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Breaking Taboos: The Impact of Explicit Content on Social Norms in OTT

KUMARI SUDHA¹ AND THAMMADI SHASHANK²

ABSTRACT

From the past decades the craze of over-the-top platforms have hiked up with an impressive speed. Before OTT, mass media like televisions, radio and theatres were only the option for people to be connected with movies and serials. But, also the 5g generation need much more than just the movies and actions. People have developed their tastes and attraction to many more like horror, Sci-Fi, action, anime, comedies, Fantasy, Romance etc. and all of these at pone place is only being provided by these OTT platforms with minimum monetary investment. But with growth of demand and viewers of OTT, it has impacted the society in positive and negative means as well especially when country like India is considered where culture, ethics and modesty still are at the priority list and where sex is till considered a taboo and not discussed openly. In this situation also OTT platforms manage to collect their huge number of viewers from this country.

Keywords: *Censorship, Depiction, Protagonist, Over The Top, Taboos, Obscenity.*

I. INTRODUCTION

OTT or Over The Top refers to streaming of films, videos, audios etc. on an internet connected device via apps. These are basically the replacement for the traditional Satellite connected and Cable Tv's for watching movies or videos. OTT is the new way of delivering content on the audience with the power of the internet. After the advent of the internet the whole world started to connect the dots around the globe. People could now watch the scenario, weather and new from miles and miles away just sitting with their internet connected devices worldwide.

Media in India has come a long way, but it still has a long way to go in terms of representation and portrayal of women. The image of women in media in India often reflects traditional gender stereotypes, where women are often portrayed as homemakers and as objects of desire. They are often sexualized, and their worth is often determined by their physical appearance and sexual appeal. As per CordCutting data, 93% of Americans adults watch OTT and only 40% have cable connection. As per a KPMG report, it is anticipated that the number of subscribers for OTT players in India will reach 627 million by the year 2023, reflecting a Compound Annual Growth

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Rate (CAGR) of 36% from 2017 to 2023. The report further projects that the Indian OTT market is poised to expand from INR 25.6 billion in 2017 to INR 103.9 billion by 2023, with a CAGR of 32%. In the Indian context, the acronym OTT commonly refers to video streaming applications. Noteworthy examples such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video fall under the OTT category because they deliver video content to consumers through their websites or applications rather than traditional cable TV channels.

The present study is on the topic "Breaking Taboos: The Impact of Explicit Content on Social Norms in OTT" will focus on various types of impacts that OTT causes on the viewers and answers the question after analysing the data that which OTT and why OTTs are now becoming demanded.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

India is culture rich country and is known for its customs and societal norms. If we dive in the old Vedic eras Indian society was much occupied with social stratification or caste system. The Vedic period was patriarchal and patrilineal. Women were given power and high positions in the society. Later, with the growth of the society and the growth of the people the everything started to take new formation. As then society grew with the growth of the people and technology came in the picture. Betty White was the First Lady of Television on PBS. And as far as Indian television is concerned, Durgabai Kamat, was the first female to come in the history of Indian cinema screen. Her extraordinary path, starting from an era when female participation in acting was deemed unconventional, to her emergence as a pioneering force in the industry, stands as a clear testament to her talent and unwavering determination. In the early 1900s, the acting was restricted to men and women. Men only used to play the part for the women which created a challenge for the Dadasaheb Phalke, widely regarded as the Father of Indian cinema. After the movie, Raja Harishchandra, in which he had to cast male actors only for the female roles, was accepted by the society fully and it pushed a wide-open gate to welcome the female actress in cinema world. And then Dadasaheb introduced Durgabai Kamat in his second movie, "Mohini Bhasma Sur". Later, with the entry of the female actress on the screen, society started accepting the females as a normal basis but they were assigned more kind off submissive roles of mother, wife, daughters etc. The role of women in media gained prominence from the 1960s onward, coinciding with the integration of television into society. During this period, women featured in newspapers, films, and television began to attract significant attention. The majority of media corporations were owned by large multinational corporations and prominent male business figures. Consequently, these entities were not

particularly attentive to women's concerns, leading to their exploitation as a means of captivating audiences and boosting ratings. This approach often portrayed women in a physical manner, neglecting their importance and perpetuating their underrepresentation as an inferior gender.

(A) Literature Review

As per *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)* |Volume IV, the women representation in advertisement has been analysed in three main types of roles i.e.

1. Responsive role
2. Decorative role
3. Independent role

These roles assigned to the women in the society are based on the various disciplines of the society i.e; Mythology, history and biology. Since ancient times only women have been portrayed as beautiful with attractive body like “apsaras” to distract sages. Likewise, women are now depicted by the advertising bodies to sell their products and services and for that the women with fair colour and lean body are chosen in the media world.

As per article *PUBLISHED AT “MANSWORLD”*³ under the headline “Has OTT the way women are portrayed on screen?” Women on screen are no longer just housewives or vamps; they now have a story and sometimes even carry the whole show. OTT platforms like Netflix has alone worked with 23 different women writers and depicted them in various leading roles

As per *Economic Times magazine* which published an article titled as “OTTs break shackles of women in Indian flicks amid changing mindscape”,⁴ the article has mentioned and discussed following points in relation to women portrayal on OTT; portrayal of women in multidimensional character, taking challenging roles (earlier male centric).

As per article published at *Exchange4media*, titled as *OTT platforms a boon for women centric Content*,⁵ The representation of women in OTT platforms are far more inspiring than the representation in Bollywood films. OTT platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Alt Balaji, Zee5 have included shows that been led by women. “Thank God the platform has no censorship.

According to an article named as Campaign in Asia, titled as “India is watching more frank

³ OTT Platforms And The Changing Female Narrative, MAN’S WORLD INDIA (2022), h.

⁴ womens day: OTTs break shackles of women in Indian flicks amid changing mindscape -

⁵ ‘OTT platforms a boon for women-centric content,’

sexual content, but is that a good thing?” which talks about India’s shift from shielded explicit depictions of sex to normalising discussions on sex. It basically answers the Indian taboos with high growth rate watching sexual content online especially growth of OTT viewers. It also stated that how taboos were used and during the time when movies were seen in cinema halls and theatres and the “bold” movies were backlashed on grounds of culture and the actors were termed as B-grade.

(B) Statement of problem

In recent years OTT (Over The Top) platforms have emerged globally and have succeeded in providing prominent source of entertainment with various categories along with societal challenges like explicit contents. Ironically, with the large number of viewers and controversies, very limited empirical research exists on the effects of the explicit content on social norms within the context of OTT platforms.

(C) Research Objectives

1. To gather and analyse the effect of OTT platforms and its contents on society.
2. To know the stand of women’s depiction in the OTT contents.
3. To analyse the legal standing for OTT contents and its censorship.
4. To investigate the factors responsible for challenging societal norms.

(D) Research Question

1. How OTT contents impacts social norms?
2. What is the effect of women depiction in OTT platforms on the societal norma and breaking taboos?
3. What is the legal scenario in dealing with explicit contents of the OTT platforms

(E) Methodology

The researcher applied the non-probability sampling method for the collection of data from primary data sources. Around 58 samples are collected from the individuals aged between 15 - 30 year, who were born and brought up in rural/urban areas, educated between intermediate to post graduation. The convenient sampling techniques have been used by sending preprepared goggle form questionnaire through various social media. And SPSS tool has been used for analysing of the data received.

III. IMPACT OF OTT ON SOCIETY

Indian society has gone through a drastic change when it comes to the entertainment field. When we compare our entertainment schedule with what we did when we were kids, we can easily find a huge difference between those time periods. And this drastic difference has been more widened by introduction of OTT platforms in our lives and in technological internet services sector. From watching Mahabharata and Ramayana with families on Sundays to seeing Mirzapur on Netflix, the societal needs have changes indifferently⁶.

India is a country where the culture and traditions are given much value. Though the society and its people have changed and been educated still the early mindset needs to be changed and framing this mindset in the society the influence of media, television and these OTT play a significant role. These platforms make a huge difference when it comes to impact on the society in following ways:⁷

- Inspiring change

OTT contents comes with new ideas and diversified contents which inspires the society to overcome big challenges and transform the lives and communities to make positive changes

- Diverse representation

OTT contents include representation from every aspect of the society, and as India is a diverse country, so every viewer get to see and think the other people's culture and thinking too.

- Starting conversations⁸

Many shows on OTT contain some very different issues of the society which normally people don't like to talk or discuss about. Here OTT by reaching all the parts of the society gives people a detailed vision and influences their mind to consider such topics of the society.

OTT content providers provide the audio as well as videos in different genres and different areas like Romance, Action, Documentaries, Fantasy, Anime etc as well as language preference is also given. So, it makes very easy to access as per the mood of the viewers.

Some famous OTT platforms in India are:

1. **Netflix:** Introduced to the Indian market in 2016, Netflix swiftly captured the attention of Indian audiences with its extensive selection of international and domestic content, spanning TV shows, films, and documentaries.

⁶ Synthesis of Factors Impacting Usage of OTT Platforms: Sustainability of OTT Industry Post Pandemic | .

⁷ S. Shyam Prasad, *Impact of OTT Media on the Society: Insights from Path Analysis*, ahead-of-print ASIA-PAC. J. BUS. ADM.

⁸ Impact of OTT Platforms on Human society: A Comprehensive Review | International Journal of Indian Psychology,

2. **Amazon Prime Video:** Came in India in 2016, Amazon Prime Video presents a fusion of Indian and global content, showcasing movies, television series, and original productions tailored for the Indian audience.
3. **Disney+ Hotstar:** Renowned as a leading OTT platform in India, Disney+ Hotstar offers a blend of international and Indian entertainment, ranging from movies and TV shows to sports events and news coverage.
4. **Zee5:** Developed by the Zee Network, Zee5 stands out for its broad assortment of Indian content, encompassing movies, TV shows, and exclusive productions from Zee.
5. **Voot:** Launched by Viacom18, Voot delivers a mix of Indian and international content, including movies, TV series, and original programming created by Viacom18.
6. **SonyLIV:** Introduced by Sony Pictures Networks India, SonyLIV features a diverse range of Indian and international content, spanning movies, TV shows, sports events, and news broadcasts.

(A) Positive aspects of OTT

OTT video services offer numerous advantages, prominently highlighted by their flexibility and convenience. Below are some of the advantages that OTT includes: ⁹

- Users can indulge in on-demand entertainment at their leisure, with the ability to binge-watch entire series, pause and resume as desired, and access content across multiple devices.¹⁰
- The breadth of content available through OTT services is impressive, encompassing a vast array of movies, TV series, documentaries, and exclusive offerings. This expansive selection allows users to explore new content and diversify their viewing preferences.
- In comparison to traditional cable or satellite TV, OTT services typically present a more cost-effective option. Users have the freedom to select services tailored to their specific preferences and budget, avoiding the burden of paying for unnecessary channels.

⁹ Growth of OTT Platforms in India During the Covid-19 Lockdown |

¹⁰ SUSTAINABILITY OF OVER THE TOP (OTT) VIDEO PLATFORMS IN INDIA: EXAMINING THE TAM MODEL ON THE ADOPTION OF OTT VIDEO STREAMING PLATFORM AMONG MILLENNIAL CONSUMERS,

- The technological advancements offered by OTT services, such as 4K Ultra HD resolution and Dolby Atmos sound, further enhance the viewing experience, ensuring a heightened level of immersion and quality.

As the advent of OTT services has revolutionized the landscape of video content consumption, offering unparalleled flexibility, affordability, and quality to users worldwide.

IV. OTT: BREAKING TABOOS

OTT have managed to gather a good number of viewers especially from the period of covid and lockdown. But it has been criticised and asked to regulation due to its regular and more often use of vulgar language and explicit contents. This has now been an issue with OTT when it comes to publishing in the Indian society. Some of the factors which leads to such content are:¹¹

1. Freedom of OTT players: Due to lack of regulation breaks, OTT players have much freedom for creativity in expressing themselves on these platforms, which has led to rise of explicit content in OTT platforms.¹²
2. Target audiences: the OTT players target the largest group of people from the population to increase the demand of the shows. They mainly target the young, adult and teenagers, who are more vulnerable and prone towards the obscenity and explicit contents to increase the demand of the shows.
3. Competitive landscape: This is one of the most important reasons why new OTT players are coming in market with more explicit contents. As to attract more viewers by showing more sexually explicit contents can lead to their rise in subscribers. Many new OTT with most sexually explicit contents are now becoming threat to Indian society as whole as it influences the mind of the teenagers and adults.
4. Viewer Preferences: Studies have indicated that sexually explicit content can significantly boost viewership, especially among specific demographic groups. OTT platforms may incorporate such content based on data reflecting viewer preferences and behaviours.
5. International Content Licensing: OTT platforms frequently procure content from diverse regions and cultures worldwide. As different societies may have varying cultural attitudes towards sexuality and nudity, this can result in the inclusion of sexually explicit

¹¹ New Trends in Over the Top Media Service (OTT) Web User Behaviour Analysis and Unethical User Prediction | Mobile Networks and Applications,

¹² Asli Ildir, *Breaking the Chains of Television: Streaming and the 'Netflix Effect' in Turkey*, 27 INT. J. CULT. STUD. 47 (2024).

material in imported programming.

Some of the most controversial OTT shows which has been debatable in the society: ¹³

- **Tandav on Amazon Prime:** This show started with big bust, debuting in January and immediately stirring controversy due to scenes containing religious connotations. Matters escalated when a First Information Report (FIR) was lodged against the show's creators for allegedly offending sentiments, prompting the removal of two scenes from "Tandav" postrelease. Additionally, the head of Amazon India, the platform hosting the show, faced potential arrest, although the Supreme Court intervened, granting relief.
- **“Cuties” on Netflix:** The French film "Cuties" on Netflix stirred controversy by portraying young girls in sexualized contexts, prompting accusations of exploitation and demands for boycotts. Facing legal repercussions and widespread condemnation, many critics argued against its presence on the platform, questioning its appropriateness.
- **Sacred Games on Netflix¹⁴:** This show on Netflix has a huge fan following but has seen controversy and backlash due to abusive language, explicit contents and violence in the show. It has also been in question due to some controversial seen related to Sikh community in the show.
- **A Suitable Boy on Amazon Prime:** This web series is based on the novel of the same name, came under severe criticism for featuring a kissing scene set against the backdrop of a temple. Several politicians accused the show of offending religious sentiments, alleging that it insulted Hindu deities. Consequently, the hashtag #BoycottNetflix gained traction on Twitter, reflecting public outrage over the perceived disrespect shown in the series.
- **Bombay Begum on Netflix:** Netflix's recent debut of "Bombay Begums" faced criticism for its alleged inappropriate depiction of children. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights has urged Netflix to remove the show, arguing that it negatively influences the impressionable minds of young viewers.

V. CENSORSHIP IN INDIA: OTT PLATFORMS

With the developing technology and internet services like cloud computing and IOTs, the digital world has seen bombardment of users in its area. In India, one-tenth of the population are active

¹³ Breaking Taboos in the Digital Space as a Communication Strategy |

¹⁴ V. B. Archana Priya, *Overview of Over-the-Top (OTT) Platforms in India- Analysis of IT Rules 2021, Judicial Battles, the Balancing Act of Artistic Freedom of Speech and Expression, and Challenges for Regulation in India.*

internet users.¹⁵

(A) Meaning:

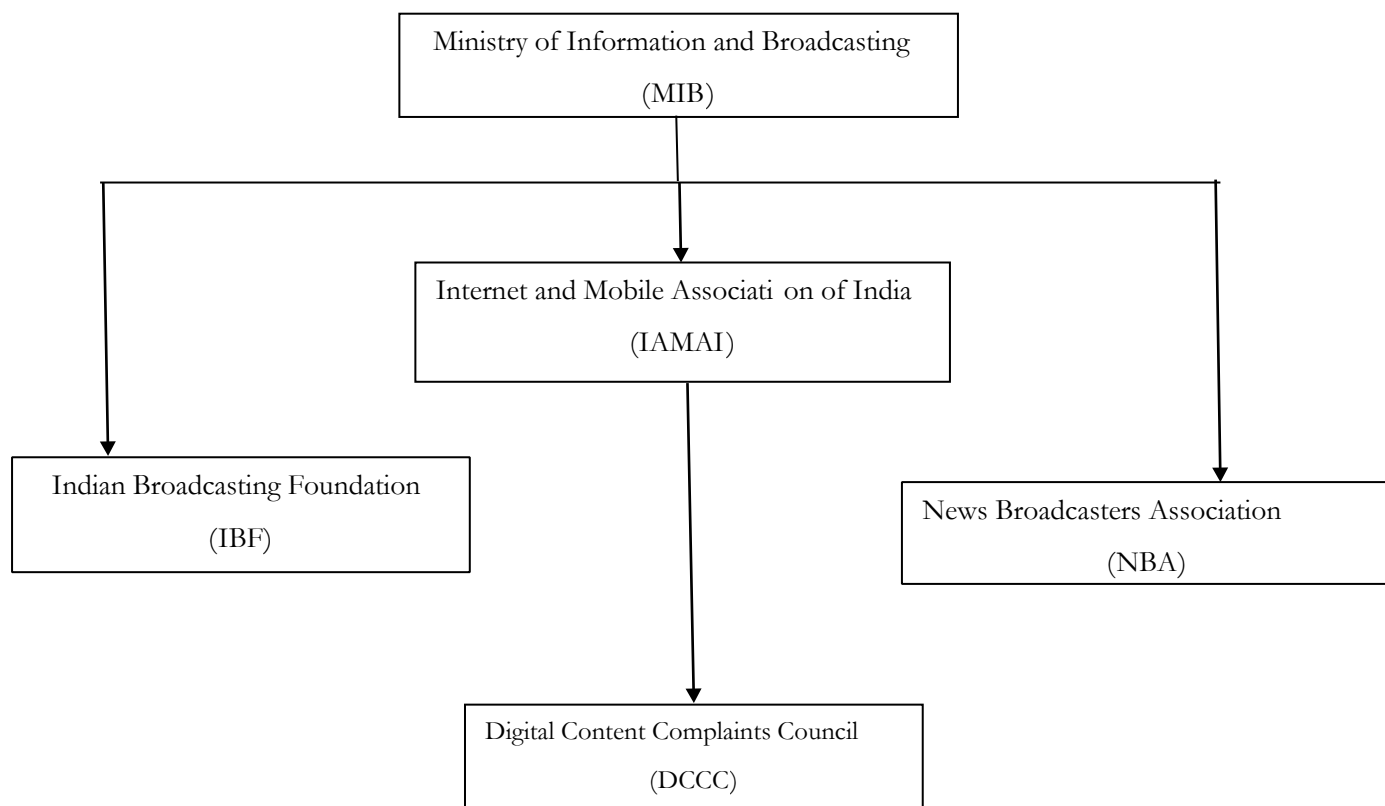
In layman words we can say that, censorship is basically filtering out of the content as per societal norms and legal provisions. It can also be understood as the suppression of speech and expression rights which is objectionable or sensitive. In India, the movies and contents related to religious and cultures issues are very much in this filtration process.¹⁶

Censorship in OTT is also the same as it means with the other media platforms meaning removal of offensive content. The extent however can vary depending on the platform and the country.

In 1948, Board of Film Censors published “Production Code” in Bombay and Madras, whose function was to give instruction to motion pictures. Two additional censorship certificates were created by Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 1949:

- “A” certification: age restricted to 18 years
- “U” certification: suitable for unrestricted public display

VI. REGULATING BODIES



¹⁵ Pratishtha Malhotra & Mishika Ruhil, *REGULATORY FRAMEWORK OF OTT PLATFORMS UNDER THE INDIAN LEGAL SYSTEM*, 8.

¹⁶ Censorship of Over The Top Platforms in India: A Comparative Study of India and Singapore by Chelcie Agrawal

- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB): A government authority issues guidelines and regulations related to the digital content providers like Televisions and OTTs. Its function is to regulate and filter out contents which can be explicit as per the norms of publishing.
- Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI): In early 2000s with the expansion of internet services, this is a not-for-profit industry registered under The Societies Registration Act was established. Digital Publisher Content Grievances Council (DPCGC) is a self-regulating body which works under the purview of IAMAI. This body is redressal mechanism especially for the OTT contents. It has 32 OTT members like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hungama etc.
- Indian Digital Media Industry Foundation (IDMIF): Is it also a independent self-regulating body responding to MIB and follows the rules laid down by the IT Rules. He regulating body under this is Digital Media Content Regulatory Council.

IAMAI AND IDMIF both the self-regulating bodies play their roles as OCCPs i.e., Online Curated Content Platforms. They advise platforms on age ratings, awareness of access controls, conducting awareness campaigns and overseeing review procedures.

VII. LAWS RELATED

ARTICLE 19(2): This article constituted in The Constitution gives the fundamental rights to the citizens; the Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression. Under this right, all the citizens are free to practice their freedom of speech due expression which includes the right to publish contents on different media platforms like OTT platforms.

Provisions related to censorship in IT ACT, 2000

Section 66A: Lays down punishment for sending offensive messages through communication service. The term offensive here includes grossly offensive, has menacing character, any false information, any false email, or aggressive message via computer resource to cause annoyance. So, this provision is very stringent towards publishing any offensive article either on a computer or on media. This empowers the government also to punish the offenders as it criminalises the vague meaning of offensive to a bigger extent via internet. So, it covers all types of media publishing and hence they have to go through the filtration of such explicit contents which can be covered under the ambit of offensive material under this section.

The imprisonment under this act is up to three years and with fine.

Section 69A: Lays down provision of power to issue directions for blocking for public access

of any information through computer resource for cyber security. This section mainly empowers the government, to take action against any explicit or offensive content which can be accessed by the public and it also punishes the intermediary which fails to follow the directions, up to seven years and fine.

Section 79: Section 79 of the IT Act includes that an Intermediary adheres to specific guidelines to qualify for exemption from liability. Issued in 2011, these guidelines stipulate that the Intermediary is obligated to remove any content that is, among other things, grossly harmful, harassing, blasphemous, defamatory, obscene, pornographic, paedophilic, libellous. Additionally, the guidelines cover content that is disparaging, related to or encouraging money laundering or gambling, harmful to minors in any way, or otherwise unlawful in any manner. The Intermediary is expected to take action based on private complaints or upon discovering such content independently.

The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 as notified on 25th February, 2021¹⁷

These rules are the most important document when the regulation of OTT platforms comes in question as India still lacks proper legislation for the same. These rules segregate digital media into three segments:

- Publishers of News
- Intermediaries
- OTT platforms

This rule categorises content into five different categories based on violence, nudity and sex etc:

- “U”: Suited for all the viewers irrespective of their age.
- “U/A 7+”: Suited for all the age groups above 7 years.
- “U/A 13+”: Suited for all the age groups above 13 years
- “U/A 16+”: Suited for age groups above 16 years. V.
- “A”: Only suited for adults i.e. above 18 years of age.

The government regulation mandates the removal of content in the event of opposition from any government agency or individual on controversial issues. As per the digital guidelines, Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms are now subject to a three-tier monitoring system.

¹⁷ Ishika Prasad, *IT RULES 2021: REGULATIONS ON OTT PLATFORMS*, 1.

1. The initial level involves appropriately classifying all content on OTT platforms, accompanied by the requirement for a grievance redressal officer on each platform to make their contact information accessible on the website.
2. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) is tasked with implementing the second-level resolution within 15 days of receiving a complaint.
3. The third tier establishes an Inter-Departmental Committee (IDC) by the I&B Ministry, chaired by an authorized official. This committee will address complaints referred to it by either the Self-Regulatory Body or the Ministry.

VIII. TEST FOR OBSCENITY

Throughout the generations women have been depicted as objects by various obscene images, films and photographs to attract customers and increase the sale of the items. Based on such cases which was more in 1800s, a case came up in English court i.e., **Regina vs. Hecklin**, which established **the hecklin test** (a legal test for obscenity), The court held that all material tending "to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to The term "immoral influences" was deemed obscene, irrespective of any artistic or literary value it might possess.¹⁸

Likewise, an Indian case came up related to the obscene act i.e., **Ranjit Udeshi vs. State of Maharashtra**, in this case, a bookstore owner was charged with selling obscene books in the name of 'Lady Chatterley's Lover by DH Lawrence. The court applied the Hecklin test and upheld the decision of the high court's considering the book sold by the Udeshi i.e., 'Lady Chatterley's Lover' as to be obscene.¹⁹

Later an Indian landmark judgement case defined the area of obscenity by the case **Aveek Sarkar vs. State of West Bengal**. In this case a nude picture of Boris Becker, a renowned tennis player's photograph was published by the magazine 'sports world' and also by the Kolkata newspaper 'Anand bazar Patrika', which was complained by lawyer who was a regular reader of both the magazines and contented that this amounted to obscene act. In this case the court did not hold the image to be obscene and also said that 'hecklin test' is not the right test to examine the act of obscenity. The court applied '**community standard test**' based on the IPC section 292 which clearly defines the term, obscenity'²⁰.

While a shift towards recognizing evolving social attitudes was perceptible in rulings such as **Samaresh Bose v Amal Mitra (1985)** and **S Khushboo v Kanniammal (2010)**, the judgment

¹⁸ Obscenity and Prosecution Practice in the Twenty-First Century |

¹⁹ Study on the Hicklin Test and its Impact on the Obscenity Laws in India by Adarsh Kumar

²⁰ Obscenity and the Law |

itself of Aveek Sarkar clearly marked a departure.

Thus, in this context, the Hicklin Test and the Ranjit Udeshi case, considered synonymous in the perspective of Indian law, were subsequently replaced and overruled by the Community Standard Test and the Aveek Sarkar judgment, that are similarly synonymous.

IX. DATA ANALYSIS

1. Descriptive Analysis: Demographics

In the process of analysis of primary data, respondents are classified according to the social profile. We have considered gender, qualification, age and region as social profile. The information of classification of primary data has been presented below in table form.

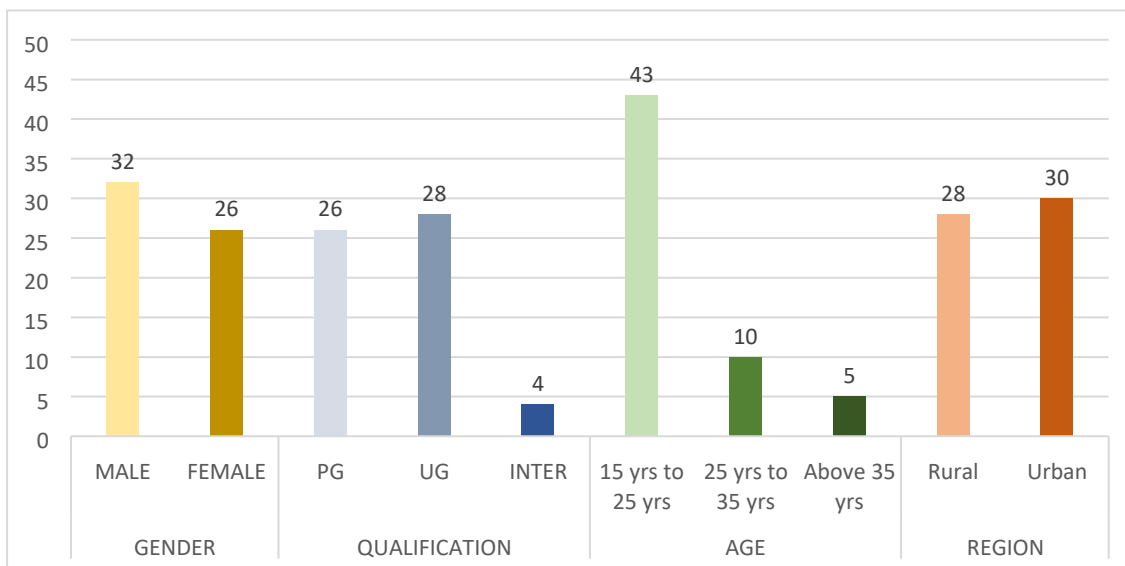
DEMOGRAPHICS		Frequency	Percentage
GENDER	Female	26	44.8
	Male	32	53.4
	Total	58	100.0
QUALIFICATION	PG	26	44.8
	UG	28	48.3
	Intermediate	4	6.9
	Total	58	100.0
AGE	15 yrs. to 25 yrs.	43	74.1
	25 yrs. to 35 yrs.	10	17.2
	Above 35 yrs.	5	8.6
	Total	58	100.0
REGION	Rural	28	48.3
	Urban	30	51.7
	Total	58	100

Table 2: Social profile of respondents

The above table has been represented below in graph format for better understanding of the division under different heads of the sample.

The four main heads have been represented in X-axis i.e., gender, qualification, age and region and the number of respondents has been represented on the Y-axis in the graph.

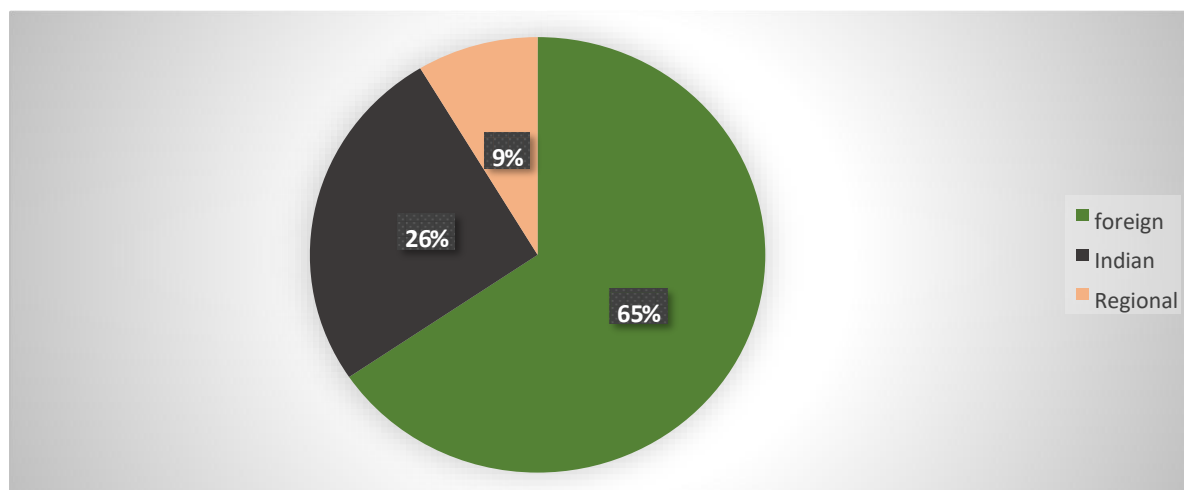
Graph 1: Demographics: Social profile



From the above graph we can see that under the head of gender, 32 were males and 26 respondents were female. As far as the qualification is concerned, 4 people were till date qualified up to intermediate, 28 people were under graduate and 26 people were in postgraduation. Now if see look into the head of age group, 43 belonged from the age group of 15 years to 25 years of age, 10 belonged from 25 years to 35 years of age and only 5 belonged from age group of 35 years or above. At the last, under the region head, 28 people belonged from rural areas and 30 belonged from urban areas.

2. OTT: Most watched platform based on origin

Graph 2: Most preferred OTT based on origin

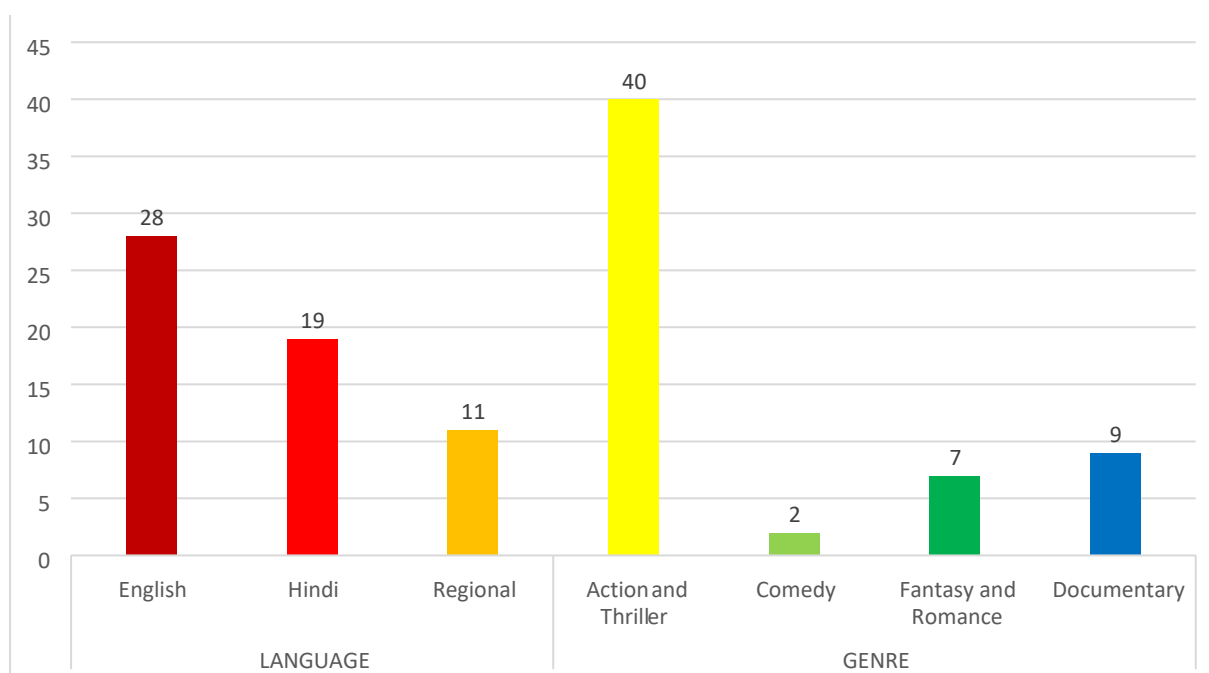


The above graph represents the data of most preferred OTT platforms. The OTT platforms running in India can broadly be classified in three main heads; the Foreign originated OTTs like Netflix, Amazon Prime etc. the second head is Indian Originated like ZEE5, Alt Balaji, ULLU etc. and the third head is regional which includes the OTT platforms only dealing with regional

language and shows like AHA in Telugu. So, maximum respondents liked watching the foreign originated OTTs in compared to Indian OTT or Regional OTT. From this data we can see that how OTT platforms and its content are influencing the Indian society and effecting the norms and cultures indirectly. The shows on Netflix and Amazon Prime are in huge number in different genres and languages which also effects the society, which we will be seeing in detail later.

3. Preference of OTT based on language and Genre

Graph 3: Most preferred OTT platform: Language + Genre



The above graph is combined detailed and descriptive analysis of the preferred language and genre on the OTT platforms by the respondents. The above graph is inclusive of two main heads; where the first head is “Language” and the second head is “Genre”.

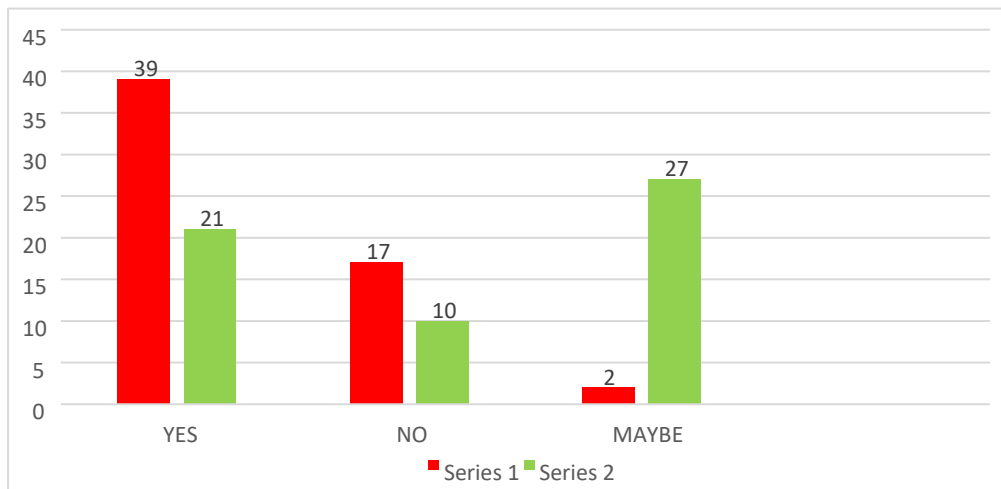
From the graph presented above we can observe that English is the most preferred language in OTT platforms content watching by the respondents and Hindi is the second choice taken up by 19 responses out of 58.

Under the second head i.e., ‘Genre’ most preferred filter is Action and Thriller taken by almost 40 responses out of 58, which is almost 69% of the total population in the paper. The least favoured genre was ‘comedy’ taken up by only 2 responses out of 58 in total.

So, these two graphs showing the highest preferred category in OTT, shows that the changing face of the society. India, being a Hindi spoken country, now OTT invasion has changed the perspectives and preferences of the people, whereas the action and thriller also symbolises on aspect of the face of the society.

4. OTT contents include more often obscene contents

Graph 4: OTT platforms include vulgarity and obscene content

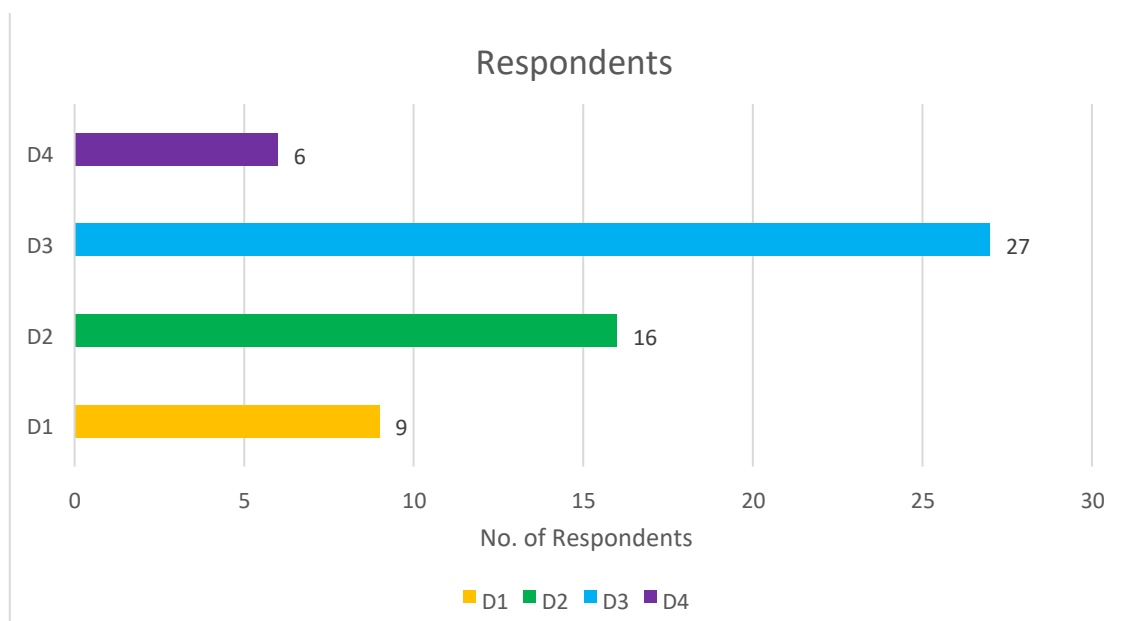


The above graph is combined answers of two questions asked by the respondents which were, the first, ‘Does OTT contents vulgarity and obscene content more often?’ represented by “Series 1” And the second question asked was ‘Which OTT contains more offensive or obscene scenes? Indian based like Alt Balaji or Foreign based like Netflix and Amazon Prime?’ represented by “series 2”.

From the above graph, answering to the inclusion of obscene and explicit content in OTT is very often done by the OTT players which attracts more viewers. As we can see, that 39 people out of 58 supports that OTT content more often obscene content.

5. Depiction of women in OTT

Graph 5: Different depictions of women in OTT

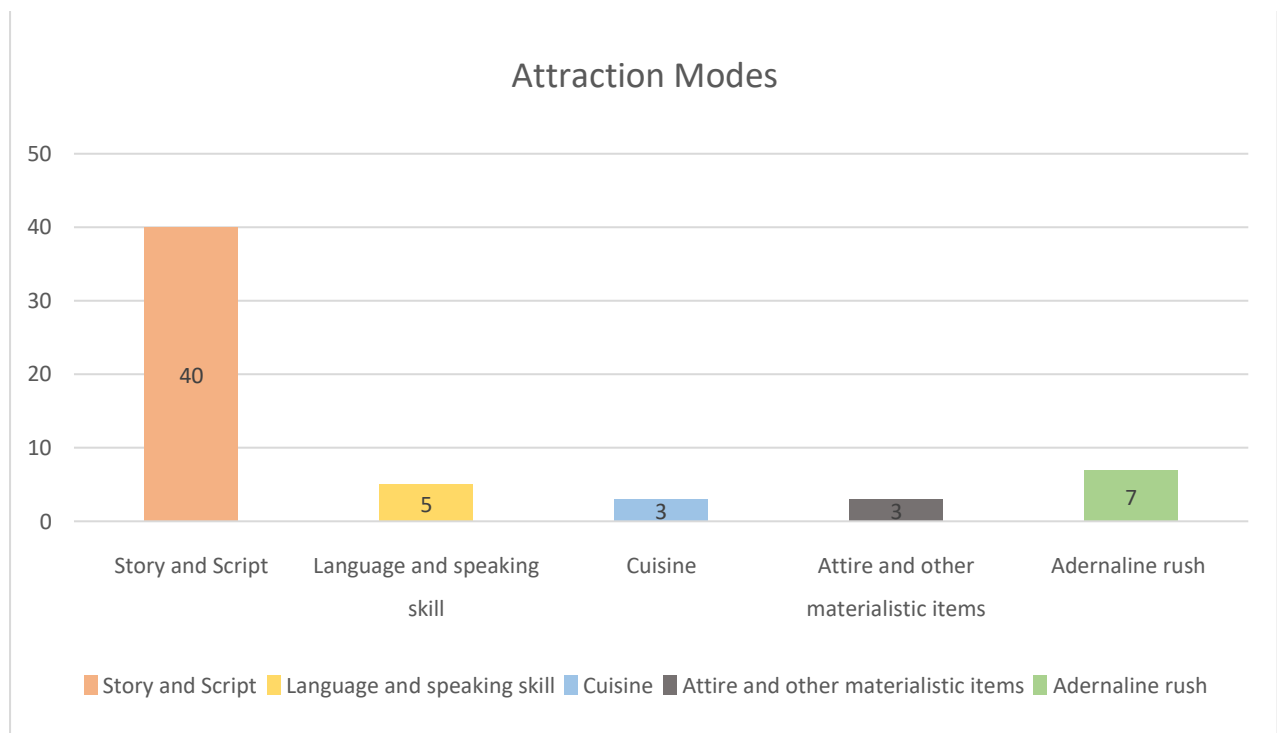


The above graph is combined answers of two questions asked by the respondents which were, the first, ‘Does OTT contents vulgarity and obscene content more often?’ represented by “Series 1” And the second question asked was ‘Which OTT contains more offensive or obscene scenes? Indian based like Alt Balaji or Foreign based like Netflix and Amazon Prime?’ represented by “series 2”.

From the above graph, answering to the inclusion of obscene and explicit content in OTT is very often done by the OTT players which attracts more viewers. As we can see, that 39 people out of 58 supports that OTT content more often obscene content.

6. OTT contents favoured on the basis of Attraction and Encourage

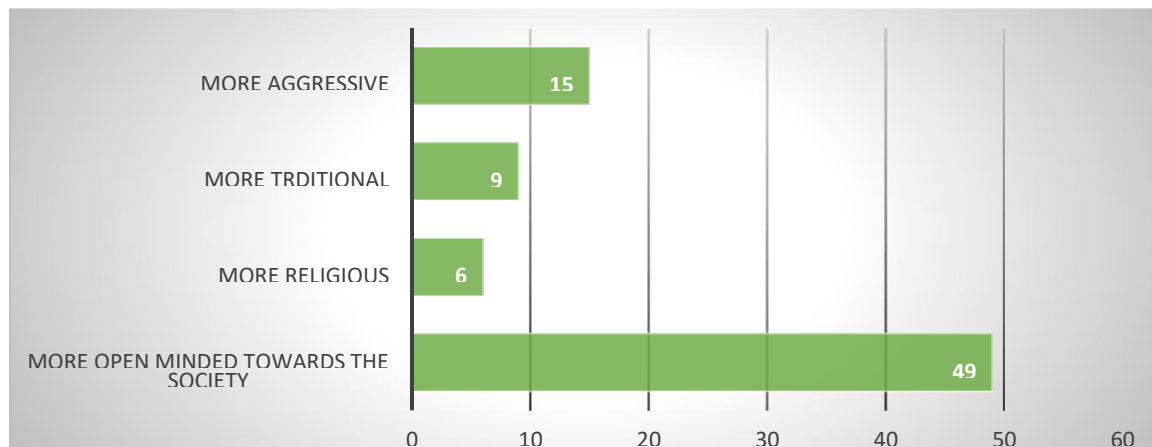
Graph 6: OTT most favoured classes



The above graph was about the different encouraging points which is influenced by watching OTT. OTT viewers have increased over time and mainly in the lockdown period of the world, and these media put a great emphasis on its viewers’ mind. So, when we took the viewers perspective on how OTT have influenced or encouraged them to do after watching their shows, we got that the violent acts and nature have been more pushed up. The OTT contents are affecting the viewer in more aggressive manner rather than building a good human. Which can also be a reason behind the increase of crime rates. Most told us about; the content is so designed that criminals get an idea to do the crime. (This data was about individual encouragement).

7. Impact of OTT on Respondents

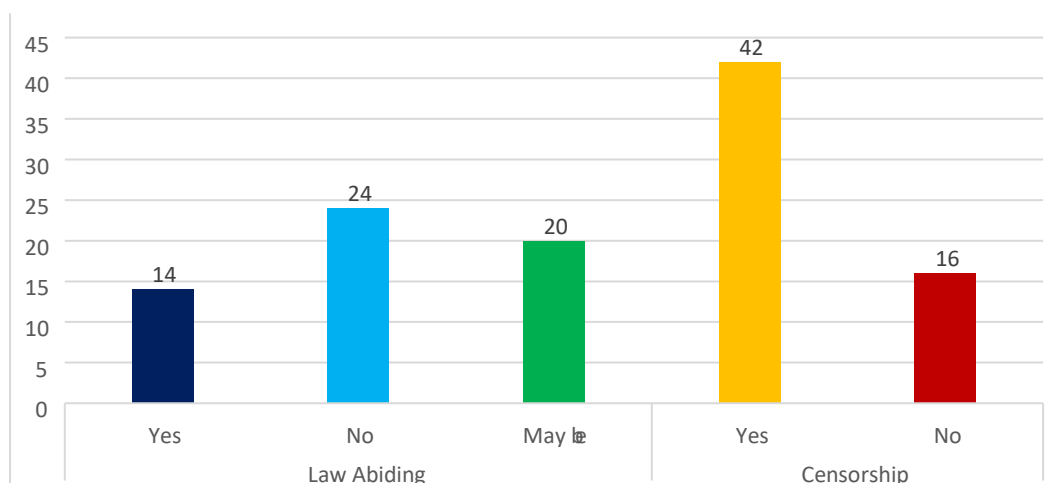
Graph 8: Impact of OTT on the society



The above graph shows the data of the different impacts which the society feels after watching the OTT shows. Individual impacts are different than the societal impacts. Here, we have shown the societal view. So, in this we found that the OTT has made the people more open minded towards the society. Whereas, the religious impact was seen with the least of all responses. Media is a best way to show the society a mirror and paint a picture with the societies’ future. If we consider the print media, it prints news and articles containing the new demands and happening of the society which effects its readers as a whole. Likewise, the OTTs are also a kind of media backed by internet and videos, keeps a strong influence on its viewers. Recent OTT players like Netflix, Hotstar etc have many shows and movies related to challenging issues of the society, which educates the viewers to open up and learn to treat society via different perspective.

9. OTT: Law abiding vs. Censorship

Graph 9: OTT: Law abiding v. Censorship



In the above graph the combined responses have been represented together. The respondents were asked two questions here. The first question asked was finding about their perspective about the OTT scenes are law abiding or not and the second question was about the censorship, that do they think OTT censorship should be done?

Finding out the answers to these questions from the data we saw that the OTT scenes are not law abiding and are offensive and explicit in the eyes of the law like using vulgar languages, explicit obscene scenes, constant aggressive scenes etc. this establishes the need of law and legislative action against the OTT platforms as it has managed to influence a huge number of people.

As far as censorship is considered, from the data we can easily interpret that lots of the people support that OTT platforms should also be filtered like the traditional media platforms which included Televisions, and threatens. Censorship is done on different cultural and societal parameters to make it worthwhile watching in the society.

X. OBSERVATION

The research was conducted with 58 adult participants between the age of 15 to 35 years from different educational backgrounds intermediate to post graduation. Moreover, 30 respondents belonged from urban region and 28 belonged from rural areas. 15 males out of 32 males belonged from urban areas and 15 females out of 26 belonged from urban area.

While analysing the data, it was found that almost 90% of the participants preferred foreign based OTT platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime etc, in compared to the Indian originated OTT platforms and regional based OTT platforms. And as far as the best category of OTT is concerned, the most favourable one got to be action and thriller which was liked by about 70% of the population.

The results also showed that almost 70% i.e., 41 out of 58 participants found that the OTT contents include vulgarity and obscene contents more often, and 46% reported that women are more often being depicted as beauty objects and symbolising sex appeal in the OTT contents but on the positive side we can see the drifting change that women are very less now being depicted as stereotypical women roles like housewives and homemakers like they were used to be given such roles in traditional televisions, and the data made this more clear as only 10% of the participants thought so.

It was also found out from the data analysis that OTT contents are now being a reason towards the rise of crime against women. Though the percentage (25%) was not that high supporting

this statement but it was shocking to know that OTT contents are leading the way to it. From that data of encouragement factors coming from watching OTT, the data showed up that 44% people thought that OTT is leading towards violent and aggressive behaviour. The OTT has impacted on the society in a positive manner also. Almost 84% of the participants thought that the OTT contents have made the people's mind more open towards the society.

The legislations and laws in the regulation of the OTT platforms and its content lacks much behind. As far as traditional television and theatre movie release are concerned, they have to go through censorship and Information Technology Act rules to make sure the movie being released on national platform is as per societies cultural and ethical markers. Whereas, when OTTs are concerned, they have no such filtration process and this is the main reason why creators of OTT platforms are free to use their creativity and publish such contents which shows the obscenity and vulgar language freely. Due to this reason the OTT content there are various controversial OTT series and movies now a days.

XI. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study on the impact of the OTT platforms on the social norms among the society in the states of Bihar and Rajasthan is important for understanding the challenges experienced by society in relation to the breaking of the taboos prevailing in the taboos related to the obscenity and many others parameters. Moreover, it is crucial to understand certain limitations that may impact the interpretation and generalization of the findings.

Firstly, the study's outcomes might have limited generalizability beyond the specific context of Bihar and Rajasthan. Regional variations, educational qualifications and consumption of OTT services could mean that findings may not apply to other regions in India or Globally.

Sampling bias is another consideration, as the study focuses on specific demographic population group varying from number of the samples to regions i.e., urban and rural areas, it has lacked in capturing the diversity of population in the concerned states which could affect the broader applicability of the research. The study also puts limitation the participants, as they may not always provide the accurate information regarding the asked QAs, as they might not understand the reasons and encouragement of social behaviour affecting the societal norms as well as the legal arena knowledge lacks in much of the sample. Low response rates or non-participation could lead to selection bias, compromising the representativeness of the sample. The demographics of those who choose to participate may differ significantly from those who opt out, affecting the study's external validity.

XII. CONCLUSION

Based on the data presented in the paper, the impact of explicit content on social norms in OTT has influenced the society in breaking the long lasting Indian taboos and answered many unanswered controversies. Large population also finds the OTT content are becoming obscene day by day affecting the very nature of the society and also projecting the women's more as beauty objects rather than independent and strong part of the society. From the data we also conclude that Indian originated OTT platforms like Alt Balaji and Ullu are more vulgar and obscene in terms of the content as compared to the foreign based OTTs.

The OTT contents have though talked and represented about many societal issues and concerns which people were afraid to talk about and considered them as taboos, which were easily and widely represented by the OTT like same sex marriage, LGBTQ concerns, female and male teenagers' issue and problems etc. but the content have also led to emergence of crimes and has affected the mind of the teenagers in a negative manner also.

Moreover, it is very important to take the legal preview of the OTTs to mark as check and balance in the content played by the OTTs. OTT platforms affect the society at large and it can easily influence the minds of the youths of India, so to control the creativity of the OTT players and to regulate the content being shown to the society, the legislature must form stringent laws to censor the content of the OTT. There are very few players who abide by the law to play their content and spread it to the population. As India, lacks in laws related to regulation of OTT which has resulted in so many obscene contents all over the platforms. So, proper measure and laws should be framed to maintain a check and balance on these OTT players.

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