
| RESEARCH ARTICLE**Article DOI:** 10.21474/JNBMS01/147**DOI URL:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/JNBMS01/147>**EXPLORING TOURISM PROMOTION IN OTT ERA THROUGH CASE-LETS****Sarbari Bhowmick¹ and Sarani Bhaumik²**

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| ABSTRACT

Over-the-top (OTT) platforms have become a significant component of audiovisual content consumption, circumventing traditional television and film industries on a global scale. Audiences increasingly view web series and movies on mobile devices rather than in conventional television or cinema settings. Destinations are often encountered virtually before being experienced in person. As a result, OTT streaming platforms have broadened the scope of tourism by enabling global access to diverse media content. This paper investigates the strategies employed by global tourism development agencies to market destinations through web series and movies featured on OTT streaming platforms. OTT platforms play a substantial role in destination marketing by enhancing audience awareness, shaping travel aspirations, and indirectly influencing tourist arrivals through the popularity of web series and films set in specific locations. Employing a qualitative multiple mini case study methodology, this study analyzes how the portrayal of destinations in OTT content supports tourism promotion. Several prominent destinations featured in web series and films were selected for analysis. Data sources included tourism destination websites, tourism development agency campaigns, references within OTT content, and media articles. The study identifies key characteristics of destination images and examines how tourism agencies leverage these portrayals in their promotional strategies.

| KEYWORDS

Destination marketing, OTT platforms, tourism promotion, movies.

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Introduction:-

In recent years, OTT platforms have gained recognition for promoting locally made shows and films in destinations. Audiences watch series and films that romantically and nostalgically showcase various locations, creating a sense of longing for those places among viewers and prompting them to visit those locations. OTT platforms now strategically drive media-induced tourism through visual storytelling. Long-form content is more effective at attracting potential tourists as streaming platforms build on-screen narratives for and around the shows and films they produce and host. The on-screen storytelling, narrative-building, and portrayal of fictional characters engage audiences; viewers can form strong emotional bonds with on-screen environments and regional cultures through long-form narratives on services like Netflix or Amazon Prime Video. By creating a sense of simulated familiarity, this psychological "transportation" significantly lowers perceived travel anxiety. Consequently, the locations featured in the show or movie generate curiosity among viewers, leading to destination searches, accommodation bookings, and flight bookings. Governments globally are partnering with OTT platforms to boost tourism. This paper highlights government partnerships with OTT platforms and strategies for developing and promoting destinations globally.

Literature Review:-

Evolution of OTT Platforms:-

The digital entertainment revolution began when Netflix transitioned from a DVD-by-mail service to an instant-streaming platform. Online entertainment and affordable internet connectivity have led to a global upsurge of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms. It started as a web experiment; however, it transformed the content-consuming experience by bypassing traditional television (Tian, 2024; Behare et al., 2024). This has presented opportunities for diverse content streaming experiences worldwide. With the outbreak of the global pandemic, the content-consuming experience has also changed for the public. This transformed audience experience has contributed to the growth of OTT platforms (Khanna et al., 2024; P S, 2022). In addition to altering how consumers consume video content, over-the-top (OTT) services have created a global video-content value chain (Lee et al., 2022). While major film production companies levelled allegations against Netflix, accusing it of defying theatre regulations and invading their market, they were also in a hurry to launch their own streaming services.

Relationship between OTT and Tourism:-

The demand for inbound travel has increased due to the rapid growth of the OTT market and its role in facilitating globalization (Lee et al., 2022). The continuous transformation of digital media and the chronic online presence of Gen Z motivate travel intentions. Screen-tourism, as it was traditionally known, has also evolved with the advent of online streaming platforms and is now observed to influence Gen Z populations globally through locations showcasing audiovisual content on OTT platforms (Chauhan, 2026). By converting long-form digital storytelling into actual travel demand, OTT platforms motivate viewers' travel decision-making. This phenomenon is also known as "set-jetting" or media-induced tourism. Shows serve as indirect marketing channels that encourage viewers to travel to distant or rural places by engrossing audiences worldwide with authentic local stories (Yoon et al., 2026).

OTT Platforms and Their Impact on Global Tourism:-

Unfamiliar places are normalized by binge-worthy shows on Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. Series that highlight particular local cultures, environments, and ways of life function as potent, immersive advertisements, converting viewers' curiosity into direct search and travel behaviors (Lopez-Cordova, 2020). Netflix partnered with the UN Tourism (formerly UNWTO) to use research-backed strategies to ensure that on-screen exposure leads to continued international and domestic travel to the featured destinations (UN Tourism, 2021).

Objective:-

- To explore the engagement of government agencies with OTT platforms for the promotion and development of tourism destinations.
- To investigate the marketing strategies used for the tourist destinations.

Case-lets:-

Case 1: The Indian Tourism Ministry signed MoUs with Netflix:-

In the latter half of 2025, the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) of the Government of India announced a collaboration with Netflix. This announcement unveiled the opportunity for potential tourism development in several parts of the country. The initiative seeks to highlight various regions of the country in Netflix productions, which inspire viewers to visit those locations for their cultural and emotional impact. This partnership will identify opportunities to feature Indian regions and ensure their portrayal is contextual and authentic. The MoT also wants to present the location's historic and cultural context to showcase their local practices and the importance of the communities. Netflix has partnered with several tourism boards globally to promote tourism in those countries. Vice President of Content at Netflix India, Monika Shergill, stated that this collaboration will create new opportunities for local communities to share their talent and stories from their region. Netflix has already shot in more than 100 cities in India over the last decade, and helped popularise several regions of the country through on-screen storytelling; some of these are "Kaala Paani," "Jaane Jaan," "The Elephant Whisperers," and the list goes on.

Case 2: South Korean Tourism Surge with K-dramas on OTT Platforms:-

Digital platforms, both domestic and international, are of great significance in South Korea. A few local OTT platforms, such as Wavve, Tving, Whacha, and Weverse, have competed with international OTT platforms in cultural production; in contrast, a few American OTT platforms, such as Netflix, Disney+, and Apple TV, have started establishing business in Korea. South Korean regions have experienced an increased tourist footfall with the globalisation of K-dramas. During the COVID-19 pandemic, OTT platforms such as Netflix saw an increase in subscriptions, along with viewership of South Korean dramas that were premiered on Netflix. In South Korea, Netflix launched “Netflix Services Korea” in July 2015 and began broadcasting Korean dramas in June 2019 (Kuo, 2024). The advent of K-dramas on Netflix has led to a surge in inbound tourism to South Korea, mostly from Asian countries such as China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Japan. Tourists from non-Asian countries, such as the United States of America, have also visited South Korea (Jo et al., 2025). This phenomenon, known as the New Korean Wave, has been linked to the expansion of digital platforms in the cultural industries, including OTT platforms and music streaming services. While acquiring licensing programs, Netflix created its original shows in Korea, including *Squid Game* (2021), *All of Us Are Dead* (2022), and *The Glory* (2022–2023). These shows are breakout successes for the Korean entertainment industry and have also boosted tourism. In addition to competing with international OTT platforms, local OTT platforms like Watcha, Wavve, Tving, Coupang Play, and Seezn also compete with one another in the domestic cultural market (Jin, 2024). In June 2025, Netflix announced its partnership with the Korean Tourism Organisation and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism for a global campaign. The campaign aims to target audiences worldwide, including the U.S.A. Japan and Canada. Findings from a recent Netflix survey suggest that 72% of Korean content consumers are interested in visiting Korea.

Case 3: Brazil Tourism Board Embratur and Netflix Partnership:-

In May 2025, the Brazilian Tourism Board, Embratur, announced a cooperation agreement with Netflix during Rio2C. The purpose of this agreement was to boost tourism by promoting Brazilian national and cultural stories through audiovisual content. This would, in turn, drive viewer engagement and motivation, increase the country’s global visibility, and foster socio-economic development and promotion. France and Spain have experienced a massive tourism surge due to their collaboration with Netflix, which influenced Brazil to partner with the streaming platform. This initiative began with a promotional video featuring clips from Brazilian shows such as *Love is Blind Brazil*, *Invisible City*, and *Amparo (SP)*, which are already loved by audiences. According to Marcelo Freixo, President of the Brazilian Tourism Board, this collaboration is a medium for transforming the power of Brazilian narratives into practical connections. As part of the partnership, a travel guide featuring itineraries and tourist experiences inspired by popular Netflix titles with high local and international engagement was also launched. These titles represent the primary cultural assets that the Brazilian Tourism Board seeks to promote. This cooperation agreement also seeks to develop the local economy and Brazilian culture.

Case 4: Collaboration between South Africa Tourism and Netflix:-

The official announcement of this collaboration came in March 2021. It aims to provide a global platform to showcase South African storytelling through stories set in those locations. Netflix has an outreach that enables content to be consumed globally (Adisa et al., 2026). Some of the Netflix original series, like *Queen Sono*, *Blood & Water*, *How to Ruin Christmas: The Wedding*, and *Kings of Joburg*, are content made in South African locations. Other international shows and films that are locally produced in South Africa include *Holiday in the Wild*, *Last Days of American Crime*, and global Netflix originals like *Sacred Games*, *The Crown*, *Black Mirror*, and *The Kissing Booth (1 & 2)*. The South Africa Tourism Board stated that the local creative industry has benefited from the opportunity to showcase its art and talent on a global stage, both on- and off-screen, due to these stories that transcend Mzansi’s borders. They added that every production helped local companies and entrepreneurs, such as regional stylists, makeup artists, and other creatives, be part of the show’s entire supply chain, thereby boosting the nation’s economy. The CEO of South Africa Tourism stated that they are seeking to attract a global audience; in doing so, a non-traditional strategy for tourism promotion was required.

Finding:-

The study has investigated the cooperation between OTT platforms and different government agencies. Out of all the international streaming services, Netflix has the most partnerships with national tourism boards. With half of its original library or catalog coming from American productions and the other half from nations like India, Japan, South Korea, France, and Spain, it is also the top OTT streaming platform globally. Additionally, this platform has the broadest reach across more than 190 nations (Iordache, 2021). Additionally, Netflix worked with UN Tourism (formerly UNWTO) to investigate how OTT platforms affect local communities and how they perceive cultural connections. Their cooperation with UN Tourism resulted from this goal. Government institutions target tourism potential by selling their local stories and increasing visibility through content marketing with a worldwide reach. It also demonstrates how watching local stories and legends can increase one’s interest in the customs, heritage, music, food, language, and people of another nation. This connection creation is the catalyst for economic growth and tourism development (Lopez-Cordova, 2020). The study also noted that the countries that have collaborated with OTT streaming platforms have experienced a massive rise in tourist arrivals over the years. The boost was most prominent after the merger between UN Tourism and Netflix.

Discussion:-

Aligning with the first goal of the paper, this study discovered that government organizations around the world are collaborating with over-the-top (OTT) platforms to produce and broadcast locally produced content following the COVID-19 pandemic. Their main goal is to raise awareness of that nation while providing opportunities for the local economy and culture to thrive. Every nation has unique cultural narratives about its indigenous spirit, and using storytelling and audiovisual media content to highlight heritage is an ideal way for government organizations to guaranty a worldwide audience (Khanna et al., 2024; Jo et al., 2025). Examining the marketing tactics employed for the tourist destinations was the study's second goal. Government organizations determined that their primary approach was to work with internet streaming services to produce locally made television series and movies. As a result, this tactic was successful for a number of nations, including France, Spain, Japan, and the United States of America (Iordache, 2021). This phenomenon has also encouraged the adoption of this strategy by nations like Brazil, South Africa, South Korea, and India. According to the study, Netflix is at the forefront of collaborations and mergers with international government agencies as the top online streaming service. The partner nations and their economies benefit greatly from these mergers (Chauhan, 2026). Over time, these nations have also seen a significant increase in demand from tourists. Netflix's partnership with UN Tourism (formerly UNWTO) is a global tourism boost.

Conclusion:-

The paper investigates how the rise of OTT platforms, which have eclipsed traditional television, has impacted tourism development across the globe (Tian, 2024; Behare et al., 2024). The emergence of online streaming services and widespread affordable internet access has made content more reachable for a larger audience, increasing their enthusiasm for travel destinations showcased online. It has been noted that screen tourism has been driving tourism demand for many years, and media-induced tourism has emerged as an important factor in promoting tourism (Gaonkar et al., 2022). The research employs a case study approach to analyze the various collaborations that OTT platforms have formed with countries around the world. The aim of this research was to examine how government agencies interact with OTT platforms to enhance and promote tourism destinations, while also looking into the marketing tactics employed for these locations. The goals were achieved by utilizing a case study methodology. This research indicates that online content streaming services are open to collaboration with government agencies, particularly when the destinations feature rich cultural heritage and possess moderate levels of recognition. Tourism boards around the globe are partnering with OTT platforms to showcase their nations' economies and cultures through effective narrative-building and storytelling. This approach has resulted in a rise in tourist visits to various destinations, including France, Spain, Japan, the U.S.A., and numerous others (Yoon et al., 2026). Additionally, it has been found that the majority of the "first world countries" or "developed countries" were involved in marketing their locations as tourist attractions. As a result, it makes perfect sense for nations like India to take part in promoting their travel destinations as part of their "Viksit Bharat" vision. As the top OTT platform in the world, Netflix has also been found to play a significant role in the demand for travel. Additionally, according to Jo et al. (2025) and Lee et al. (20), it is the most active OTT platform when it comes to taking part in international government initiatives to stimulate cultural, economic, promotional, and development efforts.

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