

## INTRODUCTION OF 'BEST WEB SERIES (OTT) AWARD' AT THE 54th INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF INDIA (IFFI), 2023

### BACKGROUND

#### OTT Platforms as a Key Pillar of the Indian M&E Industry

India has a vibrant media and entertainment sector with diversity of content across languages, regions, cultures, platforms, and mediums including theatrical films and OTT platforms. The OTT sector, despite being nascent in India, emerged as a bulwark for the M&E industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of OTT platforms has increased from 40 in 2020 to about 60 in 2022.

As per FICCI-EY Media and Entertainment Report 2023, the OTT industry in India has a **market size of Rs. 6,800 crores**. The report estimates that almost **3,000 hours of fresh, original content** was produced for streaming platforms in 2022. The growing significance of the sector can be gauged from the fact that as per an industry report, the 100 year old film sector India has 12.2 crore theatre goers at present, while the total **viewership of OTT platforms has grown to 13.5-18 crore** within a span of few years. Further, while the film sector is expected to grow at an estimated rate of 9.8% between 2022-25, the corresponding growth rate for the digital media segment is estimated at 14.7%.

The growth of the OTT sector has led to the increasing production of **content in Indian languages**, catering to the diverse linguistic and cultural preferences of the Indian audience. In 2022, 50% of OTT originals were in Indian languages, up from 30% in 2020.

The OTT industry has helped **take Indian content from regional to global audiences**, giving a significant boost to regional cinema and content creation in terms of **generating employment** and giving a fillip to the opportunities available to young writers, directors, actors, and other creative professionals. Dubbing and subtitling in multiple international languages also help to expand the **reach of Indian content to foreign audiences**.

Indian OTT content has also received **recognition and awards** globally which has helped to strengthen India's soft power across the globe. Recently, Netflix India Original 'Elephant Whisperers' won an Academy Award (Oscar) in the category of Best Documentary Short. In 2020, 'Delhi Crime' won the International Emmy Award for Best Drama Series. Several other Indian web series released on OTT platforms have received international acclaim. The Indian OTT content has also found a **receptive audience abroad** in foreign countries such as the UAE, US, UK, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, among others.

The OTT industry in India has also emerged as a source of **foreign investment**. FICCI-EY Media and Entertainment Report 2023 estimates the total online video content investment in India at Rs. 8,200 crores in 2022. With its immense potential and growing audience base, the Indian OTT industry has **attracted global players** including Netflix, Amazon Prime Video,

and Disney etc. which have not only brought in foreign investment but also expertise thereby leading to percolation of best practices to the level of local producers and talent to create high-quality content.

All the above aspects indicate that the **OTT industry is not only contributing towards growth of the media and entertainment sector of India by bring investment and revenues, but also adding to the richness of the Indian film industry by bringing out new stories from hinterlands of India, nurturing young talent, producing world class content, and taking Indian stories to the world.**

### **Government of India's Engagement with OTT Platforms**

The Government of India has taken steps to support and promote the OTT industry. The **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021** provide recognition to the OTT sector, and establish a stable institutional mechanism for OTT platforms, with a focus on self-regulation and self-classification of content which makes the platform accountable to their audiences.

Realizing the synergy between film and the OTT sectors, the Ministry has encouraged participation of OTT platforms in the prestigious **International Film Festival of India (IFFI)** in the form of world premieres, masterclasses, technology exhibitions, among others. Similar collaboration was also witnessed during regional film festivals at Kashi and Ladakh.

The Ministry has also engaged with the OTT platforms on public communication campaigns such as dissemination of Hon'ble Prime Minister's annual *Pariksha Pe Charcha* programme, and Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. Recently, the Ministry signed a **Letter of Engagement with Amazon India** for a multi-layered collaboration on various aspects related to talent development and promotion of Indian content abroad.