Chapter 13
Leveraging Curiosity Branding and Content to Remodel Viewing Habits: A Case of Netflix in India

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ABSTRACT
A growing demand for engaging content, coupled with the availability of cheap data, an increasing footprint of 4g services and facilities like mobile payment motivated several over the top (OTT) service providers like YouTube, Hotstar, Amazon Prime and Netflix among several others to venture into the Indian streaming space. Netflix saw this as an opportunity to virtually tap into the Indian Television market and leverage the shift in the content consumption pattern among young consumers, by empowering them to watch content of their choice at their time and on their preferred connected device. The easy access of Internet technology helped Netflix overcome the censorship issues, break stereotypes by allowing creators and marketers to dive deep into untapped cultural and social sensitivities, hit pain points thereby creating room for unique content. This chapter aims at exploring how Netflix is creating a differentiating factor with its new content marketing strategy in India and remodeling the viewing habits thus molding the Indian stereotypes.
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

It was the 1980’s when change actually started seeping in and percolating down the media and entertainment landscape in India, in the form of Soaps like Hum log – We the people (1984), Buniyaad – The Foundation (1986) and Film related content. This can, therefore, be looked forward to as the primeval or embryonic phase of Indian Television (Jaggi 2011).

The advent of the LPG wave in the early part of 1991, saw the growth of television as an entertainment medium. What started with lengthy episodic family soaps culminated into a pioneering flood of mythological dramas based on Hindu Epics like the original Ramayana (1986) and the original Mahabharata (1988) that were broadcasted only on Doordarshan in the pre-LPG era.

This helmed the transitional phase for Indian Television as it permitted the arrival of private channels like Star, Sony entertainment TV etc. on the Indian Media and entertainment platform (Jaggi 2011).

With the changing times, however, the upcoming generation which was by far relishing the taste of economic liberalization in India looked forward to something new that could entertain them. Despite an overdose of Emotions, loud expressions, explicit wickedness with scheming plotting characters and revenge sagas, the most popular genre of programs in the major part of 90’s continued to be soap operas (Munshi, 2014). These family dramas remarkably transformed Indian viewership patterns and also inspired cultural practices ruling the roost (Chakrabarty, 2011).

The Television consumption rate increased exponentially among the Indians as daily soaps emerged as the staple source of entertainment for family audiences especially dominating the most sought – after 8 pm to 11 pm prime time slot. This led to a remarkable social and cultural influence of the Indian television on the urban and rural segment. In the latter years of the 2000s, demographics became one of the key bases for Television audience segmentation. (BARC, 2018)

The beginning of the new millennium saw a massive impact on the TRP which also actually brought about a radical change in the viewing habits, this was the Era of adaptations and versions. The ushering in of Kaun Banega Crorepati, (KBC) - a quiz show (2000), the Hindi language adaptation of the popular International format “Who Wants to be a Millionaire” and Indian Idol (2004) – the signing reality show, adapted version of the famous American Idol opened the doors for reality entertainment genre. These reality shows marked the beginning of a socioeconomic interpretation with a market-oriented era in entertainment. It kind of brought to life the fantastical literary tale of an ugly duckling turning into a ballerina with the extraordinary prize money and incredible opportunities provided to ordinary ambitious individuals having an entrepreneurial passion from modest backgrounds to compete and win (Ganguly, 2010). The trend of adapted versions continued with engaging content and higher curiosity quotient becoming a need of the hour.

To boost their content and match up with the changing audience taste, channels were compelled to come up with a unique concept beyond the existing reality shows (Mehta 2018). Reality shows like Bigg Boss (2006) on Sony Entertainment Television an adaptation of reality game show Big Brother with just the right dash of spicy content and gossip along with several Dance and singing reality shows customized to suit the Indian culture and language sensitivities were the new flavors of entertainment.

Liberalization opened the floodgates of the Indian economy to the world, realizing changes not just in the economy but also in the lives of the people socially and culturally. To begin with, in India during the late 90s television series aired were themed on the agenda of education through entertainment which