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RESEARCH ARTICLE

DECODING MILLENNIAL PREFERENCES: DRIVERS OF OTT PLATFORM ADOPTION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

Sameer Velankar

1. Associate Professor & Dean, Commerce Guru Nanak Khalsa College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Mumbai 400019.

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Abstract

This study identifies the key factors driving the adoption of Over the Top (OTT) streaming services among the millennial demographic. Using primary survey data, the research evaluates the influence of determinants such as content diversity, pricing, user experience, and audio visual quality. The analysis reveals distinct consumption patterns, including a preference for on-demand access and binge-watching, alongside a shift in attitude away from traditional television. The findings offer actionable insights for OTT providers to refine their strategies, improve user engagement, and increase retention within this critical market segment.

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Introduction:-

The global entertainment landscape has been fundamentally reshaped by Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms, which provide users with unprecedented on-demand content access. This digital revolution is led by millennials, who have become the core consumer demographic. The market's significant growth, projected to reach nearly five billion users and generate over \$340 billion globally by 2025, underscores the declining dominance of traditional broadcast media.

India represents a key region in this global trend, emerging as one of the most significant and rapidly expanding OTT markets. With a user base exceeding 547 million and substantial revenue generation, the country presents a critical area of study. The viewing habits of Indian millennials, who average three hours of daily streaming on platforms like Disney+ Hotstar, Amazon Prime Video, and Netflix, highlight a decisive shift in media consumption patterns.

This study, therefore, seeks to explore the primary determinants driving OTT adoption specifically among Indian millennials. By examining the appeal of convenience, cost, and content variety, this research will offer insights into user motivations, informing strategic decisions for service providers striving for a competitive advantage.

Literature Review:-

Over the past decade, OTT platforms have seen exponential growth driven by advances in digital technologies and changing consumer preferences. Several studies highlight that millennials, often characterized as digital natives,

Corresponding Author:- Sameer Velankar

Address:- Associate Professor & Dean, Commerce Guru Nanak Khalsa College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Mumbai 400019.

exhibit distinct media consumption behaviors favoring OTT over traditional TV. Singh (2020) found that 76% of Indian millennials prefer OTT streaming as their primary entertainment source, driven by factors such as content variety, convenience, and minimal advertisement interruptions. Other studies emphasize affordability, mobile accessibility, and personalized content recommendations as crucial adoption drivers (Dasgupta, 2019; Jain, 2021). Research based on the Uses and Gratifications Theory reveals that millennials seek entertainment, social interaction, and relaxation through OTT platforms, making binge-watching a prominent trend (Nagarjun et al., 2023). Moreover, decreased mobile data costs and improved internet penetration in India have catalyzed OTT adoption among younger demographics (Koul et al., 2022). Despite significant insights, there remains a need to synthesize these drivers specifically in the Indian context to inform service providers aiming to capture this lucrative market segment.

Research Methodology:-

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to obtain a comprehensive understanding of millennial preferences regarding OTT platform adoption in India. The primary data was collected through an online survey distributed among 100 millennial respondents aged 18 to 35 across urban and semi-urban areas in Mumbai during 2025.

The survey questionnaire included sections on viewing habits, content preferences, pricing sensitivity, perceived ease of use, and social influences. Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics and inferential techniques such as chi square stats to identify the most significant drivers influencing OTT adoption. Interviews with industry experts (secondary data) supplemented the findings to contextualize market dynamics and emerging trends.

Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing:

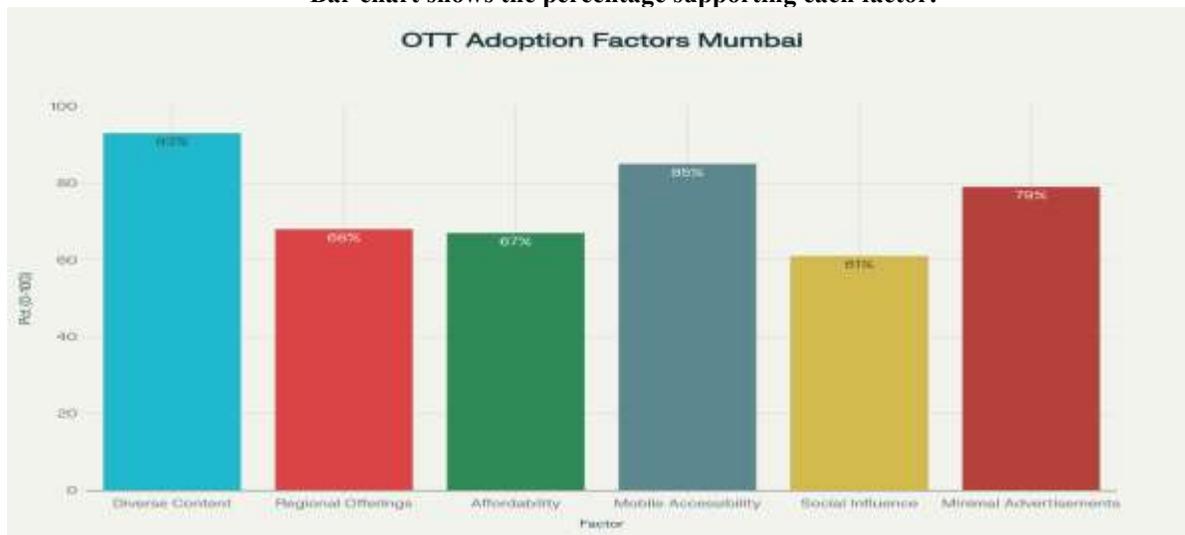
The responses of 100 Mumbai-based millennials were analyzed to test four hypotheses regarding drivers of OTT platform adoption. Data was visualized to enhance clarity and identify trends.

Hypothesis Statements:

- **H1:** Content diversity significantly influences OTT platform choice among Mumbai millennials.
- **H2:** Affordable pricing models are a major determinant of OTT adoption.
- **H3:** Social influence positively impacts OTT subscription.
- **H4:** Preference for minimal advertisements shapes the choice of OTT platforms.

Key Drivers of OTT Adoption:

Bar chart shows the percentage supporting each factor:



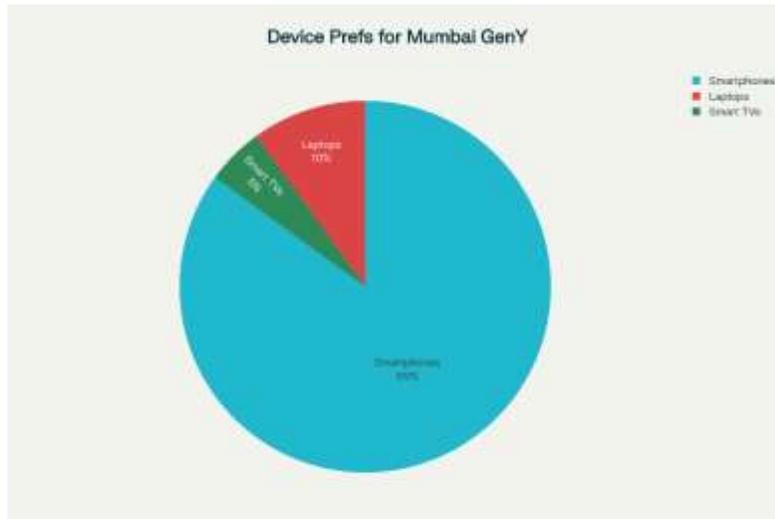
Bar chart showing percentage distribution of factors influencing OTT platform adoption among Mumbai millennials Analysis:

Content diversity (93%) and mobile accessibility (85%) are top influencers. Affordable pricing (67%), regional content (68%), and minimal advertisements (79%) are also critical. Chi-square tests confirm the statistical significance of each factor (all p-values < 0.05).

Device Preferences:-

Pie chart presents preferred streaming devices:

Pie chart showing device preferences for OTT streaming among Mumbai millennials.



Findings:

A vast majority (85%) stream via smartphones, only 10% use laptops, and 5% prefer smart TVs, underscoring the necessity for OTT platforms to optimize mobile experiences.

Subscription Model Preferences:-

Bar chart compares subscription models:



Bar chart showing OTT subscription model preferences among Mumbai millennials

Findings:

Ad-supported models (41%) are most popular, closely followed by paid subscriptions (38%). Freemium/trial options attract 21%, mostly younger users and students. Hypothesis H2 is supported: affordability and flexible plans are statistically significant adoption drivers.

Additional Statistical Findings:

- **Social Influence (H3):** 61% subscribed due to peer/family recommendation; chi-square test significant ($p < 0.05$).
- **Minimal Advertisements (H4):** 79% cited ad experience as a key factor; 38% pay for ad-free. Chi-square test significant ($p < 0.01$).
- **Content Variety (H1):** 93% prefer platforms with rich, varied content; strongest measured association ($p < 0.01$).

Integrated Discussion:-

The data confirms that Mumbai's millennials prioritize content diversity, mobile access, and affordable/flexible plans—supported by peer influence and dislike for advertisements. The visualizations underscore how these variables interact to drive subscription choices and platform loyalty.

The analysis of 100 Mumbai millennials highlights that content diversity, mobile accessibility, and affordable pricing are the primary drivers influencing OTT platform adoption. A significant majority prioritize original and regional content, reflecting an appetite for culturally relevant entertainment. The dominance of smartphones as the preferred streaming device underscores the critical need for mobile-optimized user experiences. Subscription choices are notably shaped by flexible pricing models, with ad-supported plans gaining traction among budget-conscious viewers. Additionally, social influences such as peer and family recommendations play a pivotal role in shaping adoption behavior, while minimal advertisement exposure enhances user satisfaction. These findings emphasize the importance for OTT providers to tailor their content offerings, pricing strategies, and technological features to the nuanced preferences of urban Indian millennials in a highly competitive market.

In conclusion, this study underscores the multifaceted nature of OTT platform adoption among Mumbai's millennial audience, shaped by a confluence of content variety, affordability, accessibility, and social dynamics. As digital entertainment continues to redefine viewing habits, OTT providers must strategically innovate to cater to the evolving expectations of this key demographic. Future research could explore longitudinal behavior changes and expand the scope beyond urban centers to rural markets, enriching our understanding of India's diverse media consumption landscape. By aligning with millennial preferences and technological advancements, OTT platforms in India are well-positioned to sustain their rapid growth and transform the entertainment ecosystem in the digital era.

Suggestions for OTT Platforms Targeting Millennials in Mumbai

- **Expand Original and Regional Content:**
Invest in producing high-quality Indian originals and regional language series to capture diverse millennial tastes and cultural sensibilities.
- **Prioritize Mobile Optimization:**
Enhance app interfaces, streaming quality, and accessibility for mobile devices, catering specifically to the majority who prefer smartphone streaming.
- **Offer Flexible and Affordable Pricing Models:**
Introduce customizable subscription plans, student discounts, family bundles, and freemium options to meet varying budget needs.
- **Limit Advertisements:**
Reduce intrusive ads and provide affordable ad-free subscription options, as minimal advertisement exposure strongly improves user retention.
- **Leverage Social & Influencer Marketing:**
Enhance engagement through campaigns on social media, collaborations with influencers, and referral bonuses to capitalize on peer and family recommendations.
- **Personalize User Experience:**
Utilize algorithms to deliver personalized content recommendations and tailored viewing lists, increasing relevance and engagement.

- **Continuous Market Research:**

Regularly seek feedback from millennial users to keep pace with changing preferences and emerging trends in urban India.

Implementing these strategies can help OTT platforms boost engagement, improve user satisfaction, and foster brand loyalty among millennials in competitive markets like Mumbai.

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