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Article

A Critical Analysis of Vulgar Language on OTT Platforms: A Systematic Review

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Abstract: There is a serious concern regarding framing rules and guidelines to regulate the content on OTT platforms that needs urgent attention. In the Current Scenario, the use of vulgar language in the public domain on OTT platforms needs to take seriously. Some OTT platforms heavenly use foul language, which is open to children that cause a huge psychological impact on them. The use of vulgar language, including profanity and bad words, has to be regulated strictly. Web series uses obscene, abusive words and foul language with excessive usage. This review paper highlights the excessive use of swear words, profane language, and vulgar expletives on OTT platforms.

Keywords: OTT; Vulgar Language; Vulgar Expletives; Profane Language; Web Series

Introduction

Over-the-top (OTT) platforms are video streaming services that deliver content directly to consumers over the internet without requiring a traditional cable or satellite TV subscription. OTT platforms have become increasingly popular in recent years due to technological advancements and behaviour changes in consumer viewing habits [1]. Many OTT platforms range from subscription-based services like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video to free ad-supported platforms like Pluto TV and Tubi. Some OTT platforms offer a mix of both subscription and ad-supported content. One of the primary advantages of OTT platforms is the flexibility they offer in terms of viewing options. Unlike traditional TV, viewers can access OTT content from any device with an internet connection, including smartphones, tablets, laptops, and smart TVs. This allows viewers to watch their favorite shows and movies on their schedule rather than having to tune in at a specific time [1].

Another advantage of OTT platforms is the diverse amount of content available in regional language. Many platforms offer TV shows and movies including original content unavailable elsewhere [1, 2]. This has led to increased competition among OTT providers, with each platform trying to differentiate itself by offering unique features and content. OTT platforms have also disrupted the traditional TV advertising model. Rather than relying on advertising revenue to fund their operations, many OTT platforms generate revenue through subscription fees. This has forced advertisers to adapt by finding new ways to reach consumers, such as through targeted advertising or product placement [1, 2].

There are also some challenges associated with OTT platforms. One of the main challenges is content fragmentation. With so many platforms offering exclusive content, it can be difficult and expensive for consumers to access all the content they want to watch. This has led to the rise of aggregator services like Roku and Apple TV, which allow viewers to access multiple OTT platforms through a single device. Another challenge for OTT platforms is piracy. Because OTT content is delivered over the internet, it is easier for users to illegally download or stream copyrighted content. This can significantly impact revenue for both content providers and OTT platforms. OTT platforms have revolutionized the way we consume video content, offering viewers greater flexibility and choice than ever before. While there are challenges associated with OTT platforms, their popularity shows no signs of slowing down, and they are likely to continue to shape the future of the entertainment industry [1, 2, 3].

Historical Perspective:

The history of OTT platforms can be traced back to the early days of the internet when companies first started experimenting with delivering video content over the web. In the 1990s, RealNetworks introduced RealPlayer, a streaming media player that allowed users to watch video content online.

However, it wasn't until the mid-2000s that the concept of OTT platforms began to take off. In 2007, Netflix launched its streaming service, which allowed subscribers to watch movies and TV shows online. Initially, the streaming service was only available to customers who subscribed to the company's DVD rental service, but it was later offered as a standalone service. In 2008, Hulu was launched, offering ad-supported streaming of TV shows and movies. This was followed by the launch of Amazon Prime Video in 2011, which provided unlimited streaming of movies and TV shows to Amazon Prime members [2, 3].

Since then, the number of OTT platforms has exploded, with new services launching every year. In 2013, Disney launched its first OTT platform, Disney Movies Anywhere, which later evolved into Disney+. In 2015, HBO launched its standalone streaming service, HBO Now. In 2016, YouTube launched YouTube TV, a subscription-based live TV service. And in 2017, Facebook launched its Watch platform, which offers original and user-generated content [3].

The rise of OTT platforms has significantly impacted the entertainment industry, disrupting traditional TV networks and cable providers. In response, many traditional media companies have launched their OTT platforms, such as CBS All Access, NBC's Peacock, and WarnerMedia's HBO Max. Today, OTT platforms are a crucial part of the entertainment industry, offering viewers a wide diversity of content on demand. The popularity of OTT platforms is expected to continue to grow in the coming years, with more companies launching their streaming services and the number of subscribers increasing [1, 2, 3].

Indian Perspective:

OTT platforms have seen tremendous popularity and growth during Covid-19 in India. India is the second-largest market for internet users worldwide. The increasing availability of high-speed internet connectivity has made it easier for viewers to access streaming services on various devices [1, 2].

Some of the popular OTT platforms in India include:

1. **Netflix:** Netflix was launched in India in 2016 and quickly became popular among Indian viewers. It offers a wide range of international and Indian content, including TV shows, movies and documentaries.
2. **Amazon Prime Video:** Amazon Prime Video was launched in India in 2016 and offers a mix of Indian and International content, including movies, TV shows, and original content produced in India.
3. **Disney+ Hotstar:** Disney+ Hotstar is a popular OTT platform in India that offers a mix of international and Indian content, including movies, TV shows, sports, and news.
4. **Zee5:** Zee5 is an Indian OTT platform launched by the Zee Network. It offers a wide range of Indian content, including movies, TV shows, and original content produced by Zee.
5. **Voot:** Voot is an Indian OTT platform launched by Viacom18. It offers a mix of Indian and international content, including movies, TV shows, and original content produced by Viacom18.
6. **SonyLIV:** SonyLIV is an Indian OTT platform launched by Sony Pictures Networks India. It offers a mix of Indian and international content, including movies, TV shows, sports, and news.

The popularity of OTT platforms in India has led to increased competition among providers, with each platform trying to differentiate itself by offering unique content or features. Many platforms have also started producing original content in India to attract viewers and stand out in a crowded market. However, OTT platforms in India have also faced regulatory challenges, with the Indian government introducing new rules and regulations to govern the content available on these

platforms. For example, in 2021, the Indian government introduced new rules that require OTT platforms to self-regulate their content and provide a complaints mechanism for viewers [2, 3, 4].

Vulgar Language on OTT Platforms

The use of vulgar language on OTT platforms has become a topic of controversy and debate in recent years. While some viewers argue that OTT platforms should allow creative freedom and not be subject to censorship, others believe that platforms should be more cautious about the content they distribute and ensure it is suitable for all audiences [2, 3, 4].

One of the reasons why vulgar language has become more prevalent on OTT platforms is that they are not subject to the same regulations as traditional TV networks. Unlike TV networks, which are subject to strict broadcasting standards and regulations, OTT platforms are not bound by these regulations and are free to produce and distribute content as they see fit [2, 3, 4].

This has led to some OTT platforms producing content that includes explicit language and graphic scenes, which can be offensive or inappropriate for some viewers. However, it is worth noting that most OTT platforms have age ratings and content warnings in place to help viewers make informed decisions about the content they consume.

In response to concerns about the use of vulgar language on OTT platforms, some governments and regulatory bodies have introduced new rules and guidelines. For example, in 2021, the Indian government introduced new rules that require OTT platforms to self-regulate their content and provide a complaints mechanism for viewers. Similarly, the UK government has proposed new legislation that would impose stricter regulations on OTT platforms and require them to ensure their content is suitable for all audiences [2, 3, 4].

The use of vulgar language on OTT platforms is a complex issue that requires a balance between creative freedom and responsible content distribution. While some viewers may enjoy the content that includes explicit language and graphic scenes, it is essential for platforms to ensure that their content is suitable for all audiences and to take steps to address any concerns or complaints from viewers [4, 5].

Regulations on OTT Platforms:

OTT platforms have been subject to varying levels of regulation in different countries around the world. The regulation of OTT platforms typically falls under the remit of national governments or regulatory bodies responsible for media and telecommunications. The nature and extent of regulation of OTT platforms varies widely across different countries. Some countries have strict regulations in place that apply to both traditional TV networks and OTT platforms, while others have taken a more laissez-faire approach to regulating these platforms [5, 6].

In some countries, OTT platforms are regulated in the same way as traditional broadcasters, with rules governing the content that can be broadcast and the times at which certain content can be shown. In other countries, OTT platforms are subject to less strict regulations, with guidelines or recommendations in place rather than legal requirements [7].

Here are some examples of the regulations that have been introduced in different countries:

1. **India:** In 2021, the Indian government introduced new rules that require OTT platforms to self-regulate their content and provide a complaints mechanism for viewers. The rules also require platforms to classify content based on age suitability and to display content warnings.
2. **UK:** In the UK, OTT platforms are subject to regulation by the Office of Communications (Ofcom). Ofcom has the power to enforce broadcasting standards, including rules on protecting children and preventing harmful or offensive material.
3. **USA:** In the USA, OTT platforms are subject to the same regulations as traditional broadcasters regarding advertising and marketing practices. However, there are currently no specific regulations governing the content that can be shown on these platforms.

4. **Singapore:** In Singapore, OTT platforms are subject to the Broadcasting (Class License) Notification, which requires platforms to comply with content standards and classification requirements.

The regulation of OTT platforms is a complex issue that requires a balance between promoting creative freedom and ensuring that content is suitable for all audiences. As the popularity of OTT platforms continues to grow, governments and regulatory bodies will likely continue to review and update the regulations in place to govern these platforms [8].

Several factors that may contribute to the use of abusive language on OTT platforms:

1. **Creative freedom:** One of the critical factors that may lead to the use of abusive language on OTT platforms is creative freedom. OTT platforms are often seen as a space for creators to express themselves without the constraints of traditional media, which may lead to the use of language and behavior that is more provocative or edgy.

There are several examples of creative freedom on OTT platforms that have allowed creators to push boundaries and explore new and controversial themes:

Sacred Games: This Indian crime thriller series, which premiered on Netflix in 2018, features strong language, violence, and nudity. The series has been praised for its gritty and realistic portrayal of crime in Mumbai and has been a hit with audiences in India and around the world.

Orange is the New Black: This American comedy-drama series premiered on Netflix in 2013 explores the lives of female inmates in a minimum-security federal prison. The show features strong language, sexual content, and drug use and has been praised for its diverse and complex characters.

The Handmaid's Tale: This dystopian series premiered on Hulu in 2017 and is based on Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel of the same name. The show depicts a totalitarian society in which women are treated as the property of the state and has been praised for its powerful storytelling and portrayal of social and political issues.

BoJack Horseman: This American animated series, which premiered on Netflix in 2014, follows the life of a washed-up anthropomorphic horse as he navigates life in Hollywood. The show features strong language, drug use, and depression and has been praised for its honest and poignant portrayal of mental health issues.

The Queen's Gambit: This American drama series premiered on Netflix in 2020 and tells the story of a young orphaned girl who becomes a chess prodigy in the 1960s. The show has been praised for its strong storytelling, cinematography, and performances and has been a hit with audiences around the world.

These examples demonstrate the range of themes and genres possible on OTT platforms and the creative freedom these platforms can offer creators. While some of these shows may include strong language or controversial themes, they have also been praised for their powerful storytelling and willingness to push boundaries [9].

2. **Target audience:** Some OTT platforms may target specific audiences, such as young adults or teenagers, who may be more receptive to language that is considered edgy or provocative. Creators may feel that using abusive language is a way to connect with their target audience and generate buzz around their content.

There are several examples of OTT platforms that target specific audiences based on their demographics, interests, or viewing preferences:

Hotstar: This Indian OTT platform, now rebranded as Disney+ Hotstar, targets a wide range of audiences, including sports fans, movie enthusiasts, and those interested in Indian television shows. The platform offers content in several Indian languages, making it accessible to a diverse range of viewers.

Crunchyroll: This American OTT platform targets anime and manga fans, offering a wide selection of Japanese animation and comic books. The platform has a loyal following among anime enthusiasts around the world.

Acorn TV: This American OTT platform offers British and international television shows and movies, targeting viewers interested in classic and contemporary British programming. The platform also features several shows from Australia, New Zealand, and Canada.

BET+: This American OTT platform targets African American viewers, offering a wide range of programming that includes television shows, movies, and documentaries. The platform features exclusive content from the Black Entertainment Television network and new and classic programming from other networks.

Shudder: This American OTT platform targets horror movie fans, offering a wide range of horror, thriller, and suspense movies and television shows. The platform features exclusive content, classic horror movies, and international programming.

These examples demonstrate how OTT platforms can be tailored to specific audiences based on their interests, preferences, and demographics. By offering relevant and appealing content to their target audiences, these platforms can build a loyal following and generate buzz around their content [10,12,15,27].

3. **Cultural context:** Abusive language may be more acceptable in certain cultural contexts, and creators may feel that using such language is a way to reflect the reality of the world they are portraying. However, this can also perpetuate harmful stereotypes and contribute to a culture of harassment and abuse.

There are several examples of OTT platforms that explore cultural contexts and showcase content from different cultures:

Mubi: This global OTT platform offers a curated selection of classic and contemporary movies from around the world. The platform aims to showcase films that may have yet to receive mainstream attention and offers a diverse selection of movies from different countries and cultures.

Viki: This American OTT platform specializes in Asian television shows and movies, focusing on Korean and Chinese programming. The platform offers subtitles in several languages, making it accessible to a global audience.

ZEE5: This Indian OTT platform offers a wide range of programming in several Indian languages, catering to viewers in different regions and cultural contexts. The platform features original programming, classic Indian television shows, and movies.

Al Jazeera English: This Qatari OTT platform offers news and current affairs programming from a Middle Eastern perspective. The platform covers global events and issues but presents them through a lens that reflects the cultural and political context of the region.

CuriosityStream: This American OTT platform offers documentaries and non-fiction programming that explores scientific and cultural topics from around the world. The platform features programming from different cultures and perspectives and aims to provide viewers with a deeper understanding of the world around them.

These examples demonstrate how OTT platforms can showcase content from different cultures, providing viewers with a wider perspective and deeper understanding of different ways of life. These platforms can engage viewers in new and meaningful ways by offering programming that reflects different cultural contexts [10,14,16].

4. **Competition:** In the highly competitive world of OTT platforms, creators may feel pressure to produce content that stands out and generates buzz. Using abusive language is a way to create controversy and generate attention for their content.

There are several examples of competition among OTT platforms, as these platforms vie for viewers and strive to offer the best possible programming and user experience:

Netflix vs. Amazon Prime Video: These two American OTT platforms are among the most popular in the world and compete fiercely for viewers. Both offer a wide range of movies, television shows, and original programming and are constantly adding new content to their libraries. They also offer similar pricing and user interfaces, making it easy for viewers to switch between the two platforms.

Hulu vs. Disney+ vs. HBO Max: These American OTT platforms are all owned by major media companies and offer different types of programming to viewers. Hulu offers a mix of classic and

current television shows, as well as original programming, while Disney+ focuses on family-friendly movies and television shows, and HBO Max offers a selection of HBO programming, as well as movies and television shows from other networks.

Apple TV+ vs. Paramount+ vs. Peacock: These American OTT platforms are relatively new to the market and are competing to establish themselves as major players. Apple TV+ offers original programming, Paramount+ offers programming from the Viacom CBS network, and Peacock offers a mix of original programming and classic television shows and movies.

Hotstar vs. ZEE5 vs. Voot: These Indian OTT platforms are all competing for viewers in a rapidly growing market. Hotstar offers a mix of sports programming, movies, and television shows, ZEE5 offers Indian programming in several languages, and Voot offers a mix of Indian and international programming.

These examples demonstrate how competition among OTT platforms can be fierce, with each platform striving to offer the best possible programming and user experience to attract viewers. As the market continues to grow and evolve, we will see even more competition among these platforms in the future [10,11,12].

5. **Lack of regulation:** While some countries have introduced regulations governing the use of language on OTT platforms, others have taken a more hands-off approach. In the absence of clear regulations, creators may feel that they have more freedom to use language and behavior that may be considered objectionable or offensive.

The lack of regulation on OTT platforms has been controversial, with some arguing that it allows for creative freedom and others arguing that it can lead to harmful content. Here are a few examples of content on OTT platforms that have sparked debates about regulation:

"Tandav" on Amazon Prime Video: This Indian original series sparked controversy for its depiction of Hindu gods and goddesses, leading to accusations of religious insensitivity. The show faced legal action, protests, and renewed debates about the need to regulate OTT platforms.

"Cuties" on Netflix: This French film sparked outrage for depicting young girls in sexualized situations, leading to accusations of exploitation and calls for boycotts. The film faced legal action and widespread criticism, with many arguing that it should not have been allowed on the platform.

"The Social Dilemma" on Netflix: This documentary explores the negative impact of social media on society and argues for greater regulation of tech companies. The film has sparked debates about the need for regulation of OTT platforms, as well as the role of social media in shaping public opinion.

"Fifty Shades of Grey" on Amazon Prime Video: This movie, which depicts BDSM relationships, has faced criticism for its explicit content and how it portrays women. While some argue that it should be regulated, others argue it is a work of fiction that should be allowed on the platform [26, 27].

These examples demonstrate the ongoing debate about the need for regulation on OTT platforms. Some argue that protecting viewers from harmful content is necessary, while others argue that it limits creative freedom. As the industry continues to grow and evolve, this debate will likely continue.

Conclusion:

OTT platforms include explicit language, mature content, and themes that may not be suitable for all audiences. Viewers are often warned about such content and may choose to use parental controls or other features to restrict access to certain shows or content. Overall, the use of abusive language on OTT platforms is a complex issue that requires a balance between creative freedom and responsible content distribution. While some creators may feel that using such language is necessary to connect with their target audience or generate buzz, it is important for platforms to ensure that their content is suitable for all audiences and to take steps to address any concerns or complaints from viewers.

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