

Binge Watching during COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

In every aspect of our survival whether it is economic, mental health, physical health, and social needs we all are facing very difficulties in this pandemic time. This is the year which comes out to be unexpected for the whole population of the world. The corona virus spread all over the world & all life of human beings comes to a change. In this pandemic, Govt. decided to have a lockdown and we all were packed in our houses or we can say the life stopped where it was from the midst of March. So, in this case due to the implication of lockdown, it was difficult to maintain the balance or we feel that there is an impairment in daily activities, mental health, physical health, job work, relationships, beliefs, environment, and society. Human is always considered to be a social animal and it's very difficult for him or her to adapt to this situation as in lockdown we have to stay-at-home & make social distancing. We tried to engage in different types of activities to adjust in this lockdown period by making new dishes, cleaning of home, reading books, following their hobbies and interests which they were unable to do owing to limited time & so on. A famous activity among youngsters was binge watching over the various OTT platforms like Netflix, amazon prime video and so on. Binge watching is the term used to watch OTT (Over the top) platforms continuously for 3 hours or more. In this study a self-prepared Google form was used for surveying and it included 15 items with reference to binge watching. The process of collecting data was through social networks like WhatsApp etc. Two main criteria were also taken. The first is Gender as male & female and second is Age with three sub levels as 18-25 years, 26-35 years & more than 35 years. The responses were recorded & analysis was done in terms of selected items. This study revealed that there is an occurrence of binge-watching during lockdown of COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Binge watching & COVID-19 pandemic

We are going through a terrific time called COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic has not only clinched India, but also 213 countries all over the world. As we know the Government of India implied lockdown from 25 March 2020 however Corona has already come up. As the Corona cases increased as well as curfews were introduced & to stay away from the Corona, we had to stay-at-home at any cost which was safe for us.

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In this lockdown period, we experienced various stages & situations which were purely different from what we usually experience. We are not habitual of staying at home for a number of days. There are two aspects of a situation: positive & negative aspects. It depends on our perspective on how we perceive or take circumstance around us.

As we read multiple researches on physical health & mental health that these two vital roles of humans are being affected by COVID-19 pandemic. The causes of mental health deterioration during the lockdown period are stress, anxiety, negative mood or mood swing, frustration, aggression, suffocation, discontinuation of daily schedule & so on. There has been a trend to make new dishes in India & most probably we were part of that trend. Our physical health was also declining. The means of decreasing physical health can be excessive sleep or unbalanced sleep, not following their routine work, eating so much, binge watching, not doing workout, anxious about future, unable to manage time & etc.

This research focused on binge watching behaviour during the lockdown period of COVID-19 pandemic. Somewhere binge watching made its place during lockdown as we have to stay-at-home & make social distancing. Sooner or later, if we get bored & can't go out for a hangout, this state pushes people to binge watch. They took help from binge watching for many causes like to reduce boredom, to get entertainment, or maybe they were already indulged in binge watching.

Binge watching refers to an individual watching multiple episodes usually of a single TV show or online web series in single sitting & after watching he feels guilt or regret. For understanding, take example Sourabh continuously watches online web series 'Patal lok'. These days we get to hear this binge-watching word & also we get so much news on binge watching.

REVIEWS OF LITERATURE

Ghosh & Jana (2021) studied activities that were done in lockdown among adults from the aspect of gender. The snowball technique was used via google form. The form contained close ended & open-ended questions. The percentage simple analysis was done by using multiple bar diagrams & tabulation form & measured eight activities. The result found that 8 activities were done more than 50 percent & highly was done were video call & binge watched. 74 percent male & 82 percent female were indulged in binge watching where 34 percent male preferred to watch Netflix & 34 percent Amazon prime where 39 percent female preferred to watch Netflix & 26 percent Amazon prime. By integrating all results, there were no such significant differences between male & female.

Dixit et al. (2020) studied descriptive study with cross-sectional design on binge watching behaviour during COVID-19 pandemic. 548 adults from the population of 4 Southern Asian Countries- Bangladesh, India, Indonesia & Nepal through Google form who understand English. Age criteria 18 & more. 26 items were prepared for the questionnaire. The data were analysed in terms of Percentage, Mean, SD & Proportions. Also, Country-wise comparison is done. The result revealed that most population binge watched for short duration as 1-3 hours before lockdown period. During lockdown their average time increased 3-5 hours & more than five hours of binge watching & they preferred YouTube for OTT.

King et al. (2020) researched on problematic online gaming & COVID-19 pandemic. It was review based research. This research showed that stay-at-home mandates & quarantine both

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practices increased participation in online gaming. Gaming was for socializing & stress reduction. Although after passing COVID-19 this unhealthy lifestyle will interrupt in re-adaptation. Balanced & effective approach to gaming during COVID-19 may be positive support to physical & psychological wellbeing.

Kiraly et al. (2020) worked on preventing problematic internet use during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this lockdown psychoactive substances & other reinforcing behaviour eg. Gambling, video gaming, watching pornography etc were used to reduce stress, anxiety & depressed mood. Use of ICT increased in COVID-19 to work & study from home, enhancing social connectedness, providing entertainment etc. the risk of problematic internet use was increased during the lockdown.

Elhai et al. (2020) examined that COVID-19 anxiety symptoms linked with smartphones use severity in Chinese Adults. 908 samples were included & surveyed from late-February to mid-March 2020. Administered tests were depression anxiety stress scale-21, smartphone addiction scale-short version & generalized anxiety disorder scale-7 with reference to COVID-19 through online process. The result indicated that COVID-19 anxiety significantly associated with severity problematic smartphone use, depression & anxiety.

Sachdev (2020) Netflix added 15.8 million paid subscribers in the first quarter of 2020. According to a report by Reuters, Netflix's world total spiked 182.9 million from January to March by watching shows such as Love and Blind & Money Heist. Other OTT Platforms like Amazon Prime, Hotstar & ZEE5 also reached a height. People are not having entertainment options so they turned on these OTT Platforms.

According to BARC 2020 (Broadcast Audience Research Council), TV consumption in India grew by 38 per cent during COVID period. Hindi language has grown up with 'Ramayana' & 'Mahabharata'. English movies have grown 83 per cent in lockdown. Internet users watch more Broadcast TV than Online TV. Average watching Online TV is 1 hours & 31 minutes in India. Netflix & Amazon Prime videos are strong ground in India & Netflix increased from 14 per cent to 58 per cent. The content watched by Indians are fiction, thriller, news, supernatural & mythology. Recent growth of Indian OTT Platforms included Voot, Alt Balaji, Zee5 & MX Player during lockdown.

Tana et al. (2019) explored what is prime time binge watching in Finland. They were analysed by search engines. The secondary data used to obtain data from Google Trends from 30 September till 1 December 2017. Results revealed that people of Finland have interest in streaming videos. It was clear that they begin to watch in the evening & peak during night time. Streaming media replaced Television set prime time. In this post television era, both on individual & societal level descriptive habit & behavioural patterns were found.

Kilian et al. (2019) examined neural correlates of binge-watching during inhibition in go/no go task & performance monitoring using electroencephalography. Subjects were taken both High binge-watching 35 & No binge-watching during the past 4 weeks. The result indicates that binge watching is related to increased neural recruitment during response inhibition as increased P3 to facilitate normal inhibitory performance.

METHODOLOGY

Objective

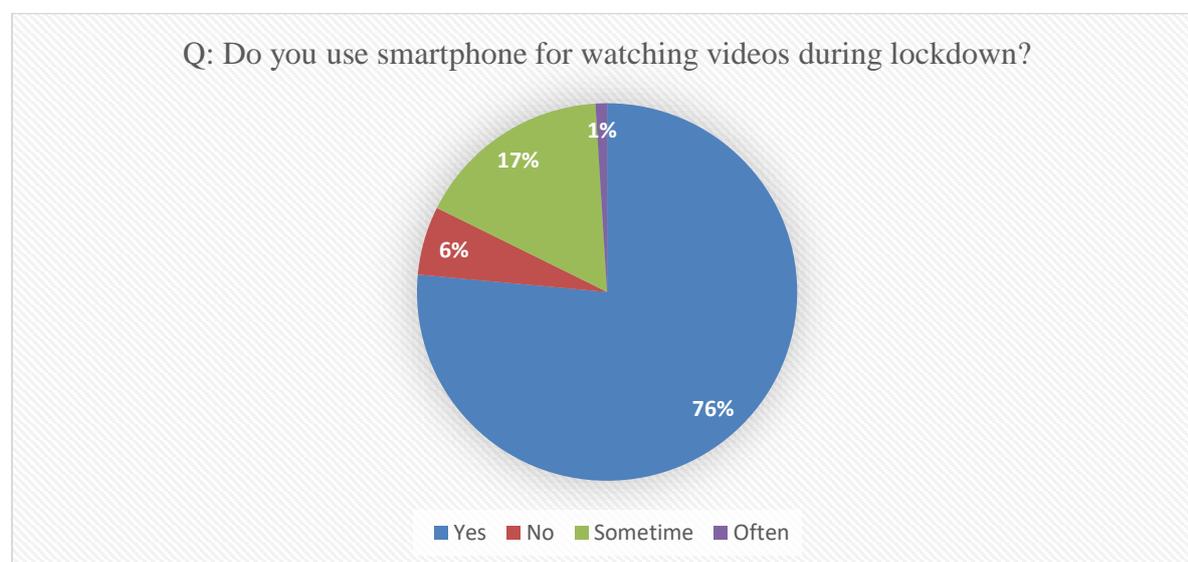
To study Binge watching during COVID-19

Sample

In this study a self-prepared Google form was used for surveying and it included 15 items with reference to binge watching. The process of collecting data was through social networks like WhatsApp, Facebook etc. the techniques used were snowball technique. The sample population knows the English language and is accessible to social media sites. respondents were from India only. 100 responses were recorded where 35 were male & 65 was female & analysis was done in terms of selected items.

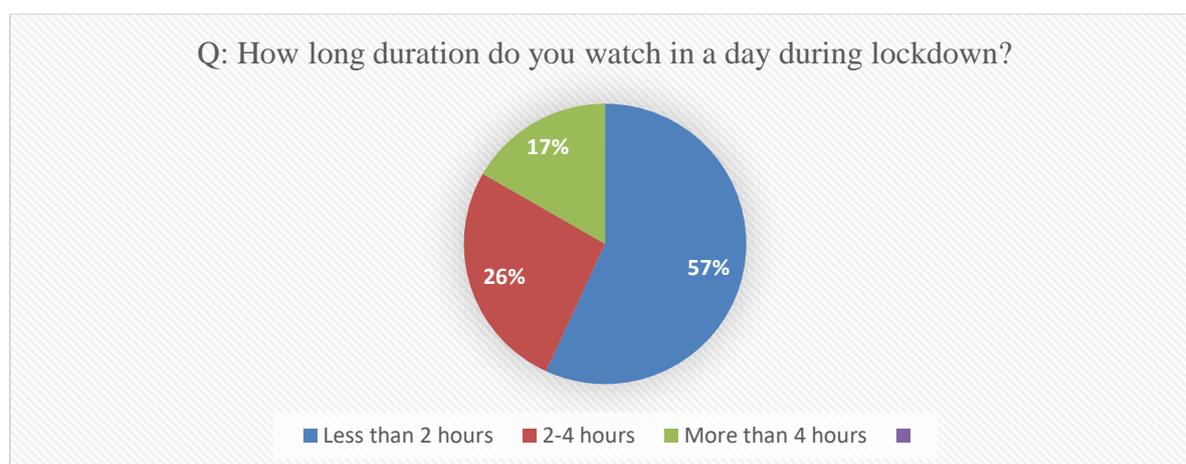
RESULT & DISCUSSION

The research revealed that binge watching is greater during lockdown of COVID-19 pandemic. People are more indulgent in binge watching due to numerous causes like they don't have a daily routine such as going to office or college, they get bored, they can't go out, make social distancing, to entertain themselves, to relax their mind and so on. An analysis was done taking into consideration each single question which indicates binge watching. So, result discussions as follows:

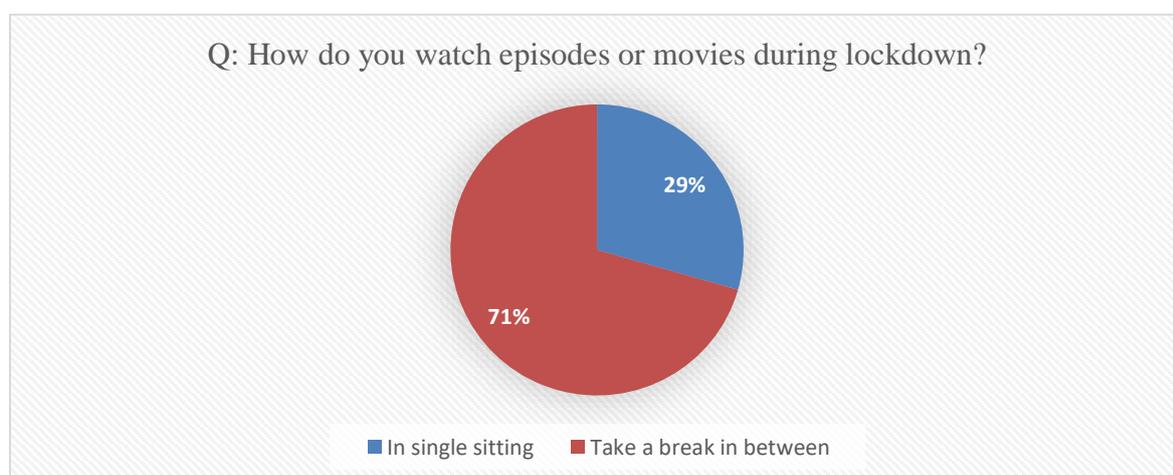


76.4 percent of individuals responded 'yes' to this question, 5.80 per cent responded 'No'. So, it's clear that they watch online content by using smartphones. According to BARC, Netflix increased subscriber 14 per cent to 58 per cent & also saw growth of Indian OTT platforms involving Voot, Alt Balaji, Zee5 & MX player during lockdown. Also, according to Survey from Market Research & Analysis firm Velocity MR, 73 percent people watch hotstar & YouTube during lockdown in India & more than 75 per cent Indians have purchased new subscriptions for OTT platforms during the lockdown. They use smartphones to watch entertaining videos owing to no new daily soaps being telecasted presently. Also, Bollywood movies are being released on OTT platforms due to shut off theatres during the pandemic period. Nine Bollywood movies were released on OTT platform till now as recently released movie on 12th June 2020 'Gulabo Sitabo' on Amazon prime video.

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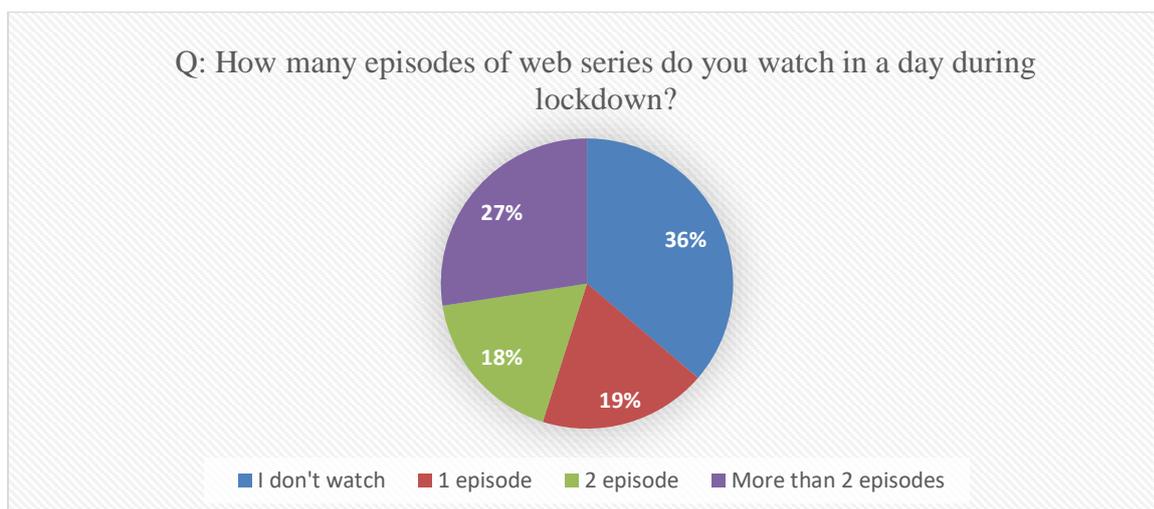


56.86 percent of respondents watch for less than 2 hours, 26.47 per cent to 2-4 hours & 16.67 per cent to more than 4 hours. According to BARC, the average time spent watching online content is 1 hours 31 minutes. Here, the result showed that most individuals watch for less than 2 hours which reflects moderate watching in India. Approx. half of individuals watch for 2-4 hours & more than 4 hours so we may say most people indulge in binge watching as per result. There can be facets which directly push binge watching as they are getting interest, getting entertainment, they already binge watchers or they are living alone in this lockdown. So, we might say binge watching is growing in lockdown period.

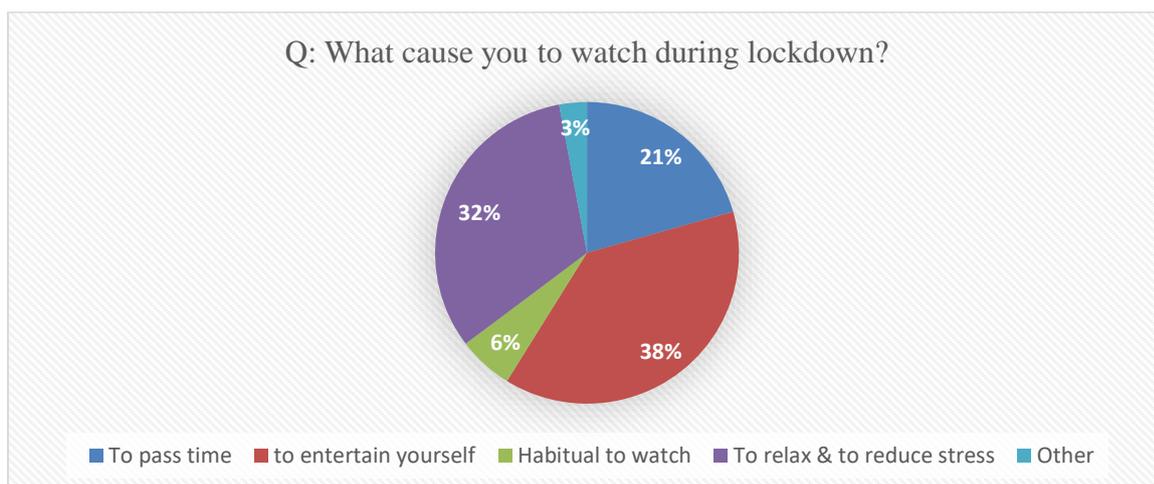


This question has two choices. The first choice is 'in single sitting' obtained 29.41 per cent & second is 'take a break in between' obtained 70.59 per cent. This result indicates that most people take a break in between watching episodes or movies. They have the whole day so whenever they feel like watching they start as they know they can watch at any time as per their convenience. These days, they don't have a certain schedule for a day when people have to finish their work like household, office or study so they get bored & they don't have activity to do and because of this they spend their empty time binge watching. Those individuals who are binge watchers watch in single sitting mostly at night. In this lockdown, mostly people give preference to binge watching rather than other activities like reading books or doing workout. In general, activities like roaming, social gathering & having fun with friends are being replaced by binge watching because people have to stay-at-home. Some people watch to distract themselves from stress, anxiety, frustration or anger which we can see highly in the lockdown.

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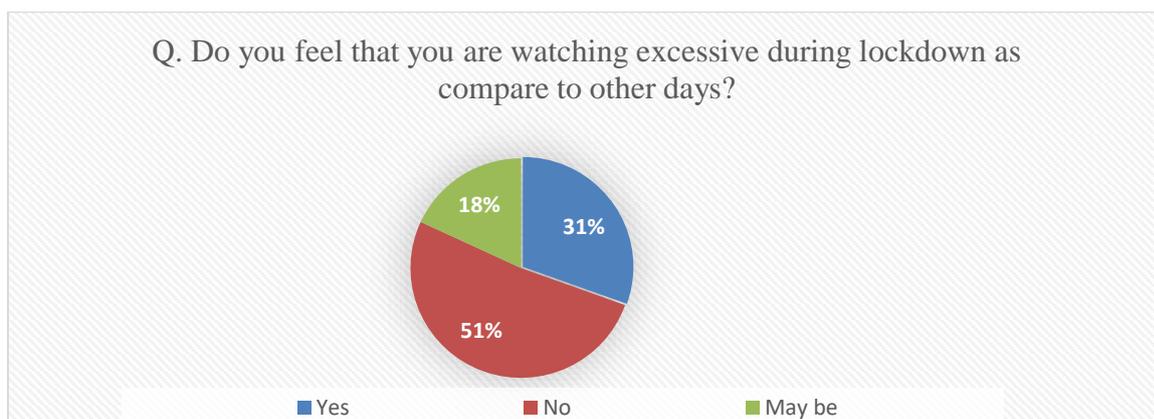


Data obtained as 18.63 percent individuals watch 1 episode, 17.65 percent individuals watch 2 episodes & 27.45 per cent individuals watch more than two episodes. As we know the process of watching two or more episodes of a single web series falls in the category of binge watching. Here, we can directly see binge-watching taking place during lockdown. Indian population involved in binge watching. Most individuals watch more than two episodes in a day during lockdown. There are a number of factors which promote binge watching. Causes can be quarantine, content of show, to pass time, to entertain self, to relax themselves, to escape from anxious news on Coronavirus & so on.

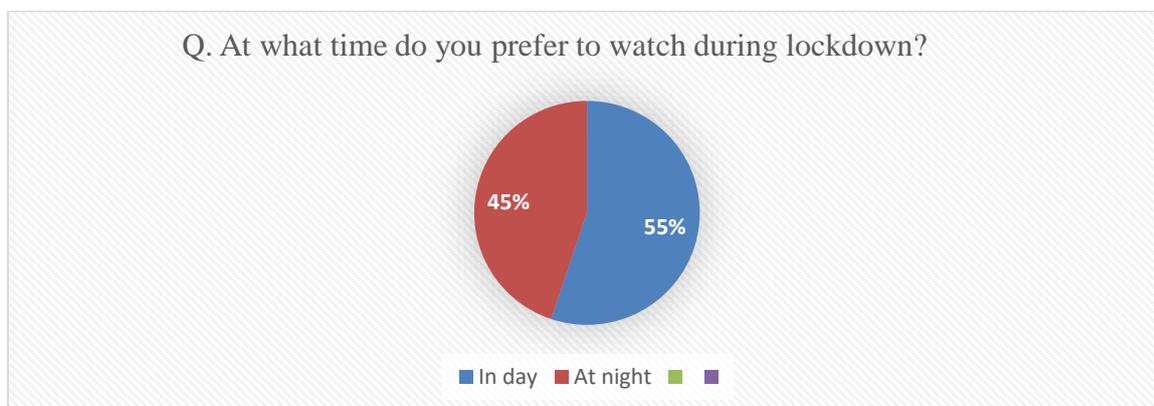


There are four choices for this question & responses are as 20.59 per cent responded to pass time, 38.24 per cent responded to entertain yourself, 5.88 percent responded to habitual to watch, 32.35 per cent responded to relax & to reduce stress. This question is on causes behind watching & highest people reported that they watch to entertain themselves. As we know in this lockdown we are locked completely also for entertainment & we need to have entertainment in our life for being happy. Second highest preference was given to relax & to reduce stress. We are going through a tough pandemic. It's common to have stress, anxiety & psychological issues. So, people are involved in binge watching to reduce their stress level. Also, suicidal rate increased during COVID-19 pandemic. Its major cause is only psychological issues such as extreme stress & anxiety, depression & etc. So, we may say that binge watching is meant to distract themselves from stress.

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The three choices were put on the above question as Yes, No & May be & sample data shows 30.48 per cent respondents answered Yes, 51.43 per cent respondents answered No & 18.10 per cent respondents answered May be. So, half of the population doesn't feel they are watching excessively during lockdown because often they will be watching at an equivalent frequency. Initially they will be binge watchers as in pandemic it doesn't cause alteration. Many people do feel binge watching has increased in their pandemic activity as compared to other days & few populations are not sure and not well versed with their binge-watching practice. Somehow, binge watching practice has increased during lockdowns among Indian population.



The following statement has two choices as 55.71 per cent sample respondent prefer to binge watch in day & 45.29 per cent sample respondent prefer to watch at night. As we know binge watching takes place most often at night here owing to lockdown binge watching happens to take place greater in day vice versa. For the present we spend our day at home only so we need to do any activity after completing day to day work or official work & population prefer to indulge in binge watching practice in day time as well as at night. They have more free time in day also distinctly they compensate their free time in binge watching rather than other practice.

Limitations

There are some limitations to this study. As this study was conducted during lockdown so no face to face interaction with the respondents was possible, only social media sites can be used and that too famous social media platforms was used for the data collection so we can't generalize the data among the general public. Limited access to the respondents was possible.

CONCLUSION

The study found binge watching exists during lockdown unquestionably. Additionally, as per given review literature it can be concluded that binge watching was raised during COVID-19 pandemic.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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