



ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

How many streaming services are too many?

MYNUL KARIM

Online content consumption is at an all-time high, a large portion of which can be attributed to the widespread popularity of paid online streaming platforms. These services have developed a very lucrative form of monetisation through tiered and bundled subscriptions at specific price points. Such a model has allowed the pioneers of content streaming like Netflix and Hulu to expand at quite a large scale.

However, with an increasing number of streaming services entering the market, the question arises if the abundance of options for these streaming platforms is really beneficial for consumers.

Methods of media consumption were limited before the advent of online streaming services. Cable TV would stream according to their own schedule. Such inflexibility, plus the bombardment of commercials despite already charging consumers a subscription fee, highlights some of TV's major shortcomings.

Services like Netflix have completely changed the landscape by letting viewers watch their desired content whenever they want to while only charging a much cheaper timed subscription fee – in essence implementing the best of both worlds.

In almost all sectors of the industry, the availability to choose from multiple options gives more power to the consumers, and creates more pressure on the service providers to retain their customers through competitiveness and innovation. A similar trend can be seen in the field of content streaming where the platforms are always adding more and

more content to their libraries, streamlining the viewing experience, providing subtitles in multiple languages and supporting more sophisticated codec and certifications like lossless audio, HDR 10, or Dolby Atmos.

On the contrary, due to stiff competition, these services are also executing other try hard means of distinguishing themselves. For example, Netflix and HBO Max are always overcrowding their media library with their exclusive shows and movies. Meanwhile, Disney+ is removing their older content from other platforms to maintain exclusivity.

In other cases, it can be seen that some seasons of a show can be found on one platform, whereas other seasons of the same show are only available on a different platform. Not every title is available on every region of the same streaming service either.

As these measures end up hindering the overall user experience, consumers are forced to subscribe to multiple streaming services at a time to minimise their compromises. Therefore, the value proposition is thrown out of the window, and many consumers end up either abandoning their desire of consumption or resorting to piracy.

A lack of competition can lead to platforms ceasing their efforts in elevating the consumer experience and introducing unjustified price hikes, while having too many competitors to choose from leaves the consumer in an odd position when they cannot find the specific content they want from a particular platform.

There is no straightforward solution to this dilemma, but if things keep going this way, it may not be economically viable for many consumers to keep enjoying media like they used to.

Mynul thinks that if you expect disappointment, then you can never really be disappointed. Remind him that he copied the quote from NWH at smmynulkarim@gmail.com



DESIGN: ORCHID CHAKMA

The vultures among us

Capitalising on our obsession with public universities

HASIB UR RASHID IFTI

If you are in college and are fairly active on Facebook, you've probably come across videos of online tutors motivating students to work harder by telling them exaggerated tales of their own. Boasting about not sleeping for 20 hours at a stretch or fainting on the table — instances that should be condemned, to begin with, are misused as tools of inspiration. And unfortunately, such toxicity sells.

Our educational approach infamously focuses on institutions rather than personal interests or aspirations. We are obsessed with getting into the most reputed engineering universities or medical schools rather than pursuing engineering or medicine as a field of interest. This obnoxious fixation gives a particular fraction of tutors the perfect opportunity to feast on our students' insecurities and vulnerabilities.

The culture of entrance exams in our country is based on fear and paranoia. Most college students are under the misconception that getting into the most reputed university is naturally going to sort out their future. While it does push an aspirant to work harder, it also puts colossal pressure on them. Panic is created fearing a plausible future where he doesn't get into his desired university. The revolting outlook that our society holds for anything less than engineering or medicine only adds to the horror.

A section of educators capitalises on this insecurity by instigating fear and hysteria into their students' mindsets. Getting sick while studying, not having enough time to eat or sleep properly, studying for unimaginable hours at a stretch — they use these instances of

unhealthy obsession to give the students a false idea about the intensity required for their definition of success. They are made to believe that anything less than this unattainable parameter will only result in failure.

Another recurring pattern in their toxic method is the repetitive mention of a dystopian future that includes getting into a private university. The constant derogatory comments about the consequences of not getting into their desired university make students paranoid enough to put their obsession before their physical and mental well-being. They're manipulated into pushing themselves to any extent, chasing goals that are beyond their capabilities or desire.

With unreal expectations set, after a student works hard day after day, only to fall behind his schedule, get poor marks in mocks, and see his classmates excel with ease, he gets chronically depressed. In a generation that already struggles in dealing with failure, these tutors feast on this very fear and bully them beforehand for something they haven't failed at yet.

What's important is to identify the differences in our goals, efficiencies and capabilities. There can never be a universal guide to your preparation routine. As certain coaching centres, teaching platforms and educators continue to capitalise on your vulnerability, it's crucial that you be the one in control.

The university entrance exams in Bangladesh are unnerving, inefficient and tiring. The last thing you need is an egomaniac bullying you into depression and making some money out of it in the process.

Remind Ifti to be quieter at hasiburrashidifti@gmail.com