



Psychosocial Impact of Web Series and Streaming Content: A Study on Indian Youth

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Abstract

Nowadays, Web series and online streaming content are becoming the heart of the youth. Web series are replacing television and have seen a boom in online streaming and web series content produced in India. Many big companies like Amazon, Netflix, SonyLiv, Hot star, and Eros Now have invested heavily in regional content. Web series have gained popularity in India in the last few years because they take us where television won't. Web series and online streaming allow their audience to watch shows at their convenience.

This research paper analysis the psychosocial impact of web series and online steaming content amongst youth on online platforms like YouTube, Amazon, Netflix, SonyLiv, hot star, and Eros Now, and Torrent downloads. The researcher also examined the perception of youth regarding the web series and online streaming content. The questionnaire was used to gather information from the respondents. The respondents were students studying in different Colleges and Universities in Haryana, India.

Keywords: Web Series; Online Streaming; Psychosocial, Youth; Impact; Addiction; Episode; Netflix; Amazon Prime; Digital Media Consumption

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Introduction

The Internet has become the trend of the youth. The phase of the youngsters is seen to be social media addicts, so web series are quickly running and gaining popularity amongst India. The serial on Television goes on for years and years, but the web series are small and have new concepts with new creativity. It has Unpredictable plots and shows the current situation much time. Also, Web series have no time-bound. People can watch it anywhere and at any point in time. Web series create any interest to watch the next episode. Web series are taking the rise in India because people can watch a series of their interests and their type. Web series provides all kinds of entertainment, and the majority of the series, at the end, leave back some moral for the viewers.

The Internet has also brought a radical change in the television industry around the world. Web series and streaming content are having a significant impact on our society, especially amongst youth. In the last few years, the online entertainment industry has marked remarkable growth in India. This is possible because of the changing lifestyle of the Indian viewers, the change in


the type of content consumed, and various online streaming platforms on which the content is served to them. With the introduction of faster and cheaper internet services in the form of mobile connection and wide availability of broadband services, there has been major growth in the access to online content, in terms of the number of people visiting online for content, and the time they spend on watching online content.

A report suggested that, on average, Indian viewers spend approximately eight hours 29 minutes watching online video content, which is far more than the global trend of six hours and 45 minutes. This clearly shows how much the popularity of online streaming content in India. A web series, in simpler words, is a series of short video episodes, which are released over a certain period to tell a story to the viewers. It is designed like a television daily soap or series, except that it's watched on web platforms.

Earlier, it was much popular in western countries, but with globalization, the trend of online content streaming became popular in India. The introduction of Netflix, Amazon Prime, ALT Balaji, MX Player, TVF, and some other websites and App-based online video streaming platforms and faster internet services

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have become very popular in the Indian entertainment industry. Even a large number of viewership comes from YouTube – the famous video streaming platform owned by the search engine giant Google. With growing popularity, online content streaming has become a lucrative opportunity for content producers, and it further has resulted in more and more content being uploaded on the Internet.

The main target audience of the web series and other online streaming content is the younger generation, mainly comprised of teenagers and the youth between 18 to 30 years of age. However, the audience includes people of 30 to 50+ years of age as well. These online video streaming platforms focus on the 'binge-watch' model. To understand this better, suppose you have decided to sit and watch just one of the web series episodes for a day, which hardly takes 30 minutes. You find yourself tempted to watch more and more episodes, even though you know you'll be killing several hours of the day on the same.

Online Streaming Services

Online Streaming Services introduced fans to entire TV catalogs, leading to "binge-watching," where viewers watch successive episodes of a single TV series in one sitting. Shows are now catered specifically to binge-watchers. Working on this model helps these platforms attract youth looking for entertainment on their smartphone or laptop devices. The youth find today's television soap boring, meaningless, and lacking originality; they tend to watch a lot of drama, comedy, action, love & romance, thrill, and more, which comes to them in web series or episodes.

Review of Literature

The Culture of Binge Watching in India

It is becoming apparent that the attraction for traditional television viewing is declining amongst the Indian youth. The famous OTT platforms like Amazon Prime, Netflix, Sony LIV, and other video streaming websites provide instant access to broad categories of video content, attracting youth in India.

In the last decade, India has witnessed a technologically transformative media landscape that has promoted the mass market of niche channels, content, and television technologies. The new platforms of engaging with television media, mainly through smartphones and Internet TV/ Video-On-Demand (VOD) and OTT platforms, gave rise to changing viewing patterns and platform choices.

Moving ahead, OTT platforms took advantage of a strong audience base that is increasingly growing accustomed to consuming entertainment content through smartphones. The online streaming platforms have now swooped in to take their slice of the market. The contents, features, and contexts of this online video streaming differ sufficiently from traditional TV. It remains a challenge to investigate how far traditional media theories and methodologies can inform research on the changing audience and their viewing pattern [1-3].

It must be noted that the most popular amongst OTT platforms in India is Hotstar, launched in 2015 and owned by Star TV (India's biggest private broadcaster), with a total loyal user base of 75

million people in the rural and urban areas, which is followed by Amazon Prime video with 11 million subscribers [4]. While Netflix only comes in the third with around 5 million subscribers, it nevertheless offers a more interesting focus of inquiry on account of its many differences from other players and the more particular audiences it targets – niche, English speaking, affluent, urban youth [5].

Effects of Binge Watching Web Series

Several studies have proven direct or indirect effects of binge watching web series and online streaming content on the youth. A research by Sung, et al (2005) suggested that binge behaviours are thought to be closely related to negative feelings. Many studies provided examples of research articles that provide correlation between binge watching, body dissatisfaction, academic loss, depressive symptoms and low esteem, such as and Stice [6].

examined the effects of binge-watching on social and academic lives of college students, where he stated, "For many participants, the rhythm of their day was built around binge-watching. The scheduled a time to binge-watch web series and awarded themselves after accomplishments. While the participants downplayed or were unaware of the effects of this new watching experience, their grades suffered, their social lives are ignored, and the schedule is determined to an extent by their binge-watching habit [7].

Found that binge-watching was related to depression and loneliness among 316 respondents between 18 and 20 years old. The studies prove that binge watching web series and online video content on the OTT platforms have brought in several changes in attitude, behaviour and social life as well [8].

Statement of Problem

India is rich in diversity, tradition, culture, religious sentiments, and values around the world. People have always taken the example of India when it comes to how culture and traditions are being passed to the next generation. Films and the television industry have always been significant sources of infotainment and entertainment for the people in India. Also, they have been one of the essential sources to influence thoughts, attitudes, behavior, and belief [9-12].

It is generally seen that the youth, especially kids and teens, tend to learn the instances, dialogues, songs from movies, and later it stays in their mind for an extended period. And as a result, parents always preferred streaming those channels or movies, which have positivity, and don't contain any unfavourable content [13-16].

The new era of online video streaming content and web series based on an economic model to earn revenue and young audience overlook the need for value-added content. Also, the thirst to adopt western culture has highly influenced the content and its type being shared on the various video streaming platforms.

Today, the video streaming platforms focus only on the 'binge watching' model, generating more viewers and viewing hours. It won't be wrong to call this model an 'addiction' to spend long

hours streaming online videos. It is a very well-known fact that the more the number of viewers and playing hours, the more the scope of revenue [17].

As a result, we can see hundreds of web series, episodes, and videos available on these platforms, and several being uploaded every minute. Since they are available on the internet, it is easily accessible to the youth via smartphones or laptops. The content served here is primarily unregulated with many factors that boost the number of young, school and college-going audiences.

This content contains too much abusive language, hatred, vulgarity, a sense of rebellion against parents, country, law or religion, and other taboos of the society. It deals in originality and creativity, but at the same time, it has a solid potential to attract the youth's attention. In the end, it introduces a lot of topics, subjects, and ideas, which the Indian youth might be unaware of, or can be influenced [18].

A general day in a youth's life should be filled with activities like playing outdoor games, meeting with friends, exercise, and other activities like doing homework and being physically active. However, all of these are today replaced with online video streaming and web shows. Being addicted to the internet and online content, they have less time for human interaction, harming their physical and mental development.

It is already understood that youths are more likely to imitate and adapt one's behavior to their own because they can easily relate to what is shown on online web shows and other video content. As a result, it develops a lot of behavioural changes in youth today. It not only makes them aggressive in both their behavior and in their thoughts, but it is also likely to influence them with what they have seen regularly like smoking, drinking, drugs, nudity, and vulgarity, which are shown frequently in these online web shows. This further develops several unhealthy habits at an early age [19-21].

Here are some significant points, which we should think properly

1. An Indian youth spends approximately an average of eight hours 29 minutes watching online video content, which is far more than the global trend of six hours and 45 minutes.
2. Watching violent web series increase aggression and violent behavior in the youth.
3. Nudity and Obscenity encourage irresponsible sexual behavior, and the web rarely mentions anything about sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy.
4. Increase in the number of depression, obesity, and eyes disorder cases amongst the youth.
5. Smoking, Tobacco, Alcohol, Drugs, and Weed are advertised directly on online web series, rarely mentioning their adverse effects.

Research Questions

1. How much time spends on watching web series by youth?
2. What is the impact of web series on the perception of youth?

3. What are the psychological impacts of web series on the behavior of youth?

4. By what means is the web series increasing depression in youth?

Objectives of the study

1. To analysis the impact of the psychosocial impact of web series and streaming content on the Indian youth.
2. To find out the causes of behavioural changes among youth because of the addiction to web series.
3. To find out the impact of web series and streaming content on the academic performance of the youth.
4. To explore the perception of youth regarding the nature of online video content and web series in India.

Research Methodology

In this research paper, the researcher used the quantitative method. This particular study is designed as exploratory research, where it aims to study the various psychosocial impacts of web series and online streaming content on the Indian youth [16]. The purposive sampling was done on students studying in Govt. PG College Panchkula, Govt. PG College Amballa Cantt, Kurukshetra Universities, Guru gram University, and Indira Gandhi University, Meerpur, Rewari in Haryana, India, where 250 responses were received and analysed by the researcher. A questionnaire with close-ended questions was built on Google Forms and was sent to the respondents through email and Whatsapp.

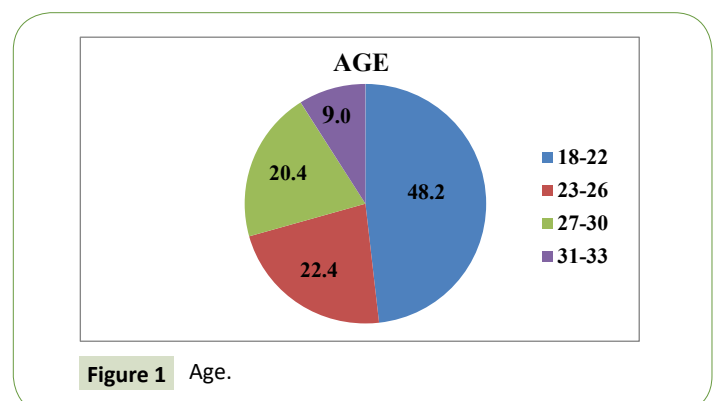
Data Presentation & Interpretation

The research data was collected and analysed based on descriptive research methodology- the data collected in the quantitative data.

Respondent analysis

Age (Figure-1)

This study is based on the responses received by the youth, where it can be clearly seen that majority of the respondents, which is 48.2% are between 18 to 22 years of age. Whereas 22.4% of respondents are between 23 and 26 years, 20.4% are between 27 and 30 years, and only 9.0% of respondents are between 31 and 33 years of age.



Gender (Figure-2)

When categorizing the respondents on the gender basis, it can be seen that 54.00% of the respondents were male, while 46.00% of respondents are female. This clearly shows that females are equally interested.

Questions asked to the respondents

Q.1. which is the most popular online platform for streaming video content? (Figure-3)

Data Interpretation

The respondents were asked about their popular online platform for streaming video content, where 30.30% prefer Netflix as their favourite online platform. 25.40% of respondents chose YouTube, while 17.10% choose hot star, 11.0% choose SonyLiv and 8.00% choose Amazon prime and 5.0% choose Eros Now and 3.20 downloads content from the torrent website. This clearly states that the majority is interested in Netflix, followed by YouTube which shows that they were interested in Netflix and free video streaming on YouTube, rather than paying subscription fee for other OTT platforms [21].

Q.2. How much time spends on watching web series or other online video content every day? (Figure-4)

Data Interpretations

When asked the respondents about the average time spent on watching web series or other video content online on a daily basis, 70.20% agreed to spend 1 to 3 hours every day, while 22.30% agreed to spend 4 to 6 hours every day and 7.60%

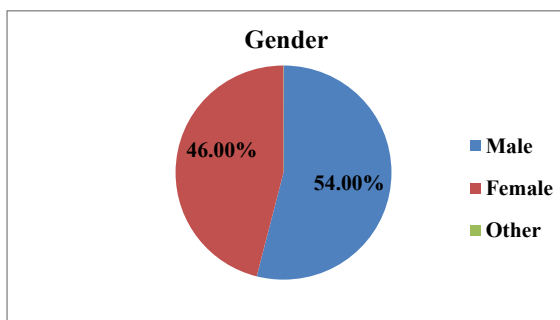


Figure 2 Gender.

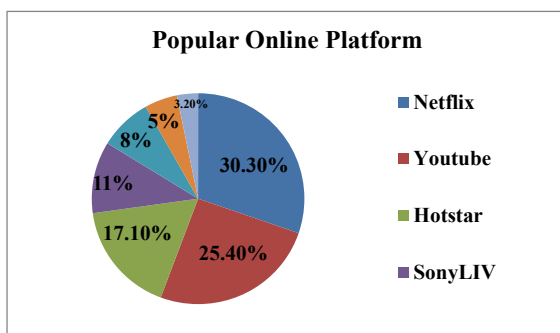


Figure 3 Which is the most popular online platform for streaming video content?

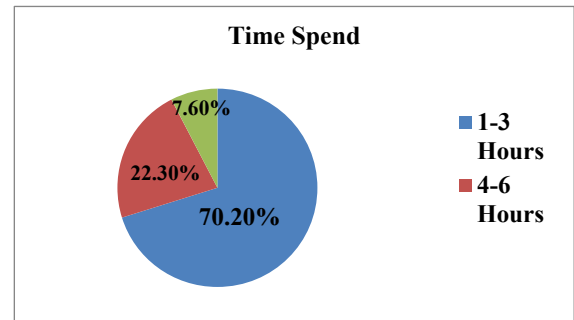


Figure 4 How much time spend on watching web series or other online video content every day?

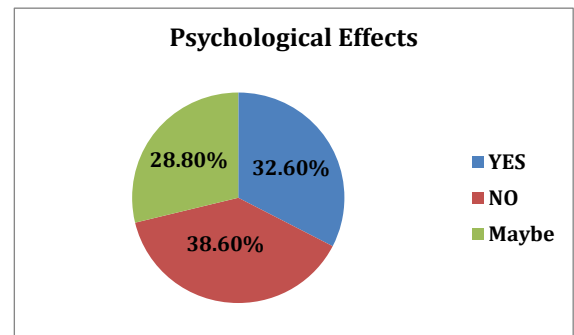


Figure 5 Do you agree that web series and online content has psychological effects on you?

respondent agreed to be spend 7 to 9 hours every day on online video streaming.

Q.3. Do you agree that web series and online content has psychological effects on you? (Figure-5)

Data Interpretation

When asked to the respondents whether the web series and online content have psychological effects on the youth, 32.60% of respondents said yes, it has an impact on them. While, 38.60% said no, that it never had a psychological impact on them [20]. It is also important to know that 28.8% of all respondents aren't sure that whether web series and online content have psychological effect on them or not.

Q.4. Do you think web series have create anger and aggression in you? (Figure-6)

Data Interpretation

The question aimed to understand whether these web series have cause a rise in anger and aggression in respondents, where 78.0% refused while 12.0% have answered the question in yes, and 10.0% aren't sure that whether web series and online content have created anger and aggression on them or not.

Q.5. Do you think watching web series and online video content is causing anxiety and depression? (Figure-7)

Data Interpretation

The next question was to analyse whether watching web series

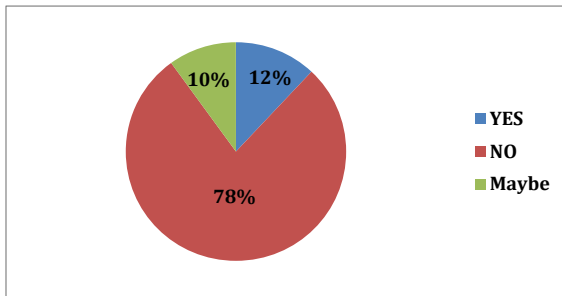


Figure 6 Do you think web series have created anger and aggression in you?

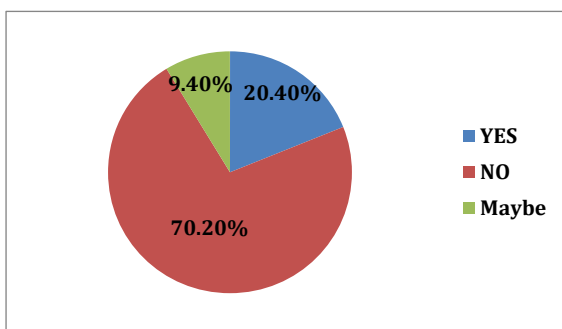


Figure 7 Do you think watching web series and online video content is causing anxiety and depression.

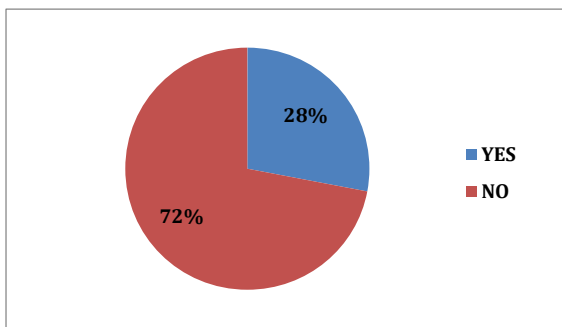


Figure 8 Has watching web series affected your performance in exams or other important works?

causing anxiety and depression amongst the youth. The majority 70.20 % of the respondents agreed with answering a No. While 20.40% of the respondents agreed and 9.40% aren't sure that whether web series and online content have created an anxiety and depression on them or not.

Q.6. Has watching web series affected your performance in exams or other important works? (Figure-8)

Data Interpretation

The next question was to assess whether OTT content have affected the academic performance of the youth. Here, 28.00% of the respondents have agreed watching online video streaming and web series have affected their performance in exams or other important works. However, 72.0% disagreed to the impact of online video streaming in their academic performances.

Q.7. what affect you most to watch the web series? (Figure-9).

Data Interpretation

When asked about the most affect you most in the web series, 40.40% of the respondents agreed to like the cast, story and theme of the web series, while 30.50% agreed to like dialogues [22]. 20.60% agreed with abusive language and double meaning jokes and 8.50% of respondents agreed with sexual scene. It is also very interesting to know that 8.50% watched web series for sexual elements of the web series.

Q.8. Do you avoid physical Exercises due to watching web series? (Figure-10)

Data Interpretation

Here 22.00% of respondents agreed that they avoid physical exercises, however, 78.0% of the respondents claimed to give preference to physical exercises.

Q.9. Do you think that web series shows enhance criminal activity in society? (Figure-11)

Data Interpretation

Majority of the respondents 40.20% feel like web series enhance criminal activity in society and 32.20 % are disagreeing, and 27.60% of respondents aren't know that web series shows enhance criminal activity in society.

Q.10. Do you think that web series are changing the language and behavior of the youth?(Figure-12)

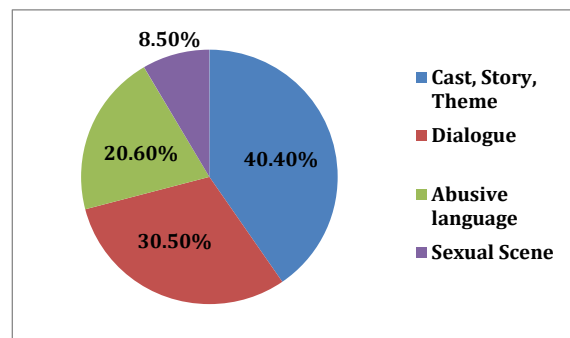


Figure 9 What affect you most to watch the web series?

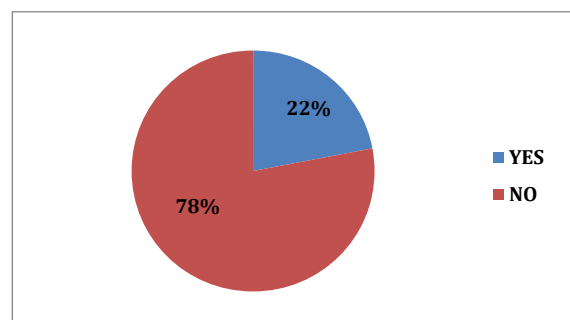


Figure 10 Do you avoid physical Exercises due to watching web series?

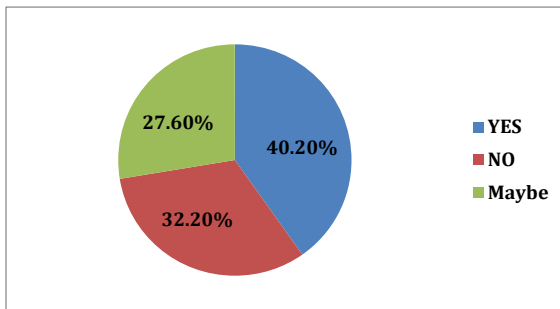


Figure 11 Do you think that web series shows enhance criminal activity in society?

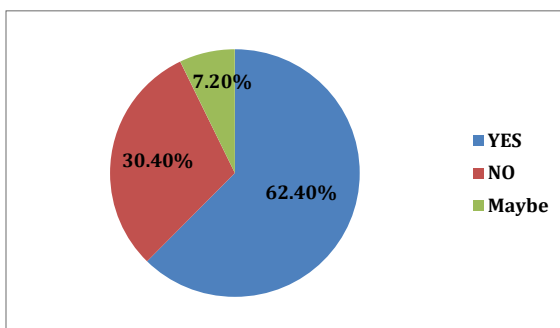


Figure 12 Do you think that web series are changing the language and behavior of the youth?

Data Interpretation

Majority of the respondent 62.40 percent are agreeing and 30.40 percent respondents disagreed, and 7.20 percent aren't sure

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that web series are changing the language and behavior of the youth.

Findings

- The study found that Netflix is the most popular online video streaming platform amongst the respondents, followed by YouTube, hot star, SonyLiv, Amazon Prime, Eros, and others.
- The respondents agreed that web series and online video content have a direct or indirect psychological impact on them.
- The respondents agreed that watching web series has given rise to anger, aggression, anxiety, and depression.
- The respondents watched web series or online content because of the story, theme, dialogue, sex scenes, or abusive language used in the content.
- When it comes to physical exercises, the respondents agree they do exercises.
- 62.40 percent of respondents agree that web series are changing the language and behavior of the youth.

Conclusion

The result clearly stated that web series and online streaming content significantly impact the Indian youth. The web series content showcased on the online platforms grabs youth's attention. The content available on OTT platforms is filled with violence, sexual, and abuse and has caused psychosocial effects on Indian youth. They have agreed that they had low symptoms of anger, aggression, anxiety, and depression in their lives. If it is uncontrollable, it will create major psychosocial issues among the youth.

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