PYXIVISIO
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INDIA'S OTT EVOLUTION

FROM SUBSCRIPTION FATIGUE TO AGGREGATED FUTURES

A Strategic Playbook for CMOs & Agencies

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

India's OTT ecosystem is entering a **structural reset**.

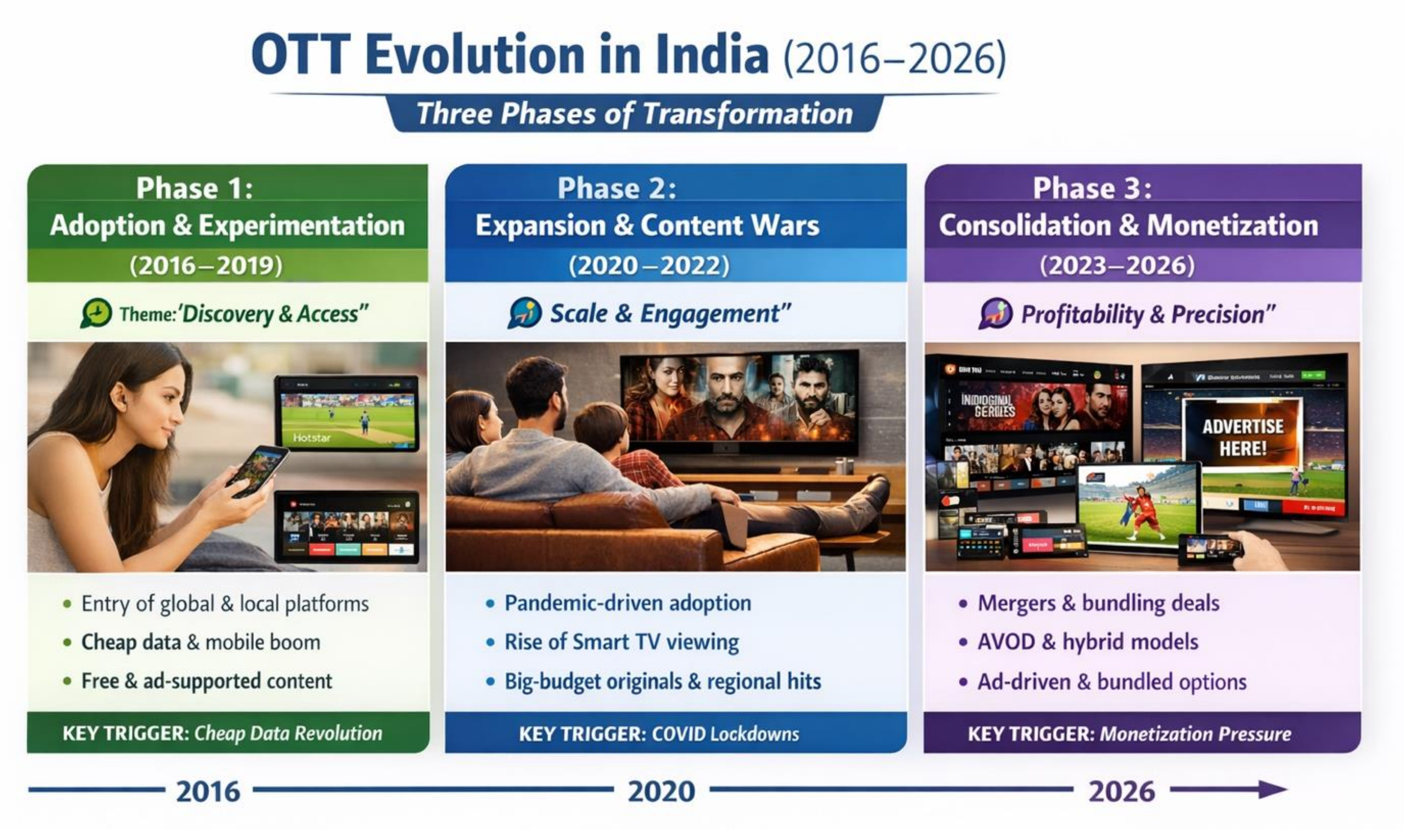
What began as a high-growth, content-led revolution has evolved into a fragmented, cost-sensitive, and increasingly complex ecosystem. As platforms multiplied and subscription costs rose, Indian consumers responded predictably—not by deepening loyalty, but by **optimizing for value, convenience, and flexibility**.

This has triggered a fundamental shift:
👉 **From platform-centric consumption → to access-centric consumption**

A Viral Truth:

"In India, consumers don't subscribe to platforms—they rent content access."

This whitepaper identifies **three distinct phases of OTT evolution in India**:



🔍 Key Insights

- **India is not a subscription-first market** – It is rapidly becoming an **AVOD-first ecosystem**, where advertising-supported models drive scale.
- **Bundling is the new battleground** – Control is shifting from content platforms to **distribution aggregators**.
- **Consumers are value-maximizers, not brand loyalists** – Content discovery is increasingly opportunistic and event-driven.
- **OTT is transitioning from a destination to an infrastructure layer** – The "app" is becoming invisible; access is becoming central.
- **Measurement fragmentation is the biggest barrier for marketers** – Lack of unified identity and cross-platform attribution limits efficiency.
- **YouTube is India's largest video platform** – OTT is competing with YouTube for time and ad budgets, not just other OTT apps.

🎯 What This Means for CMOs & Agencies

- OTT must be planned as a **portfolio of environments**, not a single channel.
- Media strategies must shift from **platform-first → audience-first**, and from **subscription audiences → hybrid audiences**.
- Free OTT (AVOD/FAST) will be essential for **cost-efficient reach at scale**.
- CTV + OTT will increasingly replicate—and eventually replace—linear TV for premium audiences.
- **Understanding event-based CPM spikes (e.g., IPL) is critical for budget efficiency.**

⚠ The Strategic Reality

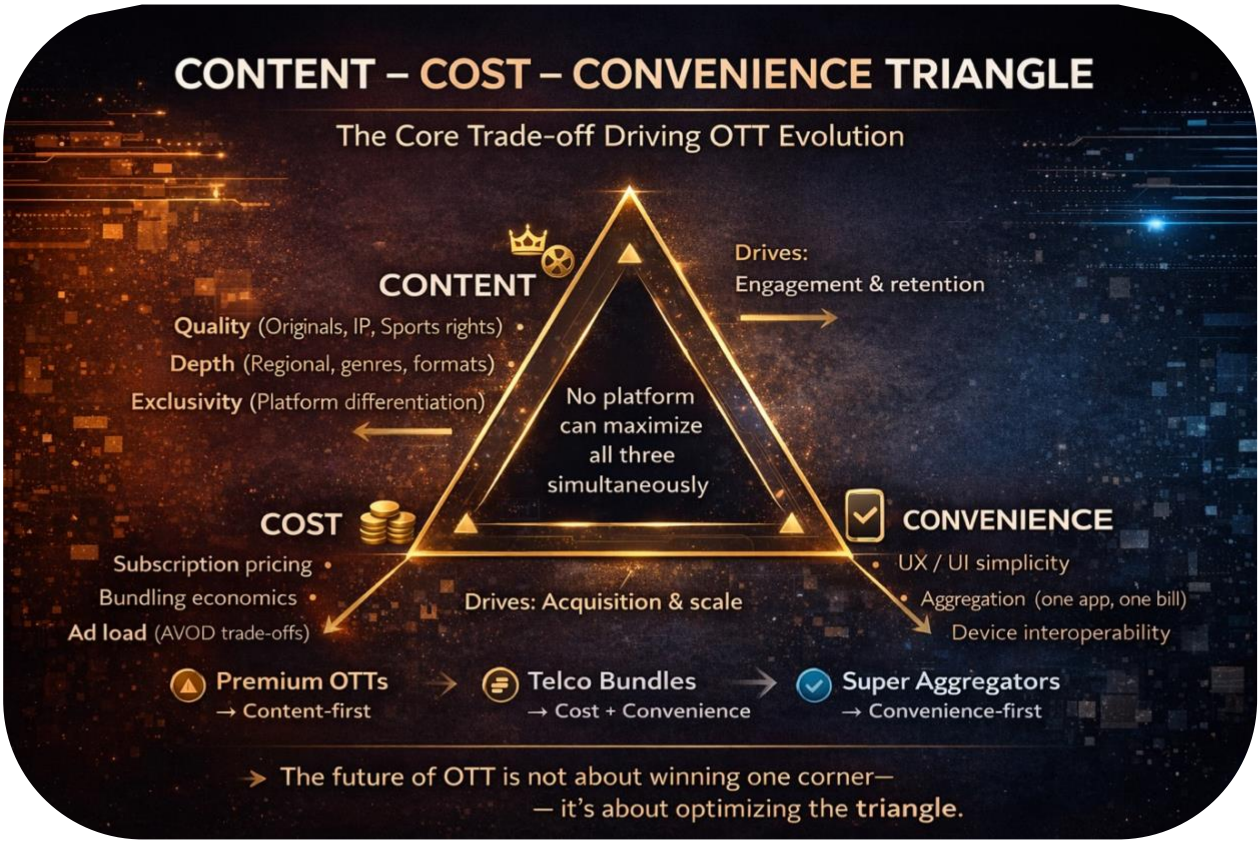
India **will not follow the Western OTT model—it will define a new one**. Instead of evolving into a subscription-dominated ecosystem, India is likely to become:

👉 **The world's largest hybrid (AVOD + bundled + freemium) streaming market**.

PROPRIETARY FRAMEWORKS

▲ FRAMEWORK 1: "CONTENT–COST–CONVENIENCE TRIANGLE"

Concept: Consumer OTT decisions in India are driven by a constant trade-off between three forces:



Interpretation:

- **Content drives acquisition** – Example: IPL, blockbuster releases.
- **Cost drives churn** – Users drop platforms after consuming specific content.
- **Convenience drives retention** – Bundles reduce friction and decision fatigue.

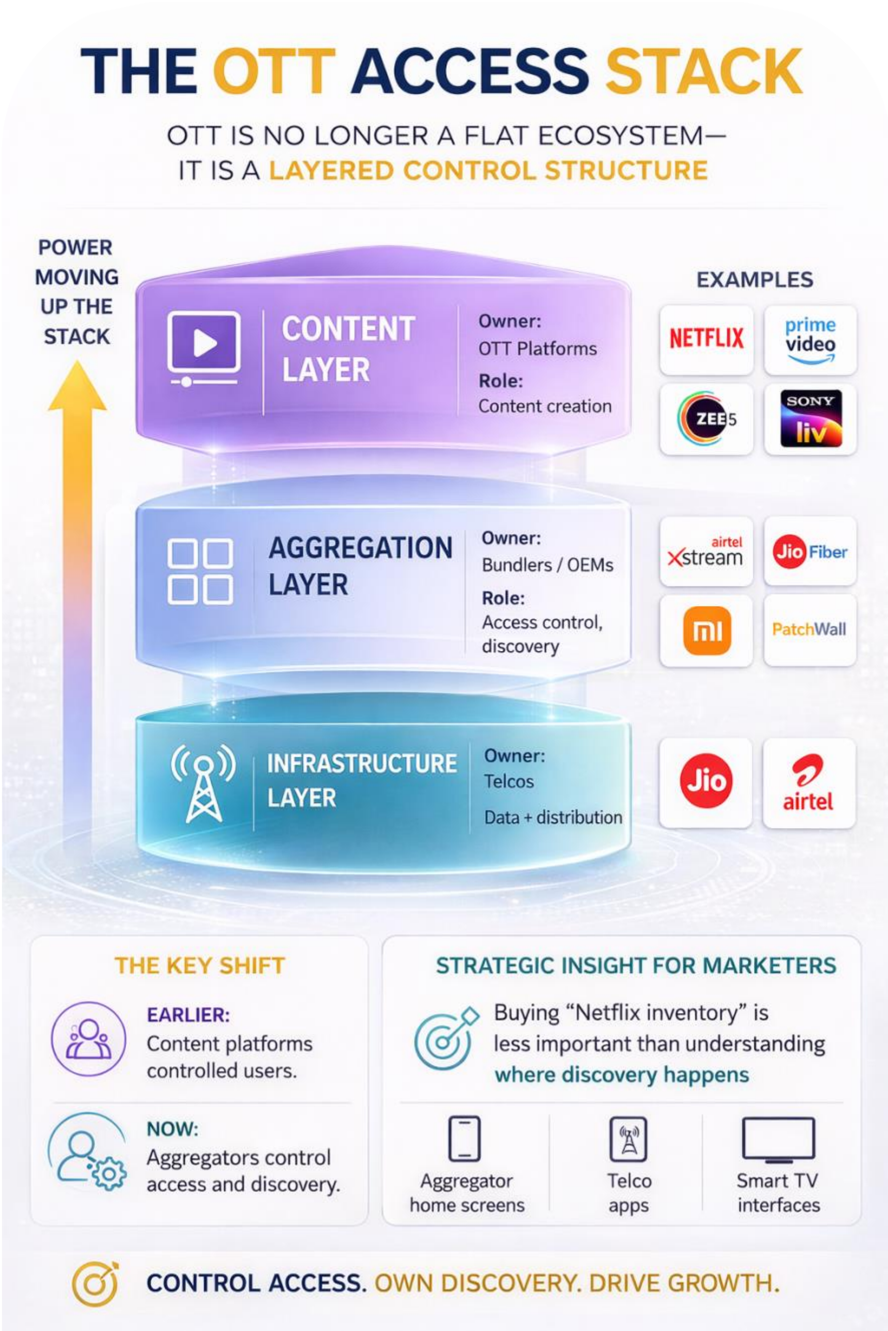
Strategic Insight:

👉 Platforms that win in India do not optimize for one variable—they **balance all three**.

👉 Bundling works because it **collapses cost + convenience simultaneously**.

FRAMEWORK 2: "THE OTT ACCESS STACK"

Concept: OTT is no longer a flat ecosystem—it is a **layered control structure**.



Key Shift: Power is moving **up the stack**.

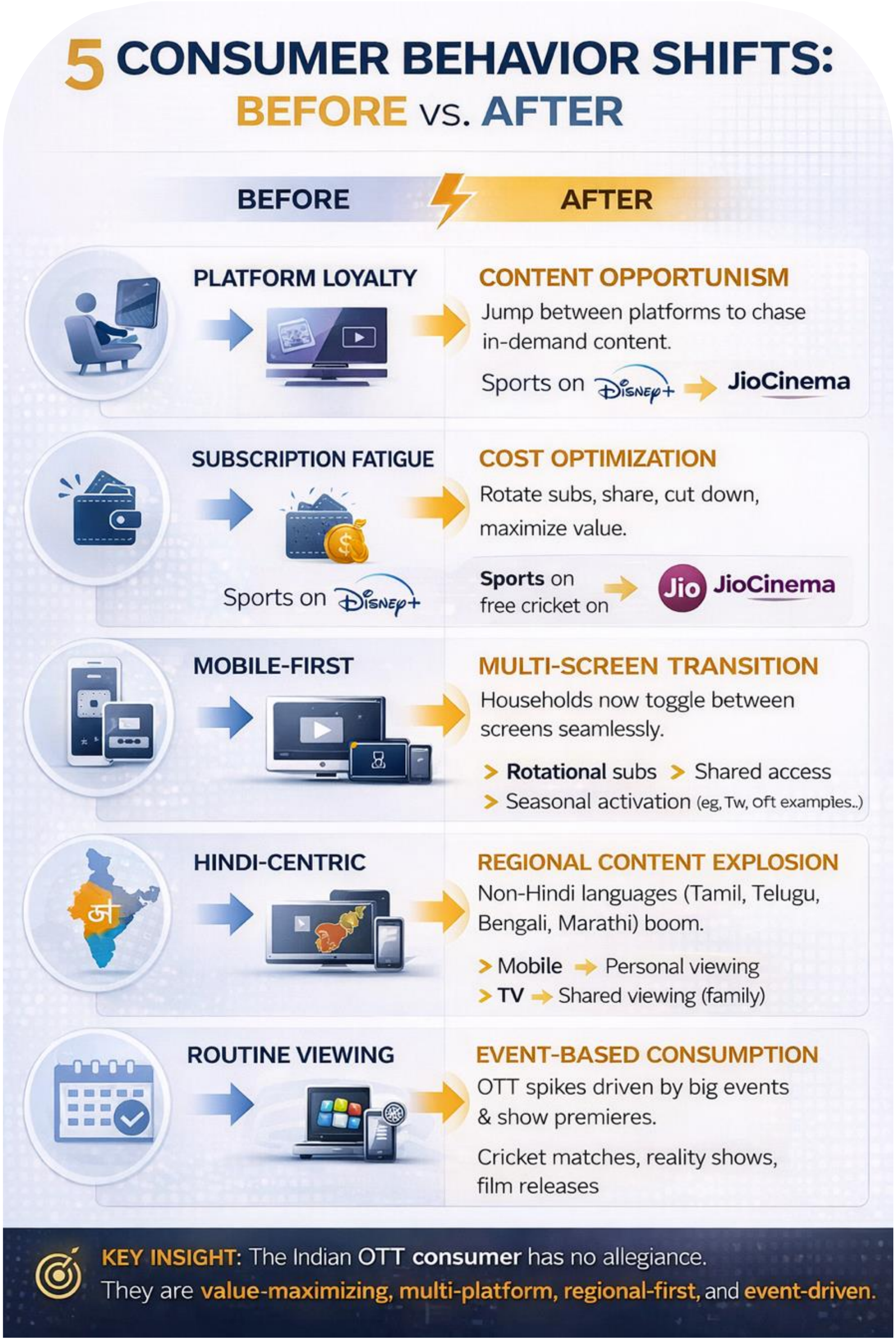
- Earlier: Content platforms controlled users.
- Now: Aggregators control access and discovery.

Strategic Insight for Marketers:
Buying “Netflix inventory” is less important than understanding **where discovery happens** (aggregator home screens, telco apps, smart TV interfaces).

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR SHIFT (Deep Dive)

The Indian OTT Consumer: From Loyal Subscriber to Smart Optimizer

Indian consumers are fundamentally different from their Western counterparts. They are: price-sensitive, content-driven, multi-platform users, and highly adaptive.



1. From Platform Loyalty → Content Opportunism

Consumers no longer “belong” to platforms. Instead:
Subscribe → Watch → Cancel → Move. They follow content, not apps.

Example: Sports on Disney+ Hotstar → free cricket on JioCinema.

2. Subscription Fatigue → Cost Optimization

Typical urban user maintains 3–5 subscriptions max, with constant churn. Emerging behaviors:

- Rotational subscriptions
- Shared accounts
- Seasonal activation (e.g., only during IPL)

3. Mobile-First → Multi-Screen Transition

India remains mobile-dominant, but CTV adoption is rising rapidly. Households now use:

- Mobile → Personal viewing
- TV → Shared viewing (family)

4. Regional Content Explosion

India’s OTT growth is no longer Hindi-centric. Growth drivers: Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, Marathi content; local storytelling.

👉 **Insight:** Language is now a **primary targeting variable**—not just a demographic filter.

5. Event-Based Consumption

Consumption spikes are driven by cricket, big-ticket releases, reality shows.
👉 **Insight:** OTT in India behaves like **“on-demand TV + event spikes”**.

6. Password Sharing & Account Economics

The informal practice of sharing login credentials has quietly become one of the biggest strategic challenges and opportunities for the OTT industry in India. What many platforms initially encouraged to drive user adoption has now evolved into a major source of revenue leakage, directly suppressing the Average Revenue Per User (ARPU).

The Scale of the "Free Rider" Economy

The most striking indicator of password sharing is the massive gap between total OTT users and paying subscribers. India is home to over **601 million OTT users**, yet the number of active paid subscriptions is just **148 million** . This staggering gap of ~453 million users is where platforms lose billions—through password sharing, piracy, and fake impressions .

Widespread Habit: Approximately **24% of OTT users in India** admit to sharing their passwords with friends or family outside their household . This "sharing economy" has become a normalized way to access premium content at no personal cost.

Direct Revenue Leakage: Studies estimate that a staggering **25–30% of potential OTT revenues in India are lost annually** to misuse, which includes password sharing and piracy . In a price-sensitive market like India, every percentage point of leakage represents a significant drag on platform profitability.

The Impact on ARPU and Platform Strategy

For a market already struggling with low ARPU, password sharing is a silent killer. It allows millions of consumers to enjoy premium content without contributing to subscription revenue, effectively acting as an illegal subsidy on the service. Some on-demand companies in India have reported losing **up to 50% of their income** as customers share account details .

Recovering even a fraction of these lost revenues could yield enormous returns. If platforms were able to recover just half of the 25–30% of lost revenue, it would translate to **savings of ₹1,000–1,500 crore every year** across the Indian OTT ecosystem . This financial incentive is why major global and domestic platforms are now aggressively rethinking their policies.

Industry Reactions: From Tolerance to Enforcement

For years, platforms tolerated account sharing as a growth tactic. OTT players allowed it in their early days, as viewing was largely on a single mobile device, and a "household pack" made strategic sense . However, as consumption has shifted to multi-device households, especially with the rise of Connected TVs (CTVs), the approach has changed.

Netflix: The global leader has been at the forefront of this shift. After implementing its password-sharing crackdown, it added millions of new subscribers globally and is now expanding these restrictions to India and other markets to shore up revenue . Netflix is now requiring users who access an account from a different location to verify their device or transfer their profile to a fresh subscription .

Disney+ Hotstar: Following Netflix's lead, Disney+ Hotstar has also announced plans to limit password sharing. It has internally tested restricting logins to just four devices per account, effectively preventing widespread sharing with distant friends and relatives .

This enforcement is a critical lever for platforms to convert casual, non-paying viewers into direct subscribers and ultimately boost ARPU in India's challenging, low-cost market. For marketers, this trend is double-edged: it signals a move toward more accurate, higher-value user data but also a potential short-term reduction in raw reach as unverified accounts are locked out.

THE BUNDLING DISRUPTION (Deep Dive)

Bundling is **the single most important shift in OTT today**. It is not a feature—it is a **market correction mechanism** that solves:

Subscription Fatigue → Demand Aggregation Problem: Consumers are no longer constrained by content availability but by cognitive and financial overload from managing multiple subscriptions. Bundling acts as a demand aggregation mechanism, reducing churn driven by subscription cycling and fragmented billing. It stabilizes revenue streams by shifting users from transactional to ecosystem-level commitment.

Discovery Challenges → Supply Fragmentation Inefficiency: The OTT ecosystem suffers from acute content fragmentation, where high-quality content remains under-consumed due to platform silos. Bundling mitigates this inefficiency by aggregating supply, improving content surfacing, and increasing utilization of long-tail libraries. This drives higher engagement per user and enhances platform stickiness.

Cost Barriers → ARPU vs Reach Optimization: Standalone subscription models create a trade-off between premium pricing and mass adoption, particularly in price-sensitive markets. Bundling resolves this by lowering the effective entry cost while preserving overall ARPU through partnerships and revenue-sharing models. It enables platforms to expand reach without diluting perceived value.

Why Bundling Wins in India

Bundling optimizes:

- ✅ **Cost** (near-zero marginal cost for user)
- ✅ **Convenience** (single login, single bill)
- ✅ While maintaining **Content access**

⚠ Strategic Disruption

Bundling shifts power:

- **From:** Content creators (Netflix, ZEE5, SonyLIV)
- **To:** Distribution controllers (Jio, Airtel, aggregators)

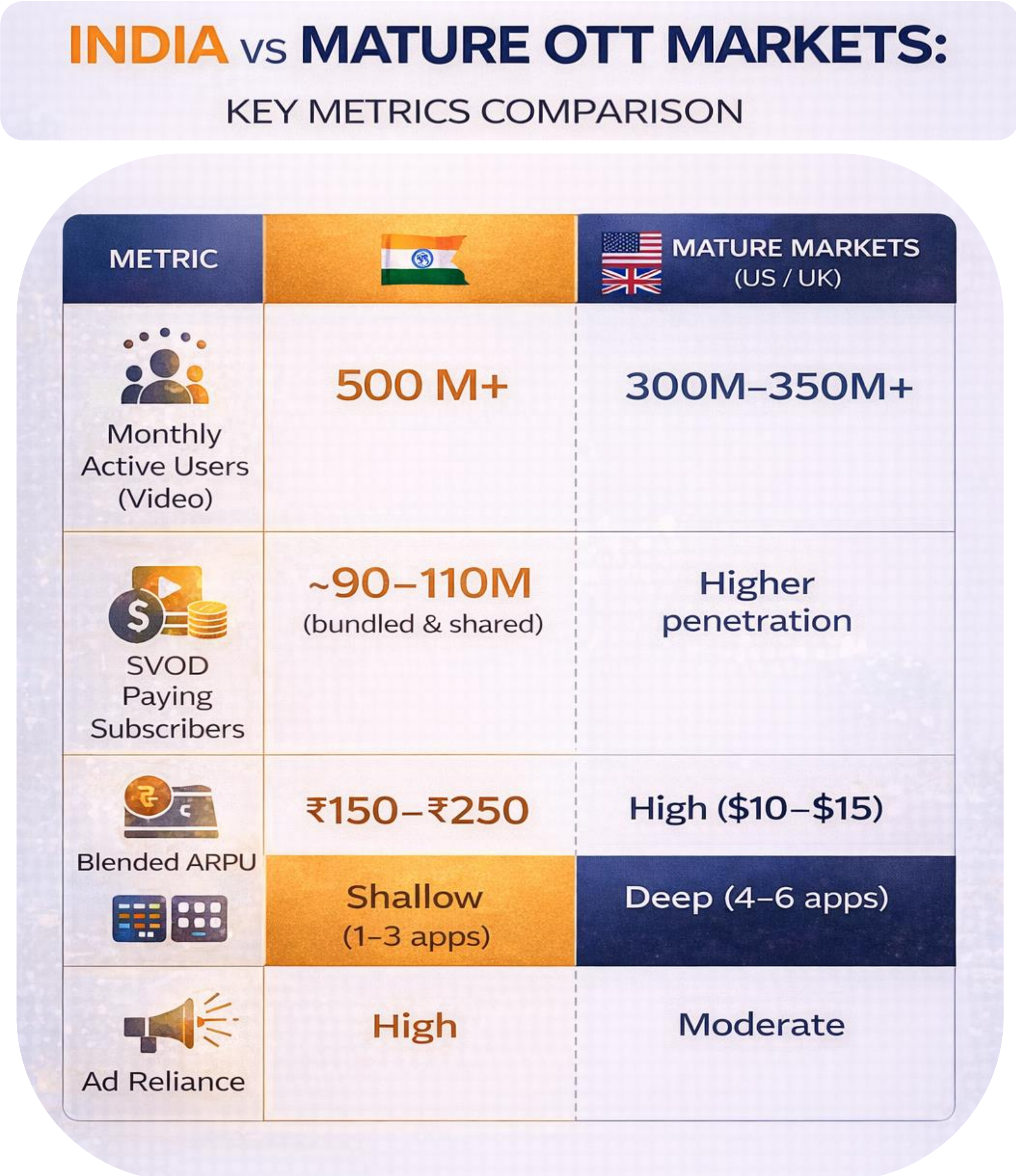
Implication for Marketers

- Media buying must evolve from **platform deals → ecosystem deals**.
- Partnerships with aggregators (telcos, OEMs) will become more critical than direct OTT buys.

MARKET LANDSCAPE & SIZING

India OTT Market: Scale Without Monetization Parity

Narrative: India is one of the largest OTT consumption markets globally, yet it remains one of the most under-monetized.



INDIA vs MATURE OTT MARKETS:
KEY METRICS COMPARISON

METRIC	India	MATURE MARKETS (US / UK)
Monthly Active Users (Video)	500 M+	300M–350M+
SVOD Paying Subscribers	~90–110M (bundled & shared)	Higher penetration
Blended ARPU	₹150–₹250	High ($10–$15)
	Shallow (1–3 apps)	Deep (4–6 apps)
Ad Reliance	High	Moderate

🔍 **Insight:** India is not constrained by **demand**—it is constrained by **willingness to pay**.

CTV: The Fastest Growing Layer

- Smart TV adoption accelerating (estimated 35M–55M households depending on source)
- Family viewing shifting to OTT
- Premium inventory emerging
- Growth rate: **High double-digit (30–40% CAGR)**

👉 CTV = Bridge between TV scale and digital precision.

🏏 IPL Advertising: The Crown Jewel of Indian OTT

IPL 2025 – A Record-Breaking Year (Actuals)

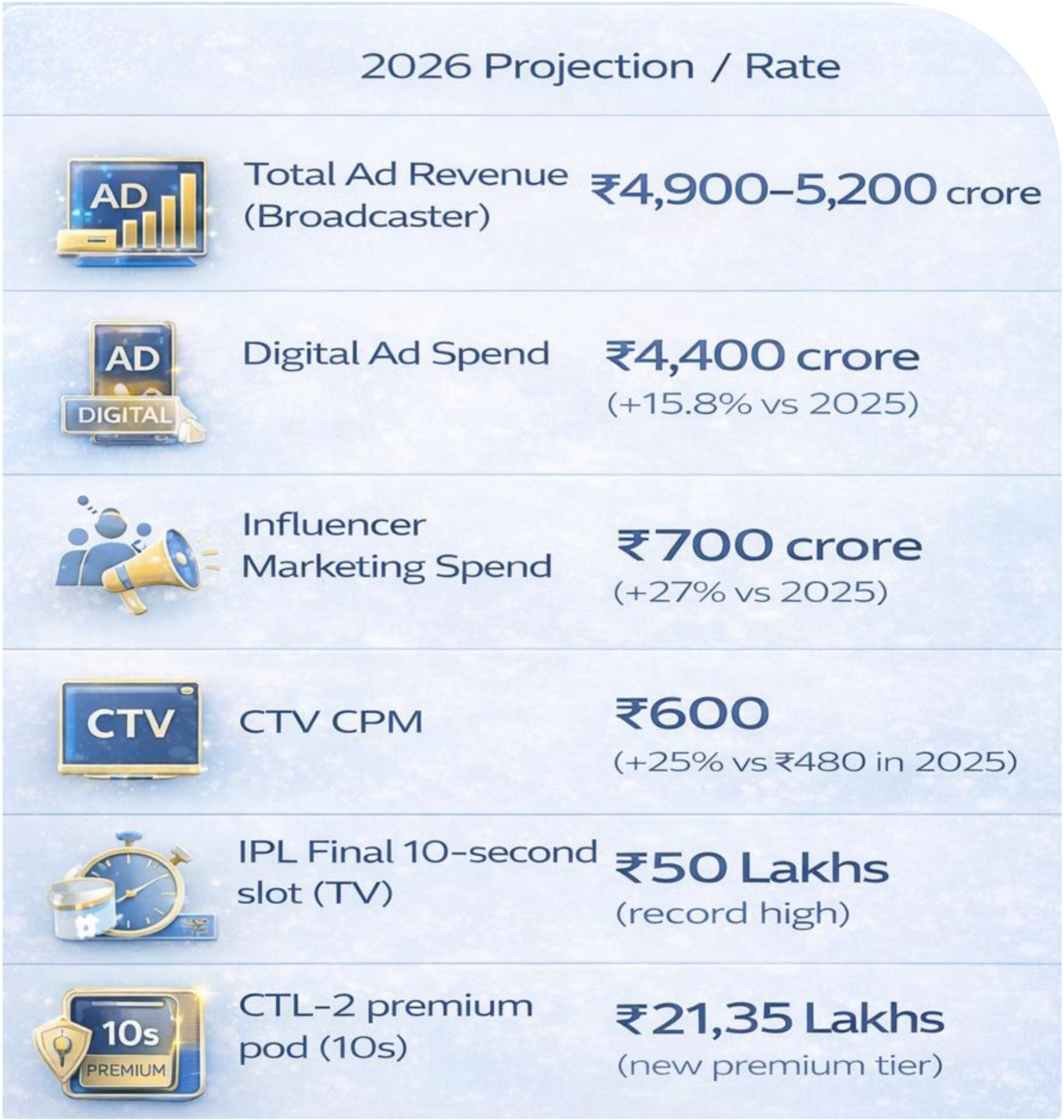
The 2025 Indian Premier League was a watershed moment for OTT advertising. **Industry estimates suggest**:

Reported figures indicate digital viewership (652 million) overtook television (537 million) for the first time (methodology varies by source).

- Cumulative reach across platforms exceeded 1B+ impressions/viewers
- Peak concurrency (digital): 55.2 million during the final
- Total watch time: 840 billion minutes
- JioHotstar subscriber base: 300 million

IPL 2026 – Premiumisation Accelerates (Current Season)

The 2026 IPL season began on March 28, 2026. Pre-season rate cards and industry projections show:



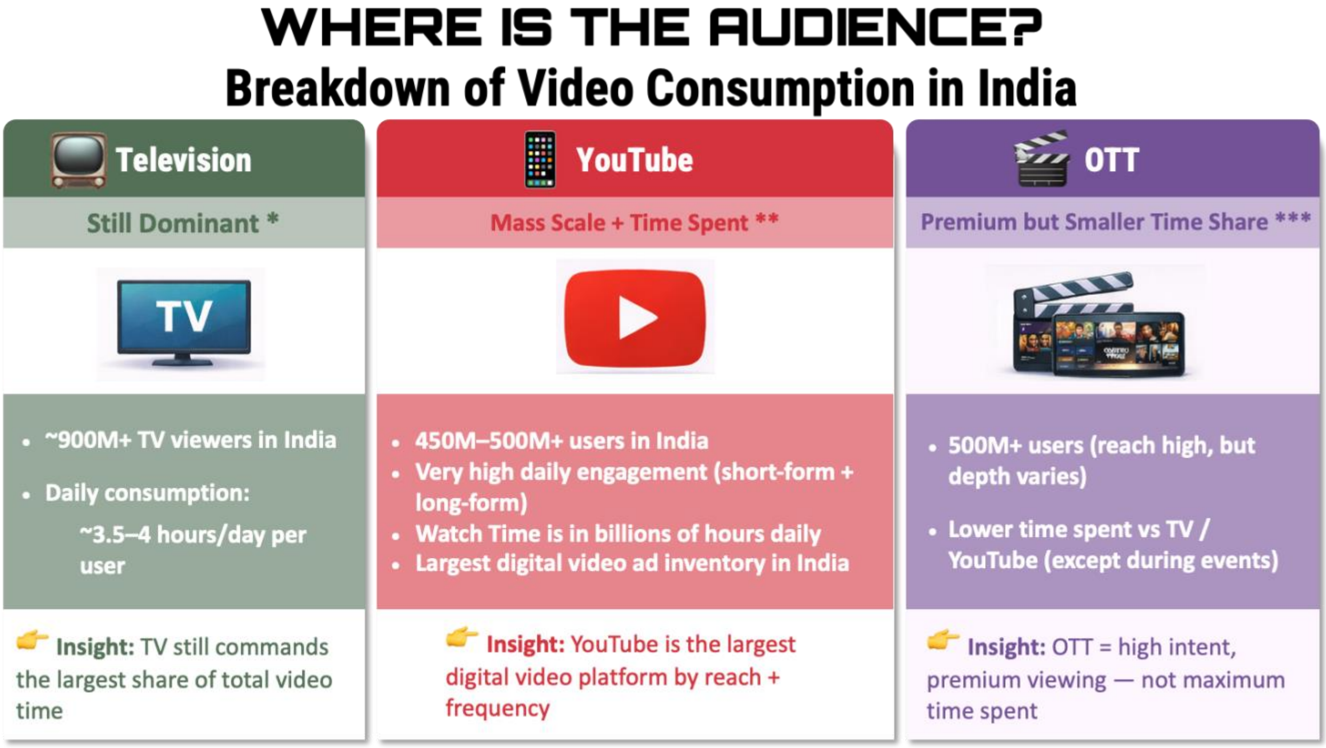
	2026 Projection / Rate
Total Ad Revenue (Broadcaster)	₹4,900–5,200 crore
Digital Ad Spend	₹4,400 crore (+15.8% vs 2025)
Influencer Marketing Spend	₹700 crore (+27% vs 2025)
CTV CPM	₹600 (+25% vs ₹480 in 2025)
IPL Final 10-second slot (TV)	₹50 Lakhs (record high)
CTL-2 premium pod (10s)	₹21,35 Lakhs (new premium tier)

Key structural changes for 2026:

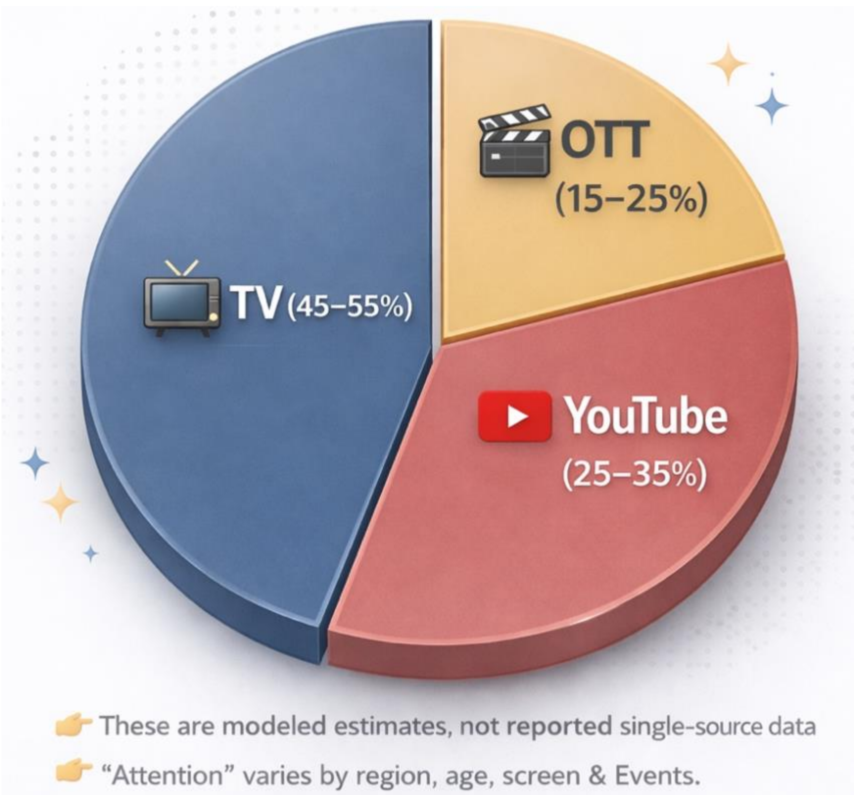
- Two buying routes for live CTV inventory: “In a block” (default) and “Any match selection” (approx. 50% premium)
- RMG ad spend gap filled by quick commerce (+30%), fintech/UPI apps, EV automotive, and FMCG giants
- 27 sponsors onboarded including Google Search AI Mode, Campa Energy, Havells, Hero MotoCorp, Amazon.in

THE YOUTUBE FACTOR

YouTube is conspicuously India's largest video platform, yet often treated as separate from "OTT." This is a mistake.



🧠 **Synthesized View:** If we convert **time spent + reach + behavior trends**, a **defensible directional split** is:



💡 **Strategic Insight:** India is not an OTT-first market. It is a TV + YouTube dominant market with OTT as a premium layer.

Why this matters:

- YouTube competes directly with OTT for **time and ad budgets**.
- Marketers often silo YouTube planning from OTT planning, causing frequency duplication and inefficient spend.
- YouTube's creator economy offers mid-funnel engagement that traditional OTT lacks.

👉 **Strategic Insight:** OTT is not competing with OTT—it's competing with YouTube. Your video strategy must treat YouTube as a core pillar, not an afterthought.

ADVERTISING & MEDIA TRANSFORMATION

From Linear TV to Fragmented Video Ecosystems: India's video landscape is no longer linear—it is **layered and fragmented**. Marketers must now navigate TV, YouTube, OTT (multiple apps), and CTV environments.

⚠ Core Challenges

FRAMEWORK: "UNIFIED VIDEO STRATEGY MODEL"

🎯 **Strategic Insight:** No single platform can deliver full-funnel outcomes. **Integration is now the competitive advantage.**

CROSS-PLATFORM TRACKING & IDENTITY RESOLUTION – THE CORE CHALLENGE

India's media landscape has undergone a dramatic transformation, yet the systems used to measure audiences have not evolved at the same pace. For years, the advertising ecosystem has operated with a fragmented view of audiences—television with one measurement system, digital platforms with several others—leaving advertisers to stitch together multiple datasets to understand campaign performance.

A unified cross-media system would help solve this challenge by offering a single source view of audiences across TV, mobile, CTV, and desktop, significantly improving frequency management and reducing media wastage.

But achieving this is far from simple. Here are the most significant obstacles.

CHALLENGE 1: IDENTITY FRAGMENTATION ACROSS LINEAR TV, CTV & MOBILE

Linear TV is designed for the living room—household-based and tied to a physical address via set-top boxes. OTT is designed for personalised devices—individual, logged-in, and often tied to a single user profile. Connected TV (CTV) sits awkwardly in between, often a shared family screen that is both connected (like OTT) and communal (like linear TV).

The fundamental problem is that **these platforms were not built to talk to each other**. When the same person watches a cricket match on linear TV at home, switches to the mobile app on the commute, and finishes on the CTV in the evening, they generate three different identifiers across three separate data silos:

Why this is so hard for CTV:

- **Fragmented Device IDs:** CTV targeting is limited by fragmented device IDs, inconsistent user data, and a lack of cross-channel audience connectivity, which reduces reach, weakens personalization, and lowers return on ad spend.
- **Inconsistent Identifiers:** Advertisers currently rely on a mix of cookies (across browsers), device IDs (across devices), and IPs (across networks)—none provide a single, unified view of a user.
- **The "Family-Watched" Problem:** Unlike mobile, CTV is often a shared family screen, making it difficult to determine *which* household member is watching an ad.

The Identity Gap: A marketer running a campaign across Linear TV, CTV, and Mobile may see three separate "reach" numbers that appear to add up to a large audience. But without deduplication, they have no idea how many are actually the same person.

🔵 CHALLENGE 2: ISP MISMATCH – HOME BROADBAND vs MOBILE DATA

A viewer might watch a show on their CTV at home (connected to home broadband with IP address A) and later watch the same show's trailer on their mobile phone (using 5G mobile data with IP address B). This creates a near-impossible tracking scenario:

1. **Dynamic & Different IPs:** Most home broadband connections in India use dynamic IP addresses. Moreover, a user's home Wi-Fi IP and their mobile data IP belong to entirely different networks (e.g., Airtel broadband vs. Jio 5G) and often different ISPs.

2. **No Common Identifier:** The CTV reports to the ad server via IP address A. The mobile phone reports via IP address B. There is no deterministic way for an ad server to know these two devices belong to the same person.

3. **Privacy Regulations Complicate Linking:** The Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDP Act) 2023 restricts linking user data across platforms without explicit consent. Secondary use of subscriber identity, KYC data, IP metadata, and behavioural profiles for cross-platform monetisation requires explicit disclosure and valid consent.

CHALLENGE 3: TELCO BUNDLE-INDUCED ID MISMATCH – THE HIDDEN CRISIS

This is a uniquely Indian challenge, driven by the dominance of telco-led OTT bundling (Jio, Airtel).

The scenario:
A user purchases a mobile plan from Jio or Airtel that includes free access to OTT apps like JioCinema or SonyLIV. On their **mobile phone**, they log into the OTT app using their **mobile number** (via telco SSO – Single Sign-On). This login is deterministic, linked to their SIM card, and often automatically authenticated.

The same user, however, may also have a **CTV at home**. On the CTV, they cannot use the telco SSO because the TV does not have a SIM card. Instead, they are forced to log in using a separate method—typically a **personal email address** (Gmail, Outlook) or a **Google/Apple ID**. This email ID is entirely different from their mobile number and is not linked to their telco account.

The result:
One physical person has two completely different, non-linked identities across two devices they own:

- Mobile OTT identity = +91-XXXXXXXXXX (telco-linked)
- CTV OTT identity = user@gmail.com (email-linked)

Why this breaks cross-platform tracking:

Aspect	Problem
No deterministic link	Ad servers and measurement platforms see two separate users. Frequency capping fails – the same person sees the same ad on mobile and CTV but is counted as two unique reach.
Attribution is impossible	If a user sees an ad on CTV and later converts on mobile, no system can connect those events.
Audience duplication is invisible	Marketers overestimate unique reach and underestimate frequency, wasting budget.
Telco data cannot be used for CTV	The telco's valuable first-party data (age, gender, location, billing info) cannot be applied to CTV targeting because the CTV login is an email, not a mobile number.
Retargeting breaks	A user who watches a show on mobile cannot be retargeted on CTV, and vice versa.

Scale of the problem: With over **65M+ telco-bundled OTT users** in India (Section 4), and CTV households expected to reach **50M by December 2026**, this ID mismatch affects tens of millions of consumers daily.

Real-world impact: A brand running a campaign across JioCinema (mobile + CTV) cannot deduplicate reach between the two devices because the mobile login is a phone number and the CTV login is an email. The same person may be counted twice, wasting up to 30–40% of the budget on over-familiarity.

CHALLENGE 4: ADDITIONAL STRUCTURAL & OPERATIONAL HURDLES

INDUSTRY EFFORTS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM (CURRENT STATUS)

Recognising these challenges, several initiatives are underway:

BARC Cross-Media Measurement Pilot (2026)

Tracking audiences seamlessly across linear TV, CTV, and mobile.

First structured attempt at integrated cross-platform measurement.

To create a unified household identifier

Telco-mobile vs email-CTV mismatch unsolved.

JioStar-Nielsen Cross-Screen Study (IPL 2025)

Analysed five brands across linear TV, CTV, and mobile. Found audience overlap of under 5% across platforms, suggesting each contributes incremental reach.

Did not address the telco ID mismatch directly but highlighted low overlap

May be underestimated due to poor deduplication

Government TV Ratings Policy (2026)

Mandates tracking across all screens (including OTT), expanding sample sizes, enabling cross-platform measurement.

Creates regulatory pressure for a solution

No technical fix yet

BARC - Nielsen ONE Ads

Cross-media measurement solution piloted during ICC T20 World Cup and IPL.

Uses probabilistic matching

Deterministic linking (mobile number ↔ email) is not yet available

IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETERS & MEDIA PLANNERS

While the industry works toward unified measurement, here is what marketers can do today:

ACTION	WHY IT MATTERS	HOW TO IMPLEMENT
Run incrementality tests	Avoid the illusion of cross-platform attribution. Incrementality testing reveals true causal impact.	Use geo-holdout experiments or time-based tests (e.g., markets with TV+OTT vs TV-only).
Partner with telcos for identity resolution	Telcos hold the most deterministic link (mobile number). Privacy-compliant partnerships can bridge mobile-to-CTV gaps.	Explore solutions like Zeotap's deterministic telco-based identity graph (where available).
Advocate for telco-OTT single sign-on on CTV	Push for telcos to enable OTT login on CTV using mobile number (via QR code or app-based authentication).	Work with Jio, Airtel, or aggregators to pilot SIM-based CTV authentication.
Test CTV in a walled-garden first	Start with one platform's ecosystem (e.g., JioHotstar) to understand its unique contribution before expanding cross-platform.	Allocate a portion of budget to CTV-only campaigns and measure uplift within that platform's reported audience.
Adopt probabilistic deduplication cautiously	Use panel-based or modelled deduplication as a directional tool, not absolute truth.	Use tools like BARC's upcoming cross-media solution or Nielsen ONE, but validate with incrementality tests.
Leverage walled-garden partners for cross-device insights	Platforms like Google have deterministic logged-in user bases and can provide device graphs.	Use Google's Ads Data Hub or Meta's Attribution to analyse cross-device behaviour within their ecosystems, then extrapolate.

Key Takeaway: Marketers must accept that perfect, deterministic cross-platform attribution is **not currently possible in India** due to the telco-induced ID mismatch and other structural issues. The winning strategy is a combination of

(1) incrementality testing to understand true causal impact,

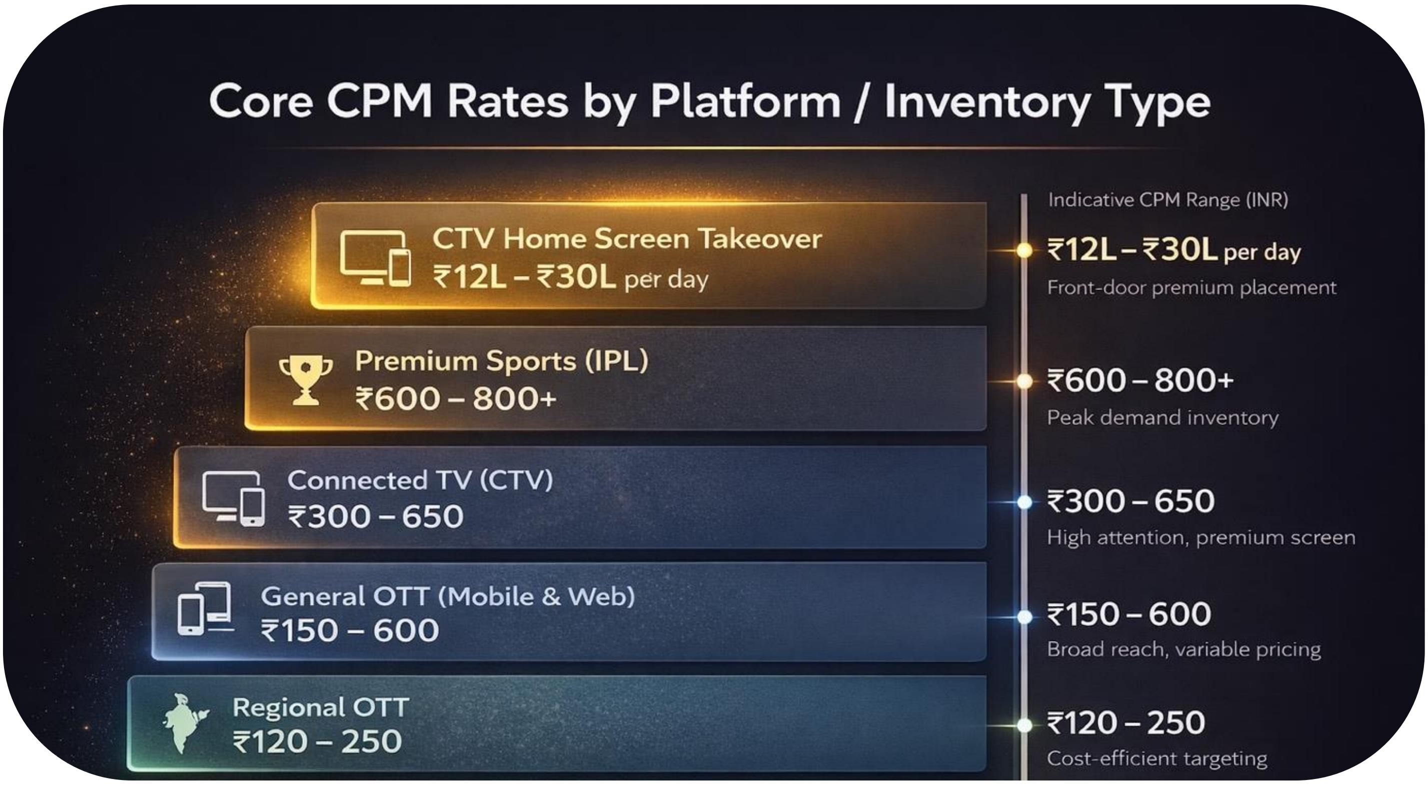
(2) privacy-compliant partnerships for probabilistic linking

(3) a shift in mindset from measuring *last-click attribution* to measuring *contribution and incremental reach*.

Final note on the telco ID mismatch: This is a uniquely Indian problem. Until telcos and OTT platforms agree on a common, persistent, and privacy-compliant identifier that works across mobile and CTV, marketers must rely on probabilistic models and accept a degree of uncertainty.

📊 RATE CARD & COST BENCHMARKS (IPL & CRICKET FOCUS)

*Note: The following are **indicative industry ranges**; actual rates vary by targeting, seasonality, inventory type, and negotiation.*



IPL Advertising Rates: 2025 Actuals vs 2026 Current

2025 Actuals	Ad Format	2026 Current	
TV 10-second spot (regular) ₹25–28 lakh	**TV 10**-second spot	₹18 lakh (stable)*	▲-30%**
TV 10-second spot (final) ₹25 lakh	**Digital CPM** (general)	₹50 lakh (record)	▲+100%
Digital CPM (general) ₹250–500 (₹400 avg)	₹250–500 (₹400 avg)	₹200–350	Stable
CTV CPM (10-second)	₹480	₹600	▲+25%
CTV spot (10-second)	₹6.5–8.5 lakh	₹8–10 lakh	▲+18-25%
Mobile pre-roll CPM	₹250–400	₹200–350	Stable
LIVE **Live mid-roll CPM** (premium)	₹400–500	₹600–800	▲+20-33%
NEW **CTL-2 premium pod (10s)**	Not available	₹21.35 lakh	NEW

****TV rates appear lower due to measurement changes (SD-only vs SD+HD) and increased inventory availability post-merger.***
*****Percentage change not directly comparable; absolute rates as reported.***

Why Cricket Rates Matter for Your Media Plan

- Premium sports inventory commands 3–5x higher CPM than general OTT but delivers guaranteed live attention.
- CTV rates for IPL grew 25% in one year – a clear signal of premiumisation.
- VOD inventory (₹190 CPM) offers cost-efficient catch-up reach.
- **Marketer Takeaway:** Use VOD or display for cost efficiency; reserve CTV or live mid-roll for high-impact moments.

SPORTS RIGHTS FRAGMENTATION

IPL is the crown jewel, but sports rights are increasingly fragmented across platforms:

Implication for marketers: No single platform guarantees all sports audiences. Planning must account for rights fragmentation.

THE MEASUREMENT CRISIS & SOLUTION DIRECTION

Marketers face platform walled gardens, inconsistent metrics, and attribution gaps.

Solution Direction:

- Incrementality testing (holdout markets)
- Marketing Mix Modeling (MMM)
- Cross-platform reach deduplication

PROGRAMMATIC OTT & CTV

Programmatic buying for OTT and CTV is still nascent in India but growing rapidly.

Marketer Action: Test programmatic CTV for retargeting and frequency capping; use direct deals for high-impact campaigns.

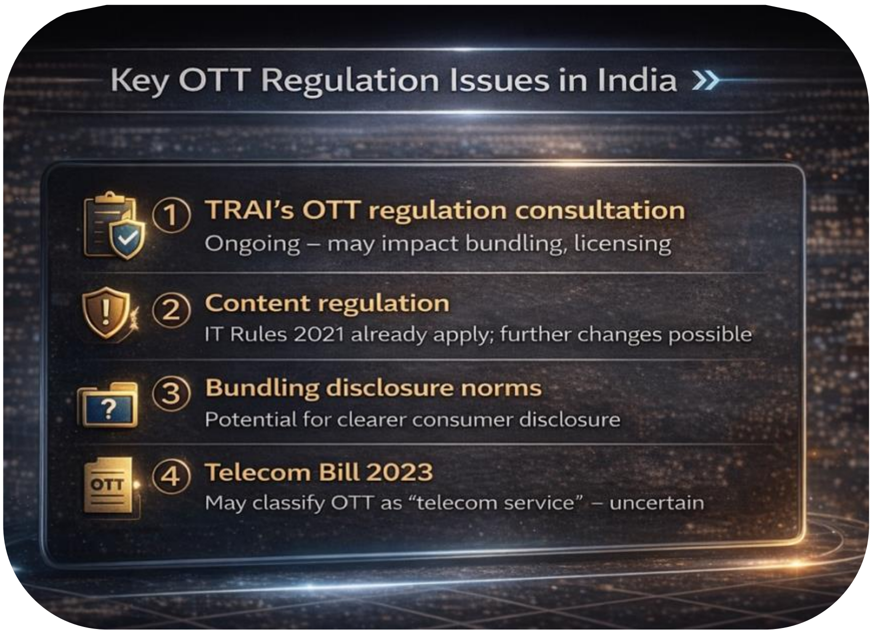
DATA PRIVACY & TARGETING

With rising privacy regulations (DPDP Act, 2023) and signal loss (cookie deprecation), OTT targeting is evolving.

Marketer Action: Build first-party data strategies now; test contextual targeting on AVOD platforms.

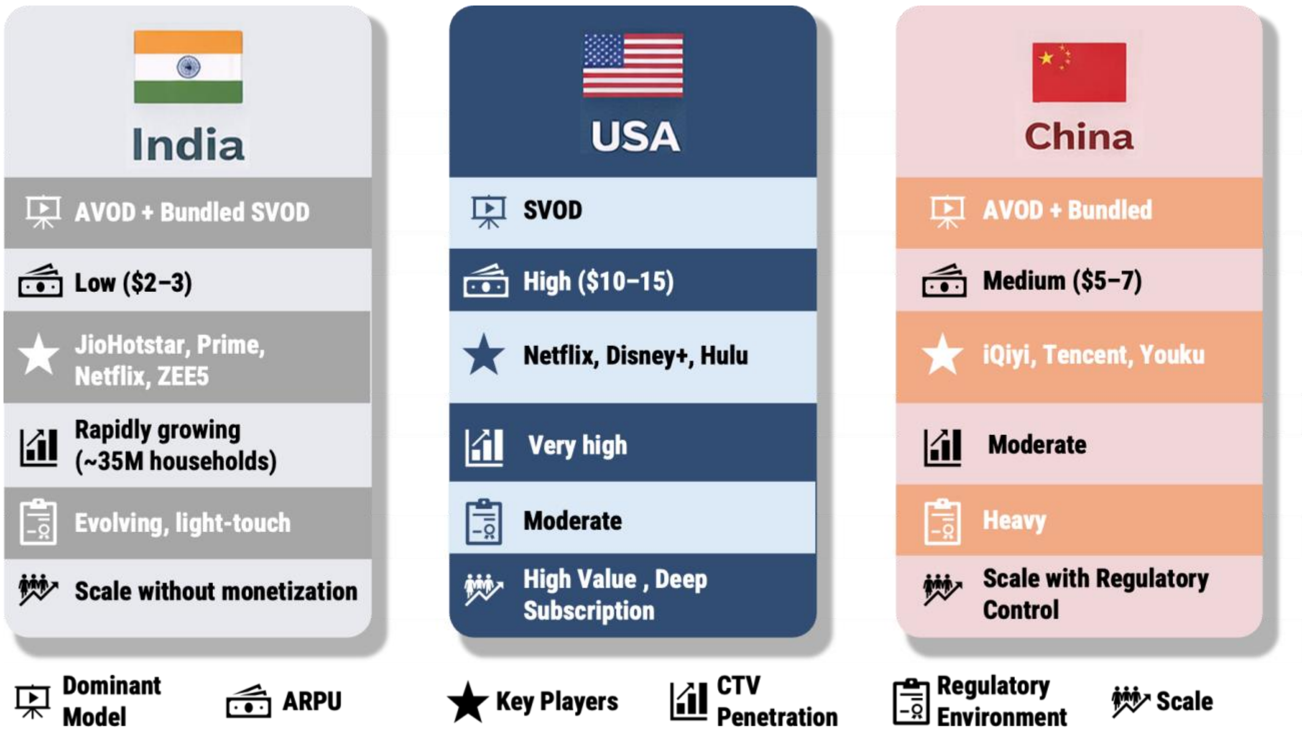
REGULATORY & POLICY OUTLOOK

Several regulatory discussions will shape OTT's future:



Marketer Takeaway: Monitor TRAI and MeitY developments; regulatory changes could affect ad inventory and user data access.

GLOBAL COMPARISON



Key Insight: India's hybrid, price-sensitive model is unique. Don't copy Western playbooks.

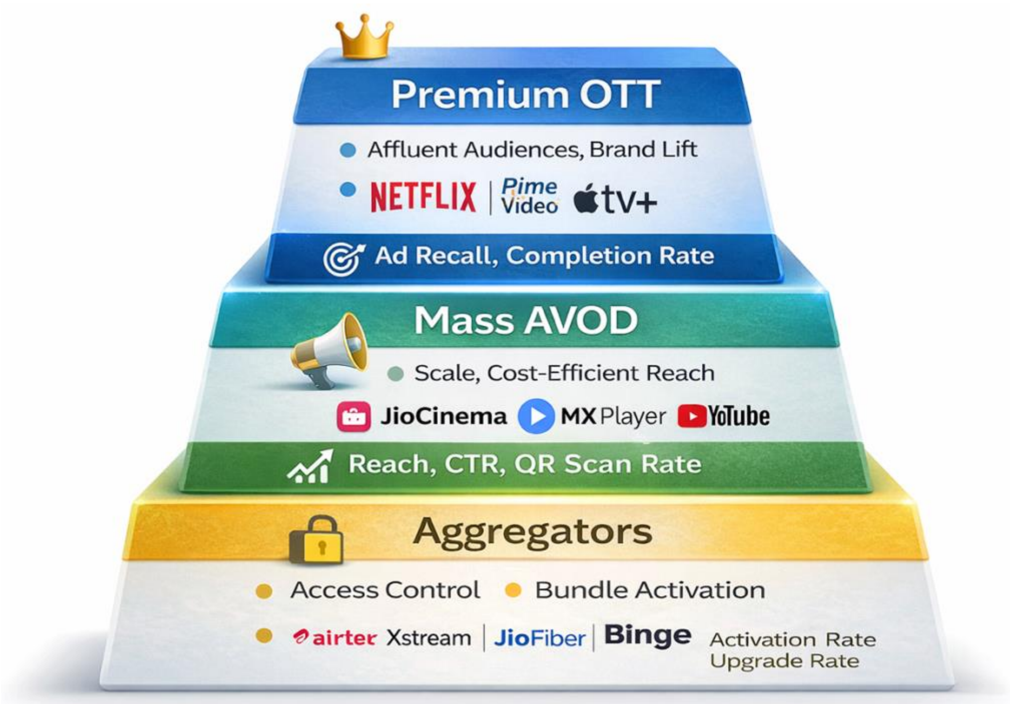
THE CMO PLAYBOOK

This is the **most important part of your whitepaper**—actionable, specific, and immediately useful.

❌ WHAT MARKETERS GET WRONG

PLATFORM STRATEGY

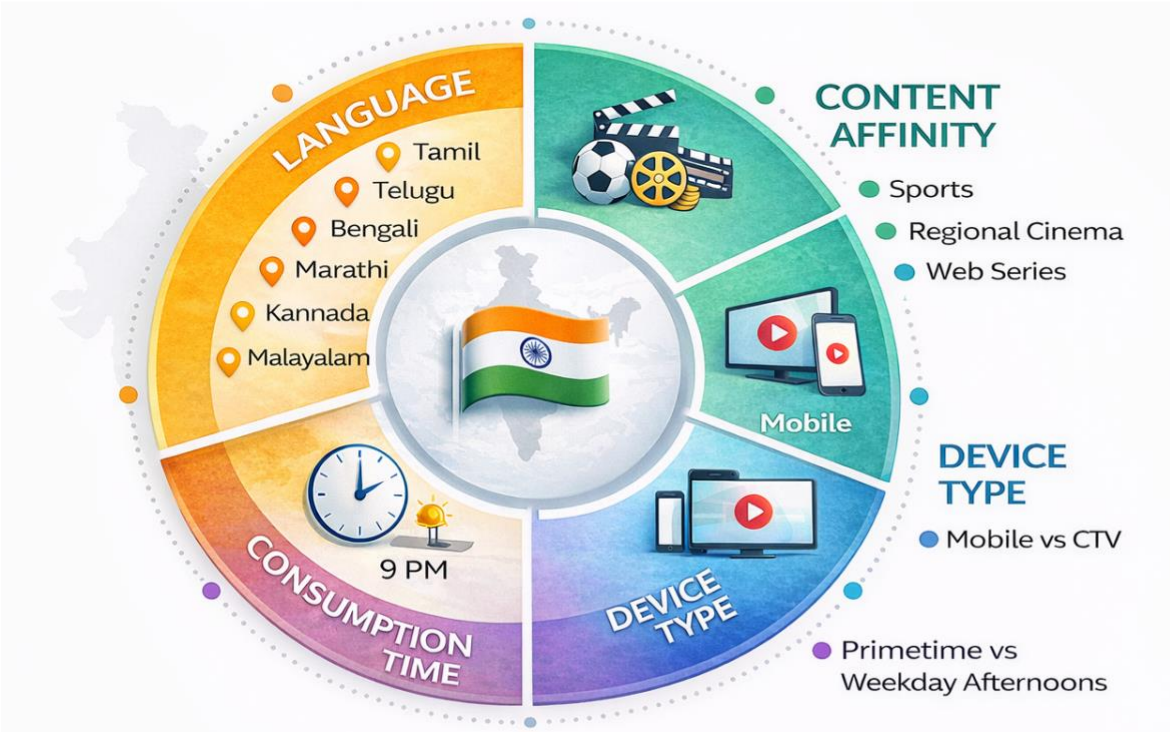
Segment OTT into 3 buckets:



👉 **Planning shift:** From "Which platform?" → "Which audience + objective?"

AUDIENCE STRATEGY

Key targeting layers for India:

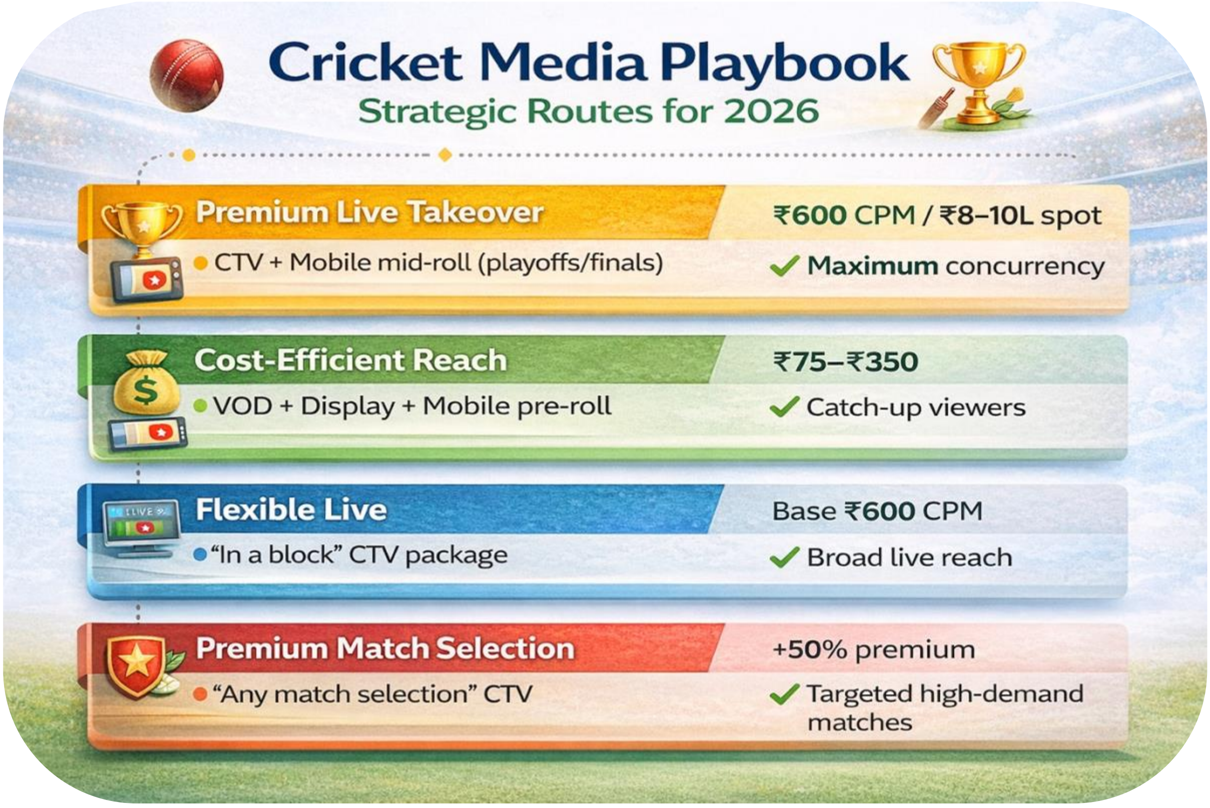


Example: Instead of “Urban males 25–40” → “Tamil-speaking sports viewers on CTV during evenings.”

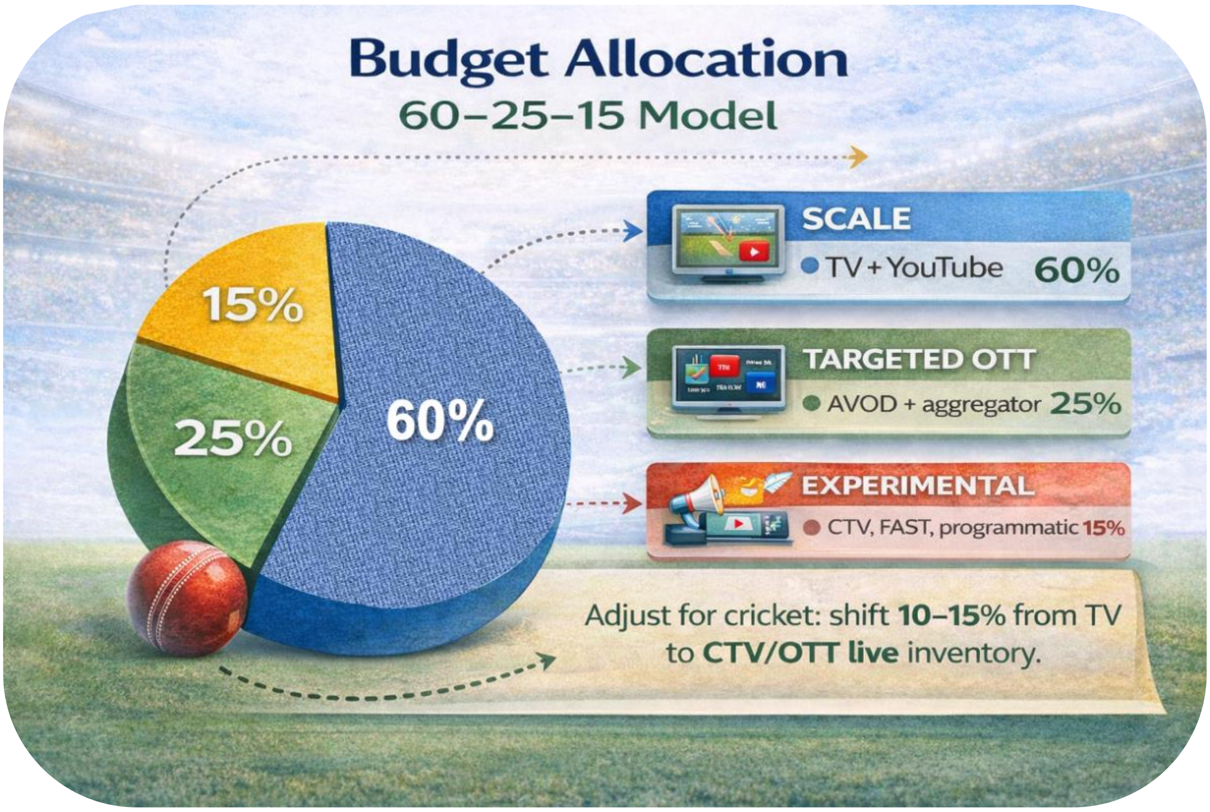
MEDIA MIX STRATEGY

Objective	Recommended Mix	Cost Consideration
AWARENESS	TV + AVOD	General AVOD (₹150–₹250 CPM)
CONSIDERATION	YouTube + OTT	YouTube (₹100–₹200) + OTT mid-rolls (₹200–₹400)
PREMIUM BRANDING	CTV OTT	Higher CPM (₹300–₹650) for attention
PERFORMANCE	Mobile OTT + YouTube	VOD or display (₹75–₹190 CPM)

Cricket-Specific Media Plan Guidance (2026)

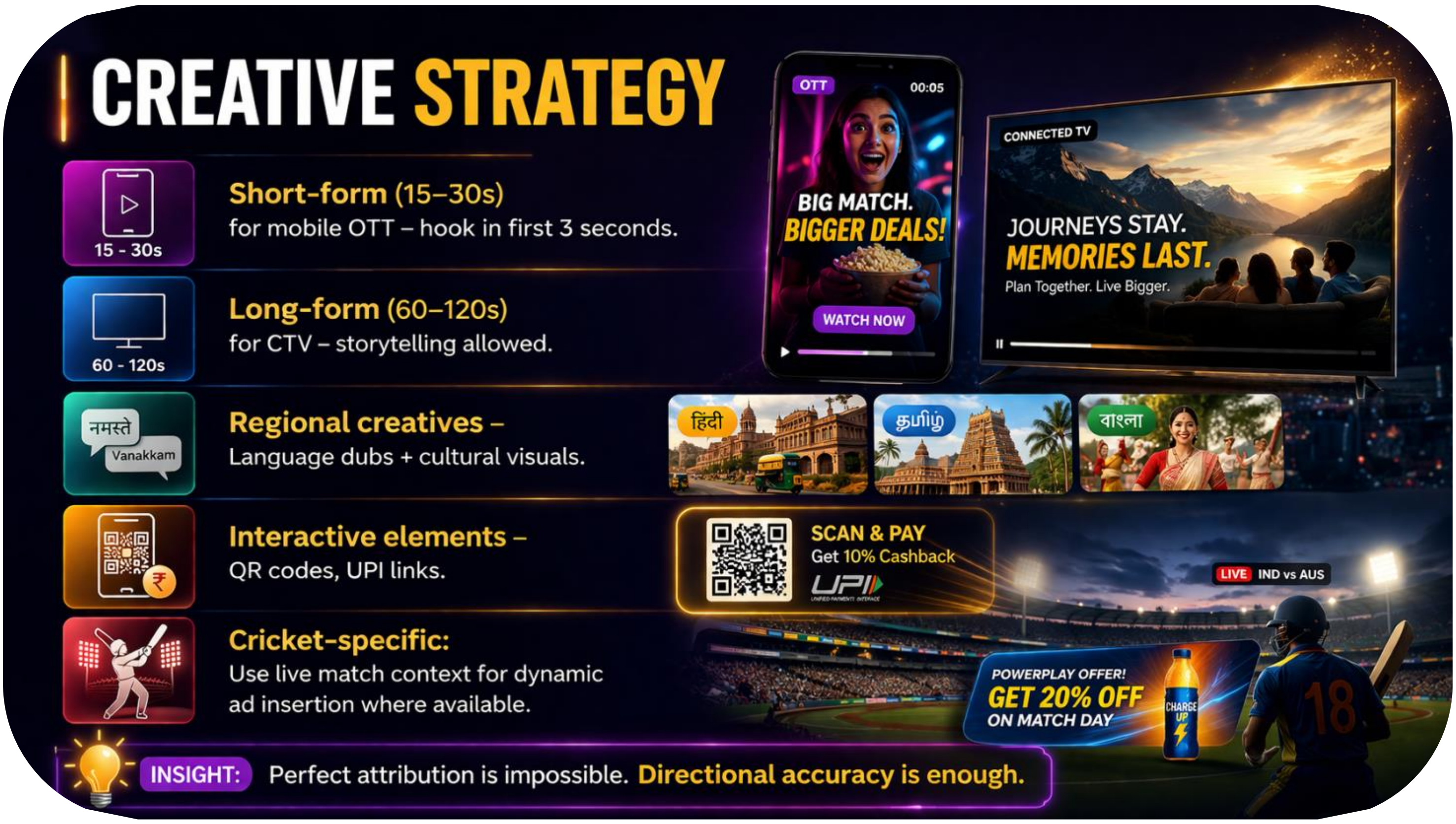


BUDGET ALLOCATION: "60–25–15 Model"



MEASUREMENT STRATEGY

CREATIVE STRATEGY



PYXIVISIO
Intelligence Engine for CTV

REAL CASE STUDY

Brand: *Leading D2C FMCG (anonymous)*

Campaign: Regional snack launch in Tamil Nadu during IPL 2025

Challenge: Low brand awareness in semi-urban Tamil markets; limited budget.

Approach:

- 40% budget on JioCinema AVOD (Tamil commentary feed) – ₹180 CPM
- 30% on YouTube (Tamil creators, snackable content) – ₹120 CPM
- 20% on CTV (evening prime time, family viewing) – ₹350 CPM
- 10% on influencer-led WhatsApp campaigns

Results:

- 22% higher brand recall than industry benchmark
- 35% lower cost per reach vs TV-only plan
- QR code scan rate of 2.8% on AVOD (above 1.5% benchmark)

Takeaway: A hybrid AVOD + YouTube + CTV plan outperformed single-platform approaches.

FUTURE OUTLOOK (2026–2028)

India's video ecosystem is no longer fragmented—it is converging rapidly toward an AVOD-led, aggregator-controlled future. AVOD is set to dominate scale, crossing 500 million users by 2028, fundamentally shifting budget allocation toward ad-supported models with performance levers like QR-driven engagement.

CTV is entering a high-growth phase, with strong double-digit expansion and increasing premiumisation, particularly driven by tentpole events like IPL. This will push marketers to invest early, test creatives, and adapt to programmatic buying environments.

Power is steadily moving toward aggregators—telcos and OEMs—who control access, discovery, and bundled distribution. In parallel, AI-driven discovery and dynamic ad insertion will reshape targeting, making contextual relevance more critical than deterministic precision.

Ultimately, the ecosystem is converging into a unified video layer across TV, YouTube, and OTT. Success will depend on cross-platform planning, frequency management, and moving from siloed strategies to integrated video investments.

CONCLUSION

India's OTT market is not stabilizing—it is **restructuring**.

India will not follow the Western OTT model—it will define a new one. The winners will be those who control access, aggregation, and attention.

For marketers, the path forward is clear:

1. **Stop treating OTT as one channel.** Manage premium SVOD, mass AVOD, and aggregators separately.
2. **Shift from platform-first to audience-first planning.** Use language, content affinity, device.
3. **Embrace free AVOD for scale** and CTV for premium attention.
4. **Solve measurement fragmentation** via incrementality testing and MMM.
5. **Partner with aggregators** – they are the new gatekeepers.
6. **Use rate card data** to optimize between live premium and cost-efficient VOD/display.
7. **Don't ignore YouTube** – it's your biggest competitor and ally.
8. **Prepare for regulatory and privacy shifts** – first-party data is your future.

Remember: *In India, consumers don't subscribe to platforms—they rent content access.*

The world's largest hybrid streaming market is being built right now. **Be ready.**

APPENDIX

A. Glossary of Key Terms

AVOD (Advertising Video on Demand)
A streaming model where content is free for users and monetized through advertising. This is emerging as the dominant scale driver in India.

SVOD (Subscription Video on Demand)
A paid subscription-based model where users pay for access to content libraries (e.g., premium OTT platforms).

CTV (Connected TV)
Internet-enabled television devices used to stream OTT content. Represents the convergence of digital precision and TV-scale viewing.

FAST (Free Ad-Supported Streaming TV)
Linear-style OTT channels supported by ads, typically distributed via smart TV ecosystems.

Aggregator Platforms
Platforms (telcos, OEMs, super apps) that bundle multiple OTT services into a single access interface, controlling discovery and billing.

ARPU (Average Revenue Per User)
A key monetization metric indicating revenue generated per user. India's OTT market is characterized by low ARPU relative to global markets.

Churn
The rate at which users cancel subscriptions. In India, churn is driven heavily by content cycles and pricing sensitivity.

Bundling
The practice of combining multiple OTT services into a single subscription or access layer, typically led by telcos or aggregators.

Programmatic OTT/CTV
Automated buying of OTT ad inventory using data and algorithms, enabling targeting and frequency control.

B. Acronyms & Abbreviations

Term	Full Form
OTT	Over-The-Top Media
AVOD	Advertising Video on Demand
SVOD	Subscription Video on Demand
CTV	Connected TV
FAST	Free Ad-Supported Streaming TV
CPM	Cost Per Mille (per 1,000 impressions)
MMM	Marketing Mix Modeling
DPDP	Digital Personal Data Protection Act
ISP	Internet Service Provider
SSO	Single Sign-On

C. Data Sources & Methodology

This whitepaper is based on a synthesis of:

- Industry reports (FICCI–EY, RedSeer, Kantar, GroupM)
- Platform disclosures and rate cards (IPL, OTT platforms)
- Public datasets and media reports
- Author's strategic analysis and interpretation

Methodological Approach:

- Triangulation across multiple sources to ensure directional accuracy
- Use of industry benchmarks where audited data is unavailable
- Interpretation of behavioral patterns across consumer cohorts

Important Note:
All data points should be interpreted as **indicative and directional**, not absolute measurements.

D. Assumptions & Limitations

Key Assumptions:

- OTT user base reflects active viewers, not just app downloads
- CTV growth follows high double-digit adoption trends
- IPL and sports data reflect industry-reported estimates

Limitations:

- Cross-platform deduplication is not fully measurable due to identity fragmentation
- Telco-led bundling creates non-unified user identities across devices
- Regional and demographic variations may impact behavior beyond aggregated insights

E. Summary of Proprietary Frameworks

1. Content–Cost–Convenience Triangle

Consumer decision-making in OTT is driven by a three-way trade-off:

- **Content → Drives acquisition**
- **Cost → Drives churn**
- **Convenience → Drives retention**

Strategic Insight:
No platform can maximize all three simultaneously. Market leaders optimize balance, not extremes.

2. The OTT Access Stack

OTT has evolved into a layered ecosystem:

- **Content Layer:** Platforms and studios
- **Aggregation Layer:** Telcos, super apps, OEM ecosystems

- **Infrastructure Layer:** Connectivity and distribution

Key Shift:
Control is moving upward—from content ownership to access and discovery control.

F. Rate Card Benchmarks (Indicative)

Inventory Type	Typical CPM Range
Premium Sports (IPL)	₹600–800+
CTV Inventory	₹300–650
General OTT	₹150–600
Regional OTT	₹120–250

Interpretation:

- Premium live content commands a significant attention premium
- AVOD provides cost-efficient scale
- CTV sits at the intersection of premium and precision

G. Key Structural Challenges (Summary)

1. Identity Fragmentation

Users generate multiple identities across:

- Linear TV (household-based)
- Mobile (device-based)
- CTV (shared + logged-in hybrid)

2. ISP & Device Mismatch

Different networks (WiFi vs mobile data) prevent deterministic linking.

3. Telco Bundle-Induced ID Split

- Mobile identity → Phone number (SSO)

- CTV identity → Email/login

Result: Same user appears as multiple users.

4. Measurement Impact

- Audience duplication
- Frequency mismanagement
- Attribution gaps

Implication:
Perfect attribution is not currently feasible in India.

H. Marketer Action Checklist

Planning

- Treat OTT as three environments: Premium, AVOD, Aggregators
- Integrate TV, YouTube, and OTT into one video strategy

Execution

- Use AVOD for reach and scale
- Use CTV for high-attention moments
- Use YouTube for mid-funnel engagement

Measurement

- Shift from attribution to incrementality
- Use MMM and geo experiments

Partnerships

- Prioritize aggregators (telcos, OEMs) over standalone platforms

I. Future Signals to Track (2026–2028)

- AVOD becoming the dominant consumption model
- Rapid growth of CTV and premium inventory
- Aggregators emerging as primary gatekeepers
- AI-driven discovery and contextual targeting

- Increasing importance of first-party data

J. Final Strategic Note

This whitepaper is built on a core strategic belief:

India is not a subscription-first market.
It is evolving into the world's largest hybrid streaming ecosystem.

Success will depend on:

- Controlling access, not just content
- Integrating platforms, not optimizing in silos
- Measuring contribution, not chasing perfect attribution

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