

## **Changed Media Ecology and Transformation in the Order of Entertainment-The Near Decline of the Big -Screen as a Fallout of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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### **Abstract**

*The paper explores the resilient adaptations of the popular film industry in the post pandemic scenario. Incremental changes in the media industry and convergence of media with the advent of the global created challenges for the big screen which in the pandemic period led to its near decline. The new configurations in the media industry that has disembedded entertainment from collectivized solid spaces of cinema halls to individuated private intimate spaces through. access to mobile and internet enabled entertainment are to be read as wider socio-political and economic ramifications within a post-colonial and post-global society.*

**KeyWords- Pandemic, Giant Silver Screen, Media Convergence, Globalization, OTT Revolution, Entertainment, Disembeddedness**

### **Introduction**

The paper based on review and analysis of extant literature, seeks to explore how the gradual decline of the Big Screen in other words cinema halls and theatres for the masses (in India) have reached an apotheosis with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic is responsible for wreaking the greatest damage to the commercial prospects and viability of the giant silver screen, one can trace the trajectory of its diminishing pre-eminence since the advent of India's economic liberalization and the consequent globalizing influences in the domain of media and entertainment that followed. This paper traces how film production negotiated with globalizing influences since mid- 1990s and sustained its popularity and dominance within the media ecology for long and the resilience of this popular entertainment form. while has survived the globalizing changes , the recent outbreak of the pandemic has led to the near retreat of the magical big silver screen .

### **Adapting to the Global; Changing Political and Cultural Economy of Films-**

Globalization had inexorably transformed the cultural and political economy of films. Proliferating diasporic reception and burgeoning overseas circulation via home videos and internet streaming were major changes precipitated by India's economic liberalization. And within the industry there arose by 1990s, a growing recognition of Indian cinema's (particularly commercial cinema of Mumbai) internationalized business potential. And so faced with increased competition from cable television and internet. Indian film production, in particular Bollywood. embraced new technologies and modes of distribution and exhibition which included sophisticated mixes of digital and analogue technologies for global distribution and marketing of films. (Karan and Schraefel, 2012,238-9,244-5)

Satellite broadcasting of Indian television which was a significant post-liberalization change, by the 1990s saw the film industry settle into a symbiotic relationship with it. Heavy dependence on popular culture of filmic content by satellite television reinforced the dominance of Hindi cinema and its stars within the domain of popular entertainment. (Ganti,2004:333 And notwithstanding this convergence and collaboration and the instrumentality of television as a medium of publicity of blockbusters since mid -1990s, film industry still had to cope with competition over viewership, since the advent of satellite television in India. This is specially so as television emerged as a rival outlet or avenue of film viewing and with growing popularity of certain prime time game shows and television soaps, television emerged as, an alternative source of entertainment vying with film viewership. Film producers conceded to a competitive pressure wherein the audience could no longer be considered as captive to the giant screen of cinema halls any longer. To entice audience to the theatres film makers since mid- 1990s. enhanced production expenses and invested substantially in an effort to project a spectacularized cinematic experience that was otherwise not replicable on television screen.

Since then Hindi films particularly have vastly improved production values that includes digital sound, foreign exotic location, extravagant song sequences.lavish sets and so on (Ganti,ibid, 367). In fact adoption of digital technology has been part of first generation changes or first wave growth in entertainment sector following up the economies in the early 1990s as part of Bollywood's face-lift. (Bose 2006.52-3)

Since 2000 with film industry officially gaining industry status, banking and corporate sector financial investment began to invest in film making either by loans or through creation of production companies. Entry of corporate and institutionalised finance led to greater transparency and discipline within the workings of the industry. Institutionalised private film financing and advent of corporatisation of leading film production houses, encouraged fresh directorial talent, earlier deprived of fair chance to experiment with newer ideas and forms and enabled their ideas to take shape in reflexive films under corporate banners.(Bose,2006,22- 3).Corporatized mode of production and institutional finance replaced earlier disaggregated mode of production (ibid35-6) Integrated film production economy and corporate dynamics have allowed film production companies to strike economies of scale with multiple production launched simultaneously. Instead of producing single blockbusters, same available resources were utilized for portfolio production of cost- effective films every year. Essentially adopted as a pragmatic approach the industry started reducing financial risks by blending films of different genres aimed at different markets and audiences. In other words. industry adopted genre differentiation and started catering to niche audience. (ibid,2021-22).

This trend of genre differentiation/diversification went beyond formulaic plots (that were aimed at undifferentiated audiences and thus encouraged multiplex revolution for the niche-audience. Trade analysts produced the expression of 'mathematical hits' wherein costs could be recouped by running for shorter period supported by other revenue sources. The multiplex market held by the burgeoning middle class (as patrons) was a significant change. Harking back the urban middle class through good narrative content and aesthetics and claiming its viewership while competing with satellite television and cable was a challenging task for the film industry. (Bhugra,2006,119) The emergence of new age film making talent mostly targeted at the niche audiences in multiplexes of urban centres was indexical of a definitive change in the dynamics and standards of film making. (Bose, ibid 22).

With economies of film production becoming complex the parameters of commercial success for films produced was no longer contingent on box office returns alone. Overseas publicity, telecast and music rights, merchandising, release of promotional material unleashed multiple sources of revenue streams and opportunities. They grossed up returns beyond the box office, more than what a theatre release via

conventional distribution channels possibly could generate. Media convergence as a corollary of the above aspect allowed for alternative outlets like mobile phones, FM Radio, home videos/DVD/VCD/CDs, animation gaming and internet to emerge as alternative opportunities of entertainment beyond film viewing in theatres. The integration of filmic content to these outlets or what trade analysts called as delivery platforms while being alternative revenue resources proved their potential as entertainment vehicles too (Bose, *ibid*,30,34-5) The immersion of the film into a media ecology, prompted by media convergence, including branding, thus rendered cinema into a commodity complex aligned with other media conduits and forms. This process epitomised as 'Bollywoodization' led to the convergence of films with a larger circuitry of mediascapes. (Gopal, 2011:18) The cultural complex within which films aligned with other entertainment forms broadened film beyond theatrical viewership much before from now,

These changes in the political and cultural economy of film making via corporate finance, genre-differentiation entry of fresh creative and directorial talent and novel ideas beyond formulaic content, multiplex revolution and niche audience can be said to be uncannily anticipatory. These changes seem to have anticipatorily set the stage and also registered the early incipient signs of what later culminated in the OTT Revolution in the middle of last decade.

### **The OTT Revolution**

While the stage was long set through certain anticipatory changes that ultimately moved towards the retreat of the giant silver screen, the OTT Revolution since middle of last decade quite uncannily prepared the audience with an alternative entertainment platform much before one could know about the pandemic. This whole sequence of changes in the production algorithms of popular film making in response to globalization and changing taste of audience appears to be quite an uncanny and may look like a prognostic trajectory. In this section I seek to explore the reasons that prompted the rise of OTT platforms and bring to fore the reasons behind its instant popularity and growing audience reception.

Internet and new media form have cast dramatic impact upon Indian cinema and entertainment and several new technologies are being used by viewers to watch movies and documentaries on their personal electronic gadgets. Internet enabled movies and video content produced by renowned entertainment companies like Netflix, Amazon, Disney, Hotstar, Zee5, AltBalaji and Jio tv have been remarkably popular amongst the viewers. These platforms have enabled a new kind of convergence between television and cinema. Some of these new ventures exclusively committed in production of video content for these Internet-aided Digital platforms have transformed the mode of Indian entertainment industry drastically. (Singh, 2019: 131)

Melodramatic sops and family sagas have continued to reign Indian satellite television since mid-1990s almost as an unavoidable staple. The entry of customised web shows signals a marked departure in favour of producing more customized content. In view of preferred choice of the youth who are keen to view more realistic content, the Indian entertainment industry for the first time in 2014 introduced the first Indian web series "Permanent Roommates" by TVF. The rising popularity of the early web series subsequently encouraged various other production houses including established Bollywood production houses like Yash Raj Films to make forays into the segment and captivate the segment of younger audience.(Kappor,2017) The entry of free 4G Internet services launched by Reliance in 2016 and the entry of the major OTT Players like Netflix followed by others coincided to revolutionized the leitmotif of media and irrevocably altered the Indian entertainment scenario.. However these shows were limited to a niche demography until subscription based services arrived to be further induced by cheap internet services and accessibility and affordability of personalized gadgets like smartphones, laptops etc., (Kalpjyoti,2021)

It is interesting to note how video content of cinema and other entertainment forms available on online platforms have affected the viewership pattern and viewing practices of Indian audience, in particular the Indian urban youth much before the outbreak of the pandemic. And study revealed that in a booming OTT service market, the most preferred content included web series and films. This paradigmatic change in entertainment mode is attributable to several factors which includes convenience of service, mobility, unique content, 'content on demand', flexibility enjoyed in watching time, affordable medium. fast internet facility available to the masses via personalized medium and appliances to avail streaming media, improved content quality and experimental changes, content without censorship, trans nationality of content, and so on And all these factors are further reinforced by smartphone penetration, international collaboration between Media moguls, cost-effectiveness and digital quality of the medium, increased investment by online international streaming media in India in view of its large market potential, affordable cost and low requirement have a reduced risk for producers on digital platforms.(Singh,2019,131, 132, 134, 135).

The phenomenal success of affordable digital entertainment has had had a serious impact upon the Indian film industry. Digital platforms are being increasingly preferred by the urban audience over cinema halls in view of cost and convenience.(Singh,ibid,136).The privacy and flexibility of watching time in the confines of domestic space/ home viewing makes internet aided entertainment forms a popularly acclaimed and already explored choice for many even before the pandemic and also that OTT applications include a variegated spectrum of media content like Movies, Web Series, Documentaries, Television Serials, Reality Shows, Live Sports Events, News etc enhanced its demand.(Singh,ibid134). The fact that audience can exercise upon a wider choice from the very professionally packaged and catalogued entertainment items renders to be almost an entertainment supermarket where audience can budget what to buy and see. This is radically different from the earlier times when viewership was hostage to the fixity of time scheduled for programme on radio and television and cinema hall show timings. In addition the genre differentiation the wider variety of programmes enable viewers with a larger choice base (Maheshkumar 2020,2-3)

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### **Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic and Resilient Adaptation of Film, Media and Entertainment Industry**

There has been a perceptible slowdown in global economic activity since 2019 with rising trade barriers and mounting geopolitical tensions constraining growth. In line with these trends in global economy, India's real GDP declined from 6.1 per cent in 2018 to 4.4 per cent in 2019. The tepid economic climate combined with a slowdown in domestic consumption had cast an adverse impact on the media and entertainment sector in India which grew slower than expected at 7.4 per cent in the financial year of 2020 to reach 1.75 trillion INR. While the slowdown caused segments like print and TV advertising to suffer, digital media and gaming continued to grow at an accelerated pace, and contributed significantly to the growth of this sector.

With the outbreak of the global pandemic India announced stringent measures to combat COVID-19 in March 2020 and headed towards a long phase of lockdown. This resulted to pressure on supply chains, manufacturing consumption and incomes as economic activity slowed and unemployment rose. As a consequence India recorded a steep decline in GDP in the financial year of 2021 as consumer spending and investments declined due to the pandemic..

The media and entertainment sector faced severe disruptions with lockdown forcing all forms of outdoor entertainment, particularly cinema halls to close down. Within the media and entertainment sector all forms of outdoor entertainment came to a standstill, there was a substantial slowdown in advertising spend and content supply chains nearly broke down. While key segments within the media and entertainment sector like television, films and print have experienced major declines, on the contrast an extended lockdown exacerbated digital consumption and segments like digital media and gaming witnessed rapid growth in user penetration and engagement levels.(KPMG Blog2022)

In 2020, with the global pandemic greatly impacting the theatrical and home/mobile entertainment, movie theatres and production studios temporarily closed. As millions quarantined, viewers were forced indoors for their video entertainment. Coinciding with the pandemic, was the new streaming video services from prominent studios and production houses like Netflix, Amazon, Disney Universal and Warner Bros etc. Hence stay-home-viewers were able to watch premium Television series and movies across various screens and providers. While industry analysts had commented that this trend was already beginning, many agree that the pandemic had accelerated or sped up this pace of adoption. And with shut-downs occurring globally, consumers steadily relied on digital platforms (video-on-demand, streaming video ) for entertainment. The upward trend in favour of digital entertainment was accelerated in 2020 as revenue share from this segment increased remarkably and digital media globally accounted for over three-quarters of total theatrical, home/mobile entertainment revenue. Among the drivers in digital entertainment was the increase in online video subscriptions which grew by 35% in 2020 totalling to a large revenue earning in this segment of entertainment. (Adgate,2021)

Indian film industry which is the world's largest in terms of the number of film produced every year and the second largest after Hollywood in terms of its global circulation is grappling with several challenges encountered since the outbreak of the pandemic and the first lockdown in March 2020. Several major films completed and also ambitious projects have been put on hold and several major film productions have been either shelved or indefinitely postponed. Thousands of cinema halls have been indefinitely shut down, supply chain and post production disrupted, not to mention significant job losses within the industry. Trade analysts are ensure when normalcy shall resume given that they have seen a flourishing industry sell 1 billion tickets every year prior to the pandemic. Stakeholders of the industry starting from film producers, distributors, exhibitors, cinema theatre owners and needless to mention production staff are grappling with uncertain times and even personal hardships. According to Ernst and Young 2020 report,1000 screens had chosen permanent closure and earnings of several others dwindled. Insider's estimates suggest that the Indian cinema exhibition industry had lost theatrical revenues of close to 120billion rupees in 2020-21. Instead of traditional cinema, OTT platforms have become the new big screen .Industry trends indicate that with access to better networks, digital connectivity and smartphones ,OTT platforms have been attracting subscribers on a daily basis.(Krishnan, M, 2021)

It is believed that the rise of OTT platforms and web-series in India are responsible for a transformative change and evolution in the media and entertainment industry in India. According to a latest report by Ernst & Young there has been a nearly 49% growth in digital subscription revenues in 2020 in comparison to the 10.5 million in 2019, in 2020 28 million Indians paid for 53 million OTT subscription . Another survey by Ormax Media reported that web-series are more popular media content in these digital platforms highly preferred by the urban millennial mostly.

As web-series and OTT are considered to be the technological and cultural successor to the traditional modes of electronic entertainment like films and television, it is quite evident that the pandemic and consequent lockdown opened the floodgates that catapulted the popularity of the web-series as a preferred and popular mode of electronic entertainment. The subscription bases of the platforms registered a significant rise during this period. (Kalpjyoti, *ibid*).

Sequestered at home during the pandemic people have been seeking newer ways to survive the crisis while avoiding at the same time monotony of home bounded state especially because it has had an impact on mobility largely. New modes of entertainment in addition to OTT delivered content have caught people's imagination during the pandemic. While some have emerged as favoured pastimes and others have resurged as people are exploring distractions and adapt to the protocol of social distancing while remaining within safe confines of private domestic spaces. This has had an impact on the mass character of entertainment and has rendered its congregational character in public spaces like movie halls quite questionable. Confined within far more private and 'sanitized' domestic spaces people are choosing virtual or online experiences of tourism, hiking concerts, learning programmes, ce of Watch Parties while remaining connected to a small group of watchers while watching a show. Reprise from office and regular ravel to workplace (and work) from home has motivated several to flexible entertainment schedule, and this also allowed for audience to reclaim an independence from scheduled show timing of cinema halls. Exploring of the already existing entertainment modes via online conduits has increased manifold times during the pandemic period wherein unexpected downtime or state of home-bounded ness has rendered many to re-design their everyday schedule through online engagements. While some have chosen to enhance pedagogical and professional skills through knowledge-based outlets via online classes and learning programmes for their wards and for themselves, others have allowed their leisure to find newer routes and all these alternative modes, have significantly affected the practices of leisure and entertainment.(Deluxe Home Blog, April 30 ,2020)

Pandemic has witnessed a strange synergy between popular demand and technology wherein people seeking newer entertainment avenues or information outlets have been readily catered to by the new age media and telecommunication platforms. Social distancing and stay-home mandates have allowed technology to be explored in revised, re-crafted and also novel ways to cater to requirements of information-searching, entertainment, leisure and social engagements. It is a solace that digital connectivity allowed for business continuity plans in the entertainment industry notwithstanding lockdowns and mobility restrictions. Although quite ironic that though revenue generation was not adequately commensurate with rise in viewership and content consumption it remains noteworthy that pandemic witnessed an upsurge in subscription base for digital entertainment. And this is so as it allowed for escape routes from drudgery of home-confinement, while also coping with a more restrictive life oriented to newly imposed health protocols.

As the world adapts and adjusts to the new-normal, consumer behaviour is fast evolving and an expanding demand for at-home digital media like OTT platforms are catering to new demographics and locations. The cartographies of entertainment spaces will presumably survive even after the crisis subsides as it offer certain newly discovered and tasted advantages. It is further believed that it would take some time for consumers to adopt external consumption models of entertainment like before the outbreak of the pandemic as apprehensions of risks and advantages of sanitised privacy shall continue to influence many.

The future of entertainment, needlessly can to be said to remain digital. Besides a proliferation in newer subscription level there shall also be growing retainer ship of existing digital consumers. Online gaming consumption and demand for OTT-originals is predictably going to witness a rise as technological

advancement shall continue to support this trend. Not dependent on advertisers this subscription-driven model had already proved its sustainability prior to pandemic and the viability of this model was further reinforced during the pandemic. Further it is believed that the dependency of media and entertainment companies on technology will likely to increase to leverage cost-efficiency and create revenue enhancement opportunities. As monetisation and revenue in terms of ad-expenditure, continues to grapple, profit protection and cash management with greater technology integration will gain strategic significance for media and entertainment companies in future. The industry is likely to remain focussed on sustenance at current levels along with a renewed emphasis on flexibility which would accelerate the move to a variable cost model and reduced fixed costs. While the long-term implications of COVID-19 are likely to emerge a little later, the developments mentioned here are likely to prevail as trends of the media and entertainment industry in the post-Covid times and further these these projections proves to show the financial risks of conventional film making. (Adhikari,2020)

Reverting back to the earlier normal of pre-Covid situation is unlikely to happen soon as the 'new normal' becomes accepted as the present reality fears, apprehensions and certain habits will continue to remain within us. And this shall influence consumer behaviour and decisions. (Adhikari,2020). Social distancing which has been literally physical distancing have found new ways to be negotiated with our social lives and the media industry particularly social, entertainment, and communications platforms has spawned new behaviours that shall persist even after restrictions are eased subsequently.(WEF/White Paper,June2020, 6) In view of this reconciliation to the new normal one can assess the differentials in the long term and near term impact of the pandemic upon the entertainment segments, and also see that while some of these segments resiliently have survived the crisis others in particular cinema will experience certain changes within them as it seeks to resiliently survive and make adaptive changes while shifting its exhibition space( from the giant screen to private ones).(KPMG Blog)

Pandemic thus seem to have altered the pattern of consumption of media and entertainment content. Long periods of lockdowns have severely affected consumer behaviour. As movie theatres, museums, events, and other forms of external entertainment consumption models faced a closure, social lives and entertainment moved online, and entertainment consumption has gravitated significantly towards digital modes like OTT services and gaming. And hence one can claim that COVID-19 pandemic has been characterised by dichotomies in the media, entertainment and culture industry. Digital consumption flourished as advertising fell away. Demand for quality, differentiated content grew as production of some media stopped altogether. New media content is being generated through low-budget productions while creators are able to transmit directly to millions of consumers directly. This has been enabled by agile, robust and scalable platform infrastructure built around active ecosystems of creators and consumers. The new patterns that emerge in communication and entertainment are likely to have profound effects for how society engages with content and who gets to tell stories in future (WEF/White Paper,2020.3,6)

The post-COVID-19scenario for the media and entertainment industry is expected to be that of increased digital integration into everyday life with short-term and long-term industry impact on consumer behaviour. While the psychological fallout of the pandemic is yet to be ascertained, however, it is not without reason to assume that previous models of entertainment such as crowded events, gatherings, movie theatres, concerts are most likely to be avoided until trust in such congregational events get restored. While social lives have moved online, and entertainment consumption has increased significantly for online gaming and over-the-top (OTT) services. It is believed that consumers might take more time to embrace previous norms of external consumption once again, especially in areas that have been the worst affected by this crisis is cinema. With a

strong digital citizenry base of consumers, the stage is being set for a new compelling battle of dominance, consumer retention and survival amongst the streaming services on digital entertainment platforms. (Saigal,2020)

With over 45 OTT services in India, there is a stiff battle for attracting consumers. As low cost and efficient mobile packages along with good and affordable internet connectivity have enabled both rural and urban populations to consume video content at an alarming rate, time will show how post pandemic developments will affect the country's cinema industry in the long term. (Krishnan,2020) As a survival strategy several producers have opted to release their films on streaming platforms without waiting for a theatrical release. What is very significant in the lockdown period is its impact on the film industry as films are being released on OTT thereby compromising on the grandeur of theatrical release since 2020. (Kalpjyoti, ibid). With film enthusiasts still apprehensive and several millions still preferring safety of private locations, streaming media services have emerged as the alternative 'new big screen'. Major production houses are considering OTT releases for new releases of blockbusters. Directors, producers and actors are increasingly accepting this altered arrangement and accepting its relevance too. Observing upon this veteran actress Shabana Azmi says 'What I have noticed also is there is a distinct change in viewing preferences in this crisis, especially in rural India, where people are seeing movies on their phones. People have turned adversity into advantage.'(Krishnan,16/7/2021)

### **Conclusion -The Retreat of the Giant Silver Screen and its Implications**

Post-World decolonization set into process the forming of the new nation-states in the Southern World accompanied by instituting individuals as right bearing citizens. The new post-colonial nation states replaced earlier communitarian structures and the new citizen was upheld as a standard legitimated bearer of rights-a principle universally maintained in modern civilized world of nations. Scholarship in film studies have acknowledged spectatorial rights of the viewing individual to be maintained via viewership protocol of cinematic system (movie theatre -halls) as of crucial significance in the numerous post-colonial states. It is seen as an extension of citizenship rights in the context of de-colonization and pan national development (Rajadhyaksha,2009,86-7)

Unlike the classical Indian theatre, dance and classical performances where access has been restricted by class, gender, and class affiliations, cinema in India had no antecedent within traditional cultural conventions. And notwithstanding that ticket pricing maintained a hierarchy among viewers within a movie hall, film viewership within a public domain or space enabled a secularization and democratization across primordial affinities, albeit beyond statist enclaves. (Jacob,2010,83)

Cinema as a public sphere emerged as a prominent institution of Indian neighbourhoods by 1940-1950s and crucially accounted for the fact that the ticket buying subject citizen assumed certain spectatorial rights- and emerged as a metaphorical incarnate of certain fundamental democratic rights within a public domain and was symbolically relevant for the new post-colonial modern nation-states. Film historians observes that in the early years of freedom, Indian cinema in several parts of the country provided the first instance where the 'national public' could congregate without being divided along primordial lines of caste, gender, religion and class.(Srinivas,2009,39).

Cinema hall as a public institution, an egalitarian space, a popular alternative democratic secular space maintained outside state confines faces an existential crisis under current dispensation. The democratic form of reception unleashed and mobilized by collective gazing within a public space, despite hierarchized

exhibition arrangements faces a competitive challenge within the new media ecology of digital entertainment. The properties of 'film citizen' has been repositioned as the political and cultural economy of film production has undergone remarkable changes since India's economic liberalization.

Currently in view of technologically enabled trans-nationalization of mediascape and digitized media ecology it is difficult to conceptualize a national viewing public or a national public sphere hostage to the territorial confines of the nation-state. Computer mediated communication and digitized public sphere with the advent of global transnationality have reduced the importance of borders and physical spaces within the domain of media and entertainment. It has also fragmented and internally differentiated the otherwise comprehensive and cohesive national public sphere. The discursive spaces fail to associate with or represent a political citizenry and do not co-relate with sovereign states. (Gripsrud and Moe,2010,10) Habermas described it as post-national constellation wherein globalization touches upon the legitimacy and functions of the nation-state. The idea of a nation of citizens rendered possible through cultural integration within public sphere is threatened by fragmentation.(Habermas1998/2001; 76) whereby it can be said that the 'one text of the public sphere' has reconciled to a certain discursivity, disembeddedness, fragmentation and fluidity of spatiality. Cinema's rapid dispersal and disembeddedness from the giant screen and decline in its exhibition within solidity of an institutionalized spatial regime of movie theatres is an observable fallout of the pandemic. Sanitized private space and the private screen is the new address cinema. The privatized fragmented locale entered into a spectatorial regime outside solidity of national space premised upon statist license or consent. The global inflexion has digitally and differently empowered the audience and the pandemic has reinforced it further.

Such times prod us to take refuge in Zygmunt Bauman's understanding of the 'Liquid Modern' (Bauman,2000). Nothing in liquid modernity, as we see at the turn of the post-national globalization, comes fully equipped with a life-time guarantee. The altered dynamics of media and entertainment industry, traced here from globalization till the pandemic, compels us to concede that absolute security eludes us against the backdrop of relentless upheaval and uncertainty. The early anticipations and intimations of changes traced, in production dynamics of the film and entertainment since mid 1990s till the OTT Revolution, prepared us slowly to anticipatorily adapt to the impact of pandemic in 2020. The solidity of physical space that was slowly eroding under the influence of these changes saw its worse results during the pandemic. The pandemic has put to question the viability of movie halls, and its credibility as safe space has been put to question in view of its congregational character and the threats it poses of contamination. Identified as a potential space of contamination that potentially contravenes or threatens health protocols during the pandemic the solidity of this physical space and its destiny has been put to question in view of the disembedded and fragmented niche audience and pluralisation of entertainment forms. The domain of media and entertainment in times of the 'liquid modern' thus appear to be peripatetic and fluid, wherein the solidity of physical space housing the giant silver screen is found to be coping with the sudden fallout of the pandemic and seeking to regain its earlier eminence.

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