilling as watching several episodes
in a continuation makes viewers connected with the storyline, thus making it enjoyable to watch. (ProCon.org, Monday, Mar. 30, 2020)

**COVID-19 has bought silver lining and growth of OTT platforms**

**Mumbai**: The unexpected crises which the world is facing known as the outbreak of COVID-19 has become a blessing in disguise for various OTT platforms. As people are locked indoors and told to stay home, in such situation their refugee have been the Smart TV, Smartphone’s and other smart devices which are giving the next wave of growth of OTT services. COVID-19 disruption will harm the growth of companies involved in direct selling concept and consultancy services but in case of delivering any kind online content like OTT, such companies will have silver lining and opportunity of growth. Due to increase of lockdown period, there is promise of innovative offerings by large media firms in the market for example Disney has collaborated with Hotstar and has become (Disney+hotstar), American firm Amazon prime has launched special content for kids and family entertainment, which is free, VOOT has launched similar scheme like Amazon prime which is creating a separate channel with the name of VOOT kids. The growth of OTT platforms will gradually increase, but it is also increasing challenges for content creators as they have to offer consumers, especially the millennials with original content which is innovative and will force them to purchase subscription of OTT channel and binge watch. (Sarkar, 2020)

**How will 5G technology impact the broadcast industry and OTT services?**

In future 5G technology will allow faster data rates, which will completely change scenario of how we consume content. The 5G technology will enable users to download a full HD movie in less than 10 seconds which is far better than 10 min on the current 4G network. The current latency speed on 4G network is around 30-40 milliseconds, but with the help of 5G technology this delay will be chopped to about 1 millisecond or maybe less. Thus users will enjoy unbelievable video streaming on various OTT platforms. The biggest attraction of 5G technology is that upcoming generations of network will have greater capacity, which means the systems will cope up with high demand applications like virtual reality experience with simultaneous HD video streaming. The 5G technology will simply enhance mobile media experience which will significantly disrupt the entertainment business models. It is estimated that the media revenue will be twice in 2028 which is ($420 billion) from the current $170 billion (2018). (Lapsiwala, 2019)
What goes behind delivering content on OTT platforms

The increasing rate of streaming online video on demand across various OTT platforms has flourished many other businesses like smartphones, smart TV, gaming industry such as Xbox, play station etc. Several OTT platforms and other media giants are aggressively investing internationally in technology up-gradation, so that users could access to better binge-watching experience. Eros now is working on introducing voice command at the backend which will enable user’s to voice search their interested shows available in different languages. Many OTT platforms like Netflix, ZEE5 have collaboration with high-tech companies which have a software that enables machine learning, this system sends you notifications and recommendation which suggest you shows with genres you’ve seen before, so that your interest stays on you continue to binge-watch. Netflix ensures that user’s enjoy best possible experience by rating shows according to user’s preference. Therefore behind the smooth functioning of delivering video content across various OTT platforms lies a superfast technology and production (Bhatt, 2019)

Why OTT advertising

One of the biggest trends is the rapid growth of online streaming platforms which are transforming advertisements, thus increasing the internet traffic up to 80%. Since the future of watching TV shows, movies, sports etc has become more digital and data-driven, Big brands having advanced digital technology are adopting OTT advertising as a part of their performance mix. (Swan, 2020).

OTT advertising is the next generation of advertising where targeted ads are inserted during online streaming of video with the help of programming technology. OTT advertising is also known as subscription of on-demand video content, such services offers users different content like movies, TV shows, web series etc which is not available on Television content or might not pass it due to age restriction. OTT advertisement only takes place incase of those platforms which offer users free subscription like YouTube, newsy, cheddar etc. The business around the world should accept that OTT advertising is the future of marketing services because traditional TV ads are very costly and it requires huge investment but OTT commercials will cost a fraction of that. OTT advertisement provides users with precise content as the promotion scheme is designed according to the content users watch and demographics. This strategy gives ads creators
a competitive edge over other businesses as they can easily predict the future trend of the market. (Team, 2020)

The Greenfield start

The OTT platforms are mushrooming in Indian market. The availability of cheap data and huge consumption base seems to be act as a driving force to create market penetration and build sufficient customer base. With IT revolution taking place, upcoming of OTT web streaming based platforms was inevitable. In Indian context, the story was written four years back. Mobile operators started offering 4G, smart-phone sales were rising, and number of people using internet started to increase. When the ingredients were ready, the flame of ‘Jio’ took advantage of monetization and established customer base by offering free services to users. Jio promoted digital India and ensured cheap availability of data plans at a good speed.

Netflix was reluctant to come to India until 2015. On the day of launch of Jio, Netflix tweeted ‘Thank You Jio’. It was clear that with cheaper data availability at a good speed, Netflix would launch its product for Indian masses as well. Now with the help of jiofibre connections jio has launched a set up box where users can view multiple OTT apps in a single platform like Amazon prime , Sunxt,Voot , Sonyliv etc. (Tiwari, 2019)

OTT business models and rise

Rising smart-phones, cheaper smart TVs, cheaper data, fresh content, and liberty of convenience, there seems no reason that one may doubt the future of the OTTs. Though the picture appears rosy, there are some hurdles. Firstly, one must understand that fundamental reason of popularity of OTT web streaming platforms, like Netflix, was its ‘out-of-the-world’ content. If the content is compromised, the business is compromised. This is what Hotstar (Star), SonyLiv (Sony) or Voot (Colors-Viacom 18) did not learn. They dumped their douche TV serials on their web platforms. This is the reason that despite much more content in these platforms, Netflix stands out as a trademark of quality. Even their first India-based production was globally acclaimed ‘Sacred Games’. Amazon Prime Video Originals’ ‘Mirzapur’ and ‘One-Mic Stand’ were loved. With lack of censorship, which is good if not misused, the content should be self-monitored and then served to audience. After all, entertainment is the rare business where creativity dominates business models. (tiwari, 2019)
DISCUSSION

One of the primary things which the literature has pointed out that the future of Online streaming (OTT) platforms is bright and their biggest audience will be the millennials. The review talks about multiple factors which are leading to the rise of OTT platforms internationally and in India. In the first two literatures the author has illustrated why millennials are ditching TV over online content by giving examples of two different minds. The literature has also shed light on the factors that affect content viewing on various OTT platforms like video on demand which is currently in trend over all social media platforms, star cast of the series etc. Apart from this as we all know that the world has been disrupted due to the outbreak of coronavirus. So in such situation watching movies, TV shows, web series, sports etc on various OTT channels has become the most prime source of home entertainment as the country is in lockdown. The literature also highlights the impact of upcoming 5G technology on digital media, 5G technology will not only boost the productivity of digital media segment but it will support the upcoming generation of networks which will have the ability to cope up with highly advanced systems like delivering users the experience of virtual reality in high definition video quality. Hence the users will enjoy better services in this industry. The literature has clearly distinguished the basic difference of number of ads insertion between paid OTT platforms and the free ones. The Ads which are displayed on OTT channels are more precise and cheap than traditional TV commercials because it matches users interest.

However despite the gradual increase of OTT businesses their challenges have also increased. The creators need to think something out of box which is creative and innovative. The most important job for creators is to create mindboggling content which makes users continue to binge watch on various OTT platforms. Thus there is always room for improvement of watching movies, TV shows etc on OTT platforms. The competition on this market segment will increase in future so marketers have to focus on implementing correct strategies at the right place and time. The USP (unique selling preposition) of the firms should be properly defined. Thus creating strategies around the consumer profile is the best way to get traffic on your website and promote your OTT platform.

Many researchers have conducted research on the success of OTT platforms and the factors contributing to its success but very few researchers have researched about factors leading to the adoption of OTT services among millennial consumers in India. Therefore this research paper is a attempt to examine various factors leading to adoption of OTT services among millennial consumers in India. This research paper will help companies to look at the bigger picture of adopting OTT services in their business models. This paper will brief them about the reasons for
consumer preference for this service and ways to induce repeated purchase and final adoption of OTT platforms in India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Objectives

• The prime objective to conduct this research is to understand various factors which encourage millennia’s or the generation Y category to watch video on demand on various OTT platforms such as Netflix, hotstar, Amazon prime, Voot etc.
• To understand the psychology of millennials to binge watch content available on OTT platforms
• The research will also talk about what various benefits which millennia’s enjoy watching movies, series, biography etc across various OTT channels
• To make audience understand the significance of OTT business and its demand in upcoming future.

Research Design

• The research methodology adopted in this research will be a survey conducted through a questionnaire. The questionnaire will examine various factors leading to adoption of OTT services among millennial consumers in India.
• In this research the data will be collected from 100 responses. These responses will come under the category of millennials.
• The primary reason for choosing this kind of methodology is to achieve high representativeness and convenient data gathering.
• The questionnaire is designed in a simple language which includes majority of multiple choice questions, dycotomus questions, short answer questions and scale based questions.
• Total number of questions in the questionnaire is 18. The questionnaire is prepared with the help of a online tool known as Google Forms.

Research Questions
• What encourages millennial consumers to binge watch web series, TV shows, web series etc on various OTT platforms?
• What kind of content is preferred among millennial consumers?
• How often it is observed that millennial consumers prefer to watch movies, TV shows etc on OTT platforms instead of traditional TV

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Findings

The data collected through 100 respondents has been sorted in Excel 2007 with help of pivot table and other functions. Cross-tabulations on a set of 2 relevant questions were made using descriptive statistics. Out of 18 questions including Gender, occupation, age etc there were many findings but only the ones which are related to the objective have been studied.

Finding: 1 Majority of millennial consumers who binge watch OTT platforms reside in north region of India which is 77% of total population.

Finding: 2 76% of millennials prefer online streaming platforms (OTT) as their source of entertainment over DTH cable operators like Tata sky, dish TV etc.

Finding: 3 (Most popular OTT platform)
Interpretation

From the above figure we can clearly observe that the most popular OTT platform is Netflix which is 66% then amazon prime video which is 21% of total population. On the other hand the least popular OTT platform is YouTube.

Finding: 4 (Relation between choice of content and genre)

Interpretation

From the above figure we can conclude that majority of millennials watch original /exclusive content based on action and violence which counts 21 out of 57. On the other hand crime TV shows, sci fi sports and original content based on true story are equally watched. We can also observe that least choice of content prefer by millennials is sports which counts 3 out of total population.

Finding: 5 (Cross tabulation analysis of devices used during time period and number of hours spent on OTT platforms)
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<th>Devices used during time period/no of hours</th>
<th>1-2 hours</th>
<th>2-3 hours</th>
<th>3-4 hours</th>
<th>4-5 hours</th>
<th>above 5 hours</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td><strong>Evening</strong></td>
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**Interpretation**

From the above table we can observe that majority of millennials prefer to watch movies, web series etc on OTT platforms during night which counts 66. Out of these most of the millennials use smart phones which counts 24 and only 2 millennials use the traditional computer. We can also observe that majority of millennials spend 2-3 hours to watch movies, web series etc on OTT platforms which counts 34. Apart from this only 1 millennial prefer to watch movies, web series etc on OTT platforms through Smartphone in the morning.

Following are analysis of Six major factors which encourage millennial consumers to binge watch movies, TV shows, web series etc on various OTT platforms

**Finding 6 (Rate of Ads insertion)**

From the data collected through 100 respondents it is observed that majority of millennials which is 47% of total population think that the rate of ads insertion during streaming video on OTT platforms is less. Whereas 6% of them say that rate of ads insertion is very high.

**Finding 7 (Content availability)**

From this primary research we can conclude that majority of millennials which is 33% of total population think that content available on OTT platforms is very good. However 11% of them disagree with it.

**Finding 8 (Innovation in content)**
From the survey we can observe that most of the millennials which is 33% of total population believe that the innovation in content shown on OTT platforms is pretty good.

**Finding: 9** (Audio and video quality)

It is noticed that majority of millennials which is 64% of total population have said that audio and video quality of streaming movies, web series etc on OTT platforms is very good.

**Finding: 10** (price)

It is observed that majority of millennials which is 35% of total population think that watching movies, web series etc on OTT platform is cheap. However 22% of them disagree with it and have said that it is rather expensive.

**Finding: 11** (Overall experience)

From this primary research we can conclude that majority of millennials which 33% of total population are highly satisfied with the overall user experience of watching movies, web series etc on OTT platforms. On the other hand 6% of them are dissatisfied.

**Summary of Findings**

The findings of this research suggest that binge watching movies, TV shows, sports, web series etc on OTT platforms has become habitual among millennial consumers. The findings were based on data collected from 100 respondents. In this research the response related to factors leading to adoption of OTT services has been collected through a questionnaire. The questions primarily mapped significance of watching movies, web series etc on OTT platforms.

Following are major factors which encourage millennial consumers to binge watch on OTT platforms:

**Content Availability**

Content Availability is the king of all factors. It is the fundamental driving force behind online businesses, especially OTT video streaming businesses. Thus in this segment the business will not grow until the right content is not broadcasted on OTT platforms.

**Innovation in content**
Many OTT platforms like justin.TV, Xbox entertainment studios, SunNxt etc failed to build subscription revenue because consumers lost interest in watching same old content. So in order to make millennials continue to binge watch OTT platforms should ensure that the content broadcasted is unique and original. A content becomes successful when it connects the audience emotions with some suspense, drama, thrill, horror, comedy, romance etc. Thus innovation in content becomes one of the most important factors.

**Audio and video quality**

The factor of offering best audio and video quality plays important role when marketers of OTT platforms talk about delivering consumers cinematic experience at home. However this factor somewhat depends upon what kind of device is been used to watch movies, web series etc on OTT platforms, ie audio and video quality on Smart TV will be better than laptops, PC, tablets and smart phones.

**No of Ads insertion**

This is a very crucial factor because if any OTT platform inserts ads during the streaming of video it somewhat annoys consumers especially the millennials. Inserting too many ads makes consumers frustrated and thus they slowly loose the interest of watching movies, web series etc on OTT platforms. But these ads are sometimes beneficial for the organization because these ads provides users with precise content as the promotion scheme is designed according to the content users watch and demographics. This strategy gives ads creators a competitive edge over other businesses as they can easily predict the future trend of the market.

**Price**

The factor of price is very important to make OTT services affordable in order to create huge customer base and create penetration in the market segment. The price depends upon monetization models of video on demand on the basis of subscription, transactional and advertisement. If we talk about Subscription based like Netflix the pricing is expensive as it is premium service with ad free contents, transactional based like iTunes every content has small price to pay, here the consumer can avail the service whenever is required. On the other hand advertisement based like voot, hotstar etc here the pricing is relatively cheap as they are standard services containing small ads while streaming video online. At the end every business needs to earn revenue so right pricing strategy and launching free schemes at right time to create customer base is the key to survive in long run.

**Overall Experience**
The factor of Overall Experience could be understood by clubbing all of the factors mentioned above. At the end what matters to consumers especially millennials is that the OTT platform which they have subscribed is affordable, offers good and innovative content, provides best audio and video quality, lastly contains minimum no of ads or even no ads during streaming of video. Marketers of OTT platforms should focus on offering perfect package of all these factors to consumers in order to build brand image so that it could enjoy the domination position in this market segment.

CONCLUSION

This research is an attempt to not only discuss the factors leading to adoption of OTT services among millennial consumers in India, but it also talks about the upcoming generations of network which will have greater capacity, which means the systems will cope up with high demand applications like virtual reality experience with simultaneous HD video streaming. Due to gradual increase of internet penetration in the market the future of OTT platforms is bright. India is a price sensitive country having diverse culture, so the viewership of watching movies, TV shows, sports etc on DTH cable operators is creeping mostly in rural areas due to lack of high speed internet services. However this limitation is been slowly eradicating as the digital infrastructure of India is in process of installing cables in rural region. Thanks to Reliance jio which is offering affordable smart phones with cheap data plans to those who can’t afford laptop, smart TV, tablets etc. In India OTT content is consumed mostly on handheld devices like smart phones. If we talk about millennials which comes under the generation Y category they don’t have patience to wait for movies, TV shows etc to air on television. They want to watch the content just like preparing maggi noodles which is masaledaar, instant and on demand. Binge watching movies, TV shows, web series etc on OTT platforms have become part of their daily routine. This research also highlights the crucial situation of the world caused by outbreak of corona-virus. Corona virus has disrupted the smooth functioning of many businesses especially tourism but for OTT platforms and other organizations involved into business of online content
delivering it is a blessing in disguise and opportunity of growth. Due to lockdown binge watching has significantly increased among millennials as watching movies, TV shows, sports, web series etc on OTT platforms have become their only option for home entertainment. This research talks about six major which encourages millennials to adopt OTT services (1) Content availability (2) Innovation in content (3) No of Ads insertion (4) audio and video quality (5) price (6) overall experience. These factors are the main crux which meets the primary objective of the research. At the end what matters to consumers especially millennials is that the OTT platform which they have subscribed to is affordable, offers good and innovative content, provides best audio and video quality, lastly contains minimum no of ads or even no ads during streaming of video. However despite the gradual increase of OTT businesses their challenges have also increased. The creators need to think something out of box which is creative and innovative. The most important job for creators is to create mindboggling content which makes users continue to binge watch on various OTT platforms. The competition on this market segment will increase in future so marketers have to focus on implementing correct strategies at the right place and time. The USP (unique selling preposition) of the firms should be properly defined. Thus creating strategies around the consumer profile is the best way to get traffic on your website and promote your OTT platform.

RECOMMENDATIONS

How to Improve OTT businesses

Since there is a competition in this market segment OTT businesses to improvise their business models and come out with innovative strategies to deliver the right content at the right time to viewers. Following is the equation which OTT marketers should focus in order to gain success in video business.

| Content + Audience + Distribution + Marketing + Monetization = Video Business Success. |

Content Strategy

- The first step to create awesome content is to define a goal which meets the mission and vision of the OTT platform.
- The second step could be to indentify and build a target group (TG) because if you know who are your customers then you can provide better service to them.
On the flip side OTT platforms should create unique and original content which is protected by multi layer security interface, so that there is no chance of piracy.

Distribution strategy

- OTT platforms should know distribution channels of their target group in order to establish strong distribution network
- Predict future, analyze market trends and needs of the target group

Marketing strategy

- Create a hype of the content on various social media platforms like instagram, twitter, facebook, snapchat etc
- Use different kinds of marketing styles like e-mail marketing, online marketing, general Ads, posters etc in order to make target group connected with the OTT platform

Monetization strategy

- OTT platforms should diversify their service so that it could be enjoyed by all income groups
- OTT platforms should include models like AVOD, TVOD, SVOD in their service.

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