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# Role And Impact Of Digital Media In Spreading News And Information During Pandemic COVID-19 In India

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**Abstract:** Digital Media is always a unique platform for spreading information and using communication technologies in effective ways. As per transmission and impact of information, traditional media (Newspaper, Radio & Television) focus to attention and feedback towards the public. On the other hand Digital Media is not only providing the platform for quick reaction but it makes the user more connected towards content by the changes and usage of information in dynamic ways. During the crises or special circumstance like pandemic digital media played crucial role because of usage and amplifying the information and news regarding COVID-19. This study aims to bring out the impact and role played by digital media during the pandemic and health crises. As per reports the communication technologies especially digital platforms of news are used and viewed at a big scale during this medical emergency around the world. It has been more powerful in professional and business role in democratic countries and liberal nature of media industry like India. This is very clear by the numbers and records of growth in content publishing and advertising profit also.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

To stay home and maintain social distance was the common and most required statement or guidelines from government and public health bodies to protect the human being from COVID-19. [1] This social distancing guideline also has been the growth line for digital media in form of increasing numbers of page views and referral rate. It is important to study the nature, impact and role of digital media in this difficult time. Its different types of categories and features of communication technologies explore the world of opportunities and challenges with the domination on traditional media. India has been on the second position in highest internet users after China and with the current rate it will be five million by 2021. The interesting fact in this growth is the betterment and reflection of positive aspects about news or information dissemination through digital platform. When people stopped reading the newspaper for a specific time to following COVID-19 guidelines during initial stages due to over consciousness, digital platform was not the alternative but in the priority.

Digital media helped people to support financial causes and information requirement in difficulties. It allowed the people across the world in building communities to fight against corona, organized action and made them more engaged with the society in lockdown. There are three important factors which need to analyze and examine in appropriate manner to check the impact of digital media in corona crises.

- A) Selection of digital media platforms for news.
- B) Feedback or response by the public in terms of views and referral.
- C) Civic engagement and behavior towards various type of communication through digital media.

Apart from above points we also can't ignore the challenges of credibility and stability with popularity of specific content in digital media. It also has been noticed that spread of fake content and rumor affect the objectives and real purpose of communication technologies. It can be difficult to identify and cross check the facts for common people or citizens in the flow of information and news.

## **2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To evaluate the role of digital media in spreading information and news during COVID-19 crises.
2. To know the impact of time to time updating of news on digital media platforms.
3. To identify the factors of popularity of digital media to following the pandemic guidelines and social distancing norms.
4. To analyze the content creation and publishing strategies of digital media domains.
5. To assess the behaviour of public towards digital media content in terms of selecting, viewing and reacting.

## **3. HYPOTHESIS**

- i. Digital media content has been the first choice of public or viewers to get information and regular update in pandemic COVID-19.
- ii. Digital news media played the effective role to fulfil the basic objectives of journalism in a democratic country like India during global health emergency.
- iii. Due to nature of content categories and specification of communication technologies, digital media dominated traditional media in corona crises.

## **4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Magda Pischetola, 2011, Digital Media and Learning Evolution : A Research on sustainable local empowerment, concludes the impact and importance of ICT with the parallel study of digital media. It also highlights the digital literacy in a broad concept. If digital technology and media extended with the various feature of content then it may be more impactful. The outcomes also suggest the effective and appropriate usage of digital media and digital literacy. Any kind of change in technology will lead to social change and definitely strengthen to local empowerment with a sustainable approach. [2]

Leonardo Tortolero Blanco, 2020, Social media influence in the COVID-19 pandemic, says in pandemic and medical emergency social media should be handle carefully. If users start application and utilization of social media platform in positive and responsible approach then it can provide supportive hand to medical and society. Social media had been beneficial and powerful mode for public welfare whenever it was utilized for spreading awareness about situation, dissemination of important information, guidelines for treatment and protocols. [3]

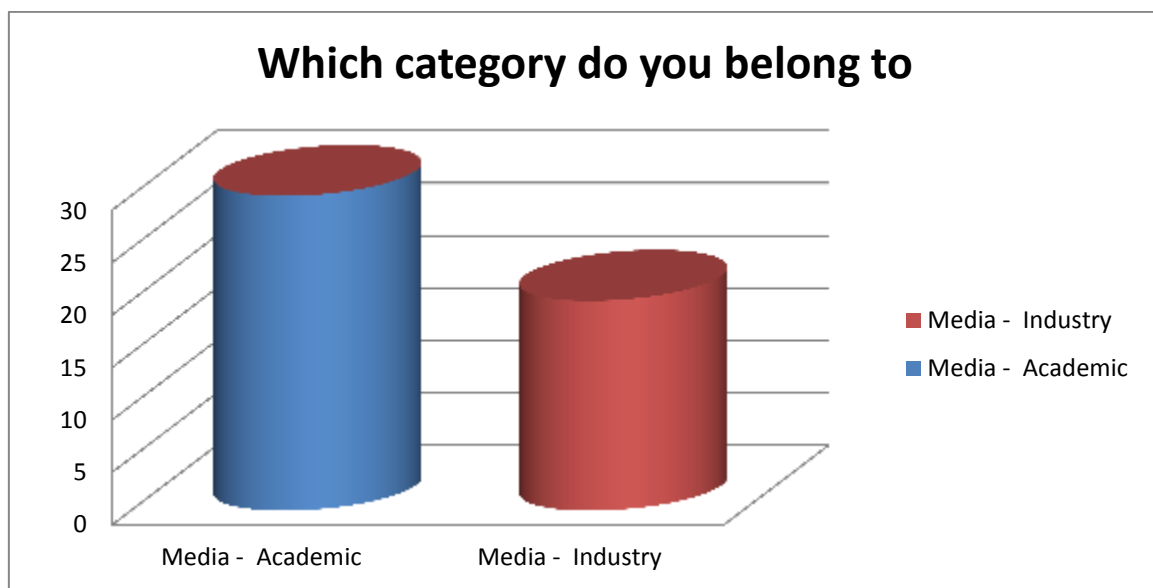
Amirhossein Asadi, Payame Noor University, 2017, A Role of digital media on discussing about the diplomacy in the world, highlights that media has great effect on survival of human life and the edge of digital media has converted it in human being that is also digital now as per requirements and technologies. [4] The tools of this emerging platform are capable to transform the emotions, culture, policy and values in current scenario. There are many countries from different continents which have improved their political situation, policies formulation and established the digital paradigm to sustain the growth and development. Even

western countries used this unique mode for stating the principles and strategies in the period of great diplomatic waves. [5]

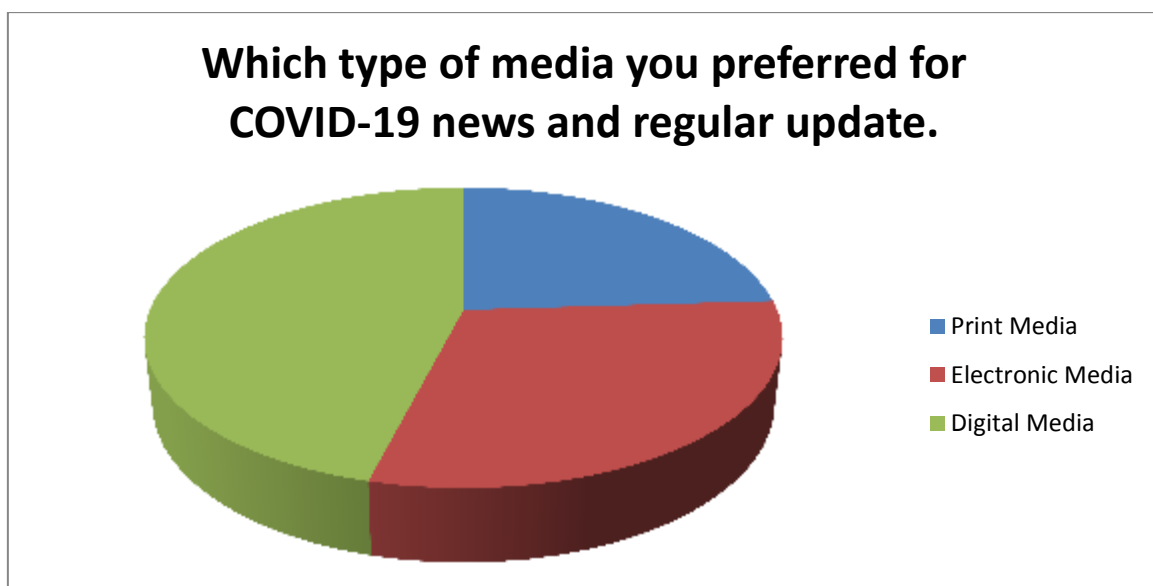
## 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study survey method is followed to check the role and impact of digital media in pandemic. In order to identify the popularity and effect of media, a voluntary questionnaire for survey and interview have conducted as primary data and review of literature considered for secondary data. The questionnaire was built with 10 questions about content creation, publication, navigation and impact factors.

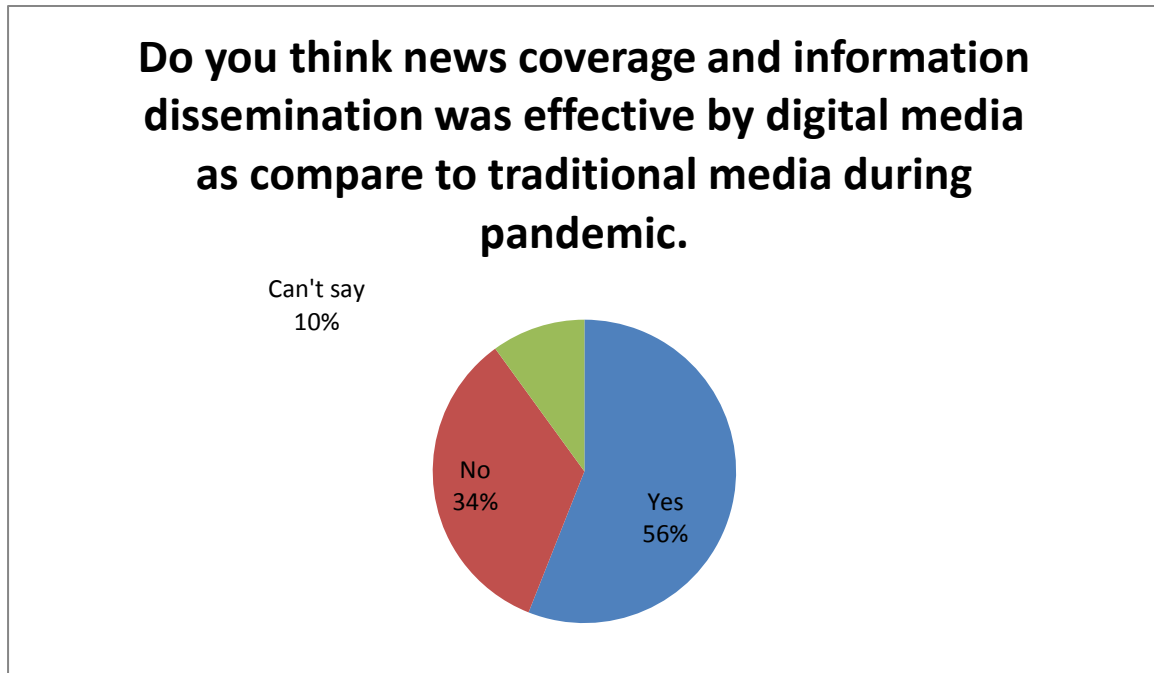
### Data Interpretation



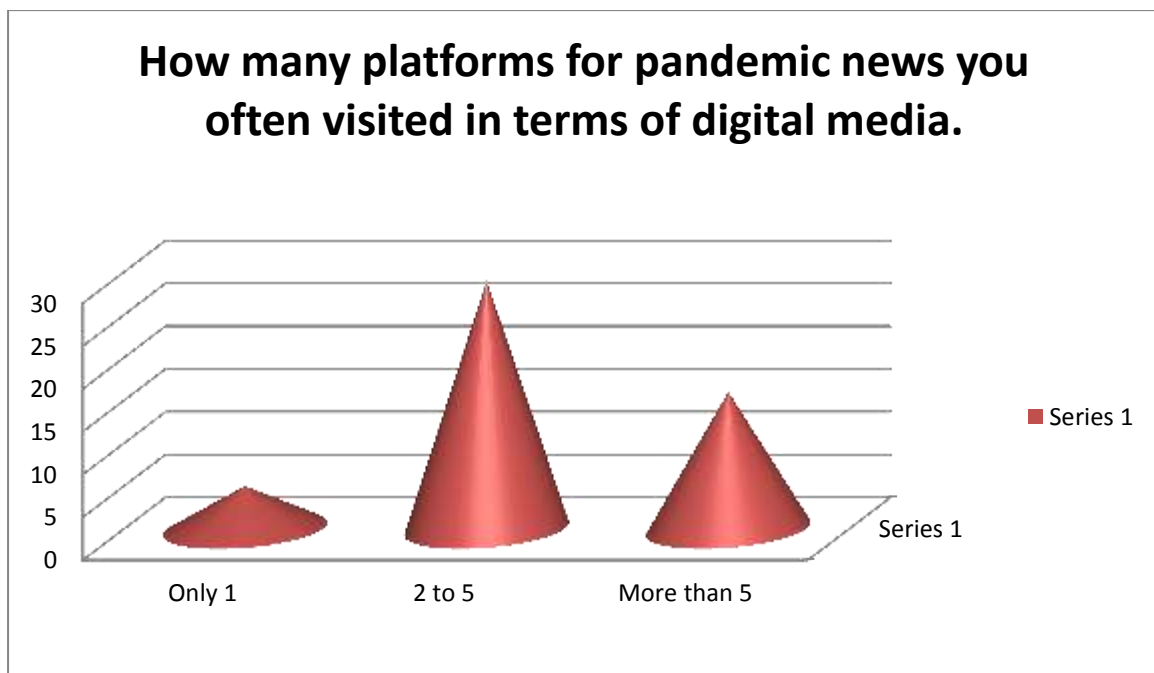
This survey was focused on two specific category in form of people from media – academics and media – industry. So, 30 people recorded the response from academics and 20 from industry.



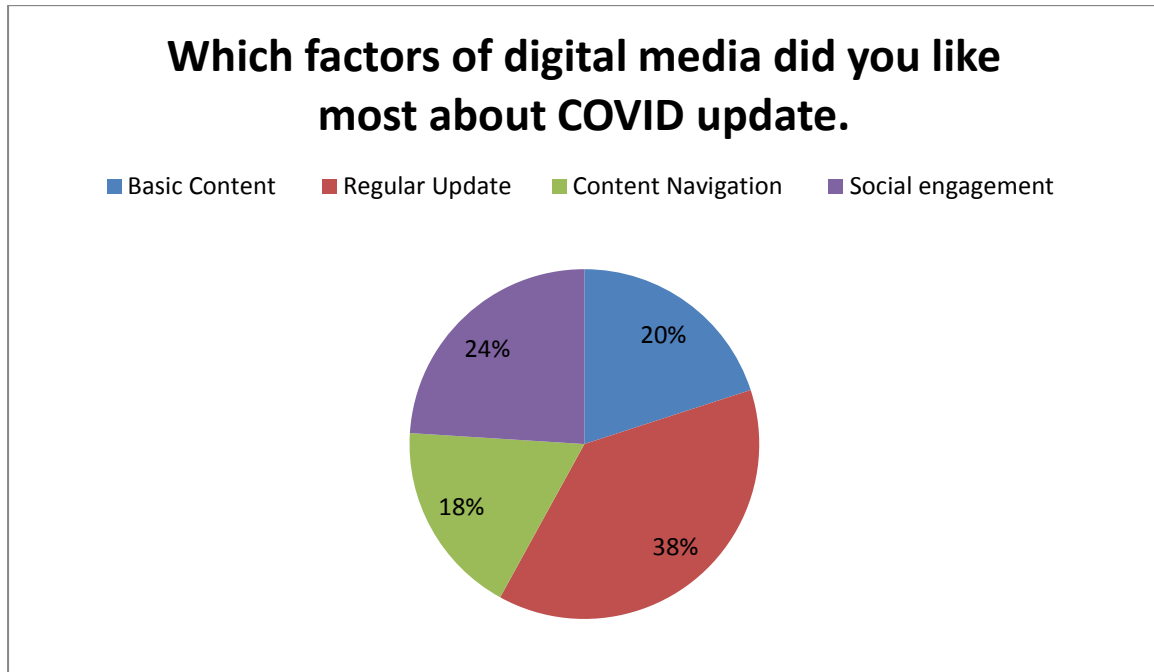
The choice of platform was very important as it had to identified the targeted class for survey. Due to sanitization issue and nature of printing process, people tried to avoid the newspaper for a certain period and digital media got the benefit. 23 people preferred Digital Media, 15 Electronic Media and 12 Print Media specially newspaper during lockdown and pick of pandemic.



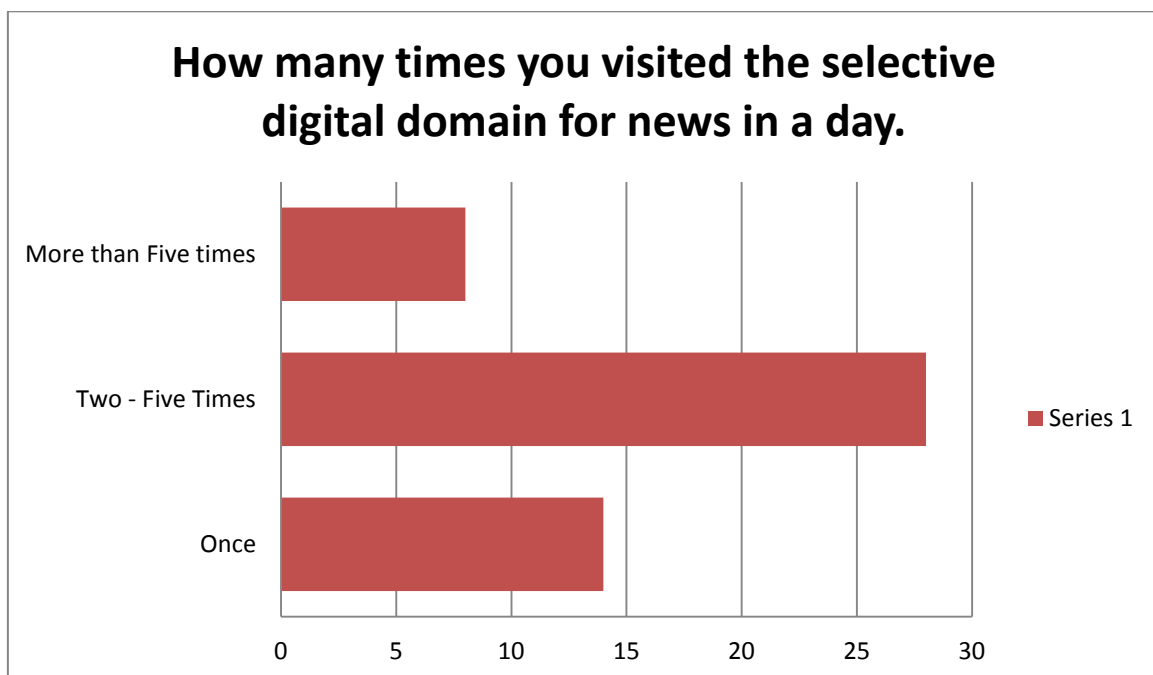
About news coverage and dissemination of information people seems to satisfy as majority in form of 56% with Yes, 34% No and 10% opted can't say. Regular update and notification on digital media was the crucial factor as per interview feedback. People follow the news notification, follow-ups and regular update for COVID-19 information.



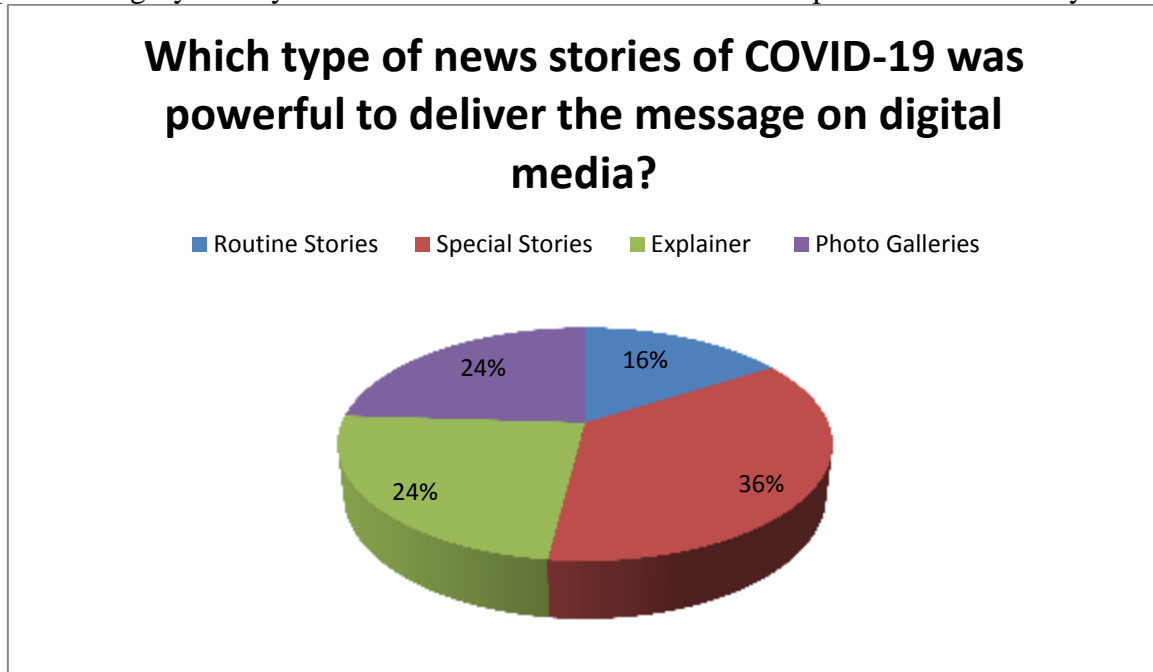
The feedback of this question clearly indicates the popularity of digital media platforms and increasing interest of people towards it. As per outcomes, 58% people visit 2 to 5 platforms while 32 percent often visit more than five and rest of these preferred single domain for news update.



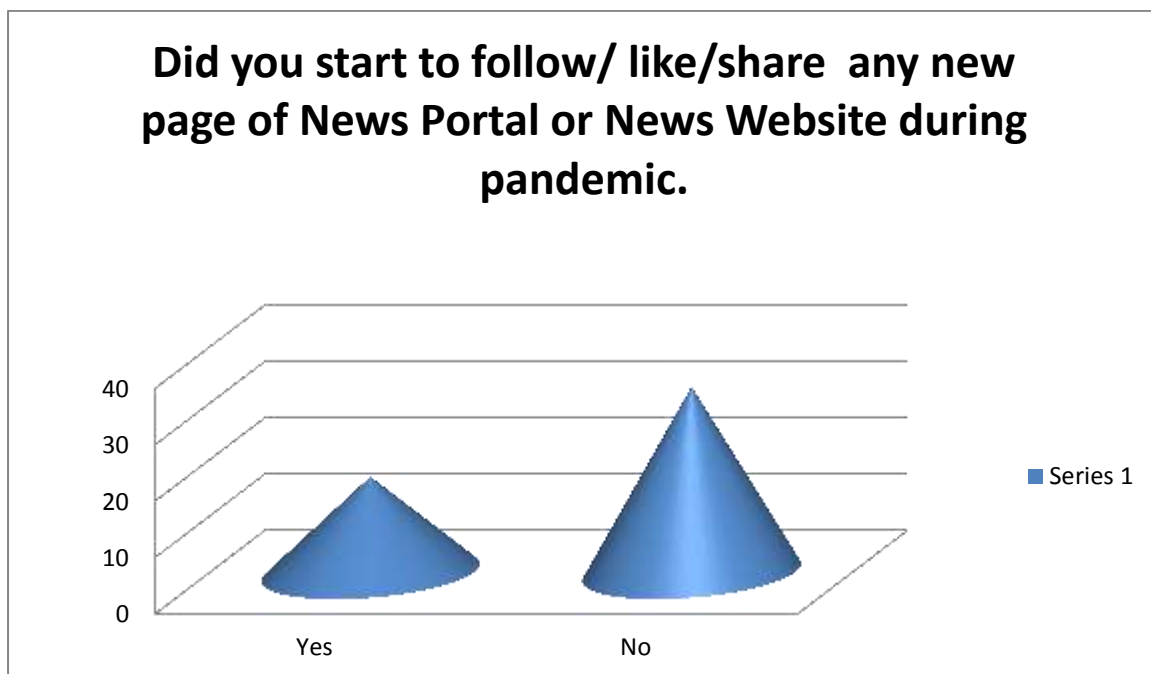
This is all about the type of content the viewers like on digital news platforms. In the category maximum people 38% received and viewed regular update through notification and 24% viewed basic content. Whereas 12 % were involved in social engagement and 18% viewed through specific search in content navigation.



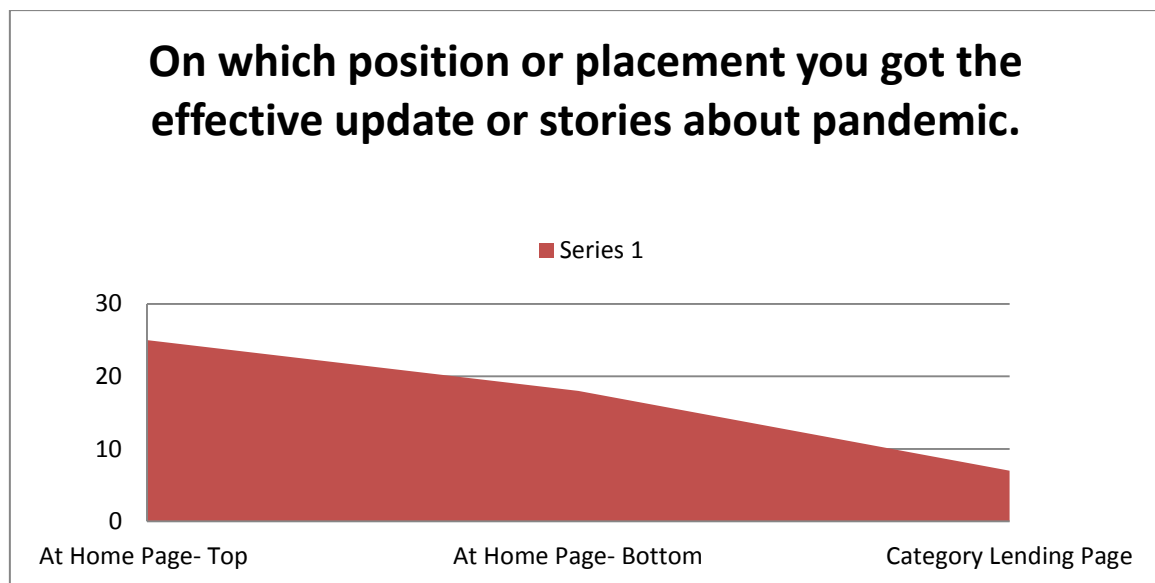
The selective response refers to targeted audience and news domains. The outcome is interesting as 56 percent visit two or more time and less than five. Whereas 16 percent the special category as they like to visit more than five times and 28 percent once in a day.



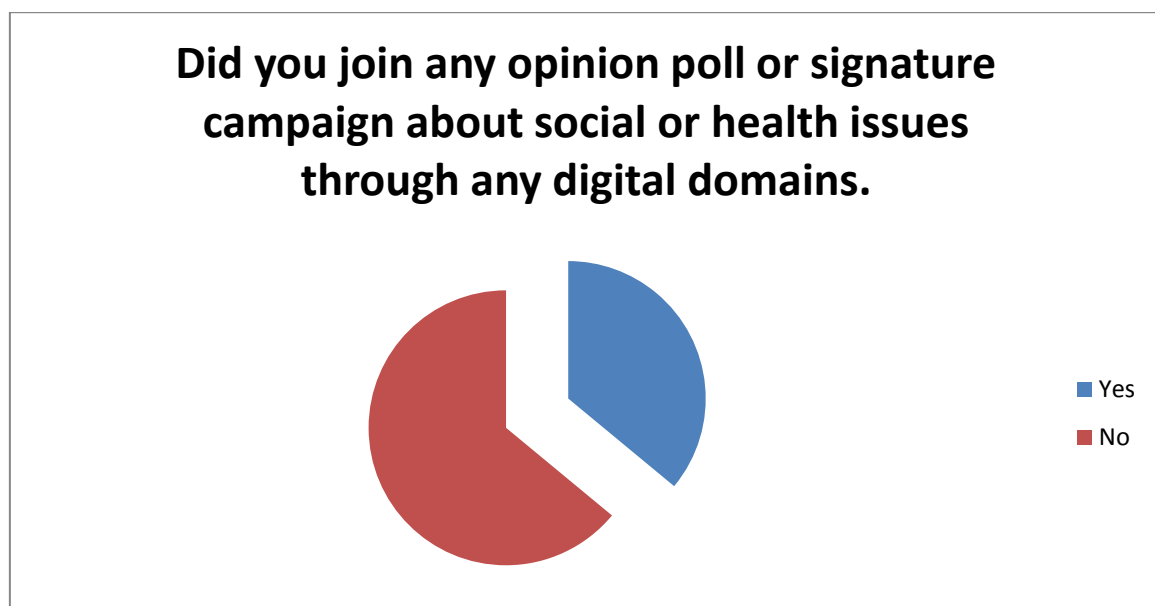
In the evaluation and judgment of stories 36% lead to special stories. Viewers got the more information with the help of news during pandemic. The people response indicates that explainer and photo galleries are equal with 24% each. As per interview and survey feedback only 16% people think that routine stories are powerful.



This question was to check the further interest of viewers in form of active engagement with the news portal and news website during pandemic. 17 people started following, like and sharing to news portal or website whereas 33 people were constant with No in answer.



Again with the special point of views reflected a new fact in the study as the stories update seems top to bottom in placement and position. Maximum people often viewed and received update on Top of Home page with the lead of 25. The bottom placement of home page stands on second choice with 18 and 7 for landing page of any category was third.



At last the response of viewers also highlighted the reaction in form of Impact of the digital news content. Digital media content was impactful in transforming the interest of 36 percent people toward further Impact. However 64 percent was constant with the same.

## 6. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Currently, we are in digital edge and nobody can ignore the existence and formation of digital technologies. Media always has a big role to play especially in emergency and crises. Pandemic is not only the global health emergency but a question mark on principles of medical

science and modern ecosystem of human life. The failure is not limited to art or style of living but of course it's connected to way of communication. So the digital media and communication technologies have to utilize in perfect way to save the human and communication in form of emotion and culture. The advantage of digital media is that it has connected to the people strongly due to nature of digital communication technologies. In terms of spreading news and awareness during pandemic, digital news media played the big role.

As per a media report India is the country which is at fourth position in using internet during COVID-19 crises. So it can be understand that importance and benefit of digital domains really have an impact on citizen. If we analyze this impact in the news categories then it appearing in the mode of fulfilling the objective of journalism. Whereas people were afraid and hesitated on receiving the news papers on daily bases at the time of increasing cases of COVID-19.

The findings of study highlight and indicate that people form media are much focused and prefer the digital media in priority as compare to traditional media. Digital media used and viewed by the people at big scale during pandemic. The keen interest in different type of content, following to specific platform and active engagement in feedback showcase the impact of the digital media and technology.

Now the users and viewers are aware about the different dimension of news presentation and navigation of various digital platforms. They are not only limited to news coverage and getting information but approving and verifying the facts and happening as per critical thinking and requirements. In the race of page views they may be targeted but they also have the specific and justified reason to view that particular platform of digital media. It has been clearly seen during the pandemic COVID-19. Digital media fulfilled all the requirement of audience and was impactful with the nature in the era of global medical emergency in India.

### **Suggestions**

In a nutshell availability of news on digital platform is not the only the demand of viewers and users but it's the need of hour and changing trend of mass media. Active participation and appropriate usage with quality content should be the issue of concern to promote the digital media in for of news and views. It should not be targeted or identify as the replacement of traditional media but the support system of real journalism and crucial mode of mass media.

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