

Content Strategy and Market Challenges: A Case Study of Netflix in India

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Abstract—The current paper focuses on the main problems that Netflix faced while expanding its influence and attracting subscribers in India. Despite being a leading OTT platform globally, Netflix experienced many difficulties operating in a competitive and heterogeneous Indian market. The OTT market in India expanded due to improved internet connection, cheaper data prices, and the popularity of digital content. At the same time, the competition became higher with the emergence of local platforms that provide their services through affordable rates and regional content. The main goal of the study is to evaluate whether the global strategy used by Netflix was effective for the Indian market. For achieving the objective, the research was performed qualitatively using the available literature, such as FICCI-EY reports, Netflix investor reports, and articles published in Reuters and Forbes. Various analytical techniques were utilized in the research process, including SWOT analysis, PESTLE analysis, and Porter's Five Forces. The results indicate that the high price of Netflix, its limited reach in regional markets, and competition from local players have hampered its growth in India. In conclusion, it can be said that in order to sustain itself, Netflix must pay greater attention to local content and dynamic pricing strategies.

Index Terms—Competition analysis, Indian Media Industry, Indian OTT Market, Netflix, Pricing Strategy, Regional Content

I. INTRODUCTION

The Indian media industry has changed a lot in the last ten years, mostly because of digital technology and new audience habits. The growing use of smartphones and the availability of low-cost internet have made it easier for people to access digital content. As a result, OTT platforms have become a major source of entertainment for many users. According to FICCI-

EY (2023), digital media is one of the fastest-growing sectors in India, with streaming platforms playing an important role in this growth.

In this changing environment, Netflix is known as a global leader in digital streaming. When it entered India in 2016, it marked an important step in the expansion of international OTT platforms into developing markets. However, India is very different from Netflix's main markets in terms of income levels, cultural diversity, and audience preferences. Because of these differences, Netflix has faced challenges in achieving the same level of success in India as it has in other countries.

This case study is important because it shows the gap between global strategies and local needs in media management. It looks at how Netflix's pricing, content, and market strategies have affected its performance in India. The study is useful for understanding how media companies can deal with the challenges of growing markets like India, where there are both opportunities and difficulties.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The growth of OTT platforms in India has been widely discussed in recent media and communication studies. According to FICCI-EY reports (2023, 2024), the Indian media and entertainment industry has experienced rapid digital growth due to increased internet penetration, affordable data plans, and rising smartphone usage. These changes have made OTT platforms an important part of everyday entertainment consumption.

Studies from Statista highlight that India's OTT market is expanding steadily, with a growing number of users and increasing demand for video streaming services. However, the market is highly price-

sensitive, and affordability remains a key factor influencing consumer choices. This makes it challenging for premium platforms to achieve large-scale growth. Research on Netflix's global strategy shows that its success is based on subscription-based revenue, strong investment in original content, and the use of data analytics to personalize user experience. However, studies suggest that this model does not fully fit the Indian market, where users prefer lower pricing and flexible viewing options.

Several industry analyses from Reuters and Forbes point out that Netflix faced challenges in India due to its high pricing strategy and strong competition from platforms like Amazon Prime Video and Jio Hotstar. These competitors have successfully attracted users by offering affordable subscription plans, regional content, and bundled services. The concept of cultural proximity is also important in understanding OTT consumption in India. Research shows that audiences prefer content that reflects their local language and culture. While Netflix has produced Indian original content, studies suggest that it has not matched the scale and diversity of regional content offered by domestic platforms.

In addition, media economics theory explains that pricing plays a crucial role in emerging markets. Consumers in India are highly value-conscious and often compare multiple platforms before subscribing. This reduces customer loyalty and increases competition among OTT platforms. Overall, existing literature shows that while Netflix has strong global capabilities, its growth in India is limited by pricing, competition, and the need for better localization. These studies support the need for a more flexible and locally adapted strategy for success in the Indian OTT market.

III. ORGANIZATION / INDUSTRY BACKGROUND

Netflix was founded in 1997 and started as a DVD rental service. Over the period, it has become one of the world's leading digital streaming platforms. Its success is based on a subscription model, strong investment in original content, and the use of data to understand and improve user experience. According to Netflix's investor reports (2023), the company is focusing on expanding its presence in international

markets, with India seen as an important area for future growth.

The Indian OTT industry is growing very fast and is highly competitive. FICCI-EY (2024) states that this growth is driven by better internet access and changing viewing habits. However, the market is also divided among many platforms that compete for viewers' attention. Major competitors include Amazon Prime Video and Jio Hotstar have created strategies that suit Indian audiences.

A key feature of the Indian market is its diversity. India has many languages, cultures, and income groups, which affect what people watch and how they consume content. Netflix mainly targets urban and premium users, but a large part of the market looks for affordable and region-specific content. This creates a challenge for Netflix, as it needs to adjust its global model to match local needs and expectations.

IV. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The central problem discussed in this case study is the difficulty faced by Netflix in reaching a large number of users and maintaining steady subscriber growth in India. Even though Netflix has a strong global brand and advanced technology, it has not been able to gain a leading position in the Indian OTT market.

This challenge is caused by several connected factors. First, Netflix's high subscription cost makes it less affordable for many users in a price-sensitive market like India. Second, strong competition from platforms such as Amazon Prime Video and Jio Hotstar, which offer lower prices and more local content, makes it difficult for Netflix to increase its market share. Third, the diversity of Indian audiences means that content needs to be more closely aligned with different languages and cultural preferences, which Netflix did not fully address in the beginning. Lastly, regulatory and cultural factors also make content creation and distribution more complex.

Together, these issues show a clear gap between Netflix's global strategy and the actual conditions of the Indian market. This makes the case important for understanding challenges in media management.

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE CASE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to understand the strategic challenges faced by Netflix in India and to

evaluate how effective its responses have been. It also aims to examine how Netflix's pricing strategies affect its subscriber growth and how competition influences its position in the market.

Another important objective is to study the role of local content in attracting and retaining viewers. The research also uses tools like SWOT analysis, PESTLE analysis, and Porter's Five Forces to provide a detailed understanding of Netflix's position in the Indian market.

Finally, the study aims to give practical suggestions that can help Netflix improve its performance and achieve long-term growth in India.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This case study uses a qualitative research approach based on the analysis of secondary data. The information has been collected from reliable sources such as FICCI-EY media reports, Netflix's investor reports, and industry articles from Reuters and Forbes. Additional data has also been taken from Statista.

The research method includes document analysis and thematic analysis. It focuses on key areas like pricing strategy, competition, content localization, and regulatory factors. This method helps in developing a clear understanding of the challenges faced by Netflix, while ensuring that the findings are based on trustworthy and verified information.

VII. DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE

When Netflix entered India in 2016, it followed a premium strategy by offering high-quality international content at relatively high subscription prices. However, this approach did not match the economic conditions of many Indian consumers, who often prefer affordable options over premium services. According to Reuters (2021), Netflix later reduced its subscription prices in India by up to 60 percent to make the platform more accessible.

Even after these changes, competition from platforms like Jio Hotstar and Amazon Prime Video remained strong. Jio Hotstar attracted large audiences through live sports content, especially cricket, while Amazon Prime Video provided bundled services that added more value for users.

Netflix also invested in Indian original content, including popular series like *Sacred Games* and *Delhi*

Crime, to connect better with local audiences. However, industry reports (Forbes, 2023) suggest that regional platforms have been more successful in meeting the needs of audiences across different languages. As India has many regional languages and diverse cultures, it is required for Netflix to modify its content strategy to more region-specific content.

VIII. ANALYSIS OF THE CASE

To better understand Netflix's position in the Indian market, it is important to analyze its internal strengths and weaknesses along with external factors affecting its performance. For this purpose, different strategic frameworks are used to provide a clear and structured evaluation.

A SWOT analysis shows that Netflix has strong brand recognition, advanced technology, and a wide range of content. However, in India, its main weaknesses are high subscription costs and limited reach in regional markets. There are opportunities to grow by expanding regional content and by focusing on mobile-first users. At the same time, threats include strong competition and changing viewer preferences. A PESTLE analysis highlights how economic factors like income differences and social factors like cultural diversity affect Netflix's performance. Technological growth supports the rise of OTT platforms but also increases competition. Legal and regulatory factors also play an important role, as they affect how content is created and shared. Porter's Five Forces analysis shows that competition in the market is very high. Consumers have strong bargaining power because they can easily switch between platforms. There are also moderate barriers for new companies to enter the market. All these factors together make it difficult for Netflix to grow in India.

IX. FINDINGS

The study shows that Netflix's pricing is one of the main barriers to its growth in India. Netflix's plans range from about ₹149 to ₹649 per month, depending on features and screen access. Even though the ₹149 mobile plan is more affordable, higher plans are still expensive for many users in a price-sensitive market. To improve accessibility, Netflix reduced its prices by up to 60 percent in 2021, which shows that its earlier

pricing was not suitable for Indian consumers. However, even after this reduction, it remains costlier than its competitors.

A comparison with other platforms clearly highlights this gap. Amazon Prime Video offers plans starting from around ₹299 per year and a full membership at ₹1499 per year, which also includes additional services like shopping and music. Similarly, Jio Hotstar provides very low-cost plans starting from around ₹49 per month. This means that Netflix's highest plan (₹649/month) can be several times more expensive than entry-level plans of its competitors.

Because of this price difference, many users prefer platforms that offer more value for money. Competitors also provide bundle offers and sometimes free access through telecom services, which makes them more attractive to a wider audience.

Another important point is about content. Netflix has started making more Indian shows and films, but most of its content is still focused on urban and Hindi-speaking audiences. India has many languages, and people prefer watching content in their own language. Other platforms have done better in this area by offering more regional content, which helps them connect with more viewers.

The study also shows that many Indian users prefer simple and mobile-friendly content that they can watch easily. Netflix's content is high quality, but it is often seen as premium and not always suitable for everyday viewing. Also, Netflix has fewer ad-based plans and bundle offers, which makes it less attractive compared to other platforms.

Strong competition from platforms like Jio Hotstar and Amazon Prime Video also affects Netflix's growth. These platforms attract more users by offering live sports like cricket and by giving extra benefits through partnerships with telecom and other services.

Overall, the study shows that high pricing, limited regional content, changing viewing habits, and strong competition are the main reasons why Netflix is finding it difficult to grow in India.

IX. Discussion

The challenges faced by Netflix in India can be better understood through ideas from media economics and globalization. In countries like India, where many people are careful about spending money, price plays a very important role. Netflix's premium pricing works well in developed countries, but in India, most

users look for affordable options and better value for money. This makes it difficult for Netflix to attract a large number of subscribers.

Another important idea is cultural proximity, which means people prefer content that feels close to their own culture and language. In India, audiences enjoy content in regional languages and stories that reflect their daily lives. Netflix has created some Indian shows, but it has not matched the wide variety and volume of regional content offered by its competitors. Platforms like Disney+ Hotstar and Amazon Prime Video have focused more on regional languages, which helps them connect with a larger audience.

The competitive market makes the situation more difficult. Indian viewers have many options, and switching between platforms is very easy. This reduces customer loyalty, as users will choose the platform that offers better content at a lower price. Features like free trials, ad-supported plans, and bundled offers also influence user decisions. For example, platforms that are included with mobile or broadband plans often gain more users because they feel "free" or low-cost.

In addition, regulatory and social factors also affect

Platform	Pricing (India)	Key Value
Netflix	₹149 – ₹649/month	Premium content, high cost
Amazon Prime Video	₹299/year (lite) – ₹1499/year	Very low cost + bundled benefits
Jio Hotstar	₹49/month – ₹1499/year	Cheapest + sports content

Netflix's operations. Content in India is often closely watched for cultural and political sensitivity. This means Netflix must be careful about what it produces and releases, which can sometimes limit creative freedom and slow down decision-making.

Another challenge is the difference in viewing habits. Many Indian users prefer watching content on mobile phones rather than TVs. They also like shorter and more frequent content, while Netflix is known for high-budget, long-format shows and films. This difference means Netflix needs to adjust not just what it produces, but also how it presents its content.

Overall, this case shows that success in markets like India requires a mix of global knowledge and strong local understanding. A single global strategy does not

work everywhere. Netflix needs to be flexible and keep changing its approach based on local needs.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve its performance in India, Netflix should take several steps:

First, it should make its pricing more flexible. Introducing more ad-supported plans and low-cost mobile-only subscriptions can help attract price-sensitive users. Offering seasonal discounts or student plans could also increase subscriptions. Second, Netflix should invest more in regional content. This means creating shows and films in languages like Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, and Bengali, and working with local writers, directors, and actors. This will help the platform connect better with audiences across different parts of India.

Third, partnerships can play a big role. Netflix can collaborate with telecom companies and internet providers to offer bundled subscriptions. This will make the service more affordable and easily available to users. Fourth, Netflix should continue improving its data analytics. By understanding what users like to watch, when they watch, and on which devices, it can suggest better content and keep users engaged for longer.

Additionally, Netflix can experiment with different types of content, such as short-form videos, reality shows, and more family-friendly programs, which are popular in India. It can also improve its marketing by focusing on local culture, festivals, and regional trends.

In conclusion, Netflix needs to focus on affordability, regional diversity, strong partnerships, and better understanding of Indian audiences. These steps can help the platform grow and achieve long-term success in India.

XI. CONCLUSION

The case of Netflix in India shows that working in a diverse and highly competitive media market is not easy. Even though the company has strong global experience and technology, its success in India depends on how well it adjusts to local needs and conditions.

The study concludes that being flexible in strategy, focusing on local content, and offering affordable

pricing are important for long-term growth in India. These findings also provide useful lessons for other media companies that want to expand into emerging markets, where understanding local audiences is very important.

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