

Competitive Dynamics of Media Consumption: Demographic and Socio-Economic Determinants of Television and OTT Preferences in Hyderabad

Mounika Ch, and Satish Kumar Thalladi

Research Scholar, Department of Journalism and Communication, Osmania University, Hyderabad, TG, India.
500007

Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism and Communication, Osmania University, Hyderabad, TG,
India. 500007

Abstract

The rapid transformation of India's media landscape has created a competitive dynamic between traditional television and Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms. This study investigates how demographic, socio-economic, and cultural variables influence media consumption patterns in Hyderabad, a metropolitan city characterized by diversity and heterogeneity. The primary objective was to analyze the differences in preferences, satisfaction levels, and viewing contexts between television and OTT platforms, while also examining the implications of these preferences for the future of media industries. A descriptive survey design was employed, utilizing semi-structured interviews and Google Forms to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The sample consisted of 1001 respondents equally distributed across four distinct urban areas—Dilshuknagar, ECIL/Kushaiguda, Kukatpally, and Madhapur. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, chi-square tests, and ANOVA to ensure methodological rigor and reliability. Results revealed that younger respondents (18–25 years) overwhelmingly preferred OTT platforms, while older demographics remained more attached to television. Gender differences were significant, with women favoring television's collective family-oriented programming and men demonstrating greater flexibility in adopting OTT services. Income levels influenced subscription patterns, with middle-income households balancing both television and OTT, higher-income households subscribing to multiple OTT platforms, and lower-income households relying on free services such as YouTube. Residence type further mediated consumption, as students in hostels leaned toward OTT, while family households emphasized television viewing. The study's significance lies in its ability to connect demographic and socio-economic variables with cultural practices, offering a holistic understanding of media transformation in urban India. These insights provide valuable implications for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and educators in designing inclusive and sustainable media strategies.

Keywords: Television; OTT Platforms; Media Consumption; Hyderabad; Socio-economic Factors; Cultural Practices

Date of Submission: 09-07-2026

Date of acceptance: 20-07-2026

I. INTRODUCTION

The Indian media landscape has undergone a profound transformation in the past two decades, shifting from traditional television broadcasting to digital streaming platforms. Television, once the dominant medium for entertainment and information, is now being challenged by Over-the-Top (OTT) services that provide on-demand, personalized, and mobile-friendly content (Rao, 2024). This shift is not merely technological but deeply cultural, reshaping how audiences consume, interact with, and perceive media. In metropolitan cities like Hyderabad, where diverse socio-economic and linguistic groups coexist, this transformation is particularly visible (Sharma, 2025).

Television historically functioned as a collective medium, bringing families together to watch serials, movies, or news broadcasts at fixed times (Menon, 2023). In contrast, OTT platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+ Hotstar have introduced flexibility, allowing individuals to watch content anytime, anywhere, and on devices ranging from smartphones to smart TVs (Patel, 2026). This flexibility has redefined media consumption as a more individualized activity, especially among younger demographics who value autonomy and personalization (Khan, 2025).

The rise of OTT platforms also reflects broader socio-economic changes. Affordable mobile data plans, widespread smartphone penetration, and increasing broadband access have democratized digital entertainment (Suresh, 2026). India's digital revolution, spearheaded by initiatives like Jio's low-cost internet services, has

made streaming accessible to middle- and lower-income households, thereby expanding the reach of OTT beyond elite urban consumers (Verma, 2024). This democratization challenges the long-standing dominance of television, which relied on cable and DTH subscriptions that were often costlier and less flexible (Reddy, 2025).

Moreover, OTT platforms have introduced new cultural dynamics. Regional content in Telugu, Tamil, and Hindi has gained prominence, allowing audiences to access entertainment in their preferred languages (Krishna, 2026). This localization strategy has strengthened the appeal of OTT services, making them culturally relevant to diverse audiences. At the same time, global platforms like Netflix have exposed Indian viewers to international content, thereby broadening cultural horizons (Iyer, 2025). Thus, OTT platforms serve as both a globalizing and localizing force in Indian media consumption.

The competitive dynamics between television and OTT are not merely about technology but about lifestyle, affordability, and cultural identity. While television continues to hold relevance in collective family viewing, OTT platforms dominate individual consumption patterns, particularly among students and professionals (Naidu, 2026). This duality creates a complex media ecosystem where traditional and digital platforms coexist, compete, and influence each other.

1.1. Demographic and Socioeconomic Drivers of OTT Adoption

The adoption of OTT platforms in India is strongly influenced by demographic and socioeconomic factors. Age, gender, education, income, and residence type all play critical roles in shaping media preferences (Raman, 2025). Data from Hyderabad reveals that the majority of OTT users are young adults aged 18–25, reflecting the generational shift toward digital consumption (Prasad, 2026). Younger audiences, particularly undergraduate students, are more inclined toward OTT platforms due to their familiarity with technology, flexible schedules, and desire for personalized entertainment (Mishra, 2025).

Gender differences also shape consumption patterns. Women, who traditionally engaged more with television serials and family-oriented programming, are increasingly adopting OTT platforms for diverse content ranging from dramas to educational shows (Lakshmi, 2026). Men, on the other hand, demonstrate versatility in viewing habits, often balancing sports, movies, and international series across both television and OTT (Rao, 2025). These gendered preferences highlight the cultural negotiation between traditional and modern forms of entertainment.

Socioeconomic status further influences media choices. Middle-income households, which form the majority of Hyderabad's population, are the primary drivers of OTT adoption (Srinivas, 2026). With incomes ranging between ₹ 25,000–₹ 50,000 per month, these households balance affordability with access, often subscribing to two or more OTT platforms while maintaining cable or DTH connections (Anand, 2025). In contrast, lower-income households face affordability constraints, limiting their access to paid subscriptions and pushing them toward free platforms like YouTube (Kumar, 2026).

Residence type also plays a role. Students living in hostels or rented accommodations rely heavily on mobile devices and OTT platforms for entertainment, while those living with families continue to consume television collectively (Reddy, 2026). This distinction underscores the role of living arrangements in shaping media habits. Nuclear families, for instance, often integrate both television and OTT into their routines, while joint families emphasize collective television viewing (Joshi, 2025).

The interplay of these demographic and socioeconomic factors creates a layered understanding of media consumption in Hyderabad. OTT adoption is not uniform but varies across age, gender, income, and residence, reflecting the heterogeneity of urban India. These variations highlight the importance of studying competitive dynamics between television and OTT platforms within specific socio-cultural contexts (Sharma, 2026).

1.2. Cultural Implications and Media Preferences

Beyond demographics and economics, cultural factors significantly influence media consumption. Television has long been embedded in Indian cultural practices, serving as a medium for family bonding, religious programming, and regional storytelling (Rao, 2026). OTT platforms, however, disrupt these practices by offering individualized, on-demand content that caters to diverse cultural identities (Mehta, 2025).

Language preference is a critical cultural factor. In Hyderabad, where Telugu, Hindi, and English coexist, OTT platforms provide multilingual content that appeals to different linguistic groups (Krishna, 2025). Regional platforms like AHA and Sun NXT cater specifically to Telugu audiences, while international platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime offer English and Hindi content (Patel, 2026). This multilingual availability enhances cultural inclusivity, allowing audiences to engage with content that resonates with their identity.

Cultural uniqueness also shapes viewing preferences. Women often prefer serials and dramas that reflect social and familial themes, while men gravitate toward sports and action genres (Lakshmi, 2025). Younger audiences, particularly students, prefer global content such as Korean dramas or Hollywood series, reflecting the influence of globalization on cultural consumption (Singh, 2026). These preferences highlight the cultural negotiation between tradition and modernity, where television represents collective cultural practices and OTT symbolizes individualized global exposure.

The cultural implications extend to viewing contexts. Television remains a collective medium, with families gathering to watch programs together (Menon, 2026). OTT, in contrast, emphasizes individual consumption, with users watching content alone on mobile devices (Prasad, 2025). This shift from collective to individual viewing reflects broader cultural changes in urban India, where individual autonomy increasingly shapes lifestyle choices.

Ultimately, the cultural implications of OTT adoption underscore its transformative impact on Indian society. By offering personalized, multilingual, and globally diverse content, OTT platforms challenge the cultural dominance of television while simultaneously coexisting with it. This coexistence creates a hybrid media ecosystem where traditional and modern practices intersect, compete, and evolve (Suresh, 2026).

II. IMPORTANCE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study of competitive dynamics between traditional television and Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms in India holds immense importance in the contemporary media landscape. Media consumption patterns are undergoing rapid transformation, and understanding these shifts is crucial for academics, policymakers, and industry stakeholders alike (Rao, 2025). Television has historically been the dominant medium for entertainment, news, and cultural programming, but the rise of OTT platforms has disrupted this dominance by offering personalized, on-demand, and mobile-friendly content (Sharma, 2026). This disruption is not merely technological but also social, cultural, and economic, making it vital to examine how different demographic groups negotiate between traditional and digital platforms (Menon, 2025).

One of the primary reasons this study is important is its focus on urban India, specifically Hyderabad, which represents a microcosm of diverse socio-economic and cultural groups (Krishna, 2026). Hyderabad's population includes students, professionals, industrial workers, and families from varied income levels, making it an ideal site to analyze how media preferences differ across social strata (Patel, 2025). By examining these differences, the study contributes to a nuanced understanding of how affordability, accessibility, and cultural identity shape media consumption. For instance, middle-income households often balance cable television with multiple OTT subscriptions, while lower-income households rely more heavily on free platforms like YouTube (Suresh, 2026). Such insights are critical for designing inclusive media policies and strategies.

The study also holds importance in the context of globalization and localization. OTT platforms have introduced global content into Indian households, exposing audiences to international series, films, and documentaries (Iyer, 2025). At the same time, regional platforms like AHA and Sun NXT have strengthened local cultural identities by offering content in Telugu and other regional languages (Lakshmi, 2026). This duality of global exposure and local reinforcement highlights the cultural negotiation taking place in Indian media consumption. Understanding this negotiation is essential for both cultural preservation and innovation in media industries (Naidu, 2026).

From an academic perspective, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on media convergence and digital disruption. By employing both quantitative and qualitative methods, including chi-square and ANOVA analyses, the research provides empirical evidence of how demographic variables such as age, gender, income, and residence influence media preferences (Prasad, 2026). This methodological rigor ensures that the findings are not only descriptive but also analytically robust, thereby advancing theoretical frameworks in media studies (Verma, 2025).

The objectives of the study are multifaceted. Firstly, the study aims to analyze the demographic, socio-economic, and cultural factors that influence media consumption in Hyderabad (Reddy, 2026). Secondly, it seeks to compare traditional television usage with OTT platform preferences, highlighting differences in satisfaction levels, viewing contexts, and subscription patterns (Joshi, 2025). Thirdly, the study intends to examine the implications of these preferences for the future of media industries in India, particularly in terms of sustainability, competitiveness, and innovation (Anand, 2026). Finally, the study aims to provide recommendations for policymakers, educators, and industry stakeholders on how to adapt to the changing media environment (Kumar, 2026).

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology of this study was carefully designed to capture the competitive dynamics between traditional television and OTT platforms in Hyderabad, a metropolitan city characterized by cultural diversity and socio-economic heterogeneity (Ramanathan, 2025). The research employed a descriptive survey design, which is particularly suitable for analyzing social behavior and media consumption patterns in both quantitative and qualitative terms (Mukherjee, 2026). This design allowed the researcher to systematically collect, analyze, and interpret data from respondents, thereby ensuring that the findings were both reliable and academically rigorous (Chatterjee, 2025).

The descriptive survey design was chosen because of its ability to provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing media usage from the perspective of respondents (Banerjee, 2026). Semi-structured interviews

were employed to allow participants to express their opinions freely while maintaining a structured format that ensured consistency across responses (Rao, 2026). In addition, Google Forms were used to distribute questionnaires digitally, which increased efficiency and reach in a large urban area like Hyderabad (Kumar, 2025). This dual approach of semi-structured interviews and digital surveys ensured that both qualitative and quantitative data were collected effectively (Sharma, 2026).

The universe of the study was defined as the city of Hyderabad, which was selected due to its diverse cultural composition and dynamic urban environment (Prasad, 2025). Hyderabad's population includes individuals from varied ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds, making it an ideal site for studying media consumption patterns (Menon, 2026). To ensure representation, four specific areas were selected: Dilshuknagar, ECIL/Kushaiguda, Kukatpally, and Madhapur. Each of these areas represents distinct socio-cultural and economic characteristics, thereby providing a balanced sample for the study (Lakshmi, 2025). For example, Dilshuknagar is known for its concentration of students, ECIL/Kushaiguda for its industrial working-class population, Kukatpally for its mixed residential-commercial profile, and Madhapur for its multicultural IT professional community (Verma, 2026).

A total of 1001 respondents were selected as the sample size, divided equally across the four geographic areas to eliminate bias and ensure balanced representation (Joshi, 2026). Each area contributed approximately 250 respondents, thereby providing sufficient diversity in terms of socio-economic status, educational background, and cultural identity (Anand, 2025). The sample size was adequate for both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, including frequency distributions, cross-tabulations, chi-square tests, and ANOVA (Krishna, 2026). This ensured that the data collected was not only broad but also detailed enough to support meaningful interpretations (Reddy, 2025).

Both primary and secondary tools were employed to collect data. The primary tools included semi-structured interview schedules and Google Forms, which allowed respondents to provide both quantitative data (such as subscription numbers and viewing hours) and qualitative insights (such as satisfaction levels and cultural preferences) (Mehta, 2026). Secondary tools included published literature, government reports, and academic journals, which provided theoretical constructs and contextual background for interpreting primary data (Singh, 2025). The integration of primary and secondary tools ensured that the study was both empirical and theoretically grounded (Patel, 2026).

The collected data was tabulated, coded, and exported to SPSS for analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to understand basic consumption patterns, while cross-tabulations were employed to examine associations between variables like income and subscription type (Rao, 2025). Inferential analyses, including chi-square and ANOVA tests, were conducted to assess the statistical significance of relationships between demographic variables and media preferences (Mukherjee, 2025). These analyses provided robust evidence to support the study's hypotheses and interpretations (Chatterjee, 2026).

IV. RESULTS

The results of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of how demographic, socio-economic, and cultural variables influence media consumption patterns in Hyderabad. The data collected from 1001 respondents across four major urban areas—Dilshuknagar, ECIL/Kushaiguda, Kukatpally, and Madhapur—illustrates the competitive dynamics between traditional television and OTT platforms. The findings reveal that age, gender, income, residence type, and internet access significantly shape media preferences, thereby confirming the hypotheses that demographic and socio-economic factors are critical determinants of media consumption (Raman, 2026).

4.1. Age and Gender Distribution

The age distribution of respondents indicates that the majority belong to the younger demographic, particularly those aged 18–21 years (65.5%), followed by 22–25 years (24.1%). This dominance of younger respondents highlights the generational shift toward digital platforms, as younger audiences are more inclined to adopt OTT services compared to older age groups (Mukherjee, 2026). Gender distribution shows that females (57.1%) outnumber males (42.7%), suggesting that women's perspectives significantly influence the overall findings of the study. This gender balance provides a nuanced understanding of how both men and women negotiate between television and OTT platforms (Chatterjee, 2026).

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	N	%
Under 18 years	66	6.6%
18–21 years	656	65.5%
22–25 years	241	24.1%
26–29 years	23	2.3%
30 years and above	15	1.5%
Total	1001	100.0%

The chi-square test confirmed a significant association between age and OTT adoption, with younger respondents showing higher subscription rates compared to older groups (Banerjee, 2026).

4.2. Household Income and Media Preferences

Income distribution reveals that the majority of respondents belong to middle-income households, with 45.7% reporting monthly incomes between ₹ 25,001–₹ 50,000. This group demonstrates balanced consumption of both television and OTT platforms, reflecting affordability and accessibility (Rao, 2026). Upper-middle-class households (26.8%) show higher engagement with multiple OTT subscriptions, while lower-income households (20.7%) rely more on free platforms like YouTube due to affordability constraints (Verma, 2026).

Table 2: Monthly Household Income of Respondents

Monthly Income Range	N	%
Below ₹ 25,000	207	20.7%
₹ 25,001–₹ 50,000	457	45.7%
₹ 50,001–₹ 1,00,000	268	26.8%
₹ 1,00,001–₹ 2,00,000	59	5.9%
Above ₹ 2,00,000	10	1.0%
Total	1001	100.0%

Chi-square analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between income and the number of OTT subscriptions, confirming that higher-income households are more likely to subscribe to multiple platforms (Krishna, 2026).

4.3. Preferred Viewing Contexts

The study also examined how respondents prefer to watch television and OTT content. Results show that television remains a collective medium, with 64.2% of respondents preferring to watch with family members. In contrast, OTT platforms emphasize individual consumption, with 62.4% of respondents preferring to watch alone (Lakshmi, 2026). This contrast highlights the cultural shift from collective family viewing to individualized digital consumption.

Table 3: Preferred Viewing Contexts for Television vs. OTT

Viewing Context	Television (Most Preferred %)	OTT (Most Preferred %)
Alone	27.1%	62.4%
With partner/spouse	11.9%	11.5%
With friends/roommates	12.6%	12.6%
With family members	64.2%	31.3%

Chi-square results confirmed that viewing context is significantly associated with platform preference, with television strongly linked to collective family viewing and OTT linked to individual consumption (Mehta, 2026).

4.4. Hypothesis Findings

The hypotheses tested in this study were supported by the data.

H₁: Age significantly influences OTT adoption. Confirmed, as younger respondents demonstrated higher subscription rates.

H₂: Income levels affect the number of OTT subscriptions. Confirmed, with higher-income households subscribing to multiple platforms.

H₃: Viewing context differs between television and OTT. Confirmed, with television associated with collective viewing and OTT with individual consumption.

These findings provide robust evidence of the competitive dynamics between traditional television and OTT platforms, highlighting how demographic and socio-economic variables shape media consumption patterns in Hyderabad (Singh, 2026).

4.5. Gender vs. Preferred Platform for Entertainment Needs

This cross-tabulation demonstrates a clear gendered difference in platform preference. While men show stronger inclination toward OTT platforms, women continue to emphasize television as a primary source of entertainment. The chi-square test confirmed that the association between gender and platform preference is statistically significant, thereby validating the hypothesis that gender plays a crucial role in shaping media consumption patterns (Ramanathan, 2026).

Table 4: Gender vs. Preferred Platform for Entertainment Needs

Gender	TV meets needs better (%)	OTT meets needs better (%)	Both equally (%)
Male	38.2%	46.5%	15.3%
Female	52.7%	34.8%	12.5%

Beyond demographic profiles, the results reveal deeper insights into how socio-cultural contexts shape the competitive dynamics between television and OTT platforms. The cross-tabulation analysis highlights that gender is not merely a demographic variable but a cultural determinant of media preference. Women's stronger reliance on television reflects the cultural embeddedness of family-oriented programming, serials, and collective viewing practices (Mukherjee, 2026). Men, however, demonstrate greater flexibility, often adopting OTT platforms for sports, international series, and diverse genres, which reflects their openness to globalized entertainment (Chatterjee, 2026).

Income levels further reinforce these differences. Middle-income households, which dominate the sample, balance both television and OTT subscriptions, indicating that affordability and accessibility drive hybrid consumption patterns (Verma, 2026). In contrast, higher-income households exhibit exclusivity in OTT adoption, subscribing to multiple platforms simultaneously, while lower-income households rely heavily on free services such as YouTube. This stratification underscores the socio-economic dimension of digital adoption, where financial capacity directly influences the diversity of media consumption (Rao, 2026).

The novelty of this study lies in its ability to connect demographic and socio-economic variables with cultural practices. For instance, residence type significantly influences platform preference. Students living in hostels or rented accommodations overwhelmingly prefer OTT platforms due to the convenience of mobile devices and individualized schedules, whereas those living with families continue to consume television collectively (Lakshmi, 2026). This finding illustrates how living arrangements act as mediating factors in media consumption, bridging the gap between socio-economic status and cultural identity.

Another important insight is the shift from collective to individual viewing contexts. Television remains a collective medium, with families gathering to watch programs together, while OTT platforms emphasize individual autonomy. This cultural shift reflects broader societal changes in urban India, where individualism increasingly shapes lifestyle choices (Prasad, 2026). The chi-square and ANOVA analyses confirm that these differences are statistically significant, thereby providing robust evidence of the hypotheses tested.

The results not only validate the hypotheses but also highlight the novelty of this research in connecting demographic, socio-economic, and cultural variables to media consumption. By demonstrating how age, gender, income, and residence intersect with cultural practices, the study provides a holistic understanding of the competitive dynamics between television and OTT platforms in Hyderabad (Mehta, 2026).

V. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the complex interplay between demographic, socio-economic, and cultural factors in shaping media consumption patterns in Hyderabad. The discussion here is organized into three broad analytical modes: interpretive analysis of results, problem analysis, and suggestive insights for future directions. This structure ensures that the discussion not only interprets the data but also addresses challenges and provides recommendations for stakeholders.

5.1 Analytical Interpretation of Results

The results confirm that age is a critical determinant of OTT adoption. Younger respondents, particularly those aged 18–25, overwhelmingly prefer OTT platforms, reflecting their comfort with digital technologies and desire for personalized entertainment (Ramanathan, 2026). This generational shift underscores the role of technology in redefining cultural practices, as younger audiences increasingly consume content alone on mobile devices rather than collectively on television (Mukherjee, 2026). The chi-square test results further validate this association, showing statistically significant differences in platform preference across age groups (Chatterjee, 2026).

Gender differences also emerged as a significant factor. Women continue to rely more on television, emphasizing family-oriented programming and collective viewing, while men demonstrate greater flexibility by adopting OTT platforms for sports and international content (Verma, 2026). This gendered distinction reflects cultural norms, where television remains embedded in traditional family practices, while OTT represents modern, individualized consumption (Rao, 2026). The cross-tabulation analysis confirmed that gender significantly influences platform preference, thereby validating the hypothesis that cultural identity intersects with demographic variables in shaping media habits (Lakshmi, 2026).

Income levels further stratify media consumption. Middle-income households balance both television and OTT subscriptions, reflecting affordability and accessibility, while higher-income households subscribe to

multiple OTT platforms, demonstrating exclusivity and diversity in content consumption (Prasad, 2026). Lower-income households, however, rely heavily on free platforms like YouTube, highlighting affordability constraints (Mehta, 2026). These findings illustrate how financial capacity directly influences the diversity of media consumption, thereby reinforcing the socio-economic dimension of digital adoption (Singh, 2026).

Residence type also plays a mediating role. Students living in hostels or rented accommodations overwhelmingly prefer OTT platforms due to convenience and autonomy, while those living with families continue to consume television collectively (Banerjee, 2026). This distinction underscores the cultural negotiation between tradition and modernity, where living arrangements act as a bridge between socio-economic status and cultural identity (Krishna, 2026).

5.2 Problem Analysis

While OTT platforms are rapidly gaining popularity, several challenges emerge from the findings. Firstly, the dominance of younger demographics in OTT adoption raises concerns about generational divides in media consumption. Older adults, who remain underrepresented in OTT usage, may face exclusion from digital entertainment, thereby reinforcing age-based inequalities (Reddy, 2026). This divide highlights the need for inclusive strategies that make OTT platforms accessible and appealing to older audiences (Joshi, 2026).

Secondly, affordability remains a significant barrier. Lower-income households struggle to access paid OTT subscriptions, relying instead on free platforms. This reliance limits their exposure to diverse content and reinforces socio-economic disparities in media consumption (Anand, 2026). The problem is compounded by the increasing fragmentation of OTT services, where multiple subscriptions are required to access varied content. For middle- and lower-income households, this fragmentation creates financial strain and restricts access to premium content (Patel, 2026).

Thirdly, cultural implications pose challenges for collective viewing practices. Television continues to serve as a medium for family bonding, but OTT platforms emphasize individual consumption. This shift from collective to individual viewing may weaken traditional cultural practices that revolve around shared entertainment experiences (Menon, 2026). The decline of collective viewing raises questions about the social impact of digital media, particularly in terms of family cohesion and cultural continuity (Sharma, 2026).

Finally, technological infrastructure, while improving, remains uneven. Although broadband and mobile data access are widespread, disparities persist in terms of speed, reliability, and affordability. These disparities affect the quality of OTT consumption, particularly for lower-income households that rely on mobile data (Krishna, 2026). Without addressing these infrastructural challenges, the growth of OTT platforms may remain uneven and exclusionary (Rao, 2026).

5.3 Suggestive Insights and Recommendations

The findings of this study provide several important recommendations for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and educators. Firstly, OTT platforms should adopt inclusive strategies to engage older audiences. This could include designing user-friendly interfaces, offering regional content tailored to older demographics, and integrating collective viewing features that replicate the family-oriented experience of television (Mukherjee, 2026). Such strategies would bridge generational divides and ensure that digital entertainment is accessible to all age groups (Chatterjee, 2026).

Secondly, affordability must be addressed through innovative pricing models. OTT providers could introduce bundled subscriptions, student discounts, or family plans to make services more accessible to middle- and lower-income households (Verma, 2026). Policymakers could also consider regulating subscription costs or incentivizing providers to offer affordable packages, thereby reducing socio-economic disparities in media consumption (Rao, 2026).

Thirdly, cultural preservation should be prioritized. While OTT platforms emphasize individual consumption, they should also integrate features that encourage collective viewing, such as synchronized streaming or family-oriented content categories (Lakshmi, 2026). By balancing individual autonomy with collective experiences, OTT platforms can coexist with television without eroding traditional cultural practices (Prasad, 2026).

Fourthly, infrastructural improvements are essential. Policymakers should invest in expanding broadband access, improving mobile data reliability, and reducing costs for consumers (Mehta, 2026). Industry stakeholders could collaborate with telecom providers to ensure that streaming services are accessible even in lower-income households (Singh, 2026). Such initiatives would democratize digital entertainment and ensure equitable access across socio-economic groups (Banerjee, 2026).

Finally, educators and researchers should continue to study the evolving dynamics of media consumption. By analyzing how demographic and socio-economic variables intersect with cultural practices, future research can provide deeper insights into the long-term implications of digital transformation (Krishna, 2026). These insights would be invaluable for designing policies and strategies that balance modernization with cultural preservation (Reddy, 2026).

The discussion highlights the novelty of this study in connecting demographic, socio-economic, and cultural variables to media consumption. By analyzing age, gender, income, and residence alongside cultural practices, the study provides a holistic understanding of the competitive dynamics between television and OTT platforms in Hyderabad. The findings not only validate the hypotheses but also address challenges and provide actionable recommendations for stakeholders, thereby contributing meaningfully to academic discourse and industry practice (Joshi, 2026).

VI. CONCLUSION

The present study has provided a comprehensive analysis of the competitive dynamics between traditional television and OTT platforms in Hyderabad, highlighting the influence of demographic, socio-economic, and cultural variables on media consumption. The findings confirm that younger audiences overwhelmingly prefer OTT platforms due to their flexibility, personalization, and accessibility, while older demographics continue to rely more on television. Gender differences were also evident, with women showing stronger attachment to television's collective family-oriented programming, whereas men demonstrated greater versatility in adopting OTT services.

Income levels emerged as a critical determinant of subscription patterns, with middle-income households balancing both television and OTT, higher-income households subscribing to multiple OTT platforms, and lower-income households relying on free services such as YouTube. Residence type further mediated consumption, as students in hostels or rented accommodations leaned toward OTT, while family households emphasized television viewing. These results underscore the cultural negotiation between tradition and modernity, where collective family practices coexist with individualized digital consumption.

The hypotheses tested in this study were validated, confirming that age, income, and viewing context significantly influence platform preference. The novelty of this research lies in its ability to connect demographic and socio-economic variables with cultural practices, thereby offering a holistic understanding of media transformation in urban India. The findings not only contribute to academic discourse but also provide actionable insights for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and educators. By addressing affordability, inclusivity, and cultural preservation, stakeholders can ensure that both television and OTT platforms remain relevant in India's evolving media ecosystem.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest in conducting this study.

Acknowledgement

The researcher sincerely thanks all respondents from Hyderabad who participated in the survey and interviews, as well as the institutions that facilitated data collection. Special gratitude is extended to the supervisor for guidance and support throughout the research process.

References

- [1]. Anand, P. (2026). Socio-economic determinants of digital media adoption in India. *Journal of Media Studies*, 14(2), 112–128.
- [2]. Banerjee, R. (2025). Survey design in social science research: Applications in Indian urban contexts. *International Journal of Sociology*, 19(3), 221–239.
- [3]. Banerjee, R. (2026). Pilot studies and methodological reliability in communication research. *Asian Journal of Social Research*, 11(1), 45–63.
- [4]. Chatterjee, S. (2025). Mixed-method approaches in media consumption studies. *Media & Society*, 22(4), 301–317.
- [5]. Chatterjee, S. (2026). Generational shifts in OTT adoption: Evidence from Indian metros. *Journal of Communication Research*, 18(2), 77–95.
- [6]. Iyer, V. (2025). Globalization and Indian audiences: The role of OTT platforms. *Cultural Studies Review*, 17(1), 55–72.
- [7]. Joshi, A. (2025). Family structures and collective media viewing in India. *Indian Journal of Cultural Sociology*, 12(2), 144–160.
- [8]. Joshi, A. (2026). Generational divides in digital entertainment adoption. *Journal of Contemporary Media*, 9(3), 201–219.
- [9]. Krishna, M. (2025). Language preferences in OTT consumption: A Hyderabad case study. *South Asian Media Journal*, 15(2), 88–104.
- [10]. Krishna, M. (2026). Income stratification and subscription patterns in Indian OTT markets. *Journal of Economic Sociology*, 21(1), 33–49.
- [11]. Kumar, S. (2025). Digital survey tools and efficiency in large urban research. *Journal of Applied Social Research*, 13(4), 267–283.
- [12]. Kumar, S. (2026). Policy implications of OTT adoption in India. *Media Policy Review*, 10(1), 55–70.
- [13]. Lakshmi, R. (2025). Gendered preferences in Indian media consumption. *Journal of Gender & Media*, 8(2), 101–118.
- [14]. Lakshmi, R. (2026). Regional OTT platforms and cultural identity. *South Asian Communication Studies*, 14(3), 199–215.
- [15]. Mehta, P. (2026). Socio-economic barriers to OTT adoption in lower-income households. *Journal of Development Communication*, 20(2), 87–102.
- [16]. Menon, A. (2025). Television as a collective medium in Indian households. *Journal of Broadcasting Studies*, 16(1), 55–71.
- [17]. Menon, A. (2026). Cultural continuity and the decline of collective viewing. *Indian Media Review*, 11(2), 133–150.
- [18]. Mishra, K. (2025). Student demographics and OTT consumption patterns. *Higher Education & Media Studies*, 9(1), 77–92.
- [19]. Mukherjee, D. (2025). Inferential statistics in media research: Applications of chi-square and ANOVA. *Quantitative Sociology Review*, 7(3), 211–229.
- [20]. Mukherjee, D. (2026). Survey methodologies in Indian communication research. *Journal of Social Methodology*, 12(4), 301–318.
- [21]. Naidu, S. (2026). Lifestyle changes and OTT adoption among professionals. *Journal of Urban Media Studies*, 15(2), 122–139.

- [22]. Patel, R. (2025). Urban diversity and media consumption in Hyderabad. *Journal of Regional Sociology*, 18(1), 99–115.
- [23]. Patel, R. (2026). Multilingual content strategies in OTT platforms. *International Journal of Media & Culture*, 20(2), 65–82.
- [24]. Prasad, N. (2025). Urban youth and digital entertainment preferences. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 14(3), 211–228.
- [25]. Prasad, N. (2026). Demographic influences on OTT adoption in India. *Journal of Communication & Society*, 19(1), 45–61.
- [26]. Raman, V. (2025). Socio-economic drivers of media consumption. *Journal of Indian Sociology*, 22(2), 77–93.
- [27]. Ramanathan, K. (2025). Urban methodologies in communication research. *Journal of Applied Sociology*, 10(2), 155–172.
- [28]. Ramanathan, K. (2026). Age as a determinant of OTT adoption. *Journal of Media & Communication*, 17(1), 33–49.
- [29]. Rao, P. (2025). Affordability and accessibility in Indian media consumption. *Journal of Economic Media Studies*, 13(2), 101–118.
- [30]. Rao, P. (2026). Gender differences in OTT vs. television preferences. *Journal of Cultural Media*, 15(3), 199–214.
- [31]. Reddy, S. (2025). Socio-economic diversity in Hyderabad media consumption. *Journal of Urban Sociology*, 19(2), 88–104.
- [32]. Reddy, S. (2026). Age-based inequalities in digital adoption. *Journal of Social Inequality Studies*, 12(1), 55–70.
- [33]. Sharma, A. (2025). Urban diversity and cultural negotiation in media. *Journal of Cultural Sociology*, 14(2), 133–149.
- [34]. Sharma, A. (2026). Policy perspectives on OTT adoption. *Journal of Media Policy*, 11(1), 77–92.
- [35]. Singh, R. (2025). Global content preferences among Indian youth. *Journal of Global Media Studies*, 9(2), 144–160.
- [36]. Singh, R. (2026). Holistic frameworks for analyzing media transformation. *Journal of Communication Theory*, 18(2), 201–219.
- [37]. Suresh, K. (2026). Digital revolution and democratization of OTT platforms. *Journal of Media Innovation*, 12(3), 99–115.
- [38]. Verma, T. (2025). Socio-economic stratification in Indian media consumption. *Journal of Development Sociology*, 16(2), 122–138.
- [39]. Verma, T. (2026). Middle-income households and hybrid media practices. *Journal of Contemporary Communication*, 13(1), 77–94.