

ANALYSIS OF OTT PLATFORMS FOR SHOWCASING AND SHARING THE INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM THROUGH MYTHOLOGY TO INSPIRE FUTURE GENERATION

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Abstract: The dissemination of over-the-top (OTT) video streaming platforms has gradually been adopted by the young once in India. With the help of cheap mobile data, increased smartphone usage, and new technological advancements, the Indian OTT market is easily reachable to the young generation. Based on the social learning theory and Representation theory, this paper investigates how OTT platforms showcase Indian mythology on the global platform that motivates users to achieve a point of cultural reorientation. By following an empirical approach using semi-structured interviews, this study found that active users when exposed to diverse mythology content and its impact on them. The primary goal of my research is to bridge the gap between the traditional Indian knowledge systems and contemporary knowledge systems with the help of new media which is popular among youngsters. The objective of this study is to investigate how the OTT platform showcases and shares the Indian knowledge system through mythology among a global audience and find out the impact. OTT platform is technology-assisted new media forms that interact with culture and bring changes to society.

IndexTerms - OTT platform, Indian knowledge system, future generation, mythology, new media

1. INTRODUCTION

OTT has become a popular entertainment media platform in recent times. This platform results from the digital revolution in the global media market and communication technology. OTT stands for over-the-top. "OTT video services may be defined as the infrastructure of a last-mile broadband access provider unaffiliated with the online content provider" (Park.E.A. 2018). This platform provides content and services to the end-users and is accessible through the open internet (Noam. E. M, et al, 2003). This platform allows us to stream video across different devices whenever we want. The OTT platform provides TV serials, short films, web series, reality shows, documentaries, and more video content over the internet. In product placement research, traditional media like television and film are decreasing, and computer, online video, digital, or online devices are rising as newer media (Kureshi, 2010). The Internet has become the powerful medium we use to interact with one another worldwide. The Internet has changed communication in business, education, government, healthcare, society, communities, and even with our loved ones. It has become one of the critical drivers of social evolution globally. In global media, audiences have many options through the internet. People can consume any media throughout the world with the help of the internet. Internet compresses the international press in our hands with the help of smartphones. However, it poses new challenges to everyone, including privacy and security. Global markets for OTT services are rising day by day. In September 2015, 43 million domestic and 26 million international streaming subscribers had Netflix as a global OTT service provider. In the second quarter of 2020, it had 192.95 million paid subscribers worldwide. In 2014, 65.6 percent of TV watchers in the United States used Netflix. It is estimated that OTT and video subscription revenue will increase at a rapid rate and surpass 96.5 billion U.S. dollars worldwide in 2025 (Statista, 2016 and 2021). The rise of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms has revolutionized content consumption, providing an opportunity to showcase Indian mythology and traditional knowledge in engaging formats. With digital streaming becoming mainstream, OTT platforms can play a crucial role in preserving and promoting Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) through mythology, history, and culture. OTT platforms provide an interactive and accessible way to share mythology with younger generations.

1.1 Reviving Mythology through Modern Storytelling

Interactive storytelling through animated Series & web shows like The Legend of Hanuman (Hotstar) has been successful. Reimagining epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata with high-quality CGI can engage Gen Z audiences with the help of Live-Action Adaptations. Blending Indian mythology with futuristic themes is called Sci-Fi/Fantasy Adaptations like Kalki 2898 AD which can make content more appealing.

1.2 Documentaries & Educational Content

Platforms can create historical and spiritual documentaries on the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, and ancient Indian wisdom (Ayurveda, Yoga, Vedic Mathematics). Shows similar to *Cosmos* but based on Indian astronomy, metallurgy, temple architecture, and ancient sciences can be impactful. Interactive shows (like Netflix's *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch*) can allow users to make choices and experience mythological stories from different perspectives. VR-based OTT content can immerse viewers in Ramayana's Lanka, Krishna's Vrindavan, or ancient Vedic gurukuls.

1.3 Regional & Folk Mythologies

Indian knowledge isn't limited to Ramayana & Mahabharata—there are countless regional myths and folk epics. Stories of Tenali Rama (South), Vikram-Betaal (North), Parashuram (Konkan), Assamese and Bengali folklore can reach a wider audience.

2. NEED OF THE STUDY

Despite the rapid growth and widespread accessibility of OTT platforms in India, there is limited research on how these platforms can be used as tools for cultural preservation, particularly in relation to the Indian Knowledge System (IKS). While OTT platforms have transformed entertainment consumption, especially among the younger generation, there is a growing concern that globalized digital media content may overshadow indigenous cultural narratives and traditional knowledge sources. Although some mythological and culturally rooted programs exist, their representation, format, accessibility, language, and pedagogical value have not been systematically evaluated. Existing studies primarily focus on market growth, user behaviour, or technology adoption, but there is a noticeable gap in understanding how mythology-based content on OTT platforms shapes cultural identity, learning patterns, moral values, and intergenerational knowledge transfer. Furthermore, there is also a lack of research exploring how children and young audiences engage with mythological content when presented in formats such as animation, interactive storytelling, or modern digital aesthetics. This research is needed to evaluate whether OTT platforms can serve as a bridge between traditional cultural heritage and modern digital consumption habits. It will also help identify the role of OTT content in influencing children's learning, cultural awareness, value formation, and identity orientation, especially among Indian and diasporic communities. The findings may benefit media content creators, policymakers, educators, cultural institutions, and OTT platforms in designing accurate, appealing, and responsible mythology-based content that resonates with future generations.

3. RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Population and Sample

There was a total of 30 participants, which consisted of 20 women and 10 men. In this research, 25 participants are Indian and 5 are NRIs. To use purposive sampling, all categories like age, educational qualification, occupation, and monthly income of the participants were considered, and the researcher ensured a varying range of representations of participants. For Indian participants, interviews were conducted offline, and for international participants interviews were conducted online.

3.2 Data and Sources of Data

The researcher used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. The qualitative method is very suitable for analyzing this topic. The quantitative studies have used factor analysis methods but some facts remain undiscovered. We believe that the qualitative method can overcome these limitations. Semi-structured interviews help maintain a natural flow and provide subjective viewpoints of individuals (Choak, 2012; Flick, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

The researchers designed the following research questions:

RQ1: Do kids like to watch on OTT platforms?

RQ2: Do kids want to watch animated movies or series on OTT platform?

RQ3: Do they like animated mythology animation?

RQ4: Do they learn some things from mythology programs?

The interviews were conducted in approximately 60 to 90 minutes. The interview questions are prepared in two sets. The researcher asked questions from general to more specific issues. The first set contains 10 questions that intend to examine the respondent's kid's choice of entertainment and medium of entertainment. The second part of the questionnaire addressed 20 questions to understand the methodology-related program and its impact on their children. Data were collected and recorded using memos to find children's interest in the mythology programs. The analysis was based on the grounded theory approach and the data were coded, closely reviewed, and theorized (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

3.3 Theoretical framework

The data were subjected to a thematic analysis as it is an important process of identifying recurring responses, themes, and trends associated with the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As the next step, the latent analysis is employed to the level of interpretations that foreground the U&G theory, Cultivation Theory, and Social Learning Theory. The uses and gratifications theory describes why and what people do with entertainment tools (Katz, 1959). The rise of mobile technologies with quality mobility and higher connectivity to the internet attracts the individual's life. This theory explains that every individual chooses to use their communication behaviors, media, and content as a source of influence. The social learning theory was coined by Albert Bandura in 1977. This theory describes that learning takes place through observing the behavior of others. According to this theory, people can acquire some behaviors simply by following and storing the observations to guide future behaviors. Social learning theory acknowledges that humans are capable of cognition or thinking. They watch content over OTT (Over-The-Top) and interpret

and store a variety of positive and negative behaviors. Observational learning is a significant element of Bandura's social learning theory. Cultivation Theory, proposed by George Gerbner, explores how prolonged exposure to media shapes an individual's perceptions of reality. It suggests that repeated media messages "cultivate" a shared worldview, often influencing societal beliefs and behaviors over time. In the context of OTT platforms showcasing Indian mythology, this theory helps us understand how consistent exposure to mythological narratives can shape cultural identity, moral perspectives, and perceptions of history and spirituality.

3.4. Descriptive Statistics

The me / Response Category	Description Based on Interview Findings	Frequency (No. of Participants)	Percentage
Availability of variety on OTT is beneficial	Parents reported that OTT platforms offer a wide range of entertainment options suitable for children, making content selection easier.	27	90%
OTT platform is user-friendly for children	Children are able to independently navigate OTT applications without the need for constant parental assistance.	22	73.3%
Children prefer animated content	Most children prefer watching animated cartoons and animated films on platforms such as Netflix, Prime Video, and Hotstar.	25	83.3%
Children enjoy anime-style content	Anime-style storytelling and visuals (e.g., Naruto, Jujutsu Kaisen type formats) strongly attract children.	18	60%
Web-series format increases curiosity	Episodic storytelling formats such as <i>The Legend of Hanuman</i> increase curiosity and sustained engagement among children.	21	70%
Mythology content interest increases after festivals	Children show increased interest in mythological stories after cultural or religious festivals.	14	46.7%
Mythology watched only when animated	Children are generally reluctant to watch mythological content unless it is presented in animated form.	20	66.7%
Parents force children initially to watch mythology	Some parents initially encourage or insist on watching mythological content to introduce cultural values.	16	53.3%
Realistic animation increases engagement	Realistic and high-quality animation enhances children's interest compared to overly cartoonish visuals.	23	76.7%
Watching with family increases interest	Children show greater interest when mythological content is watched collectively as a family activity.	17	56.7%
Language barrier affects NRI children	NRI children face difficulties understanding Hindi-only mythological content even when subtitles are available.	5	16.7%
OTT supports access to Indian culture abroad	OTT platforms help NRI families access Indian culture, traditions, and mythological narratives.	5	16.7%
Perception that mythology teaches moral values	Parents believe mythological content on OTT platforms helps inculcate moral values and good behavior in children.	26	86.7%
Concerns about script manipulation for entertainment	Some participants expressed concern that mythological stories are altered or dramatized excessively for entertainment.	13	43.3%
Children inspired by mythological characters	Children admire and emulate mythological characters such as Krishna, Hanuman, and Chhota Bheem.	19	63.3%
Use of alternative platforms (podcasts, reels)	A section of participants reported using podcasts, short videos, or reels to introduce mythology to children.	9	30%

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interviewees made a statement that OTT platforms have given their children a lot of varieties of content to watch and get entertained. They suggested the OTT platform is very user-friendly for children. Interviewees reported that their children primarily watch animated cartoons on OTT platforms like Netflix. They enjoy watching animated TV shows, such as "The Boss Baby," "Despicable Me," "The Secret Life of Pets," and

"Masha and the Bear," as well as animated movies like "Despicable Me 4," "Minions," and "The Secret Life of Pets." On Amazon Prime Video, children like to watch Dora the Explorer, PAW Patrol, Madagascar, and Angry Birds: Mystery Island kind of animated cartoons and movies. The Disney+ Hotstar animated movies and cartoons are The Jungle Book, The Little Mermaid, The Lion King, Luca, Coco, Inside Out, and Tangled. Users acknowledge that children love to watch anime series. According to the respondents, web series are not just popular among elders; they are also popular among the young generation. Children watch multiple pieces of content that are recommended by their friends or family. On the OTT platform, children watch content alone, or sometimes they watch with their families. An interviewee said that they first force their children to watch mythology cartoons, but some of the interviewers said that after celebrating different festivals, their children are attracted by the mythology cartoons automatically. Bal Ganesh, Little Krishna, and Roll Number 21 are kinds of cartoons children like to watch, but on the OTT platform, they have so much variety that they like to watch web series and anime-kind cartoon patterns like Naruto and Jujutsu Kaisen. When researchers ask that do their children like mythology programs without animation? Most respondents said their kids refused, and some said that their children watch when we sit and force them to watch. Respondents said that "The Legend of Hanuman" animation looks like a real character; it does not look like a cartoon, so it is popular among their kids. They said most of the mythology characters look like cartoons, which does not fascinate children to watch them. On the other hand, "The Legend of Hanuman" came in the series and episode format, which creates suspense and curiosity among children about the story. Some of the respondents compare the "The Legend of Hanuman" series with the Japanese anime series, and some of them said they also like to sit and watch this series with their children. NRI respondents said they can watch mythology programs in foreign countries because they are available on the OTT platform. Through which they can watch anything anywhere. They said Indian mythology-related programs are primarily available on Hotstar, but some mythology cartoons are also available on Amazon Prime. All the NRI respondents' children showed less interest in watching mythology cartoons because of the audio. Mythology cartoons are available in the Indian language, but English subtitles are available for the audience to understand, which is not bearable for NRI children. Some NRI respondents said they force their children to watch mythology programs to make them understand Indian traditions, customs, and religion. Respondent's children watch OTT platforms through TV, tablets, and smartphones. NRI respondents and Indian respondents both agree that some of the mythology programs manipulated their scripts for entertainment. The OTT platform is not very helpful for basic concepts and for getting knowledge about mythology, but it is helpful for understanding the ethics of the good life, teaching good manners and traditions, and teaching them that goodness always wins over evilness. This helps kids to build good personalities. Some respondents said that reels and some social media content also inspired children to learn about Indian mythology. Some respondent said that their children idealized the character Krishna in roll number 21, Hanuman, and Chota Bhim. NRI respondents said that they use the Amazon music podcast show Ramayan for their children to get Indian mythology knowledge.

6. Conclusion

OTT platforms have a variety of content like animated movies, cartoons, anime, and animated web series. Web series are produced with seasons and episode-wise content. Ott platform creates curiosity and suspense among the audience which motivates them to watch the platform. Web series kind of program is not just popular among the adult audience it is also popular among the children. Children mostly like to watch anime series because it looks more realistic than cartoons. Its characters do not look like cartoons they look like a real person. Children talk and discuss their friend circle about cartoon and anime series which become a factor to encouraging other children to watch OTT programs. Sum of parents said they force their children to say it with them and watch mythology programs. However, some parents respond that if mythology programs are available in the form of cartoons or anime children love to watch them. Children so different kinds of gods and goddesses during different festivals celebrated in Indian culture. Sometimes they know about them and sometimes does not. When children watch any kind of program or cartoon related to mythology, they gradually get interest and curiosity regarding mythology programs. Some of the programs are very popular

among respondent's children like Bal Ganesha roll number 21 Chhota Bheem Little Krishna Hanuman and many more. NRI responded by saying that they are very happy to see mythology programs on the OTT platform when they are in a foreign country. The key concept of the OTT platform is that we can watch anything from anywhere. So that it is easy to watch mythology programs from across the world. Mythology programs are available with English subtitles which make it more comfortable to understand for those audiences who do not understand Hindi for example NRI and foreign country people. Indian culture and tradition are very popular among foreign countries so they want to know more about our mythology and other country audience. The OTT platform helps them to access the program with English subtitles. But for the children, it is very uncomfortable to read the subtitles to understand the mythology program. Watching with reading subtitles is a very boring process for children. Language became the big hurdle to reaching out to foreign and even Indian kids. The researcher understands that all animated cartoons should be available in the English language. Many Indian children study in the English medium School so they speak in English. They also feel uncomfortable understanding the hard Hindi words. If we want to spread Indian mythology to our new generation. We should also dub all the Indian mythology cartoons or programs in the English language. Many followers are available outside the country they want to know about Indian culture mythology and tradition. If we made the program with the English language dubbed then it would be very helpful for future generations. Among all the cartoons and anime 'The Legend of Hanuman' is very popular among all the respondent's children. This is of own kind of program because its animation does not look like a cartoon its character looks like a real person. It is available in seasons and episodes format. This program is also available in so many different Indian languages. But 'The Legend of Hanuman' is not available in the English language and this is a big demerit for NRI respondent children. Because of its popularity, this program came with the five seasons and others are still coming because the story was not completed yet. We need to make more realistic animations and they should be dubbed in the English language so that children feel more connected to watching mythology programs. Mythology programs introduce our religious culture and Indian tradition to our new generation. Indian mythology teaches children to follow the path of truthiness, evil never wins over the truth, moral values, challenge acceptance capability, patience, patience is a virtue, and ethics of life. Mythology teaches children through the storytelling process. Children make different mythology characters to the ideal of their life like superheroes. OTT platform is the modern and attractive media for showcasing and sharing the Indian knowledge system through mythology to inspire future generations.

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