



## The golden triangle: Decoding Young Adult content on OTT

An analysis of Hindi fiction shows on streaming platform, belonging to the Young Adult genre, reveals their three unique benefits, and deep-drives into how these benefits can be leveraged

Published on April 04, 2024

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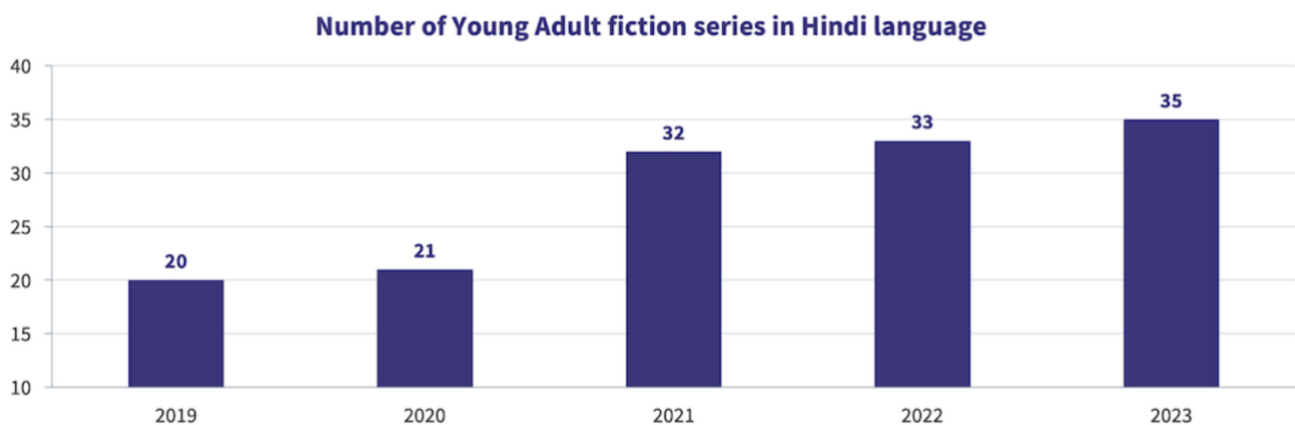
### Summary

- With 35 fiction series, the Young Adult genre accounts for 32% of all the Hindi streaming originals being released in 2023, up from about 25% in 2019
  - Given their growing importance, an analysis of the unique benefits of Young Adult genre reveals the golden triangle of three primary drivers of engagement for these shows
  - Young Generation's Mindset, Mind Fresh, and Optimism drive engagement and advocacy for shows in the Young Adult genre, in sharp contrast to shows in other genre
  - The article below deep-dives into each of these drivers, and explores how these benefits can be portrayed and leveraged
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It is well documented that the explosion of streaming content, especially post pandemic, has changed the entertainment content landscape in India. New audiences are being inducted into the fold, progressively, and to cater to their diverse tastes and interests, new content types, formats and genre are also finding their place in the ecosystem. For example, the increase in number of documentaries being released in the last couple of years, despite limited audience traction, suggests that platforms are experimenting with newer formats to retain subscribers, and to capture niche audience segments.

But amidst all the experimentation, one genre that has remained a staple, with a limited but dedicated audience base, is fiction content that belongs to the **Young Adult genre**. For the purpose of this analysis, Young Adult content is defined as a fiction series on streaming that has at least one protagonist who is in the 14-25 years age group and not married. Only Hindi language fiction series have been considered for this analysis.

The chart below captures the number of Hindi fiction series in the Young Adult genre, released across all major platforms (both SVOD and AVOD), from 2019 to 2023.



With 35 series, the Young Adult genre accounts for 32% (almost one-third) of all the Hindi streaming original series in 2023, up from about 25% in 2019. AVOD platforms like MX Player (upto 2022) and Amazon miniTV (in 2023) constitute a majority of these shows, possibly due

to their contained cost of production, and an advertiser-friendly target audience. However, even SVOD platforms have dabbled into this genre, albeit with moderate success, such as Class on Netflix and the recently-released Big Girls Don't Cry on Prime Video.



With the growing importance of this genre is established, it is also important to study what makes a show in this genre work from the audience's perspective, and how this genre is different in essence from other fiction series available on streaming platforms. For this, we have looked the deviations in benefits that content in the Young Adult genre offers, when compared to other shows in the category, by looking at the difference in their association across various Ormax Power Rating (OPR) drivers.

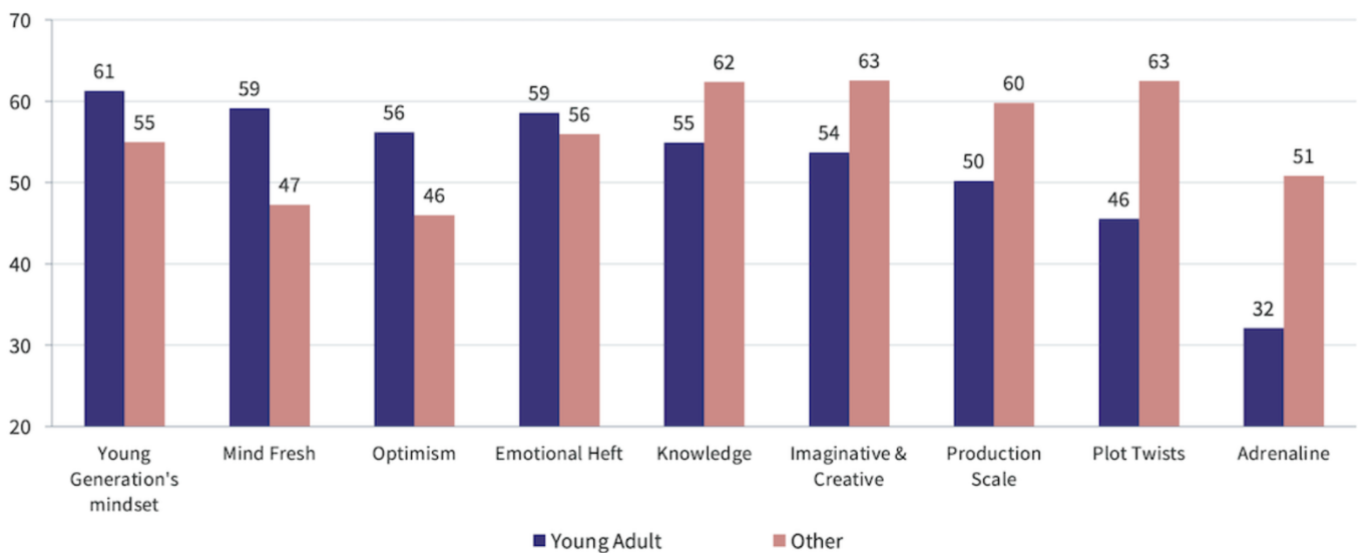
A combination of various drivers leads to Ormax Power Rating (OPR), our proprietary metric to measure audience likeability of all content, ranging from theatrical films to streaming originals to linear television shows. OPR is reported on a 0-100 scale, and can be seen as a representation of the show's inherent content strength, and is also a surrogate for its

advocacy, i.e., % audience who are likely to recommend the content to their friends or family after watching it.

OPR drivers are benefits that audience seek from content, and are factors that can have a positive influence on a show or film’s audience engagement, once they have decided to watch the content in question. [This Jan 2023 product update](#) for our testing tool for streaming, Ormax Stream Test, has more information on these drivers.

The chart below compares the average driver profile of Young Adult shows with an OPR of 55 or more, with that of 55+ OPR shows in all other genres put together. 55 is a good benchmark for shows that have been liked by their audiences, at least moderately.

**Driver Profile Comparison: Young Adult vs. Other Series (Hindi)**



It is apparent that Young Adult content provides very distinct benefits compared to other shows in the category. The drivers that have the highest positive skews for Young Adult

shows are: Young Generation’s mindset, Mind Fresh, and Optimism. These three drivers form a golden trifecta, driving engagement for the high performing shows of this genre.

A deep-dive into each of these drivers will help understand what truly resonates with the target audience of this content, and how these benefits, and their combination, can be leveraged.

### 1. Young Generation’s Mindset

**Definition: Depiction of stories and characters in a way that relate to today’s youth, their life, their thinking, their culture and their aspirations**

The success of youth-centric shows like Kota Factory, Hostel Daze, and College Romance is driven by this driver. This driver is almost definitional to the genre, and it is not just limited to the presence of youthful characters in the narrative, but is a larger idea about the stories and characters capturing and reflecting an approach that mirrors the thinking of today’s youth.



It is important to understand that just having conflicted and confused characters does not fully encapsulate the power of this benefit. The primary idea that drives association with this driver is relatability. One cannot identify with a mindset or thinking, if the conflicts and predicaments presented in the narrative aren't relatable in a real and meaningful manner. Be it relatable aspirations and struggles shown in Kota Factory, or the innocent awkwardness of first love in Flames, or the relatable setting of a hostel in Hostel Daze, relatability results in the audience being able to identify with the character conflicts and situations.

## 2. Mind Fresh

**Definition: Light-hearted and feel-good moments, delivered via comedy, fun and an overall lightness of touch in treatment**

Entertainment, and the idea of distress, is a core expectation from content belonging to the Young Adult genre. Quick-witted and quirky characters who make smart retorts, catchy punchlines with contemporary references (like those invoking viral memes or iconic movie dialogues), and exaggerated but relatable situations, are some of the common ways in which this benefit is delivered in shows of this genre. The core idea behind audiences seeking this benefit in content is for them to vicariously derive the pleasure of hanging out in a group, with a few members of the being the designated 'clowns', just like they would experience in their own friends group in real life.

From Jhattu's idiosyncrasies in Hostel Daze to Trippy's awkwardness while wooing women in College Romance, these quirky characters provide the much-needed comic relief and moments of fun. It is this idea of 'masti' among friends groups that is an important part of the Mind Fresh driver for shows of this genre.

### 3. Optimism

**Definition: Positive tonality delivered through characters, situations and messages, leading to a promise of feel-good, and an uplifting after-taste**

[This Sep 2023 analysis](#) dived deep on the issue of fiction content on streaming being overly cynical. While this is generally true for the category, shows in the Young Adult genre have managed to break this trend, and have largely remained uplifting and positive in their outlook and worldview.

With so much cynicism around, and the impending reality of adulthood around the corner for the target audience, there is a strong craving for positive and uplifting stories, which restore their faith in humanity and provide them comfort from the other ‘doomed’ narratives that percolate through their lives constantly. Characters being successful in their endeavours, ranging from wooing a love interest to qualifying a difficult competitive exam, despite all odds, reinforces a sense of positivity and faith in the minds of the audience, and is a necessary antidote to the cynicism present in other genres, as well as the world in general.

While Young Adult shows have a core and dedicated audience base, and are relatively economical to produce, they also have a high failure rate, because a lot of the shows released lack authenticity, relatability, and a general sense of positivity. Some shows fail either because the issues and conflicts presented in them are too alien and limited to an elite milieu, and others fail because they are just “me too” versions of other shows, lacking originality and heart. Understanding audience expectations from these shows, and how they differ from other genres, would help in creating shows that find greater resonance and advocacy. The golden triangle of Young Generation's Mindset, Mind Fresh, and Optimism can be a good ready reckoner.