

IMPACT OF OTT PLATFORMS ON THE LIVES OF THEATRE OWNERS-A Case study among the Theatre Owners in Thiruvananthapuram district

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DECLARATION

I, **KARTHIK BAIJU** do hereby declare that the Dissertation Titled **IMPACT OF OTT PLATFORMS ON THE LIVES OF THEATRE OWNERS –A Case study among the Theatre Owners in Thiruvananthapuram district** is based on the original work carried out by me and submitted to the University of Kerala during the year 2021-2023 towards partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree Examination in Sociology. It has not been submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship or other similar title of recognition before any University or anywhere else.

Thiruvananthapuram
18/08/2023

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CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled **IMPACT OF OTT PLATFORMS ON THE LIVES OF THEATRE OWNERS –A Case study among the Theatre Owners in Thiruvananthapuram district** is a record of genuine work done by Mr.KARTHIK BAIJU fourth semester Master of Sociology student of this college under my supervision and guidance and that it is hereby approved for submission.

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ABSTRACT

Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms have completely changed the entertainment landscape by providing viewers with a flexible and simple means to access a wide range of materials from the comfort of their own homes. This study explores the benefits and problems posed by this digital disruption as it relates to the lives of theatre owners in the Trivandrum district. The study employs a comparative analysis approach to investigate shifting consumer behaviour patterns, traditional movie theatre attendance statistics, and the financial challenges faced by theatre operators in the wake of the OTT growth.

This thesis is divided into seven chapters starting with an introduction in which an introduction of the study and about what OTT platforms are is being included. In the review of the literature chapter the researcher has identified the research gap in the existing literature and tries to shed light on those overlooked areas. Later chapters include the methodology used in which the general and specific research questions along with the approach of the study which is qualitative in nature ,purposive sampling method is being used, area of the study, the data sources and limitations of the in the study are included. The data that is collected from the respondents who are the theatre owners are analysed and major conclusions are derived from them which portray the issues that they face including financial issues, joblessness, changes in decisions of FEUOK, government instructions and their expectations about the future. The researcher through this study could understand that the lives of the theatre owners and their stability in this field are facing a lot of consequences. The future of the entertainment industry remains a question mark along with which the lives of the theatre owners remain in the same dilemma.

CHAPTER -1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the entertainment landscape has undergone a significant transformation with the advent and rapid growth of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms. Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+ are just a few of the platforms that have transformed how people consume media by making it simple to access a wide variety of on-demand material. While there is no doubt that OTT platforms have altered how viewers interact with films and TV shows, they have also had a significant impact on the daily lives of traditional theatre owners. (Moha, 2021)

OTT (Over-the-Top) platforms refer to streaming services that deliver video, audio, and other media content directly to viewers via the internet, bypassing traditional broadcast or cable television providers. These platforms allow users to access a wide range of content on-demand, anytime and anywhere, using devices like smartphones, tablets, smart TVs, or computers.

OTT platforms have experienced tremendous growth and popularity in India over the past decade. They have revolutionized the way Indians consume entertainment, providing a wide range of content choices and convenient access. The entry of global OTT platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video into the Indian market around 2016 marked the beginning of the OTT revolution in the country. These platforms initially offered international content, including movies, TV shows, and documentaries, but soon started investing in regional and Indian content to cater to the diverse preferences of Indian audiences. India is a linguistically diverse country, and OTT platforms have recognized the importance of catering to regional languages. Many platforms have started producing and acquiring content in regional languages such as Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Bengali, and more. This has allowed regional filmmakers, actors, and content creators to reach a broader audience and showcase their talent. OTT platforms in India follow various subscription models. While some platforms offer free content with ads, others provide freemium models with a combination of free and premium content. Subscription prices vary across platforms, with options for monthly, quarterly, or annual plans. Affordable subscription rates have played a crucial role in driving the adoption of OTT platforms in the country.

The rise of OTT platforms in India has disrupted traditional modes of entertainment consumption and provided viewers with a diverse range of content options. It has also opened up new avenues for content creators, regional filmmakers, and independent talent. The future of OTT platforms in India is expected to continue evolving with further investments in original content, regional language offerings, and technological advancements to enhance the user experience. Given the high smartphone penetration in India, OTT platforms have adopted a mobile-first approach. Most platforms offer dedicated mobile apps that provide a seamless streaming experience on smartphones. The convenience and portability of mobile viewing have contributed significantly to the growth of OTT platforms in India. (Scribed, 2021) OTT platforms have gained significant popularity in Kerala, just like in other parts of India. While the history of OTT platforms in Kerala is relatively recent, their growth and impact have been remarkable. Around the middle of 2010, OTT platforms in Kerala began to acquire popularity. At first, online video streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video entered the Indian market, providing a vast selection of national and foreign content, including Malayalam films and TV episodes. Through these venues, audiences in Kerala have access to a wide variety of entertainment options outside of conventional television and movie going experiences. OTT platforms have also had an impact on the distribution and release strategies of Malayalam movies. While theatrical releases continue to be the primary mode of distribution, several movies have opted for simultaneous or subsequent releases on OTT platforms. The history of OTT platforms in Kerala is still unfolding, and their influence continues to shape the entertainment landscape in the region. With the increasing availability of regional content and the preference for personalized viewing. (Jagran TV, 2023)

1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The term big screen entertainment describes the activity of watching motion pictures or other visual media on a big movie screen. It is frequently compared to the classic movie-going experience in a theatre, where people gather in a special location to see films on a huge screen. The interactive and social aspects of big-screen entertainment make it appealing. Cinema is a fascinating visual and audio experience that can absorb viewers in other domains, foster emotional connections, and offer a sense of escapism. The impact of storytelling, special effects, and cinematography is enhanced by the big screen size and cutting-edge sound systems. The theatre experience is a unique and immersive form of entertainment that has captivated audiences for generations. It involves watching movies, plays, musicals, or other live

performances in a dedicated venue designed to enhance the visual, auditory, and emotional impact of the content.

Big-screen entertainment offers several unique advantages over home viewing or streaming on smaller screens. Some of them include,

1. **Immersive Experience:** The size and scale of a cinema screen can create a sense of awe and spectacle, allowing viewers to fully immerse themselves in the visual and auditory elements of a film. It provides a more encompassing and engaging experience than watching on a smaller screen.
2. **Enhanced Visuals:** Cinemas often use high-resolution projectors and specialized screens to deliver sharp, vibrant, and larger-than-life visuals. This allows viewers to appreciate the intricate details, grandeur, and visual effects that may be diminished on smaller screens.
3. **Superior Audio:** Cinemas typically offer advanced surround sound systems, enabling viewers to experience rich, dynamic soundscapes that enhance the storytelling and emotional impact of a film. The enveloping audio adds another layer of immersion and intensity to the cinematic experience.
4. **Community and Social Interaction:** Going to the cinema can be a social activity, allowing friends, families, or even strangers to share a collective experience. It offers the opportunity to engage in shared emotions, reactions, and discussions with fellow audience members, enhancing the sense of connection and enjoyment.
5. **Exclusivity and Event Releases:** Certain movies, particularly blockbuster releases, are often intended for the big screen experience. Cinemas offer the chance to be among the first to watch highly anticipated films, creating an event-like atmosphere and a sense of excitement.

Big-screen entertainment continues to draw viewers looking for a unique and engaging experience, even as the growth of OTT platforms and home entertainment options has had an impact on the traditional theatrical environment. Filmmakers and studios continue to respect the cinematic experience and its capacity to engage people on a bigger scale, making the theatrical release of films an important component of the entertainment industry.

The goal of this study is to thoroughly examine and analyse how OTT platforms have impacted the lives of theatre owners. We may learn more about the changing dynamics of the entertainment sector by looking at the opportunities and challenges theatre owners face in the wake of the OTT revolution. The study will examine several aspects of this subject, such as the viewership competition between theatres and OTT platforms, the decline in audience numbers and its financial consequences, the changing theatrical release schedules, concerns about piracy, the impact on revenue sharing scenarios, and the necessary adjustments theatre operators must make to stay competitive in a shifting environment. We want to comprehend the complex impacts of OTT platforms on the life of theatre owners by looking at these variables. In the end, it is found to explain the complex interaction between traditional theatres and OTT platforms, showing the difficulties theatre owners confront participants in the entertainment sector may make wise decisions regarding methods, regulations, and investments to get through this quickly changing environment by developing a greater awareness of these implications. This study aims to offer a thorough and current analysis by taking into account the most recent trends, business practices, and the actual experiences of theatre owners in light of the increasing dominance of OTT platforms.

While the rise of digital and streaming platforms has expanded entertainment options, the theatre experience continues to hold a special place in the hearts of many. Its combination of visual spectacle, live performances, communal engagement, and immersive atmosphere offers a unique and irreplaceable form of artistic expression and entertainment. The theatre has long been a vital part of cultural expression and storytelling. It serves as a platform for exploring diverse perspectives, challenging societal norms, and sparking conversations. The theatre experience allows individuals to engage with thought-provoking themes, cultural heritage, and artistic expressions that can foster empathy, understanding, and a sense of shared humanity.

Theatre is a celebration of imagination, individual expression, and the allure of live performance. It keeps thriving and developing, adjusting to modern tastes while retaining its timeless charm. The theatrical experience continues to be a remarkable and transformational journey for both actors and viewers alike, whether they are seeing a Theatrical show, a local theatre performance, or attending a cultural event. The immersive experience that the big screen offers involves spectators in the world of the film. The audience is made to feel like they are a part of the tale by the larger-than-life images and superior sound systems, which increase the movie's emotional and sensory impact. Many films feature beautiful visuals and special effects

that look great on a large screen. The huge screen enables spectators to completely appreciate the majesty and beauty of cinema, from epic landscapes to minute details.

The large-screen theatres have cutting-edge sound systems that produce audio that is loud and dynamic. The audience is fully immersed in the soundtrack of the movie thanks to surround sound technology, which increases the storytelling's emotional effect.

Going to the movies is frequently a shared social experience that can be had with friends, family, or even strangers. The joint gasps, laughs, and reactions foster a sense of companionship and shared pleasure. The experience of watching a movie on a large screen is uninterrupted and focused. Viewers can escape from their daily lives and fully immerse themselves in the drama being conveyed because of the theatres' darkness and lack of outside distractions.

Some films are designed expressly for the big screen, with filmmakers and cinematographers taking the theatre experience into serious consideration during filming. When the movie is shown on a big movie screen, the director's wanted vision is completely realized. A sense of occasion and excitement is produced when watching a highly awaited or blockbuster movie on a large screen. Being present for a special screening or being among the first to see a new film can be exciting and a lifetime memory. Viewers may enjoy the artistic aspects of filmmaking, such as cinematography, set design, costumes, and special effects, on a large screen. It encourages a deeper appreciation of the movie's creativity and workmanship. The setting of a movie theatre, with its plush seats, dim lighting, and excitement, makes it a unique and memorable event for everyone.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A movie is defined as a series of parallel still images shot in such quick succession to be displayed on a screen that they appear to be moving naturally; a motion picture. The experience of watching a movie on the big screen is always a fascination for many. During the Covid-19 pandemic as the government requested the shutdown of various sectors of society, the shutdown of the entertainment sector also happened. As the theatres remained shut down and also as there was a delay in its reopening, the problems that it created among the owners are quite devastating. An operator or owner of a movie theatre is referred to as a theatre owner. The term "theatre owner" refers to the owner or operator of any facilities used for the public display or performance of motion pictures, as well as any agent, employee, consignee, lessee, or officer of such a person.

People when they were stuck at home, one of their main sources of entertainment was provided through the movies that were released on the OTT platforms. But the beauty of watching a movie on the big screen was never provided by these OTT platforms. Some people had gotten into the comfort of sitting on their couch and watching a movie and not going into the theatres to watch a movie. During this closure of the theatres, the owners and other related staff had problems and are continuing to face these challenges even though the pandemic has ended and people are rushing into the theatres.

The economic stability of the owners was huge as they don't have any other way of income. As many movie producers decided to release movies on OTT platforms like Amazon Prime, Disney Hotstar Netflix etc. many movies had lost their theatrical essence. With the belief that people find the OTT platform releases more comfortable there is an urge for certain movies to be released online, but that is not the case here.

During the shutdown times, many electronic devices of the theatre were also not in use. The non-usage of these devices which are very costly leads to them getting damaged. Many theatres had these losses that affect the income levels of the owners. The deaths among the workers and the owners were reported during the pandemic period as the movie industry was the last sector to get relaxation from the government to open for the audience. Many theatre workers were forced to leave this job and chose other ways to live as they had no other way to survive in this area of work as they were not paid by the theatre owners as they had financial problems.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The theatre owners are one category of people whose issues are never discussed. The boom of the OTT platform in the minds of people and producers being ready to release their movies on this platform is a backstab for the theatre owners. The losses they have in the income that they depend on which is the theatre and the release of movies in the theatre is an issue that has to be discussed.

The occupational mobility among the workers of the theatres especially the migrant workers who couldn't do anything as the theatres were shut and also as they couldn't do any other jobs during the pandemic period had left in search of other jobs as they concluded that working in this field will never help them in fulfilling their responsibilities they have towards their family.

There are many significant issues that theatre owners face in the economy and technical aspects. Many owners who were affected are still on their way to cope up with the losses that they had in the industry. The theatre owners association had talked against the producers who had given away their movies into OTT rather than them being enjoyed on the big screen.

CHAPTER-2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic was game-changing for the media and entertainment industry. Early in the 2020s, the COVID-19 pandemic harmed a few films, imitating its effects across many artistic fields. Cinemas and theatres were closed, festivals were cancelled or postponed, and movie releases were postponed or cancelled to varied degrees around the world. The global box office decreased by billions of dollars as a result of theatre closures, streaming became increasingly popular, and the stock of movie exhibitors fell rapidly. Numerous blockbusters that were supposed to be released by mid-March 2020 have been delayed or cancelled, and film production has also been stopped. This consequently opened doors for independent film projects to get more visibility.

2.2 OVER THE TOP PLATFORM (OTT)

Over-the-top online media services are those that are offered directly to viewers. OTT stays away from the companies that normally act as content distributors or controllers, such as cable, broadcast, and satellite TV platforms. With BigFlix, OTT services were launched in India. BigFlix, which was introduced by Reliance Entertainment in 2008, was the first OTT platform in India. After Zed TV and Sony Live were introduced in 2013, OTT eventually began to thrive in India. In 2015, Disney Hotstar entered the OTT market.

Unlike most other businesses, the Covid-19 pandemic altered the media and entertainment landscape. In contrast to the previous decade, which saw a rise in multiplexes, 2020 turned out to be the year of OTT entertainment, with Cineplex's and movie theatres closed for most of the year. As OTT platforms gained popularity, cinema owners faced concerns that they may alter how people view films as a whole, which would reduce foot traffic once the screens were once again open. Without a doubt, OTT platforms are changing how we consume entertainment, which has harmed the movie industry. Many movie buffs still favour the excitement of seeing a film on a large screen because they think the theatrical experience will never completely be duplicated.

2.3 TECHNOLOGY & THE OTT PLATFORM

The Indian entertainment market is quickly changing thanks to the Internet. With millions of users and the introduction of 3G and 4G networks, the size and impact of the country's mobile phone user base in the future will be enormous. On their smartphone devices, viewers watch films, documentaries, and web series utilizing a variety of different technologies. Examples of websites that offer films and other video content online include Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hotstar, and Zee5. It now poses a problem for the movie theatre business. Cinema owners are concerned that the common experience of watching films would eventually move to digital platforms now that theatres are closed and movie releases are delayed during the government shutdown. The purpose of this study is to find out how Indian movie theatres are being impacted by digital streaming services and how young people are using these new digital platforms to obtain video material. This study examines how young people watch video content on digital platforms and in movie theatres. This paper also examines the Indian cinema industry's shifting dynamics. A majority of respondents nearly 50% agree that over-the-top applications will disrupt movie venues (Chinana et al, 2022).

Bhalerao (2022) puts his opinion that no amount of enormous TV can equal the theatre and large screen experience. Because of the ambience - the dark room, forced to be seated in one place, attention not wavering, no distraction (stupid mobiles ringing apart), the huge screen, the booming sound, etc., this experience cannot be replicated at home. When we talk about cinema, people tend to focus on the video and quality only. They completely overlook the fact that sound plays a role in 50% or more of modern films. A true HT with projector and screen and extremely good 3D Atmos sound system can in a way bring the large screen experience to the home, but very limited people have such a dedicated HT room. So “no”. OTTs cannot pose a threat to movie theatres.

In the digital era, platforms like televisions, mobile phones, and other devices are also included as a medium through which films are screened, allowing audiences more options when it comes to where they choose to watch films. Today, viewers can watch films on a variety of devices, including televisions, laptops, and smartphones, tablets, and movie screens. OTT Channels are becoming more and more popular among Guwahati City's urban populace. According to the popularity ratio, OTT channels are predicted to continue to rule Guwahati's video content market in the days ahead. Nowadays, only those who find the content and trailer appealing go to the nearest movie theatres. The storyline and cinematography are important since the content

is king. Negative reviews would be written if the audience did not like it. It can be claimed that the filmmakers face a problem in further improving their material because the researcher found that OTT channels are growing in popularity as a result of the artistically produced content. According to the study, audiences enjoy watching inventively made video material that is displayed on any platform. The audience doesn't want to see content that has been restricted or controlled. The OTT channels are growing in popularity as a result of their original, unfettered, and youth-oriented material. OTT has been discovered to be the most entertaining media for offering new and desirable content that avoids stereotyping (Chandra et al, 2022).

There is no room for competition between OTT & Theatre platforms. Theatres and OTT platforms are two distinct mediums that are not at all in competition with one another. He said that people should be delighted about the success of streaming services and be glad that a new medium has evolved, allowing those working in the field to share fresh tales authentically. He believes that both theatre and OTT platforms will keep expanding and doing well. "When television came up, people predicted that radio listening would become obsolete. They predicted that television and movie would vanish when OTT platforms arrived. When you look around, you see that all of these media are still present and doing well. People all across the world enjoy the idea of being entertained. As a result, every medium has the opportunity to develop. I don't make a distinction between different media as a producer. My business is currently creating material for all platforms and mediums," he claims (Krishnan, 2023).

The lack of a large episode bank on general entertainment channels, OTT has emerged as the preferred entertainment choice. And with theatres still being closed after more than a year, bigbudget films are looking at their online booking options via OTT platforms. Content is dominant today because it allows for a wider concentrated distribution and is personalized. In India, around 75% of people preferred watching a movie on a variety of OTT platforms during the global pandemic. According to Google Trends research, popular OTT services like Netflix and Hotstar have received the most searches since March 1, 2020. The primary elements that have fuelled the expansion of the OTT revolution in India are convenience and the affordability of inexpensive data. For owners of movie theatres, this change in watching engagement caused by OTT is extremely alarming (Swatch et al, 2022).

The entertainment sector is doing well with OTT services as a result of the increase in smartphone technical capabilities and rising internet usage. The widespread Covid 19 has made

a significant contribution to the popularity of popular entertainment during lockdown. Due to the lockdown, the filming of TV shows and films was halted, which caused a shift in consumer behaviour towards OTT and a rapid increase in demand. Due to the simplicity and diversity offered without commercials, people are now more at ease using OTT services. According to trends, the OTT market will expand quickly over the next few years as well. Due to the abundance of free time, the necessity for edutainment, and the shifting preferences for OTT platforms over entertainment offline OTT series, companies will now have to deal with these preferences (Jain, 2021).

The producers are considering uploading their films to OTT channels as theatres struggle to begin operations. This development has not pleased movie theatre owners much. According to Siddhartha Jain, managing director of INOX owners must contend with the financial clout of services like Netflix. "They are multinational corporations with substantial financial resources. But watching films on a small screen indeed robs them of their charm. We are expecting that as soon as we open, people will return to the theatres since they enjoy the experience of seeing films on the big screen. Cinemas provide more than just the luxury of enjoying a movie on a giant screen without any outside distractions. The experience is lavish modern theatres are beautiful buildings with chandeliers that dominate (Nandwani, 2020).

There would be 1,600 more theatres open at this time of year before COVID-19. The biggest problems for theatres in the future will be capacity and availability, especially as viewers become more accustomed to streaming films from the comfort of their living rooms and are drawn in by the convenience of on-demand viewing. To adjust to the changing landscape, theatres will need to develop an attractive offer for the big-picture experience to maintain business. Perhaps a coexistence of OTT platforms and theatres would benefit both parties: owners would profit from both agreements, while viewers would have the freedom to watch whatever they want, whenever they want as technology and its advancements have benefitted the OTT platform as anyone can access them from through any digital medium (The Zype Team, 2011).

2.4 FILM PRODUCTION ASSOCIATION

“A film production company works on the process of producing video content for television, social media, and corporate promotions, commercial or other media-related fields.” Film

production companies do a great number of things, mostly centred on the pre-production process. They can help develop content, produce content, even help with post-production, or hire directors and crew (Borphy, 2020).

2.5 MOLLYWOOD

The Malayalam films will now only be released on OTT platforms 42 days after their theatrical debut. At a conference called by the Kerala Film Chamber of Commerce in Kochi, a resolution was made to this effect. The theatre owners complained that early digital downloads had reduced theatre attendance. Owners observed that viewers only go to cinemas to see highbudget films, preferring instead to see low- and mid-budget films on OTT services. A previous agreement by the Kerala Film Chamber of Commerce that there will be a 42-day buffer between theatrical and over-the-top (OTT) release of films starting on April 1 was violated, and the Film Exhibitors United Organisation of Kerala vowed not to collaborate with filmmakers who had done the same (Kumar,2023).

The recent film releases on over-the-top (OTT) platforms are causing conflict once again in the Malayalam cinema business, which has already resulted in several run-ins between exhibitors and producers. Late in July, the Kerala Film Chamber of Commerce received a request from the Film Exhibitors United Organisation of Kerala (FEUOK) that films be made available for OTT release just 56 days following the theatrical release. The Film Chamber and the Producers' Association have not yet responded, but the FEUOK has stated that it will implement the new rule starting with Onam and that, after that, it will not work with producers or stars who decide to ignore it (Praveen, The Hindu 2020)

The Malayalam industry as the OTT bloomed in an article titled “Kerala government to launch new OTT platform it is argued that the theatrical business wouldn't be impacted by the new platform in any way because films would first be released in theatres before being transferred to the OTT site. In contrast to large players, which only pay producers the amount agreed upon at the moment of purchase, the platform would use a revenue-sharing approach. Every time someone watches the movie on "Space," the producer will receive a portion of the sales. Shaji N. Karun, a filmmaker and the chair of the Kerala State Film Development Corporation, said the government was providing this platform at a time when Malayalam cinema was expanding both domestically and internationally (Cspace, 2018).

The issue the theatre owners suffer in the maintenance of the theatre when it is shut down, the case as when additional coronavirus cases being reported from the state and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan announced the shutdown of theatres, Mollywood is expecting losses in the hundreds of billions. The films playing in theatres, on the other hand, will feel the heat right away. "Some of the movies, even though they were released a week or two ago, were depending on the upcoming weeks to earn at least around 1 crore more," said G Suresh Kumar, the former president of the Kerala Film Producers Association. He claimed that Forensic producers anticipated an additional 75 lakh to 1 crore in revenue. He claimed that Ayyappanum Koshyum would have made an additional 40 lakh. The worst hit, in his opinion, is Kappel (Kuruvila, 2020).

2.6 INDIAN FILM PRODUCERS

Earlier several well-known Indian film producers made the decision to broadcast some of their high-profile films rather than waiting for theatres to reopen in the wake of the Covid-19 outbreak. This was out of the ordinary for India because there, films normally only appear on over-the-top (OTT) platforms after playing in theatres for a few weeks or even months. Naturally, the decision infuriated theatre owners and operators, some of whom even threatened to boycott those responsible. Meanwhile, even as the government has started a partial withdrawal of the lockdown, reopening cinema halls isn't high on its agenda. And even if the government allows theatres to reopen, experts believe, not many people will take the risk of going to the movies (Bhattacharya, 2020).

The article "Are booming OTT platforms a threat to cinema hall owners; what the road ahead is?" that, with everyone confined, digital platforms are grabbing hold of the movie theatres by the throat and pushing down their material every week. Cinema is a habit, and if it is broken for four to six months, many individuals will stop visiting theatres. The movie industry will suffer even if foot traffic drops by 15-20%, which is undoubtedly a downturn. Because OTT platforms are the antithesis of appointment movies, the ease they provide endangers the theatre viewing experience (Ghosh, 2020).

Even before we realized it, the Covid-19 pandemic caused another significant alteration in the world. The shockwaves changed how the film industry operated by delaying the release of high-profile films, stopping productions, and changing the income model, among other things.

For an extended period, theatres were closed, leaving residents with few entertainment options and confined to their homes. The emergence of OTT (Over-The-Top) platforms, whose growth is currently somewhat gradual, was also aided by these historic circumstances. The audience opted to stay at home rather than visit packed movie theatres, even after the COVID-19 limitations were relaxed (Eba, 2021).

The theatre owners argued in their appeal that while other businesses like malls, hotels, restaurants, swimming pools, and health clubs adjacent to hotels are not affected by the decision, they are. Many opined that "We are operating at 50% occupancy and strictly following the Covid preventative guidelines set forth by the authorities. Then why are we the target of this discrimination?" wonders Vijayakumar. Cinemas were only able to run for four to five months over the last two years. "Due to the pandemic outbreak, theatre owners are experiencing great financial hardship. We cannot continue in this manner because the majority of exhibitors are unable to pay back their loans and arrears, he said. In the meantime, blockbuster films like Aashiq, Thuramugham (Shibu, 2022).

Amongst the worst affected sectors of the Indian economy due to the ongoing coronavirus crisis is the movie theatre industry which has come to a complete standstill since the beginning of the nationwide lockdown. As multiplexes and cinema halls calculate current losses and plans for revival, what is the estimated monetary impact of the crisis and how are they coping with it (Desai, 2020).

A logical move was made by producers to release films straight on OTT platforms given that the majority of people were confined to their homes during the pandemic's outbreak and largely relied on TV and the internet for news and entertainment. Theatre owners have raised an alarm and expressed their disappointment at the new move, even though it is a win-win situation for the creators and the audience. It is crucial to finish the backlog since the lockdown caused the release of several big-budget summer movies to be delayed, and postponing their theatrical distribution will only hurt the business of further movies that are scheduled to be released (Shomini et al,2020).The cinema gives an experience that is larger than life. That is difficult for television or OTT platforms to reproduce. There are various ways to watch films. Going to the theatre, however, adds a significant dimension, making it a social event and a shared experience. The OTT platforms will be unable to compete with that, said seasoned director Shyam Bengal to Business Line. The emergence of new films on OTT platforms comes at a

time when theatre owners are already struggling under the pandemic's social isolation policies, which have reduced once-bustling movie theatres to the appearance of ghost towns (James, 2020)

2.7 ECONOMIC ASPECTS

More than Rs.400 crores have been made by the recent Tamil blockbuster *Ponniyin Selvan 1* directed by Maniratnam. However, their OTT release has prevented them from making any more money at the box office. It is a setback for theatre owners in some ways. They might then take some action that will probably have an impact on low-budget films. When a big movie is released on OTT, fewer people will go to the theatres to see it. As a result, it is now demanded that an OTT distribution of a movie only be allowed eight weeks following its theatrical debut (Chellappa, 2022).

The popularity of OTT platforms is gaining. Over the past few decades, there have been numerous obituaries for the venerable Bharatmata Theatre in the heart of Mumbai. In the 1980s, when films started to be made available on video cassettes, the first goodbye letter for the Lalbaug single-screen theatre was written. After that, satellite television arrived and started streaming films into the living room. The gleaming multiplexes came next, promising a fresh and ostensibly more satisfying big-screen experience. Streaming platforms are only now becoming a danger. Single-screen movie theatres are in a particularly bad situation. These movie palaces, which are bigger by design than multiplexes, are predicted to be destroyed by the pandemic's still-developing economic consequences. Single screens will struggle to manage seating limits given that they already have to contend with growing costs and declining attendance. (Chanda et al, 2022)

The paper titled “Effect of the COVID-19 Outbreak on the global theatrical release business and the OTT Platforms”, discusses the COVID-19 viral outbreak in China in December 2019 and its immediate effects on the global economy, but by early February 2020, the pandemic had spread to other countries and necessitated a near-global lockdown. The global film production and distribution industry is expected to be affected up until the middle of 2021, even if the majority of the accompanying economic impact has been felt by the industries of manufacturing, transportation, and logistics (Suresh, 2020).

Kerala theatre owners have set up brand-new terms and conditions for producers who want to broadcast their films on OTT platforms after they have played in theatres. The state's theatre owners' association, Film Exhibitors United Organisation of Kerala (FEUOK), recently said that it will not work with the cast or crew of films that have been distributed on OTT platforms before having a 42-day run in theatres. They have made the decision not to work with the cast and crew of the films that will be viewed on OTT platforms before spending 42 days in theatres. We won't work together with the directors, performers, or producers of these movies. Only after 42 days in theatres can these films be viewed on OTT platforms, according to K Vijayakumar, president of FEUOK (Indus Scrolls, 2022).

The previously solely available in theatres, films are increasingly finding a home on online video streaming services. Their appearance also caused an upheaval in the movie industry. In this economic downturn, multiplex owners were waiting for their movie theatres to reopen, but now they are openly criticizing the producers' decision. The biggest cinema chain, INOX, criticized the film industry for leaving its partners. However, these theatre owners do have a point; by investing so much time and money in the infrastructure, they have created a significant number of jobs. A quarter of businesses and jobs have already been lost as a result of the lockdown, and the producer's decision to release their films on OTT channels would only make matters worse (Rang,2020).

The COVID-19 epidemic has left a significant hole in the film business, and it will undoubtedly take time for things to return to normal. Even after the specified relaxation of lockdown limitations, movie theatres are unaware of how long it will take for patrons to return to a crowded, enclosed location. The main blockbuster movie releases are also being delayed. Almost everyone involved in the entertainment industry was impacted by the postponement or cancellation of films that were supposed to be released between March and November. In addition, streaming services are quickly dominating the entertainment market, particularly in terms of films and TV episodes. People are shifting to at-home entertainment options, and movie theatres are worried that even when the COVID-19 effect fades, the online video streaming market will displace the cinematic experience for millions of people (Oberoi, 2020).

Most of the studies related to OTT platforms show how digital media influenced the audience during the Covid 19 pandemic. One of the worst hits was about theatre owners whose hardships socially and economically are not studied globally. In states like Kerala, even though there

were relaxations in every other industry, the theatres had to remain shut for longer periods. Many theatre owners are still trying to cope with the losses they had during the pandemic and it must be considered for study (The Hindu, 2020).

The theatre industry was among the first to close, and it will be among the last to resume regular business. A lot of theatres were forced to cancel all or most of their 20/21 seasons. Many theatres cannot afford to offer plays with smaller audiences to adhere to public health and social distance rules. If they proceed in this manner, they run the risk of accruing a sizable deficit due to the expense of production and presentation, with insufficient ticket sales to cover these expenditures. Theatres are also making adjustments where they can to give a limited number of live performances, workshops, and online activities. Canada's theatre companies as well as the overall sector have demonstrated their resiliency by adapting to the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. In both our July and September surveys, members has opened up about how they have adapted their companies and productions to the new reality. (Association of Canadian Theatres, 2020)

The pandemic's effects on the Indian film industry brought to light the invisible backbone of the business, the below-the-line labour force. Media production and distribution chains were impacted by the changes to shooting schedules, postponements of releases, and shelving of projects. This also brought about a shift in the norm that necessitated a detailed examination of the structural issues and salary disparities that underlie the gloss and glamour of the entertainment industry. The shutdown served as a wake-up call to recognize that performers and production staff were only paid after the 90-day schedule in the television industry, which used a 90-day payment cycle. In this context, news of suicides by movie industry workers such as dubbing artists, theatre workers, and daily wage labourers serve as a sobering reminder of the film industry's structural hierarchies and toxicity, which bar the below-the-line workforce from making claims regarding the finished product (Outlook,2022).

2.8 OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY AMONG THE THEATRE WORKERS

In the past six to seven years, almost 70% of Bengal's single-screen theatres have closed their doors, leaving about 220 still in business. The figure is a little bit higher than 20 in Kolkata. The shutdown has made it a little harder for single-screen businesses to operate. The theatre workers are facing tremendous downfalls during this time. As the pandemic came in the single screen theatre owners are finding it difficult as they waited for the government orders on when

to open the theatre for the public and also as people started to depend on the OTT platforms for spending their leisure time (Ganguly et al, 2020).

The owners of theatres contend that, despite operations being suspended for the past 18 months of the five years due to lockdowns brought on by the epidemic, they have been paying Rs50,000 to Rs1 lakh per month in maintenance costs, such as fixed electricity costs, employee salaries, and property tax. According to Pravin Chalikwar, director of Priti Cinemas in Parbani, Maharashtra, who hasn't been able to run his single-screen theatre since March 2020, owners like him have been asking the government to let them pay one-third of their electricity bills due to this point and the rest in instalments but haven't received a response (Jha, 2021).

A different account of the problem that every industry will face in the case of releasing on OTT platforms and the importance of the lives of the theatre industry workers. The infrastructure has received significant funding. Such shows produce a lot of work prospects in addition to cash. Approximately 2 lakh people currently rely on this industry as their primary source of income. Therefore, if this pattern persists, there will be grounds for worry (Iyer, 2020).

In India, over 50 low-budget films were released straight on OTT in 2019 according to the 2020 FICCI-EY report. OTT ensures a larger audience for independent films with unknown titles. Advertising and publishing expenses are reduced. For them, a theatrical release is an expensive effort because distributors don't seem to be all that interested. Thus, it saves lesser films but cannot take the role of the exhibition sector. As a result, even when theatres continue to have high attendance, the presence of streaming services cannot be felt. Every movie needs a distinct approach to stand out in a digital release because the rules are varied. And as this happens the workers are affected and they are in the thought of searching for other jobs during the pandemic (Pathak, 2020).

GD Ideas (2022) discusses that many theatre employees are in danger due to the expansion of OTT platforms. OTT platforms are generating lots of new opportunities, but they are highly skilled professions. Additionally, theatre owners have invested millions of rupees in infrastructure. However, as a result of OTT platforms, they are no longer receiving adequate returns on their investment. A few members of the film business are blaming OTT platforms for the box office failure of some films. It is somewhat accurate because many people are reluctant to visit movie theatres as films will eventually be published on OTT platforms. Not everyone currently owns a smart TV or smartphone. Furthermore, many individuals must visit

movie theatres to see and participate in 3D and 4D films. Therefore, OTT services cannot entirely replace theatres OTT platforms are pricey for those who only sometimes watch films. Releases of Indian films in the US and Europe typically generate enormous earnings for the industry. However, they are losing one of their main sources of income because of the release of films on OTT platforms.

The Movie Employees Theatre Union (CMTU) today addressed the issue of movie theatre employees and discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted each of them individually in a vehement letter to the Telangana State Film Chamber of Commerce (TSFCC). Despite the Supreme Court's ruling, which mandated that employees receive full pay during the lockdown, several movie theatre owners only paid their staff 20% to 30% of their actual salaries, according to the letter. The first lockdown, which took place from March to November 2020, was used as a justification in a considerably greater number of instances, leading to either no pay at all or, worse, firings of staff, it continued. The union claimed in their letter that the closure of theatres and the consequent "apathy" of theatre owners had made it impossible for them to support their families. These employees are currently living hand to mouth and are unable to handle the circumstances. According to the union, the aforementioned factors were causing more than 20,000 workers to suffer.

Theatre professionals in the city have become volunteers and frontline workers due to the pandemic drama playing out in real life. As the globe serves as their stage, these artists have even transformed into street dog feeders to raise money for those in need. Popular theatre performers like comedian Pavan Kumar had to turn their attention to those who were negatively impacted by the shutdown, they are making sure that during the lockdown, and daily wage workers who live in slums have a full stomach (Deccan Herald, 2021).

The theatre employees in Telangana had requested to the President of TSFCC, take note of the problems experienced by staff members of various cinemas throughout Telangana. They were inspired to compose the letter since the first and second COVID-19 lockdowns severely impacted the situation of movie theatre employees throughout the state of Telangana. They are not able to find any other jobs during the pandemic period and are suffering very badly due to this (The Siasat Daily, 2021).

Many employees are working with movie theatres and multiplexes across the nation who have a similar tale to share. The staff at these establishments is busy figuring out how to make a living while the proprietors of movie theatres and multiplexes wait for the audience to arrive. They were impacted by the coronavirus epidemic as well, although in a different way. Some people's pay has decreased as a result of the lockdown. Many others are looking for new possibilities after recently losing their employment. Many of these workers are immigrants in the big cities who support their families solely. The migrant worker added that he has to find work with better pay alternatives to support his mother, older brother, and sister-in-law who live in his hometown (Economic Times, 2022).

2.9 CONCLUSION

Most of the studies related to OTT platforms show how digital media influenced the audience during the Covid-19 pandemic. One of the worst hits was about theatre owners whose hardships socially and economically are not studied globally. The theatres were one of the first sectors that got completely shut down initially. In states like Kerala, even though there were relaxations in every other industry, the theatres had to remain shut for longer periods. Many theatre owners are still trying to cope with the losses they had during the pandemic and it is important to study how economically and socially they are suffering.

CHAPTER – 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This research aims to explore the lives of the theatre owners as OTT platforms came into picture. This study is carried out among the theatre owners in Trivandrum district, which has the highest number of theatres in the state. The theatre industry was one major sector that has major issues. The change in audience preference parallely changed their minds to be confined into the comfort of their homes and watch movies on OTT platforms. Research Methodology refers to how a particular study is conducted it includes the specific research questions along with which the methods of study that is conducted, the methods of data collection, from whom the data is collected and the data analysis techniques

3.2 TITLE

Effect of The OTT Platforms on the lives of theatre owners in Trivandrum district.

3.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

General Research Question

- What are the effects of the OTT platforms on the lives of the theatre owners in Trivandrum district?

Specific Research Question

- How has the rise of OTT platforms impacted the income of the theatre owners?
- What are the key challenges faced by theatre owners in the era of OTT platforms, and how have they adapted their business models to remain competitive?
- How has the availability of streaming services affected the attendance and ticket sales for theatrical releases, and what strategies have theatre owners employed to attract audiences?
- What did the theatre owners do to maintain the electronic equipment's when the theatres were shut down?

3.4 APPROACH OF THE STUDY

In this research, qualitative has been used to study the above stated research questions. Qualitative approach helps to have an in depth understanding of the theatre owners and their issues are being done and for this research as the issues of theatre owners need an in depth view and this type of approach is being used. As theatre owners and their lives need an in-depth analysis from knowing about aspects related to their personal life and also about their lives which are revolving around the theatre and the profit that they make from these theatres.

As case study is used in this research about the lives of theatre owners, which is flexible to collect data through various means and this method can be used to capture the content and the lived reality of the theatre owners and to understand the issues they face in their professional lives and how this has affected them in their personal lives as well which makes case study the most suitable here in this research.

3.5 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY AREA

The study has been carried out among the theatre owners in Trivandrum district. The rationale for selecting Trivandrum district is that it has the highest number of theatres than in any other districts in Kerala and as the OTT platforms came into rise they had been hit very badly as people switched into the comfort of staying at home and watching movies on OTT. The capital district in which numerous number of multiplexes are found and most theatres have multiple screens and the rush that was seen in theatres in the district and celebrations in the theatres are all something which is commonly seen which clearly depicts the film enthusiasm in the people's minds, but it's been quite some time since there are changes in this pattern and even many theatres were shut down in the district in the last few years. In this study 2 theatres in the Corporation, 2 in Municipality and 1 in Panchayat regions are being studied.

3.6 SAMPLING

The purposive non probability sampling is used by the researcher here as a selected group of theatre owners are been selected, who are mostly those who traditionally are in this theatre business. This sampling method is the most suitable here in this research as a group based on the purpose of the study are selected.

3.7 SOURCES OF DATA

In research, the term primary respondents refers to the people or organizations that are actively participating in a study or survey and who supply the data or information that the study is trying to gather and analyze. These respondents are the ones who respond to questions, take part in interviews, finish surveys, or provide other research-related input such as their ideas or experiences. These respondents are referred to as primary in order to set them apart from secondary sources, which could be already-existing data, papers, or records that researchers analyze but did not voluntarily gather themselves. The primary respondents are chosen based on the research's goals, approach, and target population. In this research the primary respondents include the theatre owners from whom related data is being collected who share their experiences and issues that they face in the industry. Secondary data sources include newspapers, articles, journals from which various informations regarding theatre industry, theatre owners and their problems are found.

3.8 TOOL OF STUDY

Interview Guide is used in this research as the tool of study. Questions regarding their personal data to the changes the theatre industry has brought on them are being included in the interview guide.

3.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Though in-depth case study has been carried out to understand the impact of the OTT on the lives of the theatre owners, it has been found that the respondents were not open enough to reveal everything such as anything that is against any political party which they are in favor of and also regarding taxes and anything that is against the party that give funding for their favour. Not sure whether everything said by the respondents are valid data.

Second the problems faced by the theatre owners varied and not be the same for all, it can vary depending on the locality and various resources that are available to them

CHAPTER – 4

DATA INTERPRETATION & ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The OTT platforms and its rise had changed the audience preferences and it was seen that many shifted from the big screen views to the OTT platforms. As this changed happened the worst affected were the theatre owners whose lives revolved around the theatres. These changes had huge impacts on them and many were distracted due to this. As the data collected it was found that many theatre owners are affected and that they are finding ways to cope up with this changes in the lives.

This chapter includes the data that is collected in relation to the questions of the interview guide. The data collected are presented below.

4.2 NARRATION OF CASES

In the following passages the lived experiences of the cases are described with all details. For the sake of confidentiality, the cases are represented as case1, case 2, case 3, case 4, case 5.

Case 1

“I am Girish Chandran owner of Sree Padmanabha theatre and New Theatre of Trivandrum district aged 53 years, who got into the theatre business which my grandfather had started and was traditionally handed over to me. The theatre is almost 87 year old and I took charge of the theatre in 1997 which was handed over to me from my father. This theatre is one of the prime theatres in the district and located in the Centre of the city and most of the fan shows are celebrated here. We also have 2 screens here “he says Girish Chandran, a theatre owner says” Content is the King”. Any movie that comes to the theatre let it be of any superstar, what is needed is content and that is what attracts the audience to rush into the theatres and enjoy the movie there. Girish Chandran owns two theatres in Trivandrum district, Sree Padmanabha and New Theatre. The Padmanabha Theatre was owned by his grandfather which is now run by him and it has a remarkable history. The situation of the theatre owners is worse because very less movies were made profitable as one main reason is OTT and movies are made with a business strategy in mind like for the OTT platforms also.” The window to OTT is very small”, he says. Nowadays movies are going into OTT after 30 days, even though there was a decision

made to increase it to 42 days, but actually, 60-90 days are needed for a movie to become a hit as the perception of the audience has changed. When there is a movie released in the theatre without a not strong star cast, the audience would think that there is no need to go to the theatre to watch such a movie as it will come to OTT. But if it's a high-budget movie with a noticeable star cast people will come into the theatre to watch it." Most people need the big screen experience while watching a movie" says Girish. The OTT-released movies are mainly lowbudget movies that are created to be watched in the comfort of the home." These OTT movies are not suited in theatres and this backlog will be cleared away within 3-4 months" says Girish. Movies with real good content will come and all we need to do is wait for them. Some movies were played just for one show and left the theatres as the quality of movies is necessary. There was a decision made by the theatre owner association that "Movie Quality" is important, but this term is too subjective, and implementing such a thing is not something right as judging a movie based on quality. Some movies get rejected even though is a strong star cast, as strong content is needed for movies to persuade people to come and watch them on the big screen. For example Adhipurush this movie had great hype but it had no content which eventually led to the movie not being played on the big screen. "I aim to give the best cinematic experience to viewers at affordable rates," says Girish. Everyone has the freedom to work in any field and the right to do their business as per their needs and no one can question it" opines Girish. The rise of web series and the main actors playing lead roles in these web series probably would take cinema to a secondary level. And as the mainstream actors go into web series then there is a chance for the audience to get attracted to these which is something that the theatre owners cannot talk about or discuss as it's the personal choice of the actors. The frontline actors in the industry have their own production houses and which is a very good aspect and we can never compare the theatre releases and OTT web series as both are different. "The content in theatres and the OTT web series are different and can never be compared, but the content in web series is improving a lot, he says, The movie 2018 came in as Thrissur Pooram for us, but now that's all gone away, the movies that came after that were very disappointing and we are back to square one .If an above-average product is not coming to the theatre every month, then it is very difficult to move forward in such a situation. Then the only expected times are Onam season, pooja season, and in Malayalam certain movies are coming up like King of Kotha which is a Dulquer movie and also Nivin Paulys movie. Also, Mohanlal, Mammooty, and Suresh Gopi's movies are coming up but all as to be a hit then only we will progress. The movies driving the theatre are other languages movies like Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada. Hindi and English movies do not create much impact in the theatres. "We expect Dulquers King of Kotha to be a hit as it's his theatre release after the movie Kurup we have a great hype for the movie",

“It is always easy to satisfy a fan, but not the audience and it's this audience who are important he adds “We are ready to accept movies with no mass appeal”. The movie Sita Raman had no mass appeal but still that movie influenced the audiences as content is important for any audience who comes into the theatre. “Malaikottai Valiban will break all collection records” In addition to Mohanlal, filmmaker Lijo has a sizable fan base. Lijo will be doing a full-length mass entertainer for the first time. He stated that the only Lijo Jose movie that can be classified as being entirely commercial is Angamali Diaries. Producer Shibu Baby John previously stated to John Q Studio that "Malaikottai Valiban" is an entire action movie and that it will be released in theatres by the end of 2023.

Case 2

“Rani Theatre has 2 screens and provides a good cinematic experience to the audience who come here to watch movies. This is one of the main theatres in Nedumangadu. And we provide a lot of facilities for our audience here. This theatre was traditionally given to me and decided to go along in this business says the owner Babu Raj. We had renovated our theatres 2 years ago and after that many are coming into the theatres”, this is one theatre which serves as a prime theatre for the audience in Nedumangad and many people are found to come into the theatres to watch movies which catch their view and the ones for which they need the big screen experience “says Babu Raj “Movies with no quality will not come into the theatres,” says FEUOK had given warning letters to certain companies to be specific he says about the company which took the movie Pachuvum Albhudavilakum. We need faith in our creation he comments. It's because some directors don't have faith in the movie they take they push it into the OTT platforms and remove them from the theatres in a short span low than 20 -28 days with the feeling that it won get many views in the theaters. The movie 2018 as Jude Anthony, the director of the movie says, he took the movie with a lot of hard work and he had faith in his work and that is what everyone needs to understand. The theatre owners have the capacity and experience to understand and evaluate a movie based on whether the movie has the quality of being shown on the big screen and only movies with qualities will be shown on the big screen. There are some movies with no particular plot that is bought into the theatre and that are not needed and the theatre owners association is in a plan to only welcome movies with quality, which is to be implemented soon.

“We don't want 300 movies in a year, we just need less than 100 movies but all with good quality”, he says. A movie can either be a hit or a flop, all this depends on the fate of a movie. Some movies taken by some leading companies mostly see the hit phase rather than it becoming

a flop, the theatre owners can evaluate whether a movie will succeed or become a flop as we have experience in this area

“Many movies are created with OTT platforms in their minds, as they can create a much more profit from the release of their movie in these platforms,” he says. Many movies are just released for a sake in the theatres and then they are pulled off the theatres and led into the OTT platforms. The decision to release movies with minimal quality is very necessary as the audience can think that there is no need to spend some money to watch a certain movie on the big screen and they often wait for it to be released on the OTT platform as their expenditure will be less, but if the movie provides a great experience on the big screen then audience rushes into the theatre at any cause.

“Previews are not needed actually” he adds. There are other criteria based on which a judgment of whether a movie becomes a hit or flop is being evaluated. The movie Romancham which became a hit was rejected by certain distributors even though they previewed it and that's not what's needed as a movie can be evaluated based on the experience the owners have with the movie and their quality. The theatre owners have an experience of 40-50 years of running a theatre and it's not the audience who can sense the essence of a movie but the owners. Comfort is one element that pulls the audience into OTT.”I can watch a particular movie on my mobile or the big screen in my hall” –this makes people erase the theatre view from their minds which is the issue that affects us.

FEUOK had taken certain measures against our issue and that is one major reason why the movie Marakkar was viewed on the big screen which later went into OTT also after 15 days, later on, that was extended to 30 days and no movie has come into the OTT platform in a period less than. It is because of the constant efforts of the association that such an action was taken.

It was needed by many that theatre and OTT must go parallel and that's how it has to work. But that's not the case and that is not encouraged.” There are a lot of people behind it, who are strong economically, the producers, the distributors, and many more, and its FEUOK that is trying to remove them from such initiatives” he says. It is because of the decision made by

FEUOK that movies released in theatres are not simultaneously released in the OTT and if those movies are not being released in that way then there won't be any kind of cooperation with those producers in any manner. It is fine if any movies are directed and released on the

OTT platforms. Those movies cannot be taken to theatres and the owners are fine with it.” Do not make us and the audience fools” he added. There was a comment made by one among the audience as the Fahad Fasil movie Pachuvum Albhuthavilakum came to OTT that if this movie came this earlier to OTT then there was no need to spend money to watch it on the theatre screen and statements like this make things more clear that any person will choose it the other way. Those affected are always the owners and the workers whose lives revolve around the theatre and the theatre functionings.

The problems that the theatre owners face as the movies are attracted to the Over Top Platform and the impact that it creates on their economic and social life and how their lives especially of the traditional theatre owners who know the pulse of movie and the audience are important to understand.” Quality can never be compromised here”, he says as that is needed for any movie to boom in the big screen experience and make every audience satisfied with what they need as they leave the theatres.

Case 3

Kerala State Film Development Corporation (KSFDC) Kairali, Sree, Nila owns the Kairali theatre looks after the functioning of the theatre now. This is a government funded theatre and all the activities of the theatre are in the hands of KSFDC. “As people switched into the OTT Platform and chose to not experience movies on the big screen the most affected are the theatre owners and workers who depend on this industry,” he says the theaters give employment to those who are skilled or unskilled. Even during the Covid-19 pandemic period one of the most affected was the movie industry. There was no way to even pay rent or any of the workers who are related to the theatres and whose lives revolve around them. Many workers had gone in search of other jobs as they had to survive. “I had many workers, but as I couldn't pay them during the crises they left their jobs here”. The migration of the workers as they understood that their lives will not be proper as they depend on this industry as they were paid very less during the pandemic.” But it's not the pandemic that made our lives terrible, as OTT came as a trend we got destructed” he says, “The OTT platforms were still existing before the pandemic during the lockdown they gained more strength”. More people were attracted to OTT and came to know about such a way for entertainment during the pandemic period as there were no other options for entertainment that was available to the audience. It was the theatres that were one sector to be opened at last after the Covid relaxations came into being. The OTT platforms are very easily accessible to many and those in remote areas who cannot go to a theatre always and

they choose to watch a movie on their phones and not move to the theatre to watch one.” The one who needs the big screen experience will come no matter what, if the quality of a movie is promising “, he says. A movie needs to have quality. It need not be a movie starring a superstar or a big-budget movie, even though the content is simple all that is needed is quality, and that's what attracts the audience. Certain movies that came into the theatres recently had been a flop and there was not much view in the theatres for these movies. Most people start to think that there is no use to watch a movie in the theatre which has no quality as there is more spending to do so and OTT platforms are better in these cases.

“Business and profits and important for everyone, but it shouldn't be done by putting down one sector”, he says. Many movies were given to OTT platforms by producers just days after it was released on the big screen. This act of theirs had very badly affected the theatre owners. It is okay when a movie is given to the OTT platforms but what is needed is that a certain period is required before it is taken away from the big screen. The movie 2018 had bought a change in the theatre as it stayed a bit longer on screen. “Some movies need to be experienced in the theatres and watching it on TV or mobiles will not create a huge impression of the movie on the minds of those watching it.”

FEOUK has decided to decide that the theatre owners have the right to decide whether a specific movie has to be released on the big screen or not. “We understand the needs of our audience and so understand which movie will bring us more collection, so can decide on this matter as the quality of a movie is very important when a movie and the theatre owners are concerned about it.

“Content is the king and that is the universal truth, “he says. Certain movies like KGF, and RRR has shown that the theatres and always better than OTT as certain movies can only be enjoyed in the theatres. In the theatre, the audience gets an amazing sound quality and an atmosphere that we will not get in the OTT view. Watching a movie like Avatar on mobile or TV never delivers the output that is needed and it turns out that to be watching a normal movie.

“The cinematic experience can never be replicated in the OTT platforms,” he says. Many of the theatres are found shifting to new strategies of providing better view landscapes to the audience in a way that attracts more people to it. The OTT platforms have not entirely taken away the audience's interest in the theatrical experience as the thrill of watching a movie on the big screen exists as it. The changes made in the sound system in the theatres and the viewing

experience attract more people to the theatre views. Certain movies don't need a theatrical experience but still attract many to theatres due to their content.” Sita Ramam is one such feelgood movie that had a good number of the audience coming to see it as it has a quality and a simple but rich content”. This is what is needed in the theatres for the audience. Let it be any movie of a superstar or new face if it is rich in content, people will flow toward theatres even though the movie belongs to any genre. Movies like Romanjam many watched on OTT said that the movie had not much to be praised about as those who watched it on the big screen found certain scenes very interesting and funny to watch but those who watched it on OTT they never found anything appealing in the movie. “Every movie lover wants the experience of the big screen, I enjoy it on the big screen”. The theatre owners have changed their strategies to attract the audience by reducing the ticket fares and also by adopting other ways to make the possibility of flow of audience into the theatres.

There were times when a movie reaches 100 or 200 days of running in the theatres, but that's not how it works day,30 – 40 days is the maximum for certain movies to be running on the big screen and then they go into the OTT platform and many people view these movies from other sources.” After a movie is released the excitement of viewing it and discussions on it exist for a week and then it's like going to another topic”. The number of days a movie remains on the big screen doesn't count and what is needed is the value, the money that is made within the minimum number of days. It does not have to be a Malayalam movie, let it be a movie of any language, everything has value. Certain movies are taken away from the theatres and given to OTT and even strikes were arranged by organizations of theatre owners against this action that is done by the producers of the movies.

“The government must understand our issue and help us”. A discussion with the producers association and to make certain decisions on the same, it is important that everyone thinks from the sides of the owners and understand the issues that the owners face with the advent of the OTT platforms and the fight for releasing movies on this platform.

Case 4

“Dreams theatre Attingal has a history of almost 30 years is owned by Joshiy, and I am 55 year old. My family comprises of 4 members and I live by the earnings from the theatre business. This theatre is traditionally owned and transferred to me from my ancestors. We have a lot of rush during certain movies as we have 3 screens here but that has gone down and we suffer a lot due to this.

“The producers are greedy and that is why they give their movies to OTT,” says, the owner.

Movie making should not alone be with the motive of making money, it's an art and the creation done by a person based on his thoughts. A movie that is created must be something that can be enjoyed by the audience as they see it. As a part of the industry, there is a chain of producers, distributors, and exhibitors and it is important that this chain is understood and is moved forward in the industry. In the beginning, as the producers gave their movie to the OTT they were a concept that any movie would be accepted on this platform but later on, the OTT platforms became very selective in this and every movie was not accepted here in the OTT platforms.” They became selective “.Only movies directed by specific directors and those acted by certain actors were taken into OTT releases as time passed.

Initially, as the theatre association put forward certain regulations to extend the period between a movie coming to the theatre and going to OTT many producers did not accept it, but as there was a regulation that only after the theatre release movies will be taken to OTT many producers were ready to accept that norm.” It’s all for survival and is all business “he says. The birth of movie stars and directors is all from this theatrical revenue and now they like to leave that completely aside by not thinking about where they all came into the picture. If a movie is made for OTT it has to be given directly to that platform.” Don't do anything that hurts the theatrical revenue as there are many who depend on this for survival” he says. “There is a mental construct in everyone including me even though I am a theatre owner that I can watch small movies on OTT as they come to the online platforms very fast “.This thought will come among every audience but what is important is that the theatre revenue has to also be adjusted along with all this. The government has not done anything to make the lives of the theatre owners much better from certain regulations which were put forward by the theatre owners many years before.

In the early times, there had been great communication among the theatre owners, producers, exhibitors, and distributors but now it's all just money that matters. After a movie becomes a superhit after its theatrical release now the distributors and found running to the OTT platforms without thinking about the theatre owners as they no longer need the theatre and they have another alternative which is the over-the-top platform which they depend upon after a certain point. The income and the stability of the owners are what that are being affected here and it destructed as there is a rush of movies into the online streaming platforms

“Our existence is also important”. No chain exists and it is the theatre owners who are being destroyed here at the highest rate than any others. Earlier there was hope as if none the movie fails more and more will come in continuous time but that is not how the picture is now as the movie that is made is of no quality that suits the theatrical space. All these reasons made FEUOK go on strike for their survival.

Few years before it was the producers association that came up with certain suggestions to the theatre owners to improve the cinematic experience in the theatres and had suggested making every theatre air-conditioned and so on. Now most of the theatres here are fully equipped from the seating facilities, and double screen to the sound experience that is provided here. But coming in the pandemic and everything was shut down.” Many theatres owners are in debt “.

The movie 2018 was not a lifesaver for many owners, only some had benefited from this the rest are still suffering and are expecting another movie that will come which will help them to clear their loans and debts that they have. The producers are now ok as if no theatre then OTT but that is not the case for the rest of the people in the industry like the people whose lives revolve around the income from the theatres. There is no upcoming movie in the Malayalam industry that is not expected to be a super hit like 2018 or Romanjam but there are certain other language movies that are expected to come as a proper theatrical release.

“The actors themselves create a movie and sell it, “he says, that is what is now observed in the industry. When issues like this arise they should be addressed by government officials and the concerned authorities as this is the lives of a group of people that is being changed and affected. Many say that OTT is cost-effective, but the movie is an art that is to be enjoyed which can only be enjoyed in these theatres and such an experience will not be provided in the comfort of homes.

“Disruptions are inevitable in any business but an arrangement can be made in this case, like an OTT release can be done only after 45 days if the movie is a hit or no time limit for others and this will be much more convenient”. Even if a Malayalam movie runs for 100 days, people don't necessarily go to the theatre, because there are so many movies released OTT every week. A common audience comes to watch the movie only for those movies where the theatre experience is essential. He is ready to wait for everything else to come to OTT.

Case 5

Mahesh L is the owner of the theatre Sindhu Cinemas in Venjaramoodu”. This theatre was run by my ancestors and was later taken on by me and now I currently depend of this theatre for living. We offer good cinematic experience and has 1 screen here. My family comprise of 5 members. “He says “The OTT platforms have made our lives miserable in every manner”, he says the release of movies in theatres and the very rapid shifting of them to online platforms had disrupted the lives of theatre owners. The comfort that the audience chooses when it comes to watching a movie at home has now developed to a great extent. When people refuse to go into the theatres the affected are all those whose lives depend on these theatres and the revenue they earn from them.” Most of the theatres have reduced the cost of food items at our cafeteria, we adopted this strategy also expecting that this won't remain as an excuse for not coming into the theatres” he says. The changes that the theatre owners are making to attract more audience by changing the picture of the theatres also involve changes they make in the food prices at the theatre.” Many complain about this and I feel that changes like these would at least bring them closer to the big screen”. The has been a change in the number of movies that are released in the theatres in the Malayalam industry particularly. More other language movies are coming up like Telugu and Tamil, which are welcomed by the audience, English movies do not get much rush as the others have. For certain movies, even though they have great publicity the bookings to watch them here are very less. The Kerala Story was a movie with a lot of discussion but the people coming to watch them are very less, it may be because the audience has this concept that they can view on their mobiles through OTT as that is the general trend observed. “We had huge damages to our equipment, and we are still trying to clear our debts”, he says. “As we have a huge expense on electricity we find it very difficult to pay and also our workers in time “The expenses are very high and when the revenue that they make is affected all their functioning is also disrupted. The theatre owners need the support that they earlier had from the producers for the smooth functioning of everyone who is related to this industry. Even though there were a lot of decisions regarding the time gap that is needed between theatrical

and OTT releases still it failed to be met by the producers who rush in for money that they get from these releases of movies in the OTT platforms. “There were attempts to release movies on OTT and the big screen simultaneously and there was a strong global support behind this but our association had restricted this, which made them give up on this decision.

The decision to not work with the producers who do not follow these regulations regarding what we have given and not release their movies on screen was made by FEUOK. Many actors have supported the release of movies on OTT after the theatrical releases as actors had turned into producers and they only start to think about their own needs. No consideration is given to these people who work in the industry and they are forced to shut down as there is no other option existing. During the pandemic, it was them who were told to shut down the theatres first and were the last to open after the relaxations came into being, but it's not just the pandemic that affected them, the pandemic had paved a great way to the boom of the OTT platforms.

4.3. INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

4.3.1. Financial Loss

The expansion of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms, which provide streaming services to customers directly over the Internet, has had a big influence on the entertainment sector, particularly owners of conventional theatres. While OTT platforms have made it easier for viewers to access a wide variety of content, they have also brought several difficulties for theatre owners financially. Movies, TV shows, original series, and documentaries are just a few of the types of content that can be found on OTT platforms and are all accessible on demand because people may now choose from a wider variety of entertainment options from the comfort of their homes, there is an intense competition for the interest of audiences which causes great financial crises for the theatre owners. Others who enjoy movies may decide to watch films at home instead of going to the cinema because new releases are now readily available on OTT platforms shortly after or simultaneously with their theatrical premieres. This may result in lower box office earnings for theatre owners. The losses the owners face as the movies go into the OTT platforms when the number of people rushing towards the theatres becomes less and people choose to watch movies in the comfort of their homes this creates a shortage in the income in the theatres. A blockbuster once coming to the theatres and people rushing to see it will never change the pattern that these owners face in their financial aspects

as after this wave and hype the movie gave everything is back to normal. The consistency which was there before is not the same as it is now as the theatres need a series of movies in a stretch that can to an extent clear the debts they have.

The conventional theatrical window the period between a film's theatrical premiere and its availability on home video or streaming services has been getting shorter. The capacity of theatre owners to draw crowds during that crucial initial release time may be impacted by the distribution of some films on OTT platforms only a few weeks following their theatrical premiere. This availability of movies on these OTT platforms within days after the theatrical release is a common observable pattern in this industry this is one element that leads to the financial loss of the theatre owners. Certain movies which the audience is interested to watch on their mobile phones do not draw the audience into the theatres and this makes the theatre owners cut certain shows as they have no audience coming and they have huge financial losses when the movie is run for a handful of audience.

The availability of content on OTT platforms makes it easier for unauthorized users to pirate and distribute copyrighted material. This can lead to revenue losses for both content creators and theatre owners.

Smaller independent theatres may have more difficulty getting original designing and negotiating favourable conditions, whereas larger theatre chains may have more bargaining strength with studios. This doesn't imply that it's just the small independent theatre owners that are suffering but their losses are comparatively higher than the larger theatre chains. Theatre owners may need to make efforts to modernize their spaces by introducing new technologies, like premium sound systems, high-quality projectors, and comfortable seating, to remain competitive and draw audiences. These investments are expensive. Even after doing all this the audience not coming makes them suffer huge financial crises as they face a lot of difficulties and invest a lot to make the face of their theatres more appealing to the audience.

Even though all of this has been done the audience rushing into theatres has declined and this still has increased the financial crises among the owners which is a continuous observable pattern here. During the pandemic time as the theatres were closed the electronic equipment remained unused and this led to the equipment being repaired and serviced well before the proper usage which also made a lot of money being spent at the hands of the theatre owners. All these raised situations had made them take loans and are not able to pay them properly. Some of them even had to sell their other properties for temporary relief but still, the situation is not under their control.

Many theatre owners and workers took their own lives as they couldn't bear these financial issues and they have no other alternative system that supports their lives here. Even after the release of the movie in 2018, nothing has changed because it was just a temporary relief and after that movie, the other releases that came into the theatres were all a flop and this never created a great change in their lives. The financial losses they had affected their families also as for many of the theatres owners the only way they gained money was through the income that they got from these theatres. These issues were made worse by the COVID-19 epidemic, since closures and restrictions on operations resulted in underutilised equipment, repair costs, and an even greater burden on theatre owners' finances. Some theatre owners and employees sadly took their own lives as a result of the weight of this load. The industry is fighting to reestablish stability, but despite any short relief that some blockbuster films may provide, the underlying financial problems still exist. All parties involved theatre owners, content producers, studios, and viewers—must work cooperatively on the road to recovery. In order to compete in this shifting environment, the traditional theatre industry may need to rethink the theatregoing experience, fortify relationships with the local community, and implement adaptable economic structures. The difficulties theatre owners confront ultimately highlight the necessity for flexibility and support systems that can maintain cinemas' cultural value in the face of ever changing technical breakthroughs. As a result of the growth of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms, a new era of entertainment consumption has begun, posing both advantages and difficulties for the conventional theatrical sector. Theatre owners have seen a wide range of complex and significant effects from OTT platforms, with the main focus being on financial difficulties. A wide variety of content can now be enjoyed by viewers from the comfort of their homes thanks to the accessibility and convenience of OTT platforms.

4.3.2. Changes in Decisions of Producers & FEOUK

The Film Exhibitors United Organisation of Kerala had taken various decisions against the movies being given into the OTT platforms as their lives are completely dependent on the theatres and movies that are released here. After OTT gained its popularity many of the movies were being pushed away from the theatres very fastly to the OTT platform. FEOUK had taken a very strong decision that a gap of 42 days is needed between movie theatrical and OTT releases and also stated that those producers who make any difference in this their movies will not be shown again on the big screen. The decisions made by the theatre association were after proper discussions with everyone in the association as when affected all the owners across the state are affected. Most of the movies that had come to the theatres were not much in quality

and most of them were created with the OTT platforms in mind. The lives that the directors and actors have been created from these big screens as they all grew from the audience accepting them on the big screens. But when the time changed and more profit was made by giving the movies to OTT the producers started to shift away from the theatres some movies were directly released on OTT without the theatre screens seeing them. All these actions from the sides of the producers had made the theatre owners association take certain actions against these actions as their lives were the ones that were affected. The theatre owners consulted the government authorities for support and help. FEUOK has asked the government to allow theatres to charge a minimum service fee of Rs.5 for each ticket sold. A service fee of Rs.3 is being taken per ticket, according to the government complaint made by FEUOK. When movie theatres were more than 50% full, this quantity was sufficient. A service charge of Rs 3 is, however, insufficient at this time, with theatre occupancy being less than 5%. FEUOK highlighted that given the current situation, the service charge should be raised to at least Rs 5.

FEUOK decided to charge a minimum screening fee for a certain number of films. This is because theatres frequently only pull three to five people, which makes it challenging for them to pay their bills, including the cost of electricity. They intend to collect screening fees from the producers of films that we consider to be of low quality to address this issue. No projects will be screened that won't pay this amount. The theatre owners can judge whether the movie that comes to them will attract people as they know the pulse of the audience. If a movie has quality then automatically there will be a rush in the theatres it need not be a movie acted by a very well-known actor for people to come to watch them on the big screen, all that's needed is quality, and that's all the movie producers have to take into consideration as this is an art.

The state's theatre owners' association, the Film Exhibitors United Organisation of Kerala (FEUOK), has ordered a ban on filming First Day First Show (FDFS) reactions and internet reviews inside theatres.

The recent film releases on over-the-top (OTT) platforms are causing conflict once again in the Malayalam cinema business, which has already resulted in several run-ins between exhibitors and producers. Late in July, the Kerala Film Chamber of Commerce received a request from the Film Exhibitors United Organisation of Kerala (FEUOK) that films be made available for OTT release just 56 days following the theatrical release. The Film Chamber and the Producers

Association have not yet responded, but the FEUOK has stated that it will implement the new rule starting with Onam and that, after that, it will not work with producers or stars who choose to disregard it. As many theatres were modified after the producers had told the theatre owners about the need to transform the theatres so that more people will come to the theatres when they receive good hospitality but the same producers are those who are seen changing their words and giving away all their movies to the OTT that too OTT releases are happening. The gap between a movie shifts from theatres to OTT is not something to which most producers agree too and so this has made FEUOK make strict decisions regarding this. As the industry only prospers when all its branches function together it is needed that an evaluation of them is done.

The decision to directly release Malayalam movies in OTT is another major issue that the owners face as it is always a pattern for movies to come into the theatres and only then move on into any other medium but that's not the trend now which created a lot of tension among the theatre owners around.

4.3.3. Government Instructions

Government policies and laws have a significant impact on the environment that theatre owners operate in. This analysis looks at how regulations, funding, and cultural policies affect the opportunities and challenges faced by theatre owners in order to understand how government orders affect the problems they face. Government regulations frequently include rules concerning planning, licencing, accessibility, and safety. Although these rules are designed to guarantee public safety and high standards, they can put burdens on theatre owners. The overall profitability of theatre operations might be negatively impacted by strict compliance requirements since they can result in higher costs for renovations and modifications. It's vital for theatre owners to strike a balance between the necessity for safety and realistic business considerations. The economic future of theatre owners may be severely impacted by government directives about financial assistance and incentives. Financial strains can be reduced and industrial investment may begin via subsidies, grants, tax incentives, and lowinterest loans. However, uneven or insufficient assistance can make it difficult for theatre owners to fix operational issues, update facilities, and provide audiences with memorable experiences.

Government instructions about cultural policies may have an impact on the theatrical community's priorities. The public's impression of theatre experiences can be influenced by support for cultural preservation, promotion of regional arts, and acknowledgement of the significance of theatres as cultural centres. Effective cultural policies can raise patronage, increase attendance, and promote a feeling of community engagement, all of which have a favourable effect on the re Governments were prompted to develop guidelines for public health measures, such as lockdowns, capacity restrictions, and social division rules, as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic. Even though these guidelines were essential for everyone's safety, theatre owners faced significant financial consequences. Challenges requiring adaptable techniques, such as virtual performances and digital efforts, were caused by decreased audience capacity, cancelled performances, and rising health and safety costs. Venue sources of theatre owners. Government policies that promote the use of innovation and technology can influence how theatre owners adjust to shifting audience habits. Theatre owners can diversify their revenue streams and engage people in ways other than traditional performances with the help of guidelines that encourage the use of digital platforms, virtual reality, and interactive events. Progress, however, can be hampered by a lack of direction or funding for technology integration.

4.3.4. Joblessness

Here researcher tries to analyse the main reasons for occupational mobility among theatre employees. Joblessness is one major aspect. As the owners of the theatres find a very difficult time as not much money is being earned by them at the theatres as very few movies have turned to pull audiences into the theatres. The theatre and the movie industry revolves around the lives of many and not just those who hold high positions including the directors or producers or the theatre owners. The workers who work along with them especially when concerned with theatres which include project staff, cafe staff, cleaning staff, security, assistant manager, and ticket counter manager are the major professionals who work in the theatre industry and other concerned workers had great suffer as the theatre industry faced a collapse in the last few years. The theatre owners couldn't afford to pay them. Most of the theatres are occupied in rented buildings and not being able to pay even these rents on time was a great issue that they faced. Most of the theatre's owners had taken loans from the banks and were not able to pay them back as they had no money. This situation is alarming as even the staff couldn't be paid their salary on time.

As the OTT platform gained its boom and the coming of people to the theatres to get an experience of the big screen diminished there was no way of income for the traditional and the non-traditional theatre owners whose lives revolve around the income that they receive from these theatres. There was a trend during the pandemic to be particularly because that was the time that the entire entertainment industry had faced a terrible hit from the lockdown restrictions that were imposed by the government. The theatres were the first to be shut and the last to be open in the State and this act had a great effect on the lives of the theatre workers especially those from other parts of the country.

The workers were forced to move away in search of other jobs as they understood that depending on these theatres are not going to help them in any way. Even though the theatres were opened at times to clean the place still as it was a once-in-a-blue-moon activity the cleaning workers were not paid enough so they decided to go in search of alternative jobs.

But just keeping the pandemic time apart even before that as the theatres did not get movies that did not have that much quality to attract more people and the rush to watch a movie as every movie became available online and on the phones of the people way before. As these rush towards the theatres became less the incomes made by the theatres also was reduced and there was no way for the theatre owners to pay their workers their salary. Many people's lives were destroyed as it is always hard to find another job. Large established theatres were able to cope with this as they had some resources to help the theatre workers even though they had to send many of the workers away but while the theatre is small and independent theatres faced great difficulty in retaining their staff. Although temporary assistance was given to workers and theatrical firms by government support and relief measures including incentives and financial aid, the overall impact on unemployment remained severe.

Finding another job was a great problem these workers faced and retaining the staff was also a very difficult job indeed for the owners. The collection made by blockbuster hits was like an incline and decline trajectory as this situation was never a constant as the previous days people depended on the theatres to watch any kind of movie for their entertainment. The OTT platforms attract the comfort of the audience but the lives that are behind it are very badly affected as the owners cannot afford to pay them. The theatre owners have lost many of their staff and had to appoint new staffs who also complain about being paid less compared to certain other theatres. As only a theatre can function well when all these function at the same time as

every audience coming to the theatre needs people who need hospitality and as these workers numbers become some do multiple roles and the owners have to pay more to them. A serious problem that has an impact on individual's capacity to support themselves is unemployment. People used to move to other areas, places, and countries for various reasons, including survival. To survive, getting a better job is an important goal.

4.3.5. Expectations about Future

While talking about how OTT impacted their lives we should understand that other reasons in front of them affect the proper functioning of the theatres. The issues regarding tax, and electricity bills which are high along with which the taxes imposed by the government are also increasing. This has an impact on the lives of the theatre owners. As the policies made by the government have to be met the theatre owners are in a struggle for good content movies in the theatres.

When the Malayalam movie industry is particularly being considered we understand that the audience simply does not rush to theatres to watch any movie, quality is very essential for them. While in Kollywood, it is seen that the audience is willing to watch any sort of movie on the big screen. Meeting the expectations of the audience is very important for every theatre owner in the industry as that is their particular need. Providing proper hospitality along with great content on the big screen has to simultaneously work out well for the theatre owners. The expectations of the theatre owners from lowering taxes that the government imposes on them is something that they very crucially need for their well-being. The electricity charges are tremendously growing at a very rapid rate and there is a need for these to also be addressed as the issues that the theatre owners are found to be facing. Not just the rise of OTT an issue that these theatre owners face but these side issues which are aligned along with these are also very dangerous in the lives of the theatre owners who depend on the big screen and the audience who come up to them for their support and well-being.

The expectation of a future where a mutual alignment between all these aspects is being put forward in this fast-evolving modern world is an expectation that these theatre owners have on their lives as many aspects are essentially needed to operate together for their lives to be in the proper tracks.

CHAPTER-5

MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. MAJOR FINDINGS

Theatre owners in Kerala's Trivandrum area have experienced a significant and complicated influence from OTT platforms. This chapter shows the findings of the study in reference to the data which is found and interpreted in the previous chapters.

The major findings of this study about the effect of OTT platforms on the lives of theatre owners are:

- Due to the shift in consumer preferences, there is now severe rivalry for the attention of viewers, which has put theatre owners who depend on moviegoers for their livelihood in financial peril. The theatrical window is getting shorter, and as a result, audiences are less likely to visit theatres during key initial release windows, which has an effect on box office receipts.
- Issues with piracy are also a result of the financial difficulties. Unauthorised users can more easily access content on OTT platforms, which makes it simpler for them to steal and disseminate copyrighted information. This could result in possible income losses for both content producers and theatre owners.
- Smaller independent theatres struggle to get good deals from studios and update their facilities to be competitive, which puts a bigger strain on them. Their financial viability is still being hampered by decreased audience participation despite improvements in infrastructure and technology.
- The FEUOK is pushing for a 42-day buffer between theatrical and OTT releases because to the quick transition of films from theatre to OTT platforms. The theatre owners' desire to protect the value of the theatre experience and the livelihoods that rely on it is reflected in these actions. The decisions made by FEUOK have been the result of extensive discussions within the association, taking into account the common interests of theatre owners throughout the state.
- FEUOK's demands to the government for a minimum service price per ticket and the imposition of a screening fee are made in recognition of the financial struggles theatre owners confront.

- FEUOK has taken the position that films may only be made available on OTT platforms after a set amount of time has passed since their theatrical premiere. The FEUOK's proactive approach serves as a reminder that cooperation and adaptability are necessary to solve the challenges as the landscape of cinema consumption changes.
- The role of government instructions in addressing the difficulties faced by theatre owners is crucial in determining how the theatre business will develop. The complicated nature of this relationship is shown by the complex interplay between the legal frameworks, financial assistance, cultural policies, and public health mandates.
- Government directives may help theatre owners overcome their operational and financial difficulties or they may make them worse. For the theatre industry to flourish sustainably, it is crucial to strike a balance between protecting public safety, advancing cultural enrichment, and fostering economic sustainability.
- Theatre proprietors may be given the freedom to adapt, innovate, and continue offering audiences worthwhile creative experiences with clear and consistent instructions, financial assistance, and incentives. Theatre owners and governments must create a positive partnership that addresses concerns and seizes possibilities. Government directives can help theatre owners overcome obstacles, stimulate creativity, and give audiences lasting value both now and in the future by encouraging an environment of collaboration, innovation, and support.
- The enormous difficulties the theatrical sector faces are shown by the occupational mobility among theatre workers, which is influenced by issues like unemployment. In addition to the directors, producers, and theatre owners, a large range of professionals, including project workers, cleaning crews, security guards, and managers, are all part of the intricate web of interactions in this sector.
- Many theatre professionals have thought about leaving in search of better employment opportunities. Many theatre professionals are considering alternative jobs in search of better employment opportunities, thereby depleting the talent pool in the field. It's crucial to understand the impact on people behind the scenes as theatres continue to manage these difficulties. The necessity for adaptable methods is highlighted by the departure of skilled employees, the financial burden on theatre owners, and the restructuring of a whole sector.

- Theatre owners confront other difficulties aside from the impact of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms on the traditional theatre industry. The correct operation of theatres and their viability are greatly impacted by a number of important variables, including the advent of OTT.
- Government rules and regulations, along with factors like high taxes and rising electricity costs, place a heavy financial strain on theatre owners. While they make an effort to offer their consumers high-quality information and a welcoming environment, these outside influences significantly threaten their profitability and way of life. Theatre owners' lives are made more difficult by differences in audience behaviour and tastes across various film industries, such as those between the discerning Malayalam audience and the more diverse Kollywood crowd fulfilling the demands. It becomes a complex balancing act to meet the demands of these many audiences while navigating financial restraints. Lower taxes, affordable electricity prices, and government policies that promote business operations are all things that theatre owners want. These elements are essential to their viability and capacity to offer high-calibre entertainment experiences that rival the comfort of OTT platforms. Theatre owners maintain optimism for a future in which these various elements can harmonize align despite these obstacles.
- To maintain the survival and vitality of traditional theatres in a constantly changing entertainment scene, a collaborative strategy that takes into account the interests of all stakeholders, including theatre owners, patrons, and legislators, is crucial. The fate of the traditional theatrical industry will ultimately depend on how these variables including the effect of OTT, tax laws, audience preferences, and operational costs converge.
- Working together to ensure that theatres have a bright future while retaining the special experience of watching a movie on a huge screen and seizing the opportunities offered by technological improvements is in the best interests of all parties concerned.
- The owners of theatres in the Trivandrum district have made investments in modernizing their facilities to stay competitive in the face of technological breakthroughs made by OTT platforms. Modern sound systems, comfortable seating, and high-quality projection technology have all been crucial to improving the theatre experience and competing with OTT platforms for ease of viewing from home.
- A more immersive and visually appealing movie-watching experience can be achieved by upgrading to digital projection systems with greater resolutions and

advanced visual capabilities. Purchasing innovative audio equipment, such as Dolby Atmos, to provide greater audio quality and surround sound effects that cannot be achieved at home. By adding premium seating options, larger chairs, and more spacious layouts, the seating arrangements and comfort are improved, resulting in a luxurious and comfortable movie going experience.

- Using 3D technology and special effects to present blockbuster films in a visually appealing format that draws viewers looking for a more satisfying cinematic experience. Implementing mobile apps and online ticketing platforms for easy booking, seat selection, and contactless payment alternatives to offer viewers a quick and secure ticket purchase procedure creating a more lively and interactive movie-going environment by adding interactive displays to the lobby to engage and entertain customers before and after showings.
- Exploring VR and AR technologies to offer interactive and immersive experiences related to movies or film-related content. All these changes made in the theatres were mainly due to suggestions put forward by the producers association, but when OTT releases made them profits they shifted away and started giving their movies to the OTT platforms this created huge financial problems among the theatre owners who modified their theatres accordingly, but these theatre changes that are made are the reasons that make the theatrical experience more attracting to the audience viewing movies on the big screen.

5.2. SUGGESTIONS

The difficulties theatre owners encounter are the result of a complicated interaction between changing consumer behaviour, operational costs, outside interruptions, and competitive pressures. Although these difficulties are great, they also offer chances for cooperation, innovation, and adaptation. To successfully handle these issues, theatre owners must use numerous techniques, such as audience engagement programmes, cost management measures, and adaptable business models. Additionally, collaboration with business groups and government officials can assist build an environment that will support the theatre sector's cultural and economic significance. Studies regarding the issues of these theatre owners are not

done effectively. There is a need for their issues to be addressed so that proper solutions can be provided to them when in need.

5.3. CONCLUSION

Through the present study, the researcher attempted to develop an understanding of the issues that the theatre owners in the Trivandrum district are facing due to the boom in OTT platforms. The study among the theatre owners in the Trivandrum area demonstrates the deep impact that OTT platforms have had on their daily lives and businesses. Although there are difficulties like falling box office income and worries about piracy, theatre owners are also taking possibilities to innovate and set themselves apart from online streaming alternatives. Theatre owners work to maintain their status as popular social centres that provide distinctive and immersive entertainment experiences by adjusting their content choices, advancing technical capabilities, and encouraging community interaction. The success of theatre owners in the Trivandrum district depends on their ability to negotiate the dynamic interaction between traditional theatres and the always-changing world of OTT platforms as the entertainment environment continues to change. Theatre owner's face a variety of difficulties, including financial limitations, shifting audience tastes, and technological developments. It takes a combination of strategic planning, working with new technologies, and putting the needs of the audience first to solve these issues.

Theatre operators may continue to offer distinctive and fascinating experiences that appeal to audiences of all ages and backgrounds by adjusting to the changing scene. While home viewing and streaming platforms offer convenience and flexibility, the impact of watching a movie on the big screen remains unparalleled. It offers an extraordinary and immersive experience that engages the senses and emotions, making it a cherished and timeless form of entertainment for audience's worldwide. Even if the popularity of streaming and digital platforms has increased entertainment options, many people still have a special place in their hearts for the theatregoing experience. It provides a singular and irreplaceable form of artistic expression and enjoyment with its fusion of visual spectacle, live performances, social participation, and immersive atmosphere. Although OTT platforms have transformed the way we consume media and entertainment, they have also created enormous problems for both the industry and society at large. For content producers, distributors, regulators, and legislators, finding a balance between the advantages and benefits of OTT platforms and tackling the problems they have raised is still a work in progress.

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ANNEXURE

Interview Guide

1. Can you briefly describe your personal background including how you got into the theatre business?
2. How long have you been in the theatre business?
3. What is the criteria for movies to be selected for displaying?
4. How are your expenses on electricity?
5. How many staffs are employed and their salary?
6. Do you have a manager?
7. Is the cafeteria owned by you or is given to someone else on lease?
8. Are you having profits or loss in the running of the cafeteria?
9. What changes have getting into such a field made in your personal life?
10. Have you observed any significant changes in the industry in recent years?
11. How long did it take for you to adjust to the ups and downs in the industry both economically and mentally?
12. What decision has FEUOK taken against the release of movies on the OTT platform after its theatrical release?
13. Certain movies are made exclusively for OTT and many talk about such a practice what comment do you have on this?
14. What is your opinion regarding the time gap of theatrical and OTT releases?
15. Do you believe that the availability of movies and shows on OTT platforms has influenced audience preferences?
16. Have you observed any specific genres or types of content that have become more popular or less popular in theatres because of OTT platforms?
17. What tactics have theatre owners used to attract audiences, and how has the availability of streaming services influenced audience numbers and ticket sales for theatrical releases?