

Quote By Charu Malhotra, Co-Founder & Managing Director, Primus Partners

Published in Mint

Feb 05, 2025

Appeal of global series grows, but local originals drive views

# Appeal of global series grows, but local originals drive views

Latajha

[lata.j@htlive.com](mailto:lata.j@htlive.com)

**W**ith the likes of *Squid Game*, *The Boys* and *Emily in Paris* breaking out on streaming platforms with impressive viewership in India, entertainment industry experts say international content is firmly poised for niche but solid appeal among high-end local audiences.

The viewership may not be comparable to top Indian web shows, but the user base is loyal and discerning with high paying propensity. The second season of *Squid Game* was the most-watched international series in India last year, with a viewership of 19.6 million, followed by the fourth season of *The Boys* at 10.5 million, according to media consulting firm Ormax's report. In comparison, the most watched Hindi language web series was the third season of *Mirzapur*, with a 30.8 million viewership.

"The global shows have a steady viewership built over decades and form the largest volume of programming across our brands and genres. They have a dedicated viewership and continue to attract a significant portion of the audience for the category and help build local programming on the back of that," said Sai Abishek, head of factual and lifestyle cluster, South Asia, Warner Bros. Discovery.

Meanwhile, the company has recently seen local originals gain a large chunk of viewership due to clutter-breaking concepts and clear audience demand, he said. Local originals also command a much larger share of the marketing expenditure than the global series. "We feel that, in the long term, global originals will continue to bring in the core dedicated audience while the local original tentpoles will expand



*Squid Game's* second season was the most-watched international series in India last year, with a viewership of 19.6 mn. @SQUIDGAME/X

the genre and bring in more viewers into the category. It forms a bridge to the next generation," Abishek said.

OTTs (over-the-top) are betting big on international shows to add variety to their original content at a time when audience fragmentation is challenging due to the availability of multiple entertainment options, said Rajat Agrawal, chief operating officer of Ultra Media & Entertainment Group.

The demand for international content on OTT is growing since it keeps viewers hooked longer.

Though it has a niche but loyal audience, such content performs quite well in terms of opening and long-term viewership because of good word-of-mouth publicity and well-strategized marketing campaigns, Agrawal added.

According to Chandrashekar Mantha, partner and media and entertainment sector leader at Deloitte India, over 60% of India's 500 million plus OTT users consume regional or local content, while 40% regularly watch international content. Further, international titles are now dubbed in Hindi to cater to viewers who prefer

local languages.

Viewership for international content has been steadily increasing, with shows like *Money Heist*, *Stranger Things*, and *The Crown* garnering a loyal fanbase in India, particularly among English-speaking, urban audiences.

"Acquiring international content often involves licensing fees, which can vary based on exclusivity, region and demand. While these costs might be lower than producing original content, the return on investment depends on view-

**Over 60% of India's OTT users consume regional content, while about 40% watch international content regularly**

ership metrics. International titles attract viewers, especially among the urban and younger demographics. However, the overarching trend leans towards regional and local

content," said Charu Malhotra, co-founder and managing director of Primus Partners, a management consultancy firm. While international content adds value and variety to the platform's library, local Indian originals remain the primary drivers of viewership in the Indian OTT market, she emphasized.

For an extended version of this story, go to [livemint.com](https://livemint.com)