Beyond Entertainment: The Social and Psychological Consequences of Excessive Web Series Consumption

Sagar Dhande[1], Chhote Raja Patle[2], Anuwanshi Sharma[3], Anita Yadav[4]

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Abstract

Web series, primarily targeting youth, have a significant psycho-social impact on their personal. Factors such as peer pressure, unemployment, low education, financial hardship, strained parent-child relationships, school dropout rates, and financial limitations influence young people's involvement in criminal activities. Media, particularly TV shows and web series, also affect the attitudes and behaviours of young people. Social media sites influence the consumption of online videos and web series by young people. To address this issue, the research suggests enforcing severe legal penalties, considering juvenile offenders as adults, encouraging volunteer work, offering to counsel, involving young people in sports activities, and promoting education. It also examines parental monitoring and restrictions on children's viewing habits and preferences for web series and analyses differences between urban and rural areas. The study also addresses ethical concerns related to the production and consumption of crime reality shows and their potential effects on trust in law enforcement and the justice system. By examining these factors and strategies, the research aims to provide insights and recommendations for policymakers, educators, mental health professionals, and parents to effectively address youth crime, promote positive psychological outcomes, and create a safer environment for young individuals in society.

Keywords: Web Series; Psycho-Sociological Impact; Youth; Entertainment; Online Streaming; Crime; Law & Order.

INTRODUCTION

The internet's ubiquitous presence impacts every aspect of our lives, making tasks simple and feasible.[1] Internet usage for communication and leisure impacts society, particularly young people, with both positive and negative consequences.[2] Web series impact people differently, with developmental stage significantly influencing their effects. Exposure to violence, improper sexuality, and obscene language is harmful, affecting youngsters differently.[3] Nevertheless, researchers support more studies into the advantages and disadvantages of such web series media for young people.[4]

The development of web series has transformed the entertainment sector and propelled it to new heights.[5] Smartphones have significantly increased web series popularity among young people, pushing boundaries and exploring taboo issues. With affordable internet connections and diverse

Author's Affiliation: [1]M.Sc Student [2]Assistant Professor, [4]Associate Professor, Department of Forensic Science, School of Sciences, Sanjeev Agrawal Global Educational University, Bhopal 462022, Madhya Pradesh, India., [3]Ph.D. Scholar, Division of Forensic Science, School of Basic and Applied Science, Galgotias University, Greater Noida 201312, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Correspondence: Anita Yadav, Associate Professor, Department of Forensic Science, Sanjeev Agrawal Global Educational University, Bhopal 462022, Madhya Pradesh, India.

E-mail: anitakakas7@gmail.com

content in multiple languages, web series have become more accessible, allowing viewers to tailor their viewing experience based on their preferences.[6] The rise in entertainment interest is driven by OTT platforms and unique online programs, creating a forum for ambitious filmmakers on tight budgets. This mix of technology and platforms attracts spectators and encourages innovative content creation.[7]

Young people prioritize their favourite internet series over other aspects of their lives. However, exposure to violent and abusive behaviors in some web series can normalize these behaviors and influence viewers. Despite potential harm, many web series aim to teach constructive themes and moral lessons.[8] It is critical to evaluate the total impact of web series, taking into account both the possible drawbacks and the ideals they express to viewers.[9] This study investigates the effects of web series on individuals, considering their developmental stage to determine positive or negative effects.[10] Experts recommend investigating the harmful and beneficial impacts of web series media on youngsters, as evidenced by the negative consequences of violence, graphic sexuality, and foul language.[11] Web series influence teenagers' media consumption habits, shifting from traditional television and radio to the internet and cybermedia, with hostile characters indirectly affecting them.[12]

The broadcasting industry has experienced a significant technological shift, with the Internet becoming a primary platform for information delivery. This has improved communication, efficiency, and user preference for simplicity, time saving features, and access to global information.[13] This study will concentrate on youngsters in MP because they can provide measurable data and thorough insights into the subject.

Web series, popular since the early 2000s, are scripted or unscripted videos distributed online in episodic fashion, with an episode being a single broadcast.[14] Web series are widely accessible on various devices and TVs, influencing young people's daily lives and increasing rapidly.[15] Online series are increasingly popular among young people, impacting societal norms and behavior, particularly on platforms like Netflix and YouTube.[16] The average young person in MP watches 4-7 hours of web series daily, contributing to melancholy, obesity, eye diseases, aggressive behavior, academic performance, and risky sexual behavior.[17]

Web series expose children to adult sexual behaviors, normalizing and downplaying risks, promoting the idea that everyone engages in these behaviors. This research evaluates the attitudes of university students, as web series affect students differently and influence their behavior. Regular watching can lead to changes in behavior.[18]

Rahul Ahuja *et al.* did a study of effects of web series & streaming content on Indian youth" regarding web series and online streaming entertainment significantly impact India's youth, diverting them from traditional soap operas.[19] Bharat Dhiman *et al.* Conducted a study on psychosocial impact of web series and streaming content: a study on Indian youth suggested that web series and internet streaming entertainment significantly impact India's youth, capturing their interest but causing serious psychological consequences like violence, sexuality, and abuse.[20] In a study conducted, OTT platforms offer diverse content, including explicit language and mature topics. To prevent abusive language, viewers are warned and given parental controls.[21] Vaishnav V. S. *et al.* did a study Indian online shows have a stronger understanding of millennial women, with content aligning with feminist beliefs. This shift in feminism is not limited to Western countries but rather reflects a cultural trend toward equality and justice.[22] Vishal Waman Wagh *et al.* did a study on web series and online streaming entertainment significantly impact India's youth, diverting attention from traditional soap operas.[23] Debasish routet alconducted a study, based on the data, Web series significantly influence the youth population of Bhubaneswar, as they are available on OTT platforms. Most young people prefer watching action and crime themed web series, dedicating 1 to 3 hours of their daily routine to watching them.[24] Criminal reality programs are gaining popularity among Indian viewers, exposing society's dark side and promoting vigilantes. The creators claim these programs educate and warn viewers about crimes, but research lacks evidence supporting their harmful effects. The current study aims to understand Indian viewers' viewing habits and program perceptions of criminal reality shows by investigating youth viewing patterns for web series and how online series affect the perception of youth. The study also focuses on disparities between female and male viewers in terms of perceptions, outcomes, and expectations and how to examine the psychological influences that web series have on young people's behaviour.

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METHODOLOGY

The layout and structure of the research are largely defined by the kind and description of the theory, the sources that are accessible to the investigator and the participants, and the location of the conclusion of the measurements. The study offers a qualitative approach in order to evaluate the various psychological impacts of web series and online streaming material on Indian adolescents. Simple Random sampling was used to collect the samples from Sage University in Bhopal. For collecting facts, a questionnaire via google forms with questions, including closed ended questions, was generated and provided to participants by email and Whatsapp. By using simple random sampling total of 330 replies of which 176 was male respondents and 154 were female respondents had been collected from Sage University, Bhopal, and evaluated overall.

The survey data gives helpful perspectives into Indian viewers' tastes, beliefs, and behaviors about web series and their influence on society. The following are the important findings:

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Demographics: A significant proportion of participants (83.3% of the sample) were between the ages of 16 and 25. This shows that online series and films are popular among younger generations. The gender breakdown was nearly equal, with 46.7% females and 53.3% males taking part in the survey.

Preferred Genres: Crime is the most prevalent genre with responders (21.2%), followed by Mystery (16.1%) and Thriller (13.9%). This demonstrates that the surveyed viewers have a great interest in thrilling and fascinating content.

Language Preference: Hindi is the preferred language for watching web series by a sizable number of respondents (28.8%), while english is favoured by 12.7%. The majority (56.4%) said they preferred both Hindi and English.

The Influence of Web Series on Perception: A significant number of respondents (43.6%) feel that viewing true crime documentaries has a more beneficial influence on Indian viewers' opinions of crime than watching fictionalized portrayals of crime.

Parental Monitoring's Influence: According to the poll, parental monitoring or limits influence youngsters watching habits and preferences for web series, with the majority of respondents (50.6%) recognizing this influence.

Variations between Urban and Rural Areas: A considerable proportion of individuals (52.4%) identify variations in watching habits, genre preferences, or reported implications on social behaviour.

Ethical Worries and Trust in the Justice System: A sizable proportion of participants (35.2%) express ethical worries about the creation and consumption of criminal reality programs. Furthermore, viewing criminal reality programs has increased a large chunk of respondents' faith in law enforcement and the judicial system (45.9%).

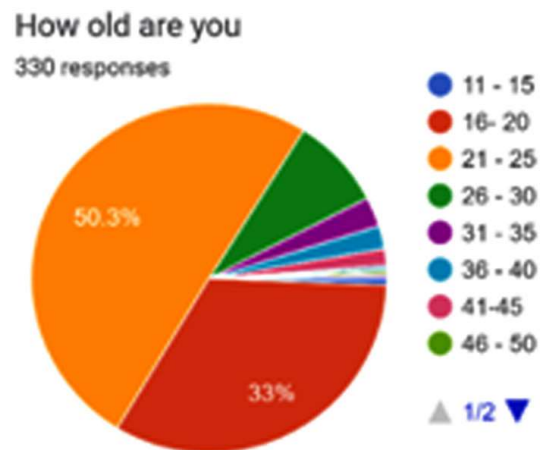*The Role of Government and Authority:* The majority of respondents (53.3%) feel that the

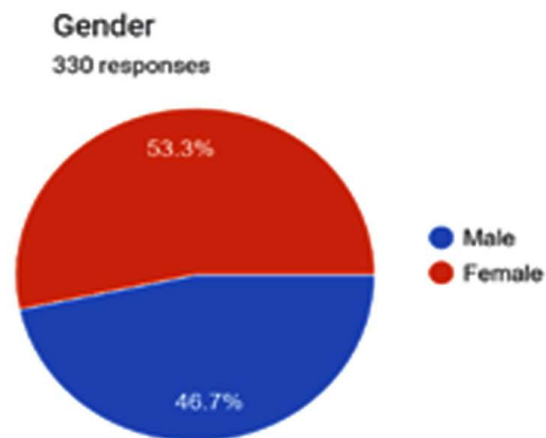**Fig. 1** Agewise distribution

Fig. 2: Genderwise distribution

existing government, judiciary, or local authorities are doing enough to prevent young criminality.

However, a substantial number of people (46.7%) believe differently.
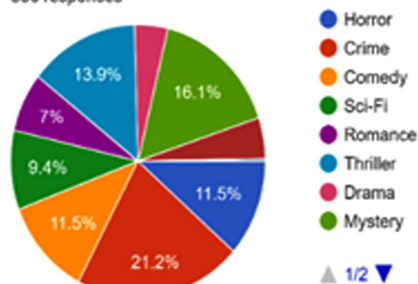
Fig. 3: Crime-related web series
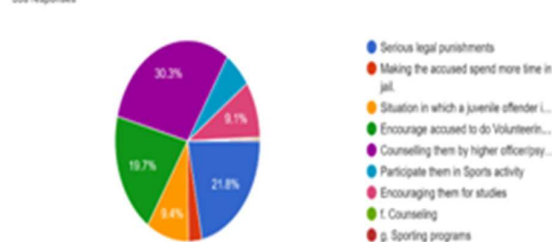
Fig. 6: criminals receive counselling from higher officers/ psychologists to change their behavior
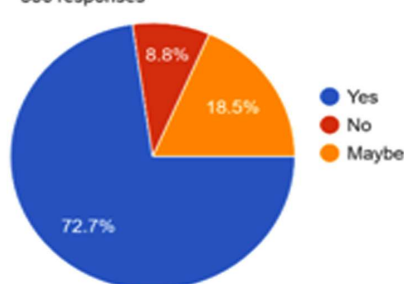
Fig. 4: youth crime as a significant issue.
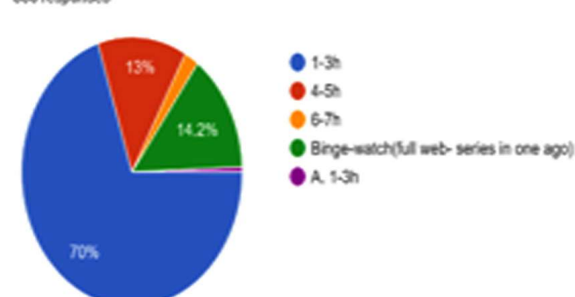
Fig. 7: Timespend 1-3 hours on web series
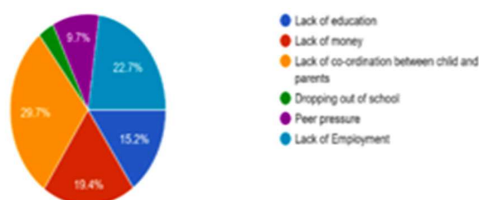
Fig. 5: of participants believe lack of coordination between children and parents is the main cause of crimes

Fig. 8: participants believe TV shows and web series increase mental and psychological disorders awareness
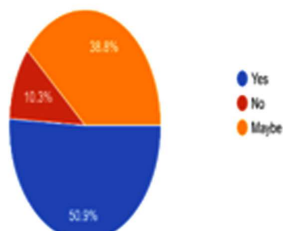
Fig. 9: Crime shows influence young people's perceptions of relationships

Fig. 10: Not influenced by web series or movies for crimes or illegal activities

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Is there any role of social media platforms play in shaping young people's consumption of web series and online video content?

330 responses

- Strongly disagree
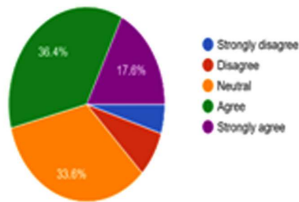- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Fig. 11: Social media significantly influences young people's web series and video consumption.

What is your Mode of access to crime shows?

330 responses

- YouTube
- TV shows at specific time slot
- OTT platforms (Netflix, Amazon Prime, hot-star)
- c. OTT platforms (Netflix, Amazon Prime, hot-star)
- All platforms
- None
- Telegram
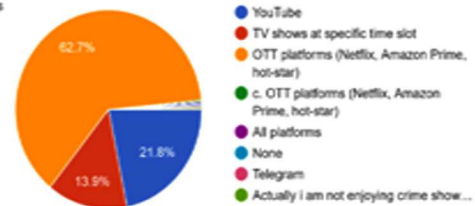- Actually i am not enjoying crime show...

Fig. 16: Accesses web series on OTT platforms

Do you think educators and mental health professionals use web series as a tool for promoting positive psychological outcomes among young people?
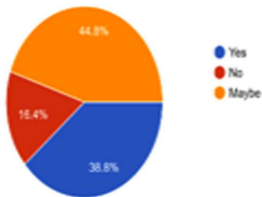
330 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Fig. 12: Educators and mental health professionals use web series for positive psychology promotion.
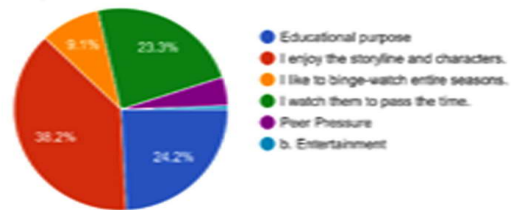
What motivates you to watch online series?

330 responses

- Educational purpose
- I enjoy the storyline and characters.
- I like to binge-watch entire seasons.
- I watch them to pass the time.
- Peer Pressure
- b. Entertainment

Fig. 17: Participants watch online series for story line and characters

Do you think watching true-crime documentaries versus fictionalized depictions of crimes have more positive impact on Indian viewers' perceptions?
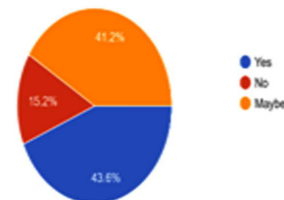
330 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Fig. 13: true documentaries positively impact Indian viewers compared to fictionalizeddepictions

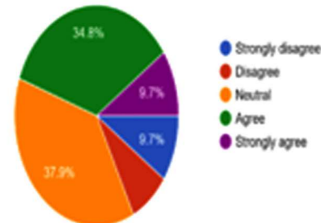Do you agree that online content and web series has psychological effects on your mind?

330 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Fig. 18 Participants experiences psychological effects

Does parental monitoring or restriction affect children's viewing habits and preferences for web series?
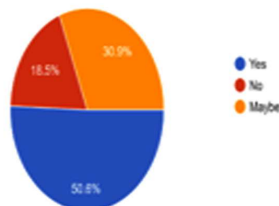
330 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Fig. 14: parental monitoring impacts children's viewing habits

Do you think there are any ethical concerns with the production and consumption of crime reality shows?
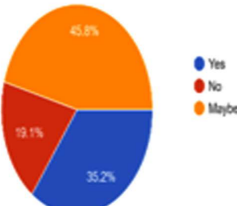
330 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Fig. 19: Participants have ethical concerns about crime reality show production.

Do you think is there any differences between urban and rural areas regarding viewing habits, genre preference, or perceived impact on social behavior?
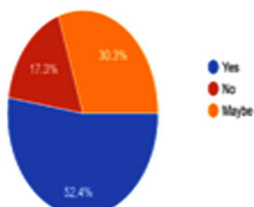
330 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Fig. 15: urban and rural areas have different viewing habits and social behaviour impacts

Do you think watching crime reality shows has made you more or less likely to trust law enforcement and the justice system?
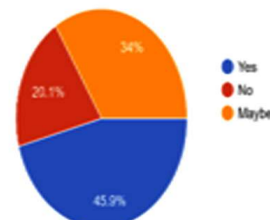
329 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Fig. 20: Participants trusts law enforcement and the justice system

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, online series programs can lead to aggressive and violent behaviour due to their hazy perceptions of good and evil. Teenagers are less susceptible to violence and more likely to copy what they see online, causing them to easily copy violent behaviour. Television is the most influential media, but other sources may also provide harmful social behaviour information. web series does have an impact on young people's attitudes today because they foster bad social development in young people, which may result in aggressive or violent behaviour, and they tend to have an adverse effect on self-development and self-esteem.

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