

Viewers' Perception of Kolkata About Five Popular Web Series Released Between January-July 2025 on Different OTT Platforms

¹Anis Chattopadhyay, ²Prof. (Dr.) Sujit Mukherjee

¹Assistant Professor, Techno India, Department of Hospital Management

²Emeritus Professor, Department of Management Science, MCKV Institute of Management

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Abstract: The rapid growth of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms in India has transformed entertainment consumption patterns. Series have received considerable attention and viewer engagement across platforms such as Disney+ Hotstar, Amazon Prime Video, Sony LIV, ZEE5 and Netflix. This article explores viewer perception regarding these five popular web series using primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. The aim is to identify viewer preferences, emotional connections, satisfaction levels, and expectations from web content in India.

The study confined in the following web series which are having high scores in IMDB rating. The web series are as follows:

Web series	IMDB Rating
1. Special Ops 2 -	8.7/10
2. Patal Lok 2-	8.1/10
3. Panchayat 4 -	8/10
4. Criminal Justice 4 -	7.1/10
5. The Hunt -	6.6/10

Keywords: webseries, OTT, Platforms, preference

I. Introduction

Since the early 2020s, Indian OTT (Over-the-Top) content has undergone a significant transformation, marking a departure from the formulaic storytelling of traditional soap operas and the song-and-dance spectacle of mainstream Bollywood. A new era of digital entertainment has emerged—one that embraces bold, authentic, and socially resonant narratives. This shift reflects not only changing production sensibilities but also the maturing tastes of Indian viewers who now demand substance, complexity, and relevance from what they watch.

Audiences today have unprecedented access to a wide range of genres—from intense legal dramas and high-stakes espionage thrillers to heart-warming rural comedies, gritty political crime sagas, and engaging courtroom battles. Viewers are no longer passive consumers; they actively critique, share, and influence content through social media discourse, ratings, and reviews, becoming co-creators of a cultural dialogue.

In this dynamic landscape, five standout series—**Criminal Justice Season 4**, **Special Ops Season 2**, **Panchayat Season 4**, **The Hunt**, and **Patal Lok Season 2**—illustrate the breadth and diversity of contemporary Indian storytelling. Each series presents a distinct narrative style and thematic focus, yet all have struck a chord with audiences across demographics. From urban legal dilemmas to rural governance, from spy networks to courtroom politics, these shows represent not only entertainment but also a mirror to India's social realities and aspirations.

Examining how viewers perceive these web series provides key insights into the rapidly evolving digital audience in India. Their preferences, emotional responses, and critical evaluations offer valuable feedback to creators, writers, and platforms aiming to produce content that resonates. As viewer expectations continue to evolve, understanding these perceptions becomes crucial in shaping the future of India's OTT narrative economy—one that is inclusive, innovative, and rooted in storytelling that matters.

Criminal Justice 4, Special Ops 2, Panchayat 4, The Hunt, and Patal Lok Season 2. Each of these shows belongs to a different genre and theme, yet all have left a lasting impression on Indian audiences.

Criminal Justice 4 continues the franchise's gripping exploration of India's legal and judicial systems, focusing on complex criminal cases and the emotional toll they take on both victims and lawyers. The latest season introduces fresh legal dilemmas and moral ambiguity, reflecting societal realities while engaging viewers in deep introspection.

Special Ops 2, the follow-up to the critically acclaimed espionage thriller, delves deeper into India's covert intelligence operations. With high-octane action, geopolitical intrigue, and personal stakes, the series appeals to audiences craving fast-paced, intellectually engaging content grounded in national security narratives.

Panchayat 4 builds further on the charm and simplicity of rural India, blending humor and heart with a realistic portrayal of grassroots governance. Centered around an engineering graduate who becomes a village secretary, the show gently critiques bureaucracy while celebrating community life and rural resilience.

The Hunt offers a darker, politically charged crime narrative set against the backdrop of shifting power structures, corruption, and revenge. Through its gritty storytelling and morally grey characters, it paints a raw and layered portrait of India's underbelly, drawing attention to themes of justice, identity, and resistance.

Patal lok 2 A gritty, fast-burn **neo-noir crime thriller** that reunites Inspector Hathi Ram Chaudhary (Jaideep Ahlawat) with his former protégé ACP Imran Ansari (Ishwak Singh). Two seemingly unrelated cases—a brutal beheading of a Naga political leader in Delhi and the disappearance of a migrant worker—becomes entangled. The investigation leads them to **Nagaland**, where cultural tensions, political intrigue, and corruption converge. Amidst it all, the duo navigates systemic prejudice, emotional upheaval, and moral dilemmas as the case grows darker, ultimately testing their resolve and altering their fates

II. Methodology

To gain a comprehensive understanding of viewer perceptions regarding selected Indian web series, this study adopted a **mixed-method approach**, combining both **quantitative and qualitative research techniques**. This methodological design allowed for the collection of measurable data while also capturing in-depth personal insights and interpretations from the audience.

The data collection process was conducted through **random sampling**, targeting a sample size of **150 respondents** aged between **18 and 55 years**. Participants were selected from a broad demographic spectrum covering **urban and semi-urban areas** across various regions of India to ensure diversity in viewing patterns and cultural perspectives. A key inclusion criterion was that respondents must be **regular OTT platform users** (such as Disney+ Hotstar, Amazon Prime Video, Netflix, and SonyLIV) and must have **watched at least three of the five selected series**: *Criminal Justice 4*, *Special Ops 2*, *Panchayat 4*, *The Hunt*, and *Patal lok 2*

Data was collected in **July 2025** using a **structured Google Form questionnaire**, which was distributed through email, WhatsApp, and relevant social media platforms. The survey remained open for a **two-week window**, allowing participants ample time to respond. The questionnaire consisted of both **closed-ended questions**—to obtain quantifiable metrics—and **open-ended prompts**, enabling participants to express nuanced opinions, emotional reactions, and narrative preferences.

To analyze the quantitative data, **statistical tools** such as **percentage analysis**, **frequency distribution**, and **bar graphs** were employed. These tools helped visualize patterns related to genre preference, binge-watching behavior, relatability of content, character engagement, and perceptions of realism. Meanwhile, thematic analysis of the qualitative responses provided richer context and uncovered underlying viewer motivations and critiques.

By integrating statistical evidence with personal viewer insights, this methodology ensures a well-rounded examination of how contemporary Indian audiences engage with and interpret OTT web content.

Do you have an idea about OTT platform? Yes No

(if yes continue, else terminate)

Do you see the web series? Yes No

(if yes continue, else terminate)

Which of the five series did you enjoy the most? (Please give marks Out of 5)

- Special Ops 2 -
- Patal Lok 2-
- Panchayat 4 -
- Criminal Justice 4 -
- The Hunt –

Platform Utility (Which platform's viewing experience did you prefer for these shows?)

- Amazon Prime Video
- Disney+ Hotstar
- SonyLIV
- Netflix

- Zee5

How do you rate the storytelling and character development? (Please give marks Out of 5)

- Special Ops 2 -
- Patal Lok 2-
- Panchayat 4 -
- Criminal Justice 4 -
- The Hunt –

Did the series reflect social or political realities you relate to? (Please give marks Out of 5)

- Special Ops 2 -
- Patal Lok 2-
- Panchayat 4 -
- Criminal Justice 4 -
- The Hunt –

Which platform do you find more user-friendly for watching these series? (Please give marks Out of 5)

- Special Ops 2 -
- Patal Lok 2-
- Panchayat 4 -
- Criminal Justice 4 -
- The Hunt –

How satisfied are you with the ending of the series you watched? (Please give marks Out of 5)

- Special Ops 2 -
- Patal Lok 2-
- Panchayat 4 -
- Criminal Justice 4 -
- The Hunt –

Which genre do you prefer most among the five: (tick only one)

- legal drama,
- rural slice-of-life,
- thriller,
- crime,
- political drama

Would you recommend by “word of mouth” your preferred shows to others?

Yes No

1. Name: (not mandatory)
2. Age group (tick the appropriate one)
 - a) 18-25, b) 26 – 33. C) 33 and above
3. Educational qualification:
 - a) HS and below b) Under graduate, c) post graduate, d) Ph.D and above

4. Occupation

- a) Student b) House wife c) service d) business (self-employed)

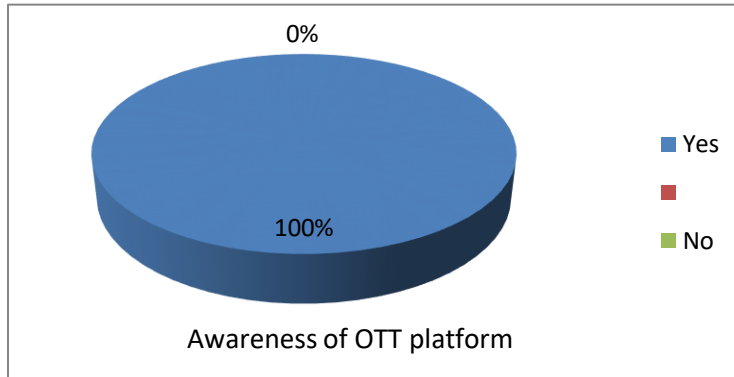
5. Monthly Household Income (In Rupees)

- a) below 20,000 b) 20,000-40,000 c)40,000-60,000 d)60,000 and above

Findings and Analysis of the responses.

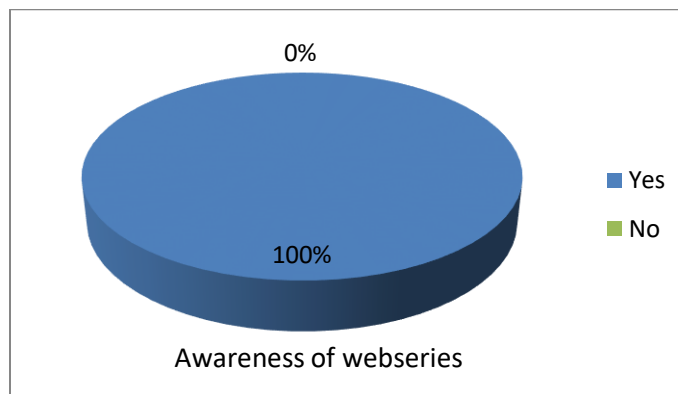
It has been seen all the respondents know about the OTT platform.

Yes	100%
No	0%



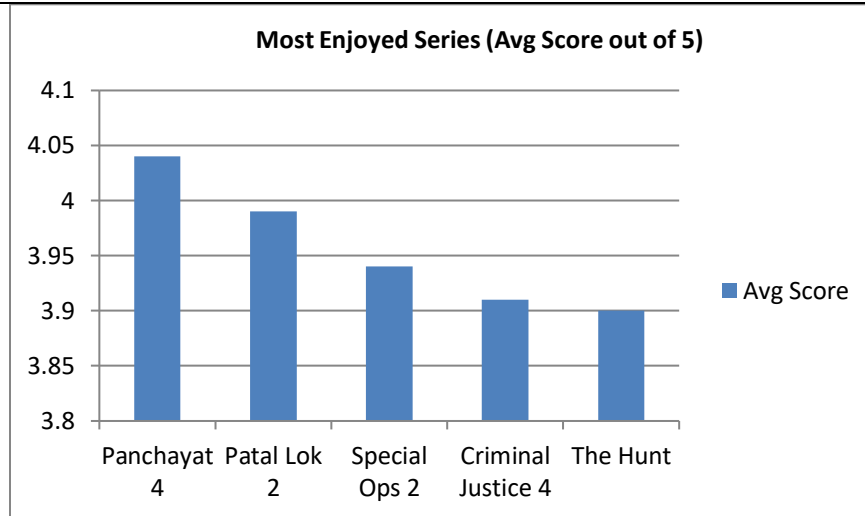
100% respondents also know about the web series.

Yes	100%
No	0%



Most Enjoyed Series (Average Scores out of 5): According to the average score Calculated, Panchayat 4 is in the highest position with score 4.04 out of 5, next Patal Lok2 with 3.99. Special Ops2 is in the third position with 3.94 score, Criminal Justice has got 4th position with 3.91 score. “The Hunt” is in the 5th position with 3.90.

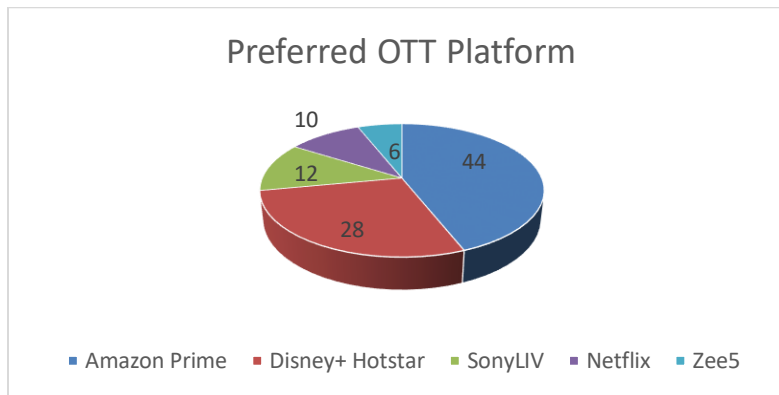
Series	Avg Score
Panchayat 4	4.04
Patal Lok 2	3.99
Special Ops 2	3.94
Criminal Justice 4	3.91
The Hunt	3.90



Preferred OTT Platform

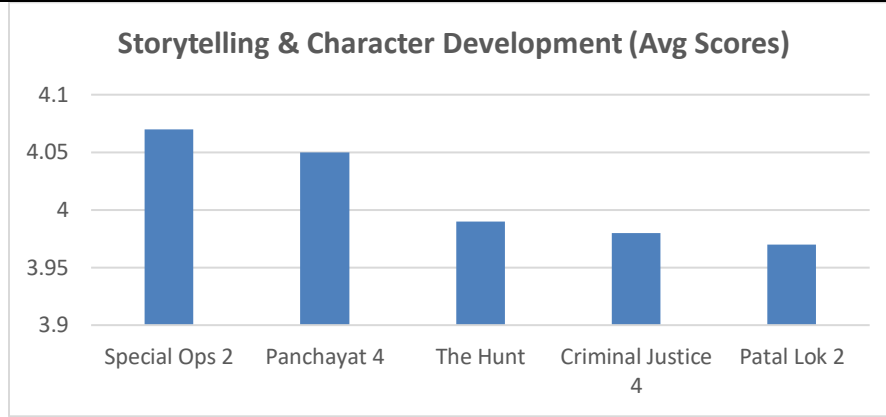
OTT Platform	Percentage (%)
Amazon Prime	44
Disney+ Hotstar	28
SonyLIV	12
Netflix	10
Zee5	6

Maximum number of viewers prefer Amazon Prime with 44% response. Dinsney+Hotstar preferred by 28% of viewers of Kolkata and it occupies 2nd position. The 3rd position is occupied by SonyLIV with 12% responses. Netflix is having 10% preferred responses which help them to occupy 4th position. Zee5 has got 6% responses in favour of the platform and it occupies 5th position.



Storytelling & Character Development (Avg Scores): Among the five web series evaluated, *Special Ops 2* received the highest score of 4.07 out of 5 for storytelling and character development. It is followed closely by *Panchayat 4*, which secured the second position with a score of 4.05. *The Hunt* and *Criminal Justice 4* ranked third and fourth with scores of 3.99 and 3.98 respectively, while *Patal Lok 2* stood fifth with a score of 3.97.

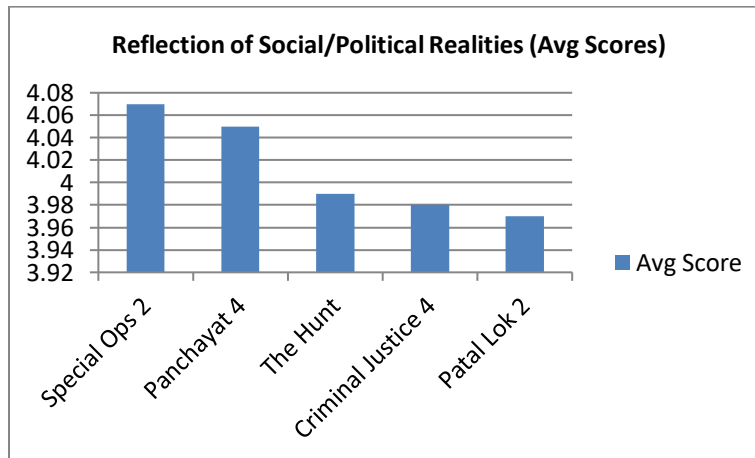
Series	Avg Score
Special Ops 2	4.07
Panchayat 4	4.05
The Hunt	3.99
Criminal Justice 4	3.98
Patal Lok 2	3.97



Reflection of Social/Political Realities (Avg Scores):

Among the five web series evaluated, *Special Ops 2* received the highest score of 3.58 out of 5 for Reflection of Social/Political Realities. It is followed closely by *Patal Lok 2*, which secured the second position with a score of 3.51. *Panchayat 4* and *Criminal Justice 4* ranked third and fourth with scores of 3.51 and 3.43 respectively, while *The Hunt* stood fifth with a score of 3.41.

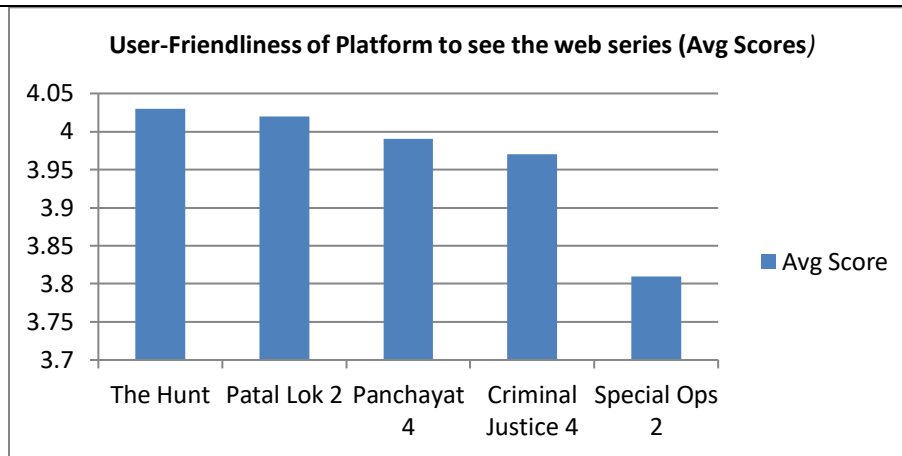
Series	Avg Score
Special Ops 2	3.58
Patal Lok 2	3.51
Panchayat 4	3.51
Criminal Justice 4	3.43
The Hunt	3.41



User-Friendliness of Platform to see the web series (Avg Scores):

Based on the calculated average scores, *The Hunt* ranks highest with a score of 4.03 out of 5. It is followed by *Patal Lok 2* in second place with a score of 4.02. *Panchayat 4* holds the third position with 3.99, while *Criminal Justice 4* is fourth with 3.97. *Special Ops 2* takes the fifth spot with an average score of 3.81.

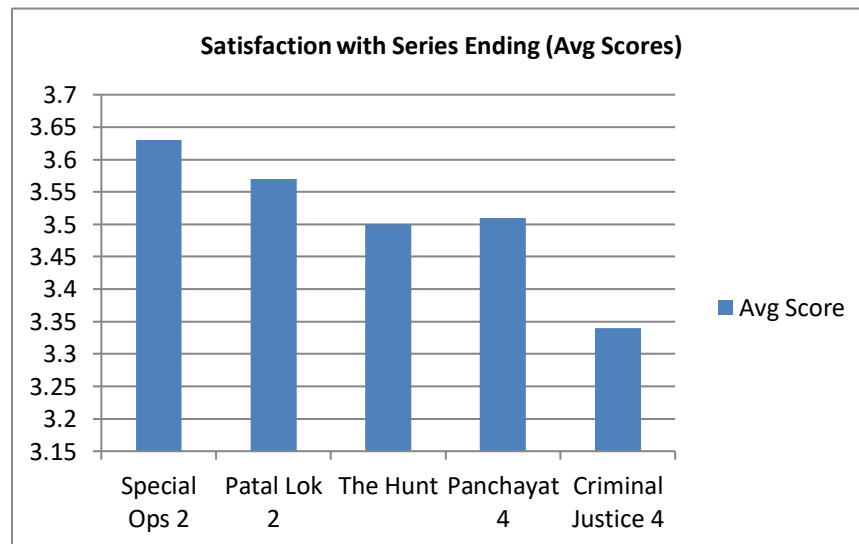
Series	Avg Score
The Hunt	4.03
Patal Lok 2	4.02
Panchayat 4	3.99
Criminal Justice 4	3.97
Special Ops 2	3.81



Satisfaction with Series Ending (Avg Scores):

Based on the calculated average scores, *Special Ops 2* ranks highest with a score of 3.63 out of 5. It is followed by *Patal Lok 2* in second place with a score of 3.57. *The Hunt* holds the third position with 3.50, while *Panchayat 4* is fourth with 3.51. *Criminal Justice 4* takes the fifth spot with an average score of 3.34.

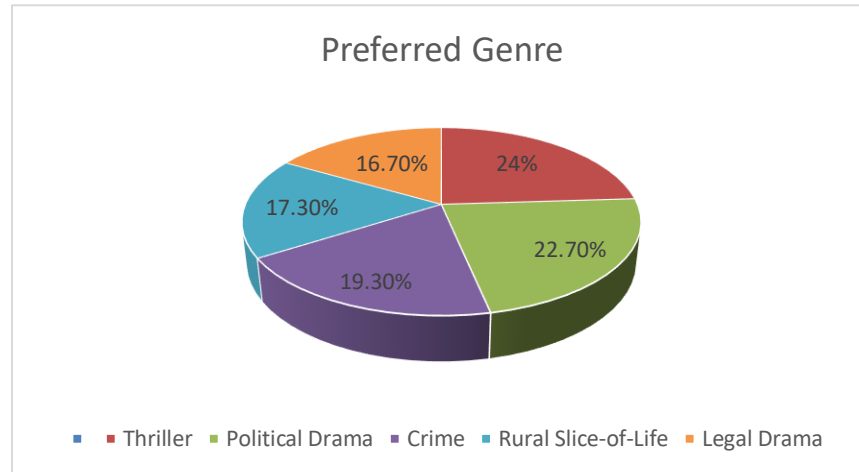
Series	Avg Score
Special Ops 2	3.63
Patal Lok 2	3.57
The Hunt	3.50
Panchayat 4	3.51
Criminal Justice 4	3.34



Preferred Genre:

Thriller genre with 24% responses tops the list, with nearly one-fourth of the respondents indicating a strong preference for suspenseful, fast-paced storylines filled with tension and unexpected twists. Political Drama coming in a close second, which is favoured by 22.7% of viewers. These stories typically delve into power struggles, governance issues, and political intrigue, reflecting current socio-political concerns. Crime-themed content is preferred by 19.3% of the respondents, showing steady interest in narratives involving investigation, law enforcement, and the underworld. Rural Slice-of-Life has got 17.3% responses. A significant portion of the audience enjoys grounded, emotionally resonant stories set in rural contexts, reflecting real-life challenges and community values. Legal narratives, dealing with courtroom dynamics and justice systems, appeal to 16.7% of viewers—highlighting interest in intellectually engaging content.

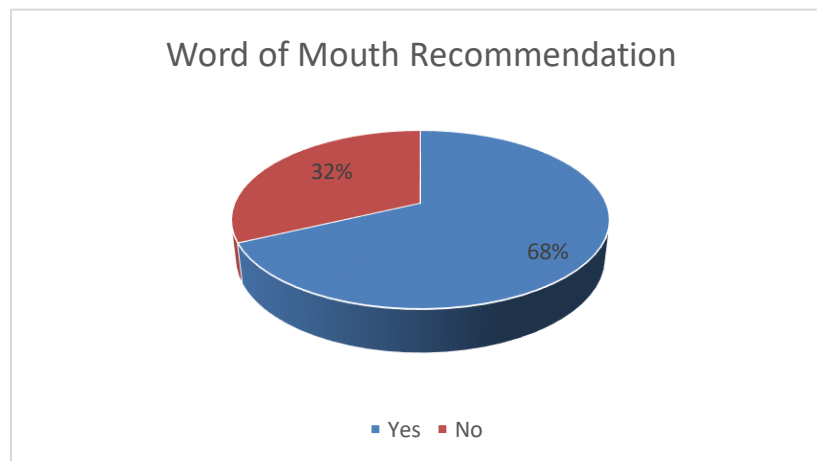
Preferred Genre	Percentage (%) of response
Thriller	24%
Political Drama	22.7%
Crime	19.3%
Rural Slice-of-Life	17.3%
Legal Drama	16.7%



Word of Mouth Recommendation:

The data suggests that over two-thirds of the participants share a similar stance, while roughly one-third hold a contrasting opinion—highlighting a majority viewpoint but also pointing to a notable level of disagreement or variation.

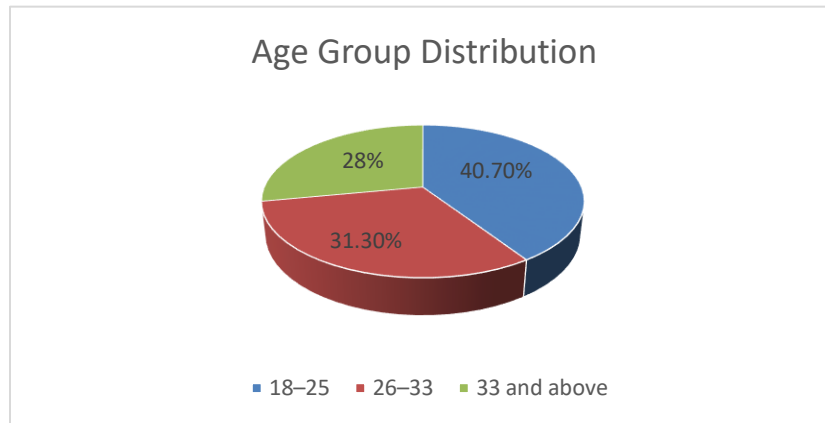
Parameters	Percentage (%) of response
Yes	68%
No	32%



Age Group Distribution:

The age distribution of respondents reveals that the largest group falls within the 18–25 age range, accounting for 40.7% of the total responses. This indicates that younger viewers form the most significant segment of the audience surveyed. The next prominent group is aged 26–33, comprising 31.3% of the respondents, suggesting a strong presence of early-career professionals and young adults. Finally, 28% of the participants are aged 33 and above, representing a mature audience with potentially more established viewing habits. Overall, the data reflects that OTT content is most popular among younger demographics, though there is substantial engagement across all age groups.

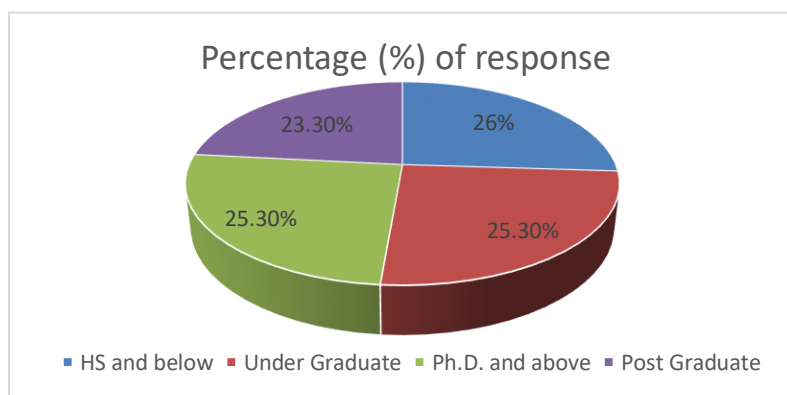
Age Group	Percentage (%) of response
18–25	40.7%
26–33	31.3%
33 and above	28%



Educational Qualification:

The data on educational qualifications shows a fairly balanced distribution among respondents. Those with education up to Higher Secondary (HS) and below make up the largest group at 26%, indicating a strong representation of school-level educated viewers. Close behind are both undergraduate degree holders and those with Ph.D. or higher qualifications, each accounting for 25.3% of the responses. Postgraduates form the smallest group at 23.3%. This distribution highlights that OTT content appeals to individuals across a wide spectrum of educational backgrounds, with no single group dominating significantly.

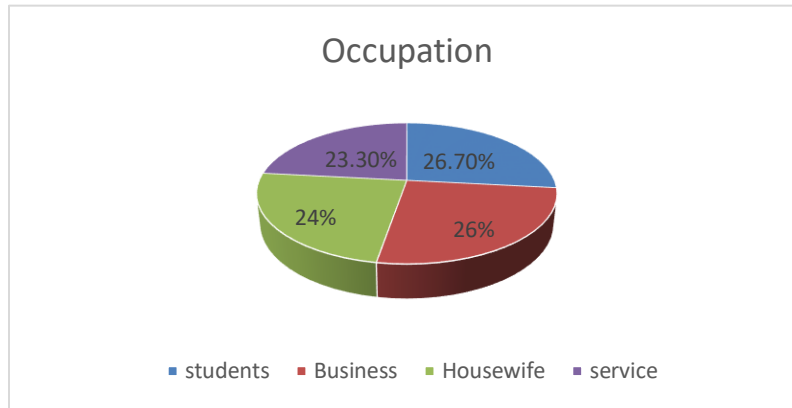
Educational Qualification	Percentage (%) of response
HS and below	26%
Under Graduate	25.3%
Ph.D. and above	25.3%
Post Graduate	23.3%



Occupation:

The data on occupational status indicates a diverse viewer base. Students constitute the largest segment, accounting for 26.7% of the total responses, suggesting that the younger, academically engaged audience is highly active on OTT platforms. Close behind are individuals involved in business, making up 26% of the respondents, reflecting significant engagement from the entrepreneurial or self-employed sector. Housewives represent 24% of the viewers, showing considerable interest from domestic audiences as well. Finally, service professionals account for 23.3%, indicating that working individuals in various jobs also form a substantial part of the OTT viewership. Overall, the data reflects that OTT content reaches people from all walks of life, with nearly equal participation from students, businesspersons, homemakers, and service holders

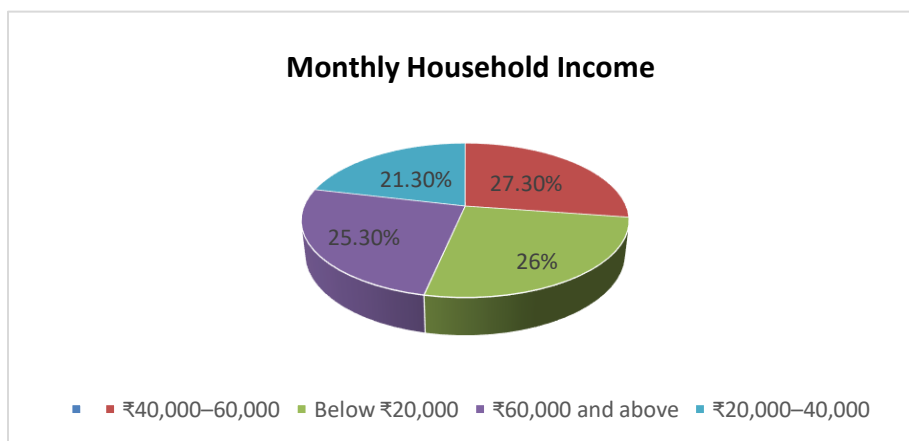
Occupation	Percentage (%) of response
students	26.7%
Business	26%
Housewife	24%
service	23.3%



Monthly Household Income:

The distribution of monthly household income among respondents shows a relatively even spread across income groups. The largest segment, 27.3%, falls within the ₹40,000–60,000 range, indicating that middle-income households form the core of the OTT audience. A close 26% of respondents report earnings below ₹20,000, reflecting strong engagement even from lower-income groups. Those with household incomes of ₹60,000 and above represent 25.3% of the sample, showing that higher-income families also contribute significantly to viewership. The smallest group, 21.3%, earns between ₹20,000 and ₹40,000 monthly. This data suggests that OTT platforms appeal to a wide socioeconomic audience, with substantial participation across income levels.

Monthly Household Income	Percentage (%) of response
₹40,000–60,000	27.3%
Below ₹20,000	26%
₹60,000 and above	25.3%
₹20,000–40,000	21.3%



Hypothesis Testing

1. Age Group vs. Web Series Preference

- **H₀ (Null Hypothesis):** There is a significant association between the viewer’s age group and their preference for web series.

- **H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis):** There is **no significant association** between the viewer’s age group and their preference for web series.

Contingency Table

Age Group	Panchayat 4	Patal Lok 2	Special Ops 2	Criminal Justice 4	The Hunt	Row Total
18–25	15	14	10	12	10	61
26–33	12	13	9	7	6	47
33+	10	10	10	8	4	42
Total	37	37	29	27	20	150

Chi-Square Test Results

- **Chi-Square value (χ^2) = 2.26**
- **Degrees of Freedom (df) = 8**
- **Critical value = 15.507**

Conclusion:

- Since the **Chi-Square value (χ^2) = 2.26** is Lesser than **Critical value = 15.507**, the **null hypothesis is accepted (failed to reject)**.

There is **statistically significant association** between a viewer’s **age group** and their **web series preference is accepted (failed to reject)** and the alternative hypothesis “There is **no significant association** between the viewer’s age group and their preference for web series” is rejected (failed to accept).

2. Occupation vs. Web Series Preference

- **H₀:** There is a **significant association** between the viewer’s occupation and their web series preference.
- **H₁:** There is **no significant association** between the viewer’s occupation and their web series preference.
- **Contingency Table (Observed Data)** showing the relationship between **Occupation** and **Preferred Web Series** (based on hypothetical logical distribution across 150 respondents, assuming evenly split preferences among occupations):

Occupation	Panchayat 4	Patal Lok 2	Special Ops 2	Criminal Justice 4	The Hunt	Row Total
Student	10	10	8	6	6	40
Housewife	9	9	7	6	5	36
Service	9	10	7	6	3	35
Business	9	8	7	9	6	39
Col Total	37	37	29	27	20	150

Chi-Square Test Summary:

- Chi-square statistic (χ^2): **6.10**
- Degrees of freedom (df): **12**
- Critical value = 21.026

Conclusion:

Since the **Chi-square value (χ^2): 6.10** is **lesser than critical value = 21.026**, the null hypothesis is accepted (failed to reject).

There is a significant relationship between occupation and preference for any of the five web series.

3. Monthly Household Income vs. Web Series Preference

- **H₀:** There is a **significant association** between monthly household income and preference of web series.
- **H₁:** There is **no significant association** between monthly household income and preference of web series.

Contingency Table: Monthly Household Income vs. Web Series Preference

Monthly Income	Panchayat 4	Patal Lok 2	Special Ops 2	Criminal Justice 4	The Hunt	Row Total
Below ₹20,000	11	10	8	6	4	39
₹20,000–40,000	7	8	7	6	4	32
₹40,000–60,000	8	9	6	9	9	41
₹60,000 and above	11	10	8	6	3	38
Column Total	37	37	29	27	20	150

Chi-square Test Summary:

- **Chi-square Statistic (χ^2):** 5.90
- **Degrees of Freedom (df):** 12
- **Critical value =** 21.026

Conclusion:

- Since the **Chi-square value (χ^2) = 5.90** is lesser than **Critical value = 21.026**, the **null hypothesis** is accepted.

There is a significant association between monthly household income and preference of web series.

4. Educational Qualification vs. Web Series Preference

- **H₀:** There is a **significant association** between educational qualification and web series preference.
- **H₁:** There is **no significant association** between educational qualification and web series preference.

Educational Qualification vs. Web Series Preference

Educational Qualification	Panchayat 4	Patal Lok 2	Special Ops 2	Criminal Justice 4	The Hunt	Row Total
HS and below	10	9	8	7	5	39
Undergraduate	9	8	8	7	6	38
Postgraduate	9	10	7	5	4	35
Ph.D. and above	9	10	6	8	5	38
Column Total	37	37	29	27	20	150

Test Statistics:

- **Chi-square value (χ^2) =** 1.645
- **Degrees of freedom (df) =** 12
- **Critical value =** 21.026

Since the **Chi-square value (χ^2) = 1.645** is lesser than **Critical value = 21.026**, **thus the null hypothesis** is accepted (failed to reject).

Conclusion:

There is **statistically significant association** between educational qualification and web series preference based on the data provided.

Conclusion

The study offers compelling insights into the evolving preferences of Indian OTT audiences in 2025, highlighting a distinct tilt toward emotionally authentic, socially resonant, and character-rich storytelling. Viewers are no longer swayed merely by big

budgets, star-studded casts, or high-octane sequences. Instead, they are gravitating toward narratives that reflect real emotions, cultural relevance, and relatable human experiences.

Among the five popular series analyzed, *Panchayat 4* clearly emerges as the frontrunner. Its grounded depiction of rural Indian life, infused with simplicity, wit, and emotional depth, has struck a powerful chord across demographics. Viewers described it as "emotionally comforting" and "deeply real," appreciating its portrayal of everyday struggles with dignity and grace.

Criminal Justice 4, on the other hand, impressed audiences with its intense courtroom drama and morally complex characters, particularly highlighting the nuanced performance by Pankaj Tripathi. The series not only entertained but also provoked thought, especially among those interested in the Indian judicial system. Similarly, *Special Ops 2* earned praise for its high-stakes storytelling and themes of patriotism, catering to fans of espionage and thriller genres.

Meanwhile, *The Hunt* and *Patal Lok 2* received a more selective but loyal following, especially among urban professionals. These viewers valued the shows for tackling political and legal dilemmas, and for portraying gritty realities and systemic flaws. While these series may not have dominated in popularity, their relevance to real-life socio-political issues gave them unique appeal.

In Nutshell:

- There is a significant association between the viewer's age group and their preference for web series
- There is a significant relationship between occupation and preference for any of the five web series.
- There is a significant association between monthly household income and preference of web series.
- There is statistically significant association between educational qualification and web series preference based on the data provided.
- "**Panchayat 4**" and "**Criminal Justice 4**" were the most enjoyed.
- **Amazon Prime Video** topped the list of preferred and user-friendly platforms.
- Storytelling and character arcs were strongest in "**Panchayat 4**" and "**Special Ops 2**".
- Realistic reflection of social issues was noticed in "**Patal Lok 2**" and "**Criminal Justice 4**".
- The **thriller genre** emerged as the most popular.
- A significant majority (70%) are willing to recommend their favorite shows.
- Most respondents were **students or working professionals**, aged **18–25**.

Recommendations

Focus on Local Contexts: Web series rooted in Indian realities—rural life, social justice, gender roles—tend to resonate more deeply with audiences.

Strengthen Endings: Many respondents desire closure or meaningful ambiguity, not rushed or inconclusive endings.

Simplify Navigation: Platforms like SonyLIV could enhance user interfaces to improve viewer engagement.

Empower Female and Social Justice Narratives: Shows like *Patal Lok 2* show promise in revealing social decay but could benefit from even more nuanced writing.

Maintain Genre Balance: A blend of emotion, humor, and realism—like in *Panchayat*—can appeal to a wider demographic.

Considering the above mentioned recommendation the following strategies to be incorporated by the marketers of different OTT platforms:

- **Invest in grounded storytelling** that combines social realism with emotional depth, like "Panchayat 4".
- **Improve app interfaces and responsiveness**, following Amazon Prime's success model.
- **Expand genres** like thriller and political drama to meet user interests.
- **Enhance series endings** to boost overall satisfaction and encourage viewer loyalty.
- Consider **demographic preferences** while marketing: students and young adults are key viewers.

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