



The Myriad Forms of Digital Entertainment and the Impact of Their Easy Accessibility on Society: A Sociological Study

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ABSTRACT

Life is based upon two essential activities: work and leisure. If both go well, then life is considered somewhat satisfactory. However, with changing technology, the way of doing work as well as spending time on leisure is also changing. Entertainment is also shifting and becoming digital and affecting this work-leisure balance. Therefore, this paper focuses on different forms and accessibility of entertainment and how they affect society. The primary aim of this paper is to explore the impact of advancement in entertainment technology on individuals. This review paper is based on secondary data, and content analysis has been used to analyze the themes and patterns related to this topic. The paper attempts to engage critically with the theory of technological determinism. The argument here is that entertainment, which is a form of art, should be used for the benefit of society. However, with the development of technology, instead of focusing on common people, it started working only in the favour of a few capitalists.

Introduction

Entertainment is an essential part of life and a defining feature of modern culture (Milliman, 2015). However, people's way of entertaining themselves is changing with digitalization, and digital media has become a popular platform (Ghalawat et al., 2021). Digitalization of entertainment contains many



different kinds or forms. Different forms of entertainment play important social, cultural, economic, political, and religious roles (Milliman, 2015). Nowadays, cultures are swamped in the tsunami of digitalization, which is holding people in such a mesmerized way that they do not want to come out of that (Gitlin, 2010). In this digital world, many digital platforms are available for entertainment, including radio, television, gaming, Over the Top (OTT), etc. In today's era of social media, entities like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat have become platforms for interaction (Deshbandhu, 2020), and these platforms have different content, such as reels and short videos. These videos are rich and colourful in nature but are lacking in local characteristics, i.e. these are unable to satisfy local audiences, particularly in terms of a sense of belongingness in regional identity (Ning et al., 2024). These forms of videos are diverse in nature; however, interactive engagement is needed to have a dense effect on this communication (Ning et al., 2024). Podcasts, vlogs, audiobooks, news, digital arts, and many other entertainment sources occupy an essential part of life, turning it into entertainment overload (Gitlin, 2010). With time, accessibility to the Internet has also increased. Therefore, the Internet is also a significant reason behind the early access to digital content (Castells, 2011). People are buying the fastest CPU not to accelerate or improve their official software applications but to use it for gaming and entertainment (Macedonia, 2000). The primary issue is that entertainment used to be a form of high art that always left a meaningful impact on society. Nowadays, the number of platforms and applications related to digital entertainment is increasing, but somewhere, the content is lacking in its qualities.

Methodology

This review paper mainly focuses on digital entertainment and its myriad forms. These different forms' have major impacts on society. The theoretical basis of this research is the technological determinism given by Thorstein Veblen. Technological determinism claims that the social history of humanity is overwhelmingly shaped by technological developments (Athique, 2013). It believes that the future can be predicted through the impact of advancements in technology. This paper tries to critically analyze the impact of advancements in technology, specifically in the field of entertainment, and how this impact shapes attitudes in society. With the advancement of technology, individuals' attitudes are changing. Secondary data has been used in this paper to grasp the multi-dimensionality of digital entertainment and its different forms. The secondary data sources are published, and online data. This paper focuses on the interdisciplinary perspective. Therefore, the researchers used literature from sociology, mass communication, anthropology, and psychology, including books, book chapters and journals. The researchers addressed a variety of keywords and topics using Google Scholar and Jstore and selected journal articles, book chapters, and conference proceedings. The keywords used for searching are



Digital, entertainment, print, radio, television, music, cinema, films, gaming, advertisements, OOH (out of home), digital media, OTT (Over the Top), reels, short videos, YouTube, Facebook etc. Along with that, books are also cited in this paper to help readers understand the background of the paper. The data analysis has been conducted with the help of content analysis to find the themes and patterns related to this topic. The researchers develop themes, sub-themes, and key quotes by classifying and coding the articles and book chapters. Later, data is analyzed from the key quotes, and their interpretation and analysis are mentioned in the findings and analysis section.

Different forms of Digital Entertainment and its impact

Digital media consumption is increasing day by day, and almost every person's purpose for consuming media is different; for example, amusement or entertainment is one of the most popular reasons for consuming media, and some will use it for communication and accessing information (Chow, 2013). Media and entertainment can split into ten segments, including print, radio, television, online gaming, animation and VFX, out-of-home (OOH), music, digital media, live events, and film entertainment (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2023).

Print-based Entertainment: Print-based media was the first attempt when technology entered the field of entertainment (Orsini, 2009). The invention of the printing machine was a major shift in technology. Print media includes many things, such as newspapers, magazines, books, comic books, etc. In previous societies, after oral, print was the major source of entertainment (Orsini, 2009). Including pleasure in previous books and other print material was a tough challenge for commercial publishers.

Radio: The most basic reason for the popularity of radio was the fact that it did not require any kind of literacy, unlike print media (Rao, 2005). Radio was a very powerful communication tool, and particularly, it promoted the educational and agriculture sectors of rural areas (Nazari & Hasbullah, 2010). The time before 1929 was considered a magical era in America and other countries because a sound coming from a box was believed a true miracle (Marquis, 1984). Until the invention of television, radio was at its maturity level, having a large audience for cultural programs, including songs and dramas, and for the in-depth coverage of current events (Marquis, 1984).

Television: Philio Taylor Farnsworth first demonstrated television in 1927 (Sheau Ng, 2012). Previously, television also started for educational purposes, but later, the perspective of watching TV shifted towards entertainment. Television came up with unexpected popular entertainment and information in the living room and shifted cultural consumption from public to private spaces (Athique, 2013). However,



sometimes, the content on television is based upon violence and heavy alcohol and drug consumption that can be a threat to health (Funk et al., 2004; Scharrer & Comstock, 2003). Screen time on television also affects the attitudes of children and their parents (Peters et al., 1991).

Music: While discussing music, we observe that it is popular in traditional society. In the contemporary world, music has not lost its importance and can easily create space in anyone's life. Sacks (2007) explores in his book 'Musicophilia' how music can activate and occupy more areas of the brain than language does (Sacks, 2008). Music has lots of benefits for the development of language, fine motor coordination (if someone is learning instruments), and spatial reasoning (because music includes mathematics) (Hallam, 2010). It can be a promising stimulus for those persons who are suffering from dementia (a neurological condition that can worsen with time) (Baird & Thompson, 2018). Music plays a very important role in developing human behaviour and changing society (Rabinowitch, 2020). But the dissolution of music into parts such as climaxes and isolated details is a mark of the decline of music (Witkin, 2003).

Film Entertainment: Film entertainment or cinema plays a significant role in education, information and entertainment (Balabantaray, 2022). According to age and education, the influence of movies differs for different people (Kubrak, 2020). Based on their tastes, individuals have different genres of interest (Sajid et al., 2022). Many times, it can be observed that the youths' attitudes change towards themselves and their family because of the influence of films (Balabantaray, 2022; Kubrak, 2020). It is a convenient way to inform the audience about tourism, traditions, culture, weather, and many others (Abou Zeid, 2021). There are numerous instances related to several degrees of protest faced by various movies that are self-explanatory (Balabantaray, 2022). Youth are fond of watching Bollywood movies as well as Hollywood, and both play a vital role in creating an impression in the youth's mind.

Online gaming: Gaming culture is increasing with time (Deshbandhu, 2020), and it has positive and negative impacts on the society (Boyle et al., 2012; Lafrenière et al., 2009; Smyth, 2007; Wang et al., 2008). Previously, games used to be a fun activity that could provide relief to the mind, but nowadays, online gaming is a stressful activity, whereby to be in that game, gamers have to be focused, and also there is pressure to win that game (Deshbandhu, 2020). One of the major reasons for the rise in online gaming culture is the concern of parents about their children's safety and the preference for indoor games (Valentine & McKendrick, 1997). From the parents' and health perspective, active video games can be an alternative to traditional games because they include the least physical activity (Ning et al., 2024; Papastergiou, 2009; Peng & Liu, 2009). However, the rest of the games, which require a long time of



sitting and full concentration, can have adverse effects (Chow, 2013; Lafrenière et al., 2009; Smyth, 2007; Wang et al., 2008).

OOH (*Out of Home*): Out-of-home advertisements are mostly observed outside the home, including at bus stops, airports, billboards, transit signage, and digital screens in public places. With changing times, advertisements are also becoming digital (Stalder, 2011). Out-of-home media is bringing the experience of the internet into public places. It is not a new concept, but with time, particularly with the development of printing machines, radio, television, and mass media, these are modified and bombarded on people (Monfared, 2015). Its primary focus is to create, build, and sustain brands (Bisht, 2013). It is playing a major role in creating an urban environment (Stalder, 2011).

Digital media: Digital media is a wider term that includes many digitalized platforms, including web series/ OTT (Over the Top), videos (Reels or long videos), and digital advertisements. After television lost its importance, web series flourished over time (Patnaik et al., 2021). OTT does not include a fixed schedule and liveness, which become its special features and make it different from television (Pandey, 2022). COVID-19 is also a significant reason for the increasing craze for web series or OTT because, at that time, going outside for entertainment was not possible. Therefore, the youth started spending more time on online entertainment, such as web series (Ghalawat et al., 2021).

Digital entertainment, early access and its impact

The internet is such an invention of human beings that it is not truly understandable by themselves as well (Schmidt & Cohen, 2014). The transformation of electronic information started from a room-sized computer, and now it is an endlessly manufactured and omnipresent outlet. The world's major computer networks had a linkage between a series of telecommunications through the internet (Athique, 2013). The network society is a society where people are radically decentered as a society but always connected through a network (Castells, 2011). The internet is the largest experiment done in our history (Schmidt & Cohen, 2014). Billions of people consume and create a huge amount of digital content in this online world. In the network society, information exchange constitutes everything, including the production of wealth, managing the population, enabling debates, and shaping personal relations (Castells, 2011). With growing space in this era of the internet, our understanding of every aspect of life will change, including minute information about our daily lives and fundamental questions about security, identity, and personal relations (Schmidt & Cohen, 2014).



In India, Reliance Jio introduced 4th generation Internet on 1st September 2016 and kept this for a trial period of four months (Christy, 2020). In this trial period, the internet was freely available to the users of reliance Jio. Accessibility and availability of free internet also brought a major change in the users' way of using data. Within every passing second, the structure of the internet, which is in a constant set of mutations, is becoming complex and growing larger (Schmidt & Cohen, 2014). After access to 4G and LTE internet, the youth started shifting towards those platforms that are connected to the internet, such as OTT and other software like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube (Moochhala, 2018; Patnaik et al., 2021). Most people prefer to use their mobile phones for entertainment (Internet Adoption In India ICUBE 2020, 2020). The accessibility of cheap data and the availability of cheap smartphones have led to an explosion in internet data consumption. Nowadays, the 5th generation (5G) internet is also promising a drastic change in the market and consumption behaviour (Caruso et al., 2019). The user's way of consuming media and entertainment depends largely on the availability, accessibility, and speed of the internet.

Findings and Analysis:

In this review paper, the content is divided into some themes and categories to understand the scenario of this forthcoming problem and how technology determines the development of society. The content analysis is explained in the table below:

Table 1: Theme, Sub-Theme and Key Quotes used in this paper

Theme/Category	Sub-Theme	Key Quotes	Reference/ source	Interpretation
Print-based media	Print media as entertainment	Make it into print from oral or written tradition.	(Orsini, 2009)	This was a major shift in the field of entertainment.
Radio	Radio as communication technology	Radio is a powerful communication tool.	(Marquis, 1984); (Nazari & Hasbullah, 2010); (Rao, 2005)	The major reason behind its popularity is that it did not require literacy.
	Agriculture and	It plays a vital	(Marquis,	Radio has a



	educational function	role in farming and development systems.	1984)	positive influence on society, especially in education and farming.
	Access	Radio used to serve the interests of the elites. Later, it penetrated into rural areas.	(Rao, 2005)	Access to radio was limited, but later, it reached the masses and became a popular mass medium.
Television	Positive effect	Television started as a major source of informal education, farming and entertainment.	(Athique, 2013); (Nazari & Hasbullah, 2010); (Rao, 2005)	Television has had a significant impact in the fields of education and farming, but now, the inclination of its content is more towards entertainment.
	Negative effects	TV content, including violence, alcohol, and drug consumption, is	(Funk et al., 2004); (Scharer & Comstock, 2003)	TV has negative impacts on the physical and mental health of individuals.



		a threat to health.		
	Consumption pattern	The advertisement displayed on TV has a significant impact on consumers' purchasing patterns.	(Arshad & Aslam, 2015); (Scharrer & Comstock, 2003)	The focus of the content or advertisement on television has shifted towards increasing consumerism.
Music	Musicophilia	Music can occupy more space in the brain than language.	(Anders et al., 2004)	Music influences society more than speeches and essays.
	Benefit of music	Music plays an important role in developing human behaviour.	(Baird & Thompson, 2018); (Hallam, 2010); (Rabinowitch, 2020)	Music is a good therapy for developing human behaviour.
Films entertainment	Positive effect	Films play a significant role in education, information and entertainment.	(Balabantaray, 2022); (Kubrak, 2020); (Abou Zeid, 2021)	Films also influence people to improve their lifestyle and health.
	Negative effect	Movies that depict the usage of drugs also	(Sajid et al., 2022); (Pechmann &	The use of drugs and alcohol has a



		affect youth.	Shih, 1999)	negative influence on society.
Online gaming	Physical activity	Only Active videos include some physical activity.	(Ning et al., 2024); (Papastergiou, 2009); (Peng & Liu, 2009)	Online games did not include physical activities except active video games.
	Social interaction	Online gaming is about bringing players together to play, but online.	(Deshbandhu, 2020); (Marlina, 2017)	Social interaction is reducing due to increase in the craze of online gaming.
	Safety	Parents' concern about their children's safety is also a reason for the increasing number of indoor games.	(Valentine & McKendrick, 1997)	Increasing accidents and crimes is also one of the major reasons for increasing the inclination towards indoor and online games.
Out-of-home (OOH) entertainment	Digital advertisements	Digital out-of-home media is bringing the internet experience into public space.	(Stalder, 2011)	Out-of-home media is becoming a kind of entertainment that is used in public places



				to sustain their brands.
Digital media	Web Series / OTT	It freed the consumers from the constraints of fixed television schedules.	(Pandey, 2022)	OTT is flexible in timings and viewers can watch anytime.
	Reels/ short videos	Reels and short videos altered the ways and patterns of consumption and communication.	(Lin, 2023); (Ning et al., 2024)	People like to watch short videos because it takes less time to provide information.
	Long videos	YouTube and Facebook videos also revolutionized the way people used to be entertained.	(Zhou et al., 2016)	Social media, including YouTube and Facebook, plays a major role in increasing the craze for digital entertainment.

The following outcomes can be observed after analyzing the themes and patterns explained in the above table. Entertainment with technology is supposed to start from print media, in which comic books, novels, and newspaper articles are used as the source of entertainment after oral entertainment (Orsini, 2009). Later, radio grasped all the attention, and the primary focus was on education and farming (Marquis, 1984). Thereafter, it shifted to entertainment and at that time, it was a miracle that a sound was coming from a box, and people were mesmerized by seeing that device. The most unique thing behind its



popularity is that it did not need literacy (Rao, 2005). Along with that, motion pictures were also invented without sound, and later, sound was added to those pictures (Sheau Ng, 2012). The invention of television also brought a revolution in technology because it shifted the consumption of cultures from public to private spaces (Athique, 2013). New inventions of instruments in the music industry also mesmerized people (Hallam, 2010). The most important fact that can be observed from this discussion is most of the programs broadcast in India on traditional entertainment platforms, including radio and television, had many benefits in different sectors such as education, farming and entertainment. Later, cinema also became an influential platform for entertainment, education, and information (Abou Zeid, 2021; Balabantaray, 2022; Kubrak, 2020). Cinema and watching television also significantly change youth attitudes (Balabantaray, 2022; Peters et al., 1991). With changing times, the impact of technology starts increasing on society. This influence was used by the industries to increase their consumers through advertisements on these platforms. The invention of the computer and the internet also brought a major shift in mass media (Castells, 2011). Mass media was changed from one-way communication to a two-way communication. With the change in time, many new platforms, such as Facebook and YouTube, have started to entertain people and have now become a very important part of their lives (Zhou et al., 2016). Easy accessibility to the internet is also a significant reason behind increasing digitalization (Castells, 2011). However, after COVID-19, people started preferring indoor entertainment to avoid many consequences of outdoor games (Ghalawat et al., 2021). The trend of web series or OTT (Over The Top) has also increased after COVID-19 (Patnaik et al., 2021). The craze of playing games digitally also started increasing, and later, it became a major reason behind changing youth's attitudes (Boyle et al., 2012). The importance of outdoor games started declining which used to be a major source of physical exercise, specifically for children. In the name of indoor games, people are choosing those games that include sitting and, becoming a reason for many health issues. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is also playing a major role in increasing consumerism. No doubt, technology is developing with time, but what about the content that society is watching and learning? The development of technology should be for the betterment of humanity, even if it is in the entertainment industry, and its motive should not be just to entertain. Instead, they should do some work on screening the content that can spread some ethically impactful messages to individuals.

Conclusion:

Entertainment is a very significant part of living a cheerful life. In traditional society, entertainment needed interaction, i.e. more than two people were required to play any game or activity. These games



were the perfect package of social interaction and physical activities. However, in the contemporary world, the importance of outdoor games is declining due to safety issues, and entertainment is also shifting from real to virtual. People are playing with computers and living in a hyperspace. With the changes in technologies, individuals' way of thinking is also changing. Radio, television, and print media used to be a source of information and knowledge, but with time, it is completely shifting towards entertainment. Youths prefer to use smartphones, and with time, their private place is limited to that particular device. This brings major changes in individuals' attitudes. Therefore, sometimes, they lose their patience and become angry. Violence or aggression shown in movies, television, or other platforms also affects the audience's attitudes. Along with that, digital entertainment content, which includes heavy alcohol and drug consumption, is affecting the health of youth and encouraging them to become consumers of these products. Digital entertainment, such as gaming and pornography, affects the physical and mental health of people. AI also plays its role in sending the desired notification to the user, which makes users passive and makes them spend more time on devices and buying their products. Therefore, it can be clearly visible that technological development in the entertainment industry affects our society. The inclination of this industry is more towards entertaining people and making them passive regarding the content and buying materials through notifications and advertisements. However, there are some platforms and software that are particularly useful for education purposes, but their subscription charges are found to be very high. Therefore, we should at least focus on, and discuss the quality of entertainment, which used to be a form of high art and had a meaningful impact on society.

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