


# Transforming the Media and Entertainment Industry: Cases From the Social Media Marketing World

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## ABSTRACT

Technology is the mast that keeps the flag of the entertainment industry flying high. As technology evolves and the mode and quality of entertainment changes vigorously, India represents one of the top 5 entertainment and media markets across the world. The growing usage of 3G, 4G, 5G, and portable devices, rising advertising revenues, as well as growing consumer demand has resulted in the growth of the Indian media and entertainment industry at a CAGR of 10.9% from FY 17-18. Constant support from TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India) and the Govt. of India has pushed the Indian media and entertainment (M&E) industry on a progressive growth path with a transformation of digital TV experiences, increased use of smartphones, advanced distribution channels, Convergence 4.0, the rise of social media, and the era of big data. Technology shifts have changed the way businesses use traditional and mass media and the way consumers consume media offerings. Recent reports received from the India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) claim that India's digital evolution will witness the number of internet users reaching 907 million by 2023. Fresh projections expect revenues for this sector to increase to 43.9 billion USD by 2024. The significant progression of this M&E ecosystem as well as the transformation in consumption practices brings up a strong need for a thorough investigation into the same. Some of the emerging digital tools and practices are throwing up new directions for traditional marketing methods, concepts, and applications. This manuscript traces the evolution of the M&E landscape and discusses specific cases from the M&E industry in India, where social media has been instrumental in hugely impacting the consumption of the M&E content as well as providing an opportunity for marketers through data analytics. The coverage of the manuscript is original, and the novelty of ideas make it an interesting read.

## KEYWORDS

Digital Convergence, Information and Communication Technology, Media and Entertainment, Social Media Marketing, Virtual World

## INTRODUCTION

The entertainment industry encompasses diverse aspects of entertainment including cinema, television, radio, theatre, music etc. and includes a large number of service providers which contribute to this sector. The media and entertainment industry represents a significant component of the economy of any country.

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While there are myriad forms of exhibition entertainment, and live entertainment, this manuscript primarily focusses on the mass media and electronic entertainment industry. The mass media sector includes Television, live entertainment (musical shows, theatre and plays, drams and sports), films, broadcasting, radio, music industry (concerts, bands, choirs, singers, music composers), new media (web and social media), and the electronic entertainment industry includes video games etc.

The proliferation of communication and entertainment devices, and the era of smartphones, smart TVs and tablets has created a period where consumers have on demand access to specific content that they want to consume. Additionally, social media has brought in a dimension of social sharing to the erstwhile entertainment consumption experience and TV show ratings and popularity are impacted by audience reviews and comments on social media networks, which are becoming the pillars of content credibility (Kang, 2010). The last decade has brought about tremendous change. The advent of digitisation has changed the way M&E companies produce and share content with consumers. The consumers have also evolved and become more digitally savvy. This manuscript attempts to answer some very important questions like-

- (i) What are the most significant transformations in the M&E industry over the last decade?
- (ii) How have M&E players evolved?
- (iii) How have the consumers evolved? Are they able to adopt the changes in technology at the same pace as the M&E companies? Do the M&E companies need to take some special measures to ensure that the consumers are comfortable with the adoption of digitisation? Do they need to segment the consumers and cater to them separately?
- (iv) How are M&E players using the vast volumes of data that they are able to collect about their consumers now? Can they use the same for enhanced profitability as well as enhanced consumer experiences?

The manuscript moves forward with a literature review followed by a section which discusses the changing landscape of the Media and Entertainment world and subsequently comments on *Media Consumption and the consumers* of today. In this section, a consumer segmentation methodology is discussed which can enable the M&E players to understand the consumer psyche. This is followed by a discussion on the social media practices of the newage M&E consumers. Subsequently a case based approach is used and three case studies are used to demonstrate how some new techniques, best practices or methods have been successfully adopted by 3 M&E players from India. These include-

- (i) The Indian Entertainment channel, Colors which has been successful in making use of online video streaming platforms, social media and Mobile Apps to reach out to consumers.
- (ii) Netflix, India, its use of social media and its data analysis efforts and subsequent learnings for other M&E players.
- (iii) NDTV Social and the usage of social media and mobile apps for the consumption of news

After evaluating these case studies, the manuscript proceeds to identify some important social media content objectives for M&E players. New technologies and methods will be successful only when all the stakeholders-organisations as well as consumers are able to use digitisation and social media to their maximum advantage.

## Literature Review

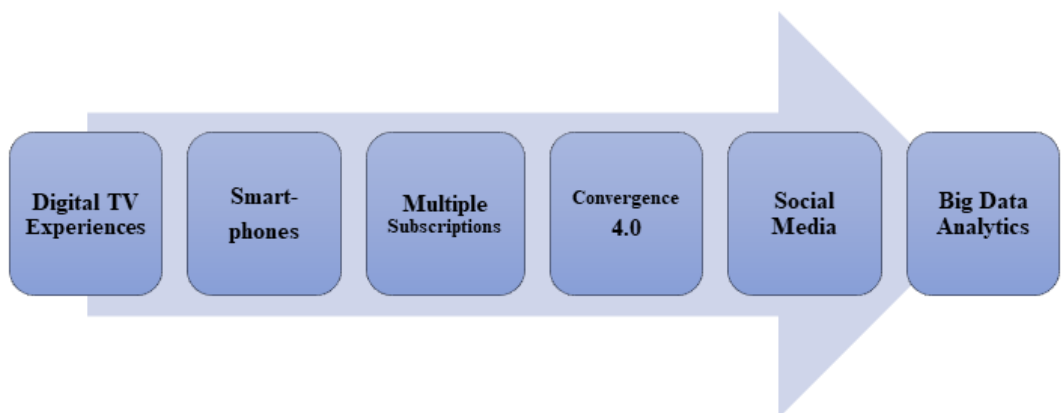
Digitisation has changed the way organisations communicate with their consumers. Social media has emerged as a new mode for communication between all organisational stakeholders. Geographical (Liao et al., 2018), temporal (Carr et al., 2015) and spatial (Li et al., 2013) boundaries have been shattered. Subsequently, brands and consumers are connecting with each other without any constraint

of time, location or medium and the old-fashioned one-way of communication has transformed into dynamic two-way direct communication. Social media is also referred to, as media shaped with highly reachable and accessible publishing technology, designed for social interaction (Bodnar, 2011) and includes weblogs, social blogs, wikis, podcasts, images, video, ranking, and social bookmarking. The rise of social media and social networking platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter etc. is witnessing usage by millions of consumers. Most of them have logged onto the platforms to satiate their personal gratification (Jacobson et al., 2020) and hedonic needs. In this context, the societal fabric is undergoing a major change and there is substantial optimism with regard to the potential uses of this medium to sensitise society and address social issues (Allcot et al., 2020). This creates an opportunity for marketers to reach out to their consumers and use social media for building relationships (Kizgin et al., 2020) with consumers, for consumer engagement (Kim et al., 2020) and CRM. The Media and Entertainment industry thrives on popularity amongst the viewers and social media offers an excellent space for using content marketing to build and retain this popularity. Additionally, enhanced interactivity (Sreejesh et al., 2020) amongst viewers can build participation (Bruns, 2009) which can help Media organisations in understanding the consumer cognitive (Vinerean, 2013) space and create programs and content accordingly. While the above has been successfully established, there is a lot of research work that is required to deeply understand the media consumption patters of consumers and the subsequent implications for organisations. No significant research has been conducted in a bid to understand how media organisations can make use of the data that is being generated in the virtual world to their advantage. Also, as the usage of mobile apps (Zhao et al., 2015) brings about a paradigm shift in consumer temperaments and usage patterns, it is important to delve deeper into how these new tools can aid Media companies. For this it is vital to understand how these apps are adopted by consumers. Additionally, as social media content marketing becomes important, it is mandatory for the M&E players to identify what types of content in social media campaigns garners differential levels of success with the consumers. The following sections of this manuscript will address these issues.

## **THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF THE MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT (M&E) WORLD**

Several factors have brought about a change in the way organisations function and the way consumers consume content in the Media and Entertainment world (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The Changing Landscape of the Media and Entertainment world



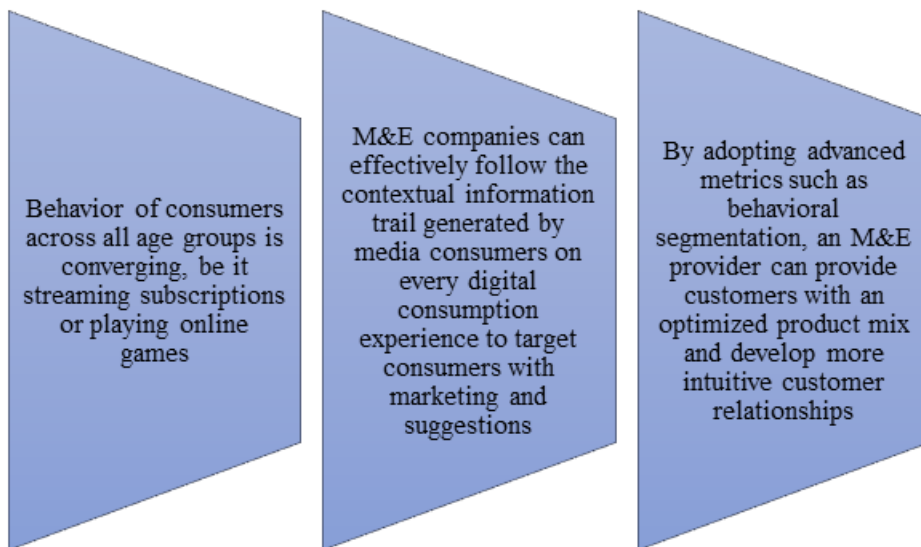
1. Digital TV experiences are being transformed because of DVR (Digital Video Recorder) and VOD (Video on demand) platforms. Viewers can consume entertainment related content as per their convenience by recording content, skipping commercials, catching specific dialogues etc. VOD platforms and movie streaming sites like iTunes, Netflix and Amazon prime are allowing consumers to view content as per their needs, timings and device specifications.
2. The increased usage of smartphones has brought about a significant usage of mobile interfaces for accessing entertainment related content. A large number of mobile apps are being developed. Superior mobile consumption experiences permit the entertainment industry to distribute content directly to the audience, through the usage of social media platforms and forums like Youtube. The growing power of technology is transforming the M & E world and is giving rise to new and significant revenue streams for organisations (Newman, 2018). The M&E industry is witnessing the advent of the High Definition (HD) systems that provide an image resolution that is of substantially higher resolution than that of standard definition television and viewers are hooked to their television screens to watch their favorite shows.
3. Advanced distribution channels (Doyle, 2016) and connected platforms are allowing consumers to subscribe to multiple services and are changing the way content is being consumed. Movies and videos can now be streamed directly on multiple platforms like iTunes, Youtube Movies, Netflix, Google Play etc. Subsequently the audience has greater choice of content and flexibility of consumption.
4. The era of Convergence 4.0 (Vukanovic, 2018) is here and there is a continuous effort to converge all smart devices. The Internet of things is coming up with new offerings everyday and the concept of convergence aims at offering users with a single device to perform synergised functions controlling all applications. New solutions are being developed with telecom service providers and paid TV operators in mind, allowing these small players to have greater autonomy so that the smaller players are able to tap into different insights and develop new capabilities.
5. Social media is a force to reckon with. It is providing media houses with a tool to connect with viewers. It is also providing viewers a platform to share their thoughts and experiences. This content influences the consumption behaviour of other viewers.
6. The era of Big Data Analytics (Lewis et al., 2015) is allowing associated stakeholders of the media and entertainment industry (TV channels, gaming companies, media owners, video publishers) to make use of the vast data volumes. Continuously connected consumers are generating a voluminous stream of data through every digital transaction or content consumption. Big Data Analytics will benefit these entities by helping them in predicting consumer preferences, getting insights into customer churn, helping in scheduling media streams, monetising content and effective ad targeting.

## Media Consumption and the Consumer

The democratisation of technology is making it imperative for media organisations to focus not merely on the demographic information of consumers, for segmentation etc., but also their media consumption habits and use behavioural targeting strategies to provide consumers with information about entertainment content that would interest them. Behavioral targeting (Yan et al., 2009) refers to gathering data about a consumer's online browsing and shopping behaviour and then sending him product related information that is relevant to him, to increase chances of purchase. In the context of the M&E industry, the viewer's past media consumption behaviour can give a service provider adequate information about his preferences. The viewer can then be sent relevant information about media content that he may like to view. This way, by analysing his past behaviour, the M&E organisation can target him appropriately and increase chances of him becoming their consumer. Simply put, the digital disruption has shifted power into the hands of the consumers. Organisations need to produce and market content based on the consumers' likes and dislikes.

Based on research conducted by WATConsult, a Social Media conversation consulting company in India, consumer behaviour in the media and entertainment industry has changed dramatically. Media consumption over the internet is very high, as compared to lesser consumption over the television. 58% of consumers watch television while surfing the internet and 75% users watch online videos. Deloitte's Digital Media Trends Survey has further provided some interesting insights into the consumption behaviours of consumers of the Media and Entertainment industry. These have been highlighted in Figure 2. The Deloitte study pointed out that exclusivity of content was a key issue and primary driver of consumption behaviour and further went on to conduct a segmentation of consumers on the basis of their consumption habits and usage of specific devices. Segmentation of consumers on this criteria helps M&E companies to identify ways of distributing content that will be appealing to different audiences, who use a wide variety of devices and subscription options to consume content. It also helps them in formulating their advertising strategies.

Figure 2. Consumers of Media and Entertainment Industry-some insights



As per this study, consumers could be segmented as *Mobile-first Viewers*, *Power Streamers*, *Highly Subscribed*, *Hybrid Adopters*, and *Linear TV Consumers* (Figure 3).

### Social Media Usage by Consumers in the Media and Entertainment Industry

Some salient features pertaining to social media and the M&E world include:

- Social media has started influencing decision making in the entertainment industry
- Research has shown that 70-80% consumers visit a social networking site while watching television or a movie
- A large number of consumers like to tweet about the media content that they are consuming
- Most consumers love sharing their opinion about a movie or TV show
- Peer reviews drive consumption of media content by individuals as people become influenced by the views of others.
- Social media is being used by the youth to consume full length TV shows and for watching documentaries, video clips and advertisements

Figure 3. Segmentation of media consumers

Mobile-first viewers	Power Streamers	Highly Subscribed	Hybrid Adopters	Linear TV Consumers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consume content on mobile devices</li> <li>• Use voice based digital assistants</li> <li>• Tend to consume content anywhere, anytime.</li> <li>• Use mobile video and streaming services regularly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harness video streaming to move away from linear viewing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subscribe to most paid subscriptions</li> <li>• Willing to pay for premium video on demand, in-app game purchases, and online news.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily shift between devices and services across traditional &amp; nontraditional platforms to optimize content discovery and value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most prolific linear broadcast TV watchers.</li> <li>• Generally traditionalists.</li> </ul>

- Social media is a cost-effective way to connect with the consumers
- While consumer generated content is influencing the minds of other consumers, most Media and Entertainment companies have established their own social media presence to find ways to connect with their consumers and impact their media consumption preferences. Consumer (viewer) acquisition and retention are the two primary social media objectives of these M&E companies.

## METHODOLOGY

This manuscript makes use of the case-based method to investigate the usage of social media by diverse organisations. Each media organisation has been highly successful in leveraging this new digital tool for a range of objectives.

The study makes use of the work on *Crucial case theory* by (Eckstein et al., 1975) who described the crucial case as one “that must closely fit a theory if one is to have confidence in the theory’s validity.’ Using this philosophy as a base, this manuscript has identified some decisive examples of media organisations which have used social media content marketing, mobile apps and big data effectively. The manuscript deviates from the traditional ‘one case’ methodology to a ‘multiple case’ method and progresses to explore diverse propositions of interest.

The following section details some social media case studies from the M&E world-

### Case Study 1

#### *The Indian Entertainment Channel, Colors*

Colors is an Indian entertainment channel which hosts a series of very popular shows directed towards the Indian household audience, for mass consumption. Colors is an entity of Viacom 18, Media Pvt. Ltd, a M&E company which defines entertainment in India, by touching the lives of people through its ventures. The social media presence of Colors comprises of a series of video campaigns which revolve around its shows, #Rising Star, #Khatron Ke Khiladi, #Jhansi ki Rani and so on. Colors has successfully used the art of storytelling to build consumer awareness, every time a new show is launched. A continuous stream of posts built around the show drives subsequent content consumption. The social media content generated by Colors centres around small anecdotes and moments from the storylines of the shows, directed towards triggering specific emotions to entice the consumer to watch

them. Narratives built around cute banter amongst participants, sensational aspects like a participant getting injured in a reality show, coverage of breath-taking stunts, visits of celebrities, special episodes, contests and countdowns constitute a riveting social media journey. Content pertaining to shows developed around social issues like female empowerment etc. is well received by the consumers and further adds value and credibility to brand Colors. The most significant aspect of the social media presence of most of the TV channels-Star Plus, Zee and so on, is the postage frequency of 6-8 times a day. Additionally, certain special shows like Big Boss which is known to create mass hysteria amongst the viewers, maintain separate social media profiles on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The complete profile is directed towards sharing snippets of information, during the show, creating a buzz for the next day episodes and creating an element of surprise, mystery or amazement to keep the content consumers asking for more. Additionally, information pertaining to auditions and contests generate the required frenzy around the shows.

### *Colors and Voot-the Online Video Streaming platform*

Online video streaming platforms provide unparalleled video experiences to consumers. These services offer several hours of TV content and movies and sports across several languages. These platforms use highly evolved video streaming technology and ensure superior quality of viewer experiences across devices and platforms. Colors uses platform VOOT which provides a friendly user interface to enable users to comfortably navigate the platform, to discover suitable content and gradually evolve their usage experience. The platform ensures excellent high definition video quality on mobile networks as well as wifi internet connections. Like other online video streaming platforms, VOOT also offers a smart search functionality to enable viewers to access content easily, and offers latest and popular television content, movies and knowledge-based programs for viewers. The *downloads* feature enables viewers to download programs and watch them offline. The *Watchlists* enable viewers to save programs to be watched later. Viewers can watch programs seamlessly, across a diverse set of genres ranging from romance, drama, family, reality, comedy, mythology, crime, action, talkshows, lifestyle, teen, awards, biopics, science, travel, wildlife, documentary, horror, thriller, sports, kids, docudramas etc. across a series of languages. A set of FAQs are readily available to help viewers get over any problems they may encounter or solve any queries they may have with regard to membership, availability, system requirements, playback issues, billing, account management, playing games etc. Interestingly, these video streaming platforms are very active on social media and by allowing viewers to download their mobile apps using their social media pages, they have been able to popularise these new technological offerings. Consumers have eagerly embraced these video streaming platforms and now they are the new rage.

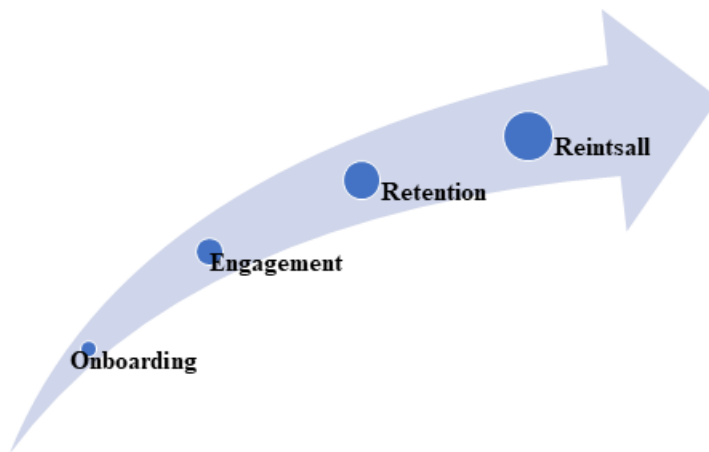
### *Mobile Apps*

The Media and Entertainment industry has witnessed the growth of the mobile app culture where viewers are using mobile apps to watch movies and shows, follow news, follow cricket and other sports and connect with M&E brands and their peers using social media and so on. The advent of touchscreen enabled mobile devices, has made the ubiquitous mobile a very attractive proposition for the M&E industry and COLORS has jumped onto the mobile app bandwagon.

A report by research and consulting firm Clevertap has identified 4 stages of app adoption by M&E viewers. These are Onboarding, Engagement, Retention and Reinstall. According to the industry benchmark reports developed by the company, organisations need to find ways to ensure that viewers download their app. This will happen when viewers perceive benefits to themselves through the adoption of the new technological tool. Research has shown that it is perceived ease of use, convenience, adequate functional benefits, collaboration and other hedonic benefits that trigger the adoption of mobile apps by consumers. This process of onboarding comprises registration by a viewer, after downloading the app and is dependant on whether the first-time user experience was pleasing to the viewer or not. If the viewer has had a pleasurable and gratifying experience, the first

time, the bond between the user and the M&E brand strengthens. As per research conducted by the company, it takes a user 72 hours to progress from the onboarding stage to the engagement phase and only 26% of new users play media on an app that they have downloaded, in the first month. As onboarded viewers perceive value in the continued usage of the mobile app, engagement ensues and long-term brand loyalty can be developed. This can happen as the apps help in delivering customised experiences, tailored to match the needs of the viewers, by enabling them to select their preferences and interests (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Stages of app adoption by M&E viewers



When an app creates personalised user experiences by streaming recommendations through in-app notifications, M&E companies can track the click through rates (CTR) to optimise their message content, delivery times, user segments and campaign strategies. (A click through rate is the proportion of viewers who click on any internet link to be directed to a specific web location.) The average click through rate (CTR) for notifications pushed onto the viewer, using a mobile app is 6.5%. Success of app usage depends on whether viewers stay with the app or stop using the same. Viewer retention and regularity of usage leads to sustainable app growth. Organisations need to work hard to ensure that viewers do not stop using an app after the initial euphoria and interest has subsided. As per past statistics, a large number of viewers stop using an app after 2 weeks, cancel subscription or simply uninstall the app and companies need to keep track of drop in daily usage activity to prevent churn. Additional marketing activity then needs to be diverted towards getting the viewers to reinstall the app. Brand Colors has been very successful in using Mobile Apps to its advantage.

## Case Study 2

### *Netflix, India*

Netflix is an American media services provider based in California. The company provides subscription based streaming services, which grant consumers access to films and TV programs. Owing to its growing popularity at a global level, Netflix had over 139 million paid subscriptions, by January 2019.

Netflix has increasingly used social media to form a connection with its consumers through a continuous stream of exciting, thought-provoking content.

Netflix, India boasts of over 2 lakh followers on Twitter. An incessant stream of interactive content like



- Which of the Akshay Kumar movies best describes your best friend?
- If the world really were to end in 8 days, what would you do?
- The last thing you drew comes to life and tries to kill you. What is it?
- Give us a song lyric and we will tell you what to watch.
- Tag your best friend and we will tell you guys what you can binge on next week.
- Tell us your mood in 3 emojis and we will tell you what to watch.

stimulates consumer participation and is triggering huge number of likes, comments and retweets.

Along with this, a constant stream of posts on finding love, binge watching, sex education, relationship goals, cricket fever, pre-apocalypse playlists creates an image of Netflix as a spirited, adventurous brand, willing to use customisation, feedback and personalisation to provide content based on consumer needs and increase its popularity.

The company is not only a leader in user experience and original content-it uses its data analytics abilities by collecting data every time a user interacts with it. Subsequent analysis of the data helps Netflix predict user preferences, overall engagement and volume and frequency of content consumption. Netflix is able to track consumer behaviour when they pause, rewind or fast-forward a particular show, dates and timings when shows are watched by viewers, the geographic location where a show is watched from, the ratings, the searches and scrolling behaviour. Netflix has algorithms which allow it to differentiate content amongst 75000 different content genres. Tracking the data helps Netflix increase content consumption by viewers by providing them options that they would like to view and preventing them from leaving Netflix and going to its competitors. Customer retention and increased usage are the two primary outcomes of Netflix's data analysis efforts.

### *Big Data Analytics and the M&E Industry*

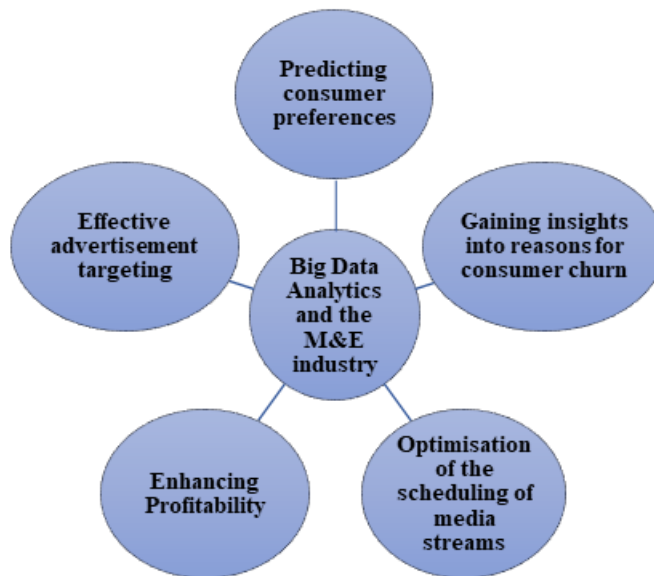
The increased viewer activity in the online domain viz. social media interaction, online search, video streaming platform downloads, mobile app downloads etc. is generating vast volumes of data which can be analysed by M&E players for the following 5 purposes.

1. Predicting consumer preferences-This involves the identification of movies, music and shows that consumers want by viewing search history, reviews, ratings, location and device data and clickstreams to extract information pertaining to consumer preferences and sentiment mining and analysis of viewer generated data on social media to understand the consumer minds. This will help companies in
  - Effective decision making for driving consumer engagement
  - Formulation of strategies for influencing consumer sentiments
2. Gaining insights into reasons for consumer churn-M&E companies need to identify reasons that make viewers subscribe and unsubscribe to a channel or program. Answers can be discovered in the email and social media records and any other connections that a consumer has made with an M&E brand. This will help them in
  - Developing promotional strategies to acquire new customers
  - Developing retention strategies to retain customers
  - Develop product strategies to acquire new customers and retain old ones.
3. Optimisation of the scheduling of media streams-Scheduling of programs on media depends on consumer preferences with regard to timings and specific devices that they will be using to access the content. Analysis of data collected from the consumers helps schedule programs in an optimum manner to ensure that maximum number of viewers are watching the programs.
4. Enhancing profitability-Data Analytics can give M&E companies insights into the right timing for releasing movies and other M&E products. It allows companies to study trends to change the positioning of the M&E products. Better forecasting and prediction aids revenue planning.

Additionally, companies can find ways to monetise their content. Monetisation refers to finding ways to generate economic value (revenue) by using content.

5. Effective advertisement targeting-Advertising can be more personalised if results of data analytics help M&E companies to merge demographic data about consumers with their predicted preferences. By targeting the consumers with the right content at the right time, advertising can be made more effective. Additional information pertaining to the devices that consumers will be using to consume content, can help M&E companies to optimise their multi-channel advertising campaigns, across different devices (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Big Data Analytics and the M&E industry



### Case Study 3

#### *NDTV Social*

NDTV or the New Delhi Television is one of the most popular company sharing news and other programs directed at current affairs, latest news headlines, art, gadgets, global affairs, health, budget, profit and business, politics, technology, education, sports, fashion, lifestyle, food, art, book excerpts, humour, films and many more issues. A pioneer in news television and digital journalism in India, NDTV's credibility lies in its accuracy and the respect that it has garnered for itself, since inception. NDTV has been at the forefront of every news revolution in India and is now primarily an internet company.

The NDTV website hosts sections on offbeat topics ranging from latest trends to life advice from celebrities. NDTV has been a frontrunner from transforming a news provider to a provider of information across all facets of life-scientific breakthroughs, health innovations, makeup tips, health illusions and so on. The new feature on Railbeeps is a one stop domain for an individual's rail enquiries.

NDTV has supported a large number of social issues ranging from the 7 wonders of India, Save our Tigers, the Greenathon, Jeene ki Asha and so on. NDTV has an effective global presence and

has further expanded its brand portfolio to include NDTV Lifestyle, NDTV Convergence and NDTV Worldwide.

The first to adapt to the changing times, NDTV realised the evolution of the social consumer and started a platform termed as NDTV social. NDTV social allows viewers to become friends with the people at NDTV (who are the popular faces of news and other shows). The platform allows viewers to participate, ask questions, share their opinions, respond to the questions of others, watch live updates of sports matches or political briefings and interviews of celebrities etc.

Active shows on NDTV Social include *Truth vs Hype*, *Walk the Talk*, *The Property Show*, *We, The People* and many more. A very high degree of interactivity, a continuous stream of content by regular columnists and bloggers, NDTV has built social groups centred around anchors and shows and has successfully engaged the viewer community in regular interactions. A thinking viewer is a loyal viewer and a participating viewer is a distinct brand advocate. By creating a platform for the Indian diaspora to connect with the team, NDTV has successfully used social media as a powerful, effective and cost-efficient news distribution network for the masses.

NDTV's presence on established social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter further adds to its image of a fearless news channel, engaged in providing timely information to the world. The consumption habits of news consumers have changed drastically. It is significant to note that the major chunk of the youth segment does not consume news using the traditional media channel of newspapers. News is now distributed through several distribution channels and is consumed through the usage of mobile apps, television and social networking platforms. Nowadays, mobile news publishing involves using multiple distribution methods ranging from providing customised news alerts by SMS or MMS to mobile news sites and mobile apps. In fact, mobile apps have become a vital social media tool for the distribution of news. By realising that the new-age consumer was primarily a social consumer, most of the M&E companies behind news have evolved. A large set of viewers refer to the corporate news website or online newsroom while following or sharing the news. Another set of viewers consume news through a social networking site and subsequently log onto the corporate news website for verification of the same and for gaining access to the complete story. All M&E companies are using social media as a distribution channel for news.

### *Mobile Apps and the Consumption of News*

The factors which influence the consumption of news through a mobile application can be clubbed under the following categories:

- i. *Content-related factors* viz. text or audiovisual, the length of content, the freshness of content, and language of content.
- ii. *Consumer-related factors* viz. demographic factors of the consumer like age, gender, occupation and place of news consumption.
- iii. *Mobile app-related factors* viz. notifications, whether the application is news aggregator or single publisher
- iv. *Uses & Gratification needs of the consumer* viz. diversion, personal relationship, personal identity & surveillance etc.(Blumer& Katz).

Some research findings with regard to usage of mobile apps by Indian consumers for consumption of News include the following-

- Indian news consumers prefer audio-visual content over text while consuming news on a mobile application. They usually prefer English over vernacular medium.
- News consumers who use mobile apps do not like lengthy content.
- Freshness of content has a positive impact on the news consumption behaviour of Indian consumers.

- Consumption of news through mobile apps is more popular amongst youngsters, students and working professionals, who consume more content while commuting between home, work and elsewhere.
- Consumers prefer single news publishers over news aggregators.

Typical functionalities offered by a mobile app being used for the consumption of news are personalisation, customisation (Pentina et al., 2014) and navigability.

**Personalisation** is the action of designing or producing something to meet someone's individual requirements. Typical app features that support personalisation include

- Personalised sign up and onboarding
- Offering content based on location and browsing activity
- In-content prompts to help discover content (Recommendations and notifications)
- Customisable feed
- Robust discovery features
- Consistency across all devices
- Personal settings option
- Provide reviews to facilitate viewer choice

**Customisation** is the act of modifying something to meet an individual's requirements. For instance, the features of downloads, watchlists and favourites in apps allow users to customise their watching experiences. Typical app features that support customisation include allowing users to customise notification settings (frequency, type, content category) e.g. Amazon prime video pushes notification options and behavior based triggers for users e.g. Spotify creates playlists based on most frequently listened to songs.

**Navigability** involves allowing users to move through the interface of an app seamlessly. Apps should be easy to use and accessibility of what any user would want should be high. Including tutorials to enhance viewer clarity is a step in the right direction.

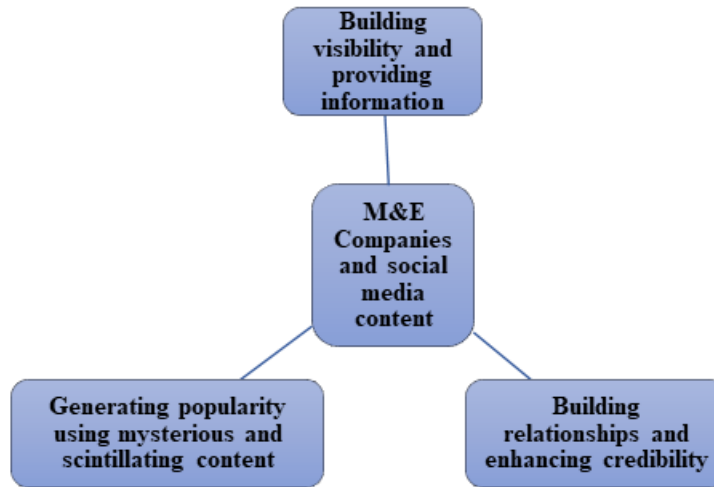
## **SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT OBJECTIVES FOR MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT PLAYERS**

M&E players are becoming more adaptable and flexible and are replacing conventional business models with social media based models for enhancing sales or viewership. By promoting their actors and artists and music or movie promos, in the social media space, organisations are able to build new revenue models through licensing, royalties and advertisements. Additionally, they are able to align strategic business models with social media; maximize the benefits from various social media channels; engage customers with on-and offline promotions; and stimulate audience with exclusive content to drive mass consumption.

The above discussion revolves around mass consumption of social media content by individuals. Social media has redefined the relationship between the M&E organisations and their viewers, by allowing users to participate in discussions and share their thoughts and opinions. Consumer thoughts that were ephemeral, transient, unmappable and invisible, became mappable and viewable, with the growth of social media.

Media and Entertainment companies host content on social media for the following objectives (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Social media content objectives for M&E companies



- **Increasing visibility (Treem et al., 2016) and providing information(Karkkainen et al., 2011)**

M&E companies post regularly on social media platforms to provide information to viewers about upcoming programs and increase visibility of the same, to compete against competing channels and organisations. When a new news program is being launched, channels advertise its authenticity. When a new soap opera is being launched, channels advertise it to stimulate the curiosity of the viewers, to enhance its popularity. The objective of the social media posts is to interact with the audience, and not merely create mass broadcasts. In addition, auditions for reality shows and invitations to the masses for participation in certain events generate a lot of publicity for an M&E company. Social media is redefining content, its production and consumption and factual content, opinion, and conversation often can't be clearly separated. Simple social interactions amongst viewers who have liked a program, say on a TV channel, are becoming meaningful cues for other consumers. These reviews, comments and discussions inadvertently help the M&E companies when they become consumer testimonials and influence peers.

- **Attracting(Lin et al., 2011) the viewers through mysterious and scintillating content**

Content that is bold and weird resonates hugely with the viewers. Sensational promos, behind the scene snippets and program anecdotes attract viewers, who are left asking for more. M&E company, Paramount conducted a social media exercise prior to the launch of the movie *Paranormal activity*. They stated that if the film received 1 million hits on the internet and viewers demanded it for their town, the movie would be released nationally. The movie used Reddit, Stumbleupon, Facebook and Twitter and users were allowed to Tweet their screams directly from the film's website. The excitement and intrigue generated in the minds of the consumers was testimony to the fact that social media could be used to generate buzz for a movie and popularity could be generated online, virally. By finding ways to empower the viewers, by soliciting their opinion, by releasing teasers or songs online, M&E companies can find ways to enhance interactivity with the viewers and build engagement in the virtual world.

Sometimes, when a controversy erupts around a particular movie or M&E offering, the popularity doubles or triples overnight. In India, when a controversy erupted around the movie, *Padmaavat*, the online world and social media was flooded with viewers wanting to gain insights into the issue. The movie opened to full houses, because of the ensuing mass hysteria. Before the launch of the webseries *Apharan*, in India, the producer, ALT Balaji motivated significant opinion leaders from the media industry to carry out an Instagram campaign comprising a dark black background on their social media accounts with the caption *Mera apharan ho gaya*, meaning *I have been kidnapped*. The subsequent conversations on the campaign stimulated audience curiosity and helped build the required hype around the new show.

- **Building relationships (Brionnes et al., 2011) with the audience and enhancing credibility (Haider, 2016)**

M&E companies try to build a relationship with their audience, by bringing the fans onboard with them and creating a virtual community. When an M&E company showcases its humane side, for e.g. by hosting promos of programs directed towards supporting social causes, audience engagement quadruples, because of increased affection and warmth towards the organisation. Forums like twitter are very useful for celebrities and enables them to create online personas for themselves, communicate actively with the masses and bond with them.

A careful assessment clearly demonstrates how celebrities have used twitter for self gratification (Dumlao et al., 2013), relationship building, diffusion of information and inducing likeability for themselves.

- Brand *Priyanka Chopra* was trending across twitter in early May 2015, due to the long train of her Ralph Lauren dress that she wore for MetGala2017. With over 17 M followers, for @PriyankaChopra, the Bollywood actress has successfully used her Twitter handle to generate visibility for her show, *Quantico*, aired on Star World, at a regular basis. The fiery actress also uses the medium to thank people who inspire her, and build a relationship with certain acquaintances and show her gratitude towards her fans.
- Brand *Sonam Kapoor*, a Bollywood actress who is also considered to be a fashionista, shares information not only about her films, but also some amazing dress styles. Her twitter page maintains a conversationist style, and she has also launched an app to engage her fans. She has also managed this engagement of her audience, by retweeting any tweets pertaining to congratulating or appreciating her activities. A scroll down her profile confirms that the content she retweets is generated not only by her acquaintances, but also by her fans.
- @iamsrk is a twitter handle which represents the superstar Shahrukh Khan on twitter. The simplicity and picturesque feel of the twitter page demonstrates Brand Shahrukh's love for himself. By capturing his special moments and hosting them on twitter, King Khan gives his followers a peek into his life. The interesting outcome is that he has been able to generate an emotional aura for himself, which adds to the poignant image for his personal brand. Equally visible is a zest for life and an effervescent individual, hungry for more positive experiences out of life, making his 25 M followers respect him, even more. An evident cricket fan, Shahrukh also uses Twitter to build connections with cricketers, congratulate them for their achievements and build a rapport with them.
- Actress Deepika Padukone has gone a step forward. She uses her twitter presence to tweet and retweet about issues of social relevance, the Prime Minister's *Mann ki Baat*, issues pertaining to World Health Day etc. Be it her smashing Hollywood debut, her presence on the Ellen show or the cover of filmfare, everything is documented for her followers to consume, on her twitter profile. The profile also includes information pertaining to announcements like Deepika being appointed as brand ambassador for L'Óreal, Paris and so on. Deepika used her twitter presence

to hugely criticise those who vandalised the sets of her upcoming film, Padmavati. Known to be a strong personality, Deepika has been able to position herself as a woman of substance and her vocal Twitter presence, further strengthens her voice on several issues.

- @karanjohar is the signature twitter page of Karan Johar, bollywood's famous actor, director, TV host and media personality. The page is rife with a degree of freshness and showcases Karan Johar's vivaciousness, versatility, charisma and wit. The multitasking personas of Karan Johar are depicted through his myriad tweets on his endeavours pertaining to his production house, Dharma Productions, his participation in TV shows and his celebration of life through a book, as its author.

## CONCLUSION

The social media world has transformed media consumption completely. Availability of suitable tools like Social Networking Platforms, Blogs, Online Communities and Mobile Apps backed by the attributes of cost-effectiveness and enhanced reach have made organisations revisit their mass media strategies completely. Social media can be used by M&E world for the purposes of brand management, enhancing consumption, collecting customer intelligence, managing reputations, building consumer brand relationships, understanding competitors, targeted advertising and analytics. The benefits demonstrated by this new media has made it a superior investment option for organisations.

Organisations can now host specific social media content to target specific consumers and then track the increase in media consumption. Well-crafted social media campaigns can be used to influence the consumer mind and build brand identity and loyalty. As social media popularises media brands and offerings, social media optimisation and a successful analytics strategy can help M&E organisations in predicting consumer preferences, effectively target consumers, enhance profitability and gain insights into the consumer mindspace. By quantifying the social media ROI, media organisations can measure the impact of their social media efforts. Their success lies in identifying the content typologies and specific campaigns that work for them.

## Future Research Directions

This manuscript has explored three different M&E organisations and their social media practices. The discussion provided here can be used to serve as a base for formulating three unique research problems, with regard to (i) Customer relationship management in M&E companies, (ii) usage of big data by M&E companies to aid decision making and (iii) Consumer adoption of social media and mobile apps in the M&E sector. Data can be collected from consumers and the suppositions can be subsequently validated empirically.

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