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ART FILM CONSUMPTION IN INDIA: AN ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS REFORM AND MARKET PREFERENCE

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Abstract : The following paper experimentally studies the tendency of the Indian public mainly hailing from Tier 1 and 2 cities, towards the consumption of Art Films as opposed to the widely available and big budgeted Commercial Films. The study is conducted with the intention of analysing these preferences considering the business reforms and market trends that have a role in affecting film production and distribution. Chronicling the history of the rise and subsequent decline in the production of art films in India as well as chartering a course across time to analyse the evolution in distribution channels, specifically, the rise of OTT Platforms, is taken into consideration when ascertaining the current public consensus on the preference of film type. Data derived from respondents from Tier 1 and 2 cities were used to segregate the varying degrees of tendencies across locales as well as theorising possible reasons for the same. Given the growing popularity of and growing cumulative spending on the entertainment and art sectors in India, a cultural study affected by factors of business trends is prudent.

Index Terms - Art Films, Commercial Films, OTT Platforms, Indian Cinema

I. INTRODUCTION

The motion picture product category has been the subject of numerous research in quantitative marketing literature. In order to forecast the box office receipts, these studies concentrate on examining data about consumption patterns, primarily of commercial films. The majority of the behavioural study on art films, which is scarce, was conducted by academics in the communications profession and was intended to produce thorough reports on how consumers saw and used the media. As opposed to commercial movies that cater to the tastes of general audiences, the art film business targets particular consumer groups and could grow increasingly significant in our culture. Because the comprehension of these customers' consumption motivations may result in changes to the focus and mixture of films produced that highlight our society, art cinema audiences deserve special consideration. The majority of the major studios have acquired independent studios, demonstrating the importance of the art cinema business. Additionally, some theatre chains think that the art and speciality market is expanding more quickly than the entire film industry. An independent film that targets a niche audience rather than a broad public is known as an "art film" (sometimes known as an "art house film"). It has "unconventional or highly symbolic content" and is "intended to be a serious, creative production, frequently experimental and not geared for popular appeal." It is created largely for aesthetic purposes as opposed to financial gain (S. L. H. Chuu et al., 2009). Predominantly, in India, the general public associates' film and the “art” of cinema with Hindi cinema or what we term: “Bollywood”. Looking back at the very advent of the art of cinema in India, the waves of cinematic movements that have occurred in our history did have heavy artistic traits. Most notably the Indian Parallel Cinema/ New Wave Movement that began in the 1960s rivalled the likes of Bollywood. There were a large number of audience members that created the demand for the production of these films. Filmmakers such as Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen, Guru Dutt and others became prominent names associated with this movement. Their inspiration mainly lay outside the Indian mainstream pomp and found footing in movements such as the Italian Neo-realism and the French New Wave (Chakraborty & Banerjee, 2022).

Indian viewers are more inclined to see art films in urban regions than in rural ones, per a study by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies and the Indian Market Research Bureau (Kumar, 2017). However, with the expansion of multiplexes and the emergence of digital platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video, which offer simple access to a greater selection of movies, the appeal of art films has grown recently (Chakravarty, 2018).

The evolution of Indian cinema, through to the introduction of various streaming services and OTT platforms, that has seen a recent increase in subscribers from 22.2 million to 29 million, (Thakur, 2021) contributes to the diminishing consumption of art films in India. For reasons that will be explored in the following paper, in terms of market reforms and trends, the objective is to analyse the widening gap between these publicly financed and geared films and the art house parallel cinema, that still exists today but has sadly diminished in number.

II. Review of Literature

Art Film Audiences:

An art film can be defined as an independently produced film that explores the possibilities of cinema in new and experimental ways that actively satisfy the filmmakers vision and artistic pursuit. They include films in various languages across the world. These films are usually showcased at major film festivals and oftentimes enjoy a limited theatrical run, in select art-house theatres (S. L. H. Chuu et al., 2009).

Commercial films on the other hand, are those films made as audience pleasers for the purpose of earing profits. These films usually enjoy a longer theatrical run and are released in more countries. Large production conglomerates such as Warner Bros. and Disney financially back these films and have a sufficient amount of control over the product from script to screen. Such control over production and promotion activities sees commercial films having a significant market advantage.

As different as the approach to its making, art and commercial films have different consumption patterns. Audiences of art films are attracted to them because they mainly like and are interested in such films rather than seeing them as casual social gatherings. A rather general comment about the demographic of art film audiences can be made: art film audiences can be found to be well-educated and include artistic consumption in their regular lives. It's is found that art film audiences are more loyal to the films they choose to watch and are more tolerant of theatre conditions. Art film audiences see movies as more than mere entertainment and include it as part of their cultural lifestyle (S. L. H. Chuu et al., 2009). They place higher importance on the director of a particular film as opposed to commercial film audiences who place importance on the actors and their star power. Well-known directors have a strong positive influence on the expectations of the quality of a movie (Ulker-Demirel et al., 2018).

In India, art film audiences reached its peak in the late 1970s, when cinema was still relatively young. At the time, there was very little to distinguish art films and mainstream commercial film as they were all made to satisfy similar purposes. However, in the 1980s as the commercial, mainstream Bollywood films began to take off exponentially, art film production reduced and subsequently so did its audiences.

Hypothesis 1:

H0: No significant difference exists between the consumption of mainstream and art films.

H1: A significant difference exists between the consumption of mainstream and art films.

Evolution of Art Film Production in India:

In the early 1950s a band of filmmakers from Bengal broke out as major contributors to India's cinematic output, aside from the films that had song and dance, fight scenes and melodramatic plots that became quite prominent in Hindi cinema. They were Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen and others. Their contributions led the famous critic P.K. Nair to coin the term "Parallel Cinema" (Matt, 2022). This movement was characterised by its neo-realist inspirations and culturally grounded subject matters. The films of this movement actively broke away from the pomp of Bollywood also known as "Commercial Cinema". "Parallel Cinema" films such as Ritwik Ghatak's Ajantrik (1958), Mrinal Sen's Neel Aksher Neechey (1959), Bimal Roy's Do Bigha Zameen (1953) were critically acclaimed on its release and brought the worldwide film fraternity's attention to India (Somani, 2015). However, it was Satyajit Ray's Pather Panchali (1955) that is credited to have propelled Indian Parallel Cinema into international limelight, followed by its sequel Aparajito (1957) that won the prestigious Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival, becoming the first Indian film to win the major international award.

Although, Indian Parallel Cinema had gained such notoriety in the international film scene, the early 1980s marked the introduction of governmental reforms that saw a slow decline of this movement. Mention must be made of the fact that Indian cinema received no sustained support from the state post World War II as opposed to film industries in Europe and America. The only source of state funding was meagre loans awarded by the Film Finance Corporation, however, this too changed in 1979 when the Indian Motion Picture Export Corporation (IMPEC) and the Directorate of Film Festivals merged to form the National Film Development Corporation (NDFC) heralded by the Minister of Information and Broadcasting L.K. Advani. The new body cut public financing, dismissing the "Parallel Cinema" filmmakers as "pseudo-intellectuals whose films nobody wanted to see." (Majumdar, 2021). The art film movement began its slow decline when it couldn't keep up with the lack of funding, although, certain state governments such as that of Bengal and Karnataka, attempted to continue their autonomous financing practices.

These reforms brought about a complete shift in Indian audience's film consumption patterns. These policies created new market trends giving rise to more privately financed, big budgeted commercial films that became the dominant choice of consumers. It is particularly felt widely in the current market scenario where emphasis has shifted to streaming and OTT platforms, that create further in-roads, revolutionising the way films are received, consumed and preferred in India.

Evolution of the Market: The OTT Era

Mention has been made of the reforms that bolstered the decline of art cinema and the rise of a new visibly dominant industry in India. This transition has also created shifts in market conditions with new players entering the market in order to best meet the demand created by customers for this newer industry. It's worth examining the impact of this digital evolution with respect to the history of cinema consumption in India, for it poses various virtues but also creates a space for a certain kind of precondition filmmaking.

The first OTT platform in India was BIGflix, launched by Reliance entertainment in 2008 to meet the growing digital needs of the country (Thakur, 2021). Since then, the growth of individual platform in India has been exponential, extending to digital services not only for films but also for series, music, video games etc. In terms of OTT platforms for film, the impacts on film viewing and consumption are consequential. Very clearly, digital viewings take away from theatrical presentations, moreover, due to their easy accessibility the search for great cinematic works have been diminished. India is one of the world's largest markets and with a GDP scale of around 6-7 percent, the country has the third largest purchasing power parity in the entertainment and leisure sector (Varghese et al., 2021). This growing interest in the sector by millions of Indians places the OTT platforms as a revelatory and convenient innovation, thus acting as a direct disruption to traditional theatrical presentation modes. The size of the OTT market in India is expected to increase from \$0.5 Billion to around \$5 Billion by 2023. It's also found that films directed on the OTT path are more likely to meet its intended audience (Sharma, 2020). Moreover, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the number of paid subscribers in India increased by about 30%, jumping from 22.2 million to 29.0 million between March and July 2020 alone (Jhala & Patadiya, 2021).

Hypothesis 2:
H0 There is no relationship between age and preference in viewing location (at theatres or at home)
H1 There is a relationship between age and preference in viewing location

Having discussed the effects of OTT on modes of consumption, it's imperative to mention its impact on the kinds of films these platforms usually expose the public to. Moreover, it aids our understanding of the decline in art film consumption in modern times as a stage in the evolution of cinema in India. Particularly, the way the algorithms of these platforms are written with emphasis on its recommendation systems, skews our consumption patterns.

In the case of Netflix, it is found that their recommendation algorithms activate as soon as a subscriber makes an account. They begin pushing the large cash-cow shows and films that mainly lie within the mainstream blockbuster sector of filmmaking. Once audience members start viewing these recommendations, suggestions for further viewings are personalised based on previous watches. Netflix also uses their subscriber's consumption data to determine the kind of films and shows they should produce and license for the platform (Invisibly, 2021). The question amongst the film fraternity then arises: If further viewings is suggested based on what you've seen already, what does that do for the art of the cinema within the market of quick consumption? Many art films that find its way on OTT platforms, like Netflix, remain un-pushed and un-suggested and thus lost in abyss that the service harbours. It can then be said that audiences, as a result, are unable to discover newer films and thus consume what's given to them.

Hypothesis 3:
H0: Consumers feel that the OTT Platform's recommendation system does not influence their future viewings.
H1: Consumers feel that the OTT Platform's recommendation system influences their future viewings.

As the governmental reforms contributed to this shift in consumption pattern, technological and distribution channel evolutions in the markets (OTT Platforms) can be credited to have furthered the diminishing art film consumption amongst audiences in India.

III. Statement of the Problem

The post-war and post-colonial era, saw India become a sovereign nation, left to create reforms and policies for itself. The policies made with regards to the cinematic landscape of our country has catalysed market trends that have directly contributed to our cinema viewing and consumption. Traditional cinema viewing in present day India seems to have been distorted by the evolution in those very market trends. Now, these market trends do not refer solely to consumer markets. Reforms and policies passed by the government give rise to trends in producers markets as well, which in turn dictates the kinds of films that are produced and subsequently consumed. Moreover, recently due to developments in technology and leaps in distribution channels, OTT platforms serve as a convenient means to maintain our regular film intake. While OTT platforms present many virtues, most of the prominent ones exploit the market to produce a large number of films which are released instantaneously, thereby devaluing the art of cinema. This phenomenon occurs in the way the algorithms of these platforms are written. This blatant disregard for the makers of the films have basically allowed the platforms to bypass creative discretion and control the kinds of films that are released based on the rationale of profit instead of symbolic meaning. Thus, as audiences we may not realise this digital conditioning, we are subject to, that has affected our cinematic consumption, which affects filmmakers and films whose rise through the ranks of the industry have been restricted. This paper aims to analyse the effects of these occurrences on the shift in preferences of audiences and the consumption of art films in India.

IV. Methodology

In the following research, the objectives are satisfied in the form of quantitative research. Empirical data is gathered to ascertain the preferences and state of film consumption amongst the general public as a result of the market reforms, trends, and evolutions analysed earlier. A questionnaire on Google Forms was formulated and circulated. The data was analysed using SPSS. In addition, the graph builder feature on JMP was used sparsely to present accurate visual information.

Mainly the research area pertains to the film industry, all supporting industries that have arisen around it and its external environment. The study concerns itself with analysing the changes in any of these areas that may have a direct effect of the kind of films produced and consumed in the Indian market.

Initially, the paper reviews and analyses the implication of changes in environmental factors, then aims to analyse the implication of the analysis on real time preferences and data derived from avid movie-goers and movie-watchers.

The targeted respondents belong to the section of the Indian demography who belong to Tier 1 and Tier 2 Indian cities where there is relatively higher access to cinema houses, theatres and multiplexes. Moreover, according to studies, most of India's Netflix users hail from these cities. Thus, the inclusion criteria require respondents who hail from cities with access to theatres, streaming services and good internet activity, who belong to the age range of 20-80 years.

Objectives:

The objectives of the study are as follows:

(1) To ascertain public preferences and shift in consumption as a result of the aforementioned cases.
(2) To analyse the reaction of consumers as to whether they feel that the OTT Platform's recommendation systems influence future viewings.
(3) To review the shift in market trends with respect to technological changes and evolution in distribution channels.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 5.1: Frequency Distribution of Age Groups

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-30	11	6.7	6.7	6.7
	30-40	16	9.8	9.8	16.6
	40-50	68	41.7	41.7	58.3
	50-60	44	27.0	27.0	85.3
	60 and above	22	13.5	13.5	98.8
	Below 20	2	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	163	100.0	100.0	

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA

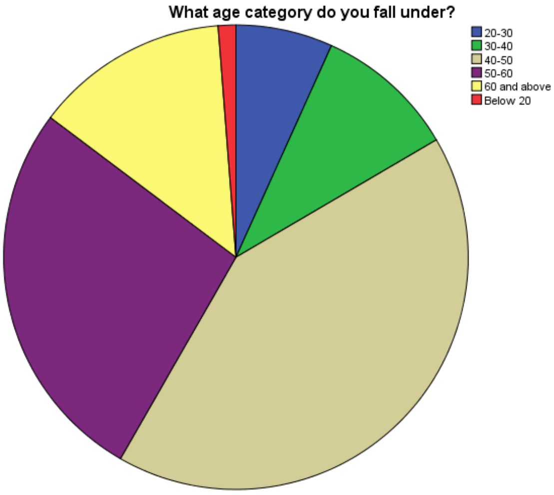

Figure 5.1: Frequency Distribution of Age Groups

The frequency of age table shows us that the majority of respondents belong to the age group of 40 – 50 years (41.7%) followed by respondents belonging to the 50 – 60 age range (27.0%). The least number of respondents belong to the age category of below 20 years (1.2%). There is a fair distribution of respondents that belong to the age categories of 20 - 30 years (6.7%), 30 – 40 years (9.8%) and 60 and above (13.5%).

Table 5.2: Frequency Distribution of Residing City Tier Type

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Tier 1	159	97.5	97.5	97.5
	Tier 2	4	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	163	100.0	100.0	

SORCE: PRIMARY DATA

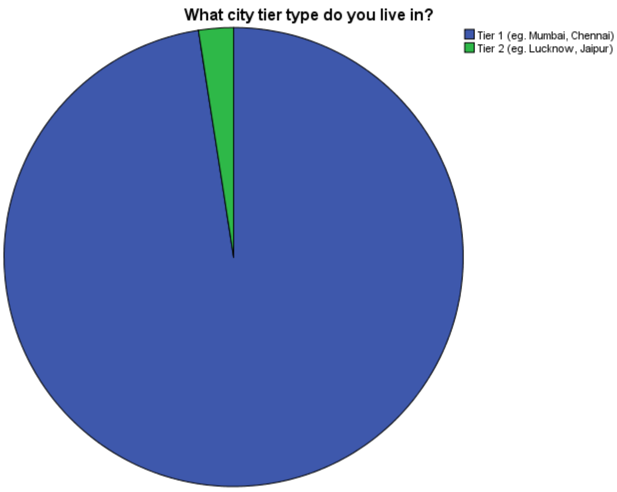

Figure 5.2: Frequency Distribution of Residing City Tier Type

After having run a frequency test on the city tier type the respondents hail from, it is clear that there is a clear imbalance. 97.5% of respondents hail from Tier 1 cities such as Mumbai and Chennai while only 2.5% of respondents hail from Tier 2 cities such as Lucknow and Jaipur. From the frequency table we can infer that the respondents hailing from Tier 1 cities have more of a dependency on film consumption than respondents from Tier 2 cities.

Table 5.3: Frequency Distribution of User Subscription to OTT Platforms

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	17	10.4	10.4	10.4
	Yes	146	89.6	89.6	100.0
	Total	163	100.0	100.0	

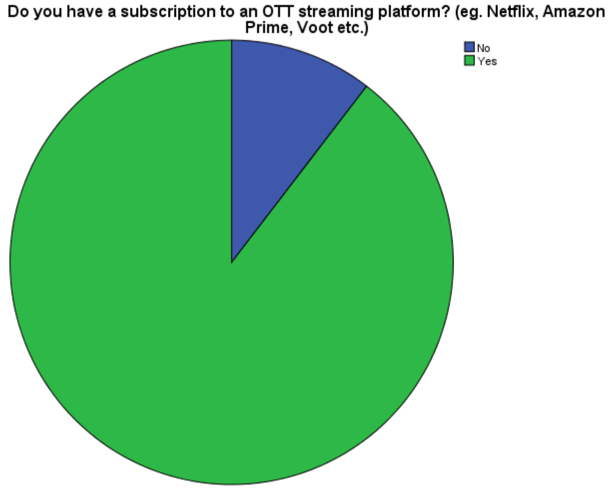

Figure 5.3: Frequency Distribution of User Subscription to OTT Platforms

The frequency of OTT Platform users is also insightful. It is notable that 89.6% of respondents have a subscription as opposed to those who don't 10.4%. such an inequitable frequency gives us an insight into the dependency of consumers in the market on OTT Platforms to maintain their regular entertainment and art intake.

In India, art film audiences reached its peak in the late 1970s, when cinema was still relatively young. At the time, there was very little to distinguish art films and mainstream commercial film as they were all made to satisfy similar purposes. However, in the 1980s as the commercial, mainstream Bollywood films began to take off exponentially, art film production reduced and subsequently so did its audiences. And so began a divide in the kind of films audiences came to know, split into the more entertainment specific, big budgeted commercial or mainstream films and the festival playing art films.

H0: No significant difference exists between the consumption of mainstream and art films.

H1: A significant difference exists between the consumption of mainstream and art films.

Table 5.4: Correlation Analysis for Hypothesis 1

	Value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Signif. Prob
Correlation	-0.31707	-0.44891	-0.17172	<.0001
Covariance	-0.46755			
Count	163			

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA

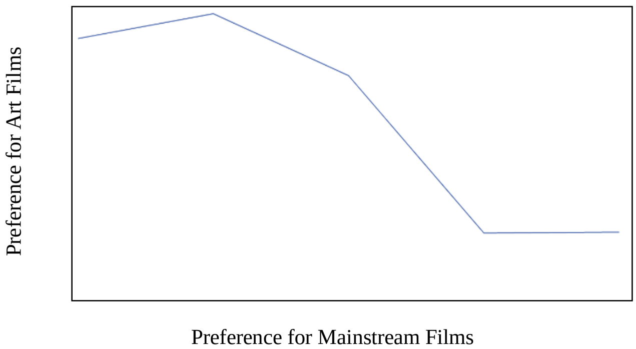

Figure. 5.4: Preference between Art and Mainstream Films

According to the data collected, the above graph, Figure 5.4, was obtained by running a Fit Y by X test on JMP and analysing the summary statistics. From the given graph, what's noticeable is the declining slope towards the bottom right towards the propensity of consuming more mainstream films. What can be inferred from this is that as people tend to move towards the consumption of mainstream movies, they stray away from the consumption of art films by greater degrees as the travel down the graph and vice-versa. The statistical significance is lesser than 0.05 and therefore is proven to be statistically significant, thus we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis.

Given the global film landscape in today's day and age, we've seen the divide between mainstream and art films, however, that does not mention the variety of films made today. It would be apt to say that audiences are spoilt for choice, a privilege that wasn't available to viewers as recently as a decade ago. More and more films are made so easily accessible to audiences and in part OTT Platforms such as Netflix, Prime Video etc must be credited. Its not just the types of films that these OTT Platforms give audiences, they further spoil viewers with a variety of choices with respect to where they want to watch these films. The OTT rise has completely changed the landscape of film distribution bringing a great deal of convenience and comfort bringing the movies from theatres to people's homes.

H0 There is no relationship between age and preference in viewing location (at theatres or at home)

H1 There is a relationship between age and preference in viewing location

Table 5.5: Chi-Square Analysis for Hypothesis 2

	Do you prefer to watch films on an OTT platform at home over going to the cinema?	What age category do you fall under?
Chi-Square	63.472[a]	110.313[b]
df	4	5
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 32.6.
b. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 27.2.

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA

Looking at a chi-square analysis, taking age as a factor to discern whether people prefer watching films at home on OTT Platforms or in theatres. Looking at the table, it is shown that the significance level is below 0.05, thus proving a statistically significant relationship between age and viewing preference. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. It is the most logical assumption that older people are more likely to depend on their OTT Platforms to maintain their quota for entertainment and art, while younger people, who keep abreast about the activities in the film industry, are more likely to take out time and money to travel to their nearest theatre.

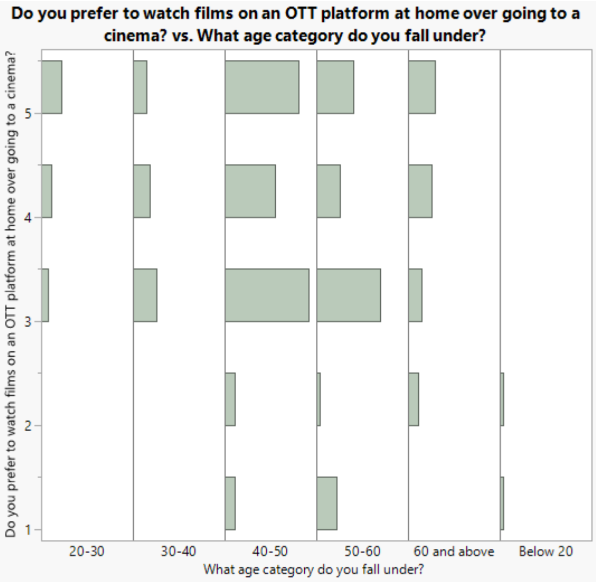

Fig. 5.5: Relationship between age and viewing location preference

Since the chi-square analysis proves a statistically significant relationship between age and viewing location preferences, we can analyse the above graph, Figure 5.5, so as to ascertain the frequencies of each age group with respect to their preferences.
Instantly what's notable is that out of all respondents below the age of 20 years prefer to go to the cinema rather than stay indoors. According to the data so obtained no respondents below the age of 20 years prefer to watch films at home on their OTT Platforms.

As we move towards older age groups, the tendency of respondents to stay at home to watch films on their selected OTT Platforms increases. The highest number of respondents who choose to watch films at home belong to the age group of 40 – 50 years. This may be the case for a number of reasons. Middle-aged people are usually at their busiest before approaching a suitable retirement age and thus may not have enough time to step out to the movie theatre regularly.
Younger people who belong to the age groups of 20 -30 years and 30 – 40 years prefer OTT Platforms at home as well. This may be the case due to the fact that they are more technology savvy and find easy entertainment through the offerings of the OTT Platform.

In the case of respondents above the age of 60 years, although a majority of them choose to watch films at home, their responses are more varied than that of younger age groups. A few respondents above 60 years still step out to local movie theatres. This may be the case due to a generational construct. Years ago, when OTT Platforms didn't exist, these respondents had to resort to movie theatres to maintain their consumption. This predominant practice of stepping out for films may be preferred by them because of a force of habit they endured in their youth.

At home when one is spoilt for choice and consumes a variety of films, the question arises: "What next?" The algorithms of these OTT Platforms are written as such to optimize their profits, thus my recommending the films and TV shows that have been consumed to great degrees worldwide. They also recommend films and shows based on each subscriber's past viewings, thus it comes down to how effective are these systems to push audiences to watch the cash-cow films at home.

H0: Consumers feel that the OTT Platform's recommendation system does not influence their future viewings.

H1: Consumers feel that the OTT Platform's recommendation system influences their future viewings.

Table 5.6: Wilcoxon/ Kruskal-Wallis Tests (Rank Sums)

Level	Count	Score Sum	Expected Score	Score Mean	(Mean-Mean0)/Std0
No	17	1294.00	1394.00	76.1176	-0.559
Yes	146	12072.0	11972.0	82.6849	0.559
WILCOXON TWO-SAMPLE TEST, NORMAL APPROXIMATION					
	S	Z	Prob>|Z|		
	1294	-0.55870	0.5764		
KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST, CHISQUARE APPROXIMATION					
	ChiSquare	df	Prob>ChiSq		
	0.3153	1	0.5745		

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA

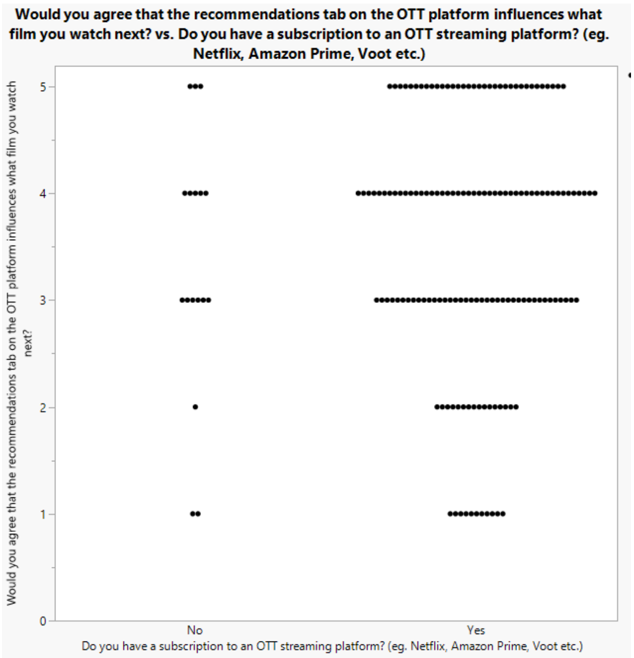

Figure 5.6: Degree of agreement of OTT subscribers to the influence of the recommendation systems

According to the data collected, the above graph was obtained by running a Fit Y by X test on JMP as well as a Wilcoxon/Kruskal-Wallis Test. As per the questionnaire, the metric for evaluation were as follows: 1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE, 2 = SOMEWHAT DISAGREE, 3 = NEUTRAL, 4 = SOMEWHAT AGREE, 5 = STRONGLY AGREE. From the given Figure 5.6, the inference made is that, out of all respondents who have a subscription to any given OTT Platform, the largest chunk of the population agree that the recommendation systems influence future viewings, however the opinion of the population is also varied with the second largest chunk seemingly indifferent/ neutral. Therefore, a Kruskal-Wallis Test, ChiSquare Approximation shows a statistical significance of more than 0.05 and thus proves it statistically insignificant. Hence, H0 will be accepted and H1 will be rejected.

OTT Platforms mainly recommend films and shows that have been consumed by a majority of their users, thus pushing the more popular mainstream products, however, the below graph, Figure 5.7, shows that from the derived data, as the respondents move from slight to strong feelings that the OTT Platform's recommendation systems influence their future viewings, they also consume more art films, thus seconding the previous claim of a varied data set.

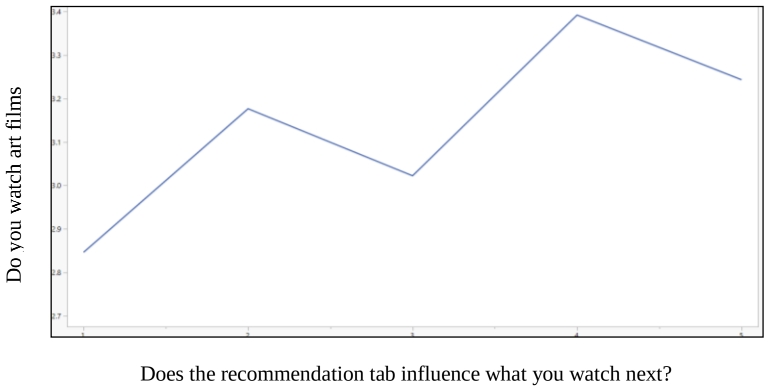

Figure 5.7: Supplementary Graphical Summary for Hypothesis 3

VI. Findings and Conclusion

Summarization of Responses

The main finding was that respondents who consumed more mainstream films strayed away from the consumption of art films and vice-versa. Another finding that was unanimous was the reaction of subscribers to the recommendation systems of their chosen OTT Platforms. Most respondents felt that the way their OTT Platform's recommendation system worked, influenced their future viewings. Furthermore, it was found that age has no influence on the preference of people to go out or sit at home to watch a film. Moreover, respondents in Tier 2 cities have a larger dependency on OTT Platforms due to the relative shortage of movie theatres in their cities. A majority of respondents also agreed that they are more drawn to watching a film based on the actors in it. They preferred star power of the abilities and notoriety of the film's director. The consumption of films in foreign languages was evenly spread amongst all respondents.

Respondents who had subscribed to a given OTT Platforms are also more willing to watch films outside of that streaming service.

Findings for Further Studies

An interesting finding from the primary data suggests that from the collected data, Tier 1 cities in India have a larger population with a subscription to any given OTT Platform than Tier 2 cities, however, Tier 1 cities also have a larger population of people who do not have an OTT subscription compared to a 100% subscription rate of people from Tier 2 cities.

The population of Tier 1 cities such as Mumbai and Chennai, tend to be spoilt for choice. There are more malls, more communal leisure areas and luxury experience centres. It is noted that the rise of multiplexes has been an integral part of the popularisation of mall culture (Athique & Hill, 2007). The choice to physically visit a local cinema house is greater in Tier 1 cities, not to mention the recent increase in number of the luxury, boutique theatre product. The theatre has now transformed into an almost luxurious event, therefore, with larger disposable income and greater access, it is fair to assume that the population of these cities are torn between OTT and theatre viewings and thus have a larger number of people who do not subscribe to any OTT Platform.

According to a CRISIL report, the U.S. has 125 screens per million people, China has 16, and India has just nine. India's low screen rate has meant lesser access to theatres across cities outside of the metropolitans. A sub-brand of PVR Cinemas called "PVR Utsav" was recently launched to create a stronger foothold in Tier 2 and 3 cities (Prerna Lidhoo, 2019). Since these expansion developments are fairly nascent, the population of Tier 2 and 3 cities do not yet have the variety of their metropolitan counterparts, thus their reliance on OTT Platforms is higher.

A study to further understand the division between people from Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities and their reliance, perception and tendency towards OTT Platforms and their reasons could be carried out by future researchers.

The retrieved primary data was used to compare the respondents' preference for watching films in theatres or on OTT Platforms and which city tier type they belong to, it's apparent that the preferences of respondents from Tier 1 cities are more varied as they have greater access to a number of options.

Art film audiences place a higher importance on the director of a particular film as opposed to commercial film audiences who place importance on the actors and their star power. Well-known directors have a strong positive influence on the expectations of the quality of a movie (Ulker-Demirel et al., 2018). As per the above graph, it can be inferred that although there is a varied preference for films amongst the population of Tier 1 and 2 cities alike, there is a steady consensus that all respondents feel that they are drawn to a film based on the actors in it over the prowess and abilities of the director.

Based on the data so obtained, a negligible correlation was found and thus it cannot be conclusively mentioned that the more respondents who prefer to consumer art films, are more attracted by the abilities of the director or producer as opposed to those who prefer mainstream cinema who are drawn more by the stature and star power of the actors, however, future researchers could carry out comprehensive reviews and studies on this topic.

When it comes to the propensity to watch foreign language films in relation to the city tier type that respondents hail from, the data derived shows that a larger number of people from Tier 1 cities tend to gravitate towards foreign language cinema. Further, the data suggests that out of the limited respondents hailing from Tier 2 cities, there is a clear varied set. A major number of Tier 2 respondents either gravitate to foreign language cinema or completely abstain from it. Further analysis can be conducted to ascertain a relationship between city tier type and the variety of types of films consumed.

From the primary data obtained, those respondents who have a subscription to an OTT Platform do try to venture outside of it to experiment with their regular consumption. In the case of those respondents who do not have a subscription to any OTT Platform, it is evidently assumed that they mainly tend to discover new films.

Furthermore, from the data, its noticed that those who have responded yes to having a subscription to an OTT Platform, a majority of them are more likely to discover films outside of their chosen platform. Thus, the degree of audiences to completely rely on their OTT Platforms for the film intake can be analysed by future researchers.

From the data obtained, it's noticed that out of all respondents who have a subscription to any given OTT Platform, a larger number of respondents agree that they prefer mainstream blockbusters over art films.

As mentioned earlier in the study, the algorithms of the OTT Platforms are written as such so that they recommend the most watched films and TV shows to each and every subscriber. Also, they heavily push their own original content. Since these companies invest a lot of money in each of their projects, they can all be termed as mainstream films. Therefore, since these kinds of films are heavily produced and circulated amongst all users, it becomes very evident that most OTT subscribers will prefer these films since they saturate their screens over and over again. A future study based on the objective to discern the proportion of mainstream films to art films on any given OTT Platform can be carried out.

Discussions

After having collected and analysed all responses it's evident that the film culture and propensity of viewers to experiment with their entertainment and art intake is evolving. It was found that most respondents reacted well to venturing out of the regular commercial blockbusters and try out a foreign language or offbeat film. This shows that although many thought that Indian art cinema had completely disappeared, its seemingly making a steady return predicated mainly by the evolution of the mentalities of the viewers.

When it comes to the role of OTT Platform in the cause of this radical evolution, it cannot be said that they are completely etching out films of substance and independent films. Most respondents who admitted to including art films in their regular consumption also preferred the offerings of OTT Platforms. The inference that can be made here is that, although these OTT Platforms propagate their own content and popular mainstream films, they also harbour many low budgets, independent, art films on their apps. Even though, these films may not be pushed as much as other films on the platform, viewers are still able to discover them and maintain a balance between the OTT offerings and art cinema.

Implications for Businesses

The research suggests that viewers are growing more conscious day by day. They are now more aware of the cinema industry and its artistic side. Many viewers include art films in their regular consumption patterns although they prefer the recommendation systems of their chosen OTT Platform. This shows a diverse attitude taken by audiences.

In response to this growing consciousness, business in the OTT sector, like Netflix, Prime Video etc. must also look to strike a balance in its offerings. While, these powerhouse OTT channels do showcase some art films, they tend to be submerged by a wave of original content, so much so that, these art films could be lost in this vacuum of offerings. Their recommendation systems can be re-written to accommodate such a varied outlook on cinema consumption.

Businesses in the OTT space, like Netflix and Prime Video now may have further to re-evaluate the kind of shows and movies they produce and brand as their original content. What's become blatantly noticeable about these offerings are that they're made in the same formulaic way and thus they all look the same. Now, as audience members are more aware of the quality of the films they watch, the onus to create a shift in production practices falls on these companies. In the case of Netflix, every once in a while, they stray away from the formula they've set for itself in creating content by funding projects of big-name directors and allow them complete creative control over the look and feel of the film. Most notably, Netflix funded acclaimed director Martin Scorsese's $200 million masterpiece The Irishman (2019). They are also known to have partnered with other notable directors like Noah Baumbach and Alfonso Cuaron. Netflix, also enters some of these films for Oscar contention, thus gaining recognition in the light of its "serious moviemaking" side. Now, what this means is that Netflix and other platforms, must take into consideration the proportion of formulaic and serious films they fund. They must smartly decide which to put its money behind especially since viewers are now pickier about what they watch.

Conclusion

Based on the study, a niche audience exists for art cinema in India. The focus on aesthetic expression and original storytelling, as well as its emphasis on social, political, and cultural themes, are often characteristics of art films.

The survey discovered that there is still a sizable audience for art films, especially among younger, urban, and educated audiences, even though the mainstream commercial film industry dominates the Indian film market. These viewers frequently seek out art films as an alternative to the mainstream cinema because they value the creative and intellectual qualities of these films.

Although the rise of OTT Platforms oftentimes limits the reach of art films, they have done a supreme job at enabling a direct distribution channel, getting viewers in contact with films that perhaps may never have had a theatrical release in India.

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