

#ENTERTAINMENT

Hoichoi: The one-stop streaming service platform for Bengali speakers worldwide

Bangladesh has witnessed a paradigm shift within the entertainment industry in the past decade. Backtracking to the '90s when digital entertainment was limited to local television channels, rapid technological advancements, combined with robust Internet connectivity in the 21st century has drastically transformed the entertainment scenario of the country.

Sakib R Khan, Country Head at Hoichoi, echoes this sentiment, saying, "The Bangladeshi entertainment industry is going through a stage of transformation and adaptation, as both consumers and businesses alike are redefining the meaning of digital entertainment."

Much to the delight of netizens, streaming services are all the rage now, and with myriad streaming platforms to choose from, the Indian subscription-based streaming service Hoichoi hails as one of the most popular brands that made its foray in the Bangladeshi market on March, 2019.

Aimed towards the Bengali diaspora, Hoichoi is the one-stop streaming service platform for Bengali speaking people worldwide, with coverage in about a hundred countries at present. Airing quality content that mainly consists of web series, movies and short films, Hoichoi quenches the demand of people searching for exquisite visual content in their native language.

Having made its debut with the successful web series, Dhaka Metro, under the direction of highly acclaimed director Amitabh Reza Chowdhury, it was only onwards and upwards for Hoichoi since then. The streaming service boasts a diverse catalogue of fictional content, portraying stories from all walks of life, including thriller, crime drama, romantic comedies, detective stories, and much more.

Money Honey, Byomkesh, Hello, and Taqdeer – all of which are part of Hoichoi's original web series, are a few popular names from the platform's copious collection of exclusive shows that received much attention and appreciation from the Bangladeshi clientele.

The streaming platform promulgates extraordinary content and is taking strides towards broadcasting series and videos that



depict the various realities of life to cover a wide range of subjects from financial to personal aspects of living.

"Money Honey, which is based on the true story of a bank heist, was highly praised by the audience," said Khan.

Alongside, despite the bold theme and unique plot of "Hello," the web series received much applause and acceptance nationally, which is warranted by the recent airing of its third season. Another such example can be seen in the short film, Tasher Ghawr, which depicts a realistic storyline that garnered vast appreciation from women.

Apart from original shows, Hoichoi also retains a dynamic selection of third-party visual materials to meet the demand of their wide range of subscribers. For instance, it contains an array of movies including Dwitiyo Purush, Swapnajaal, Kathbirali, and Konttho, to name a few.

Although the Bangladeshi audience is yet to fully embrace the system of subscription-based video-on-demand (SVOD), they need not worry about making a dent in their pocket in this case because Hoichoi charges

the bare minimum.

While online subscription requires users to subscribe for at least one year via website or app, people can also choose the tenure of 3, 6 or 12 months by purchasing offline subscription cards, which are available at outlets of Meena Bazar and Gadget & Gear in Dhaka. Additionally, backend subscription is provided by Daraz and Pickaboo at a discounted price.

Albeit the evident success of the streaming service industry, there still persists areas that require investment and improvement.

"We strive to create great content that is befitting to various groups of people, but the lack of availability of production facilities in this sector acts as a hindrance," noted Khan.

Nevertheless, the digital entertainment industry of Bangladesh is brimming with potential and progressing to be better by leaps and bounds with the ever-growing popularity of video-on-demand services that are now available at our fingertips.

By Fariha Amber
Photo Courtesy: Hoichoi