Use of Internet by Indians during Extraordinary Times: A Study through Gendered Lens in the Covid-19 Lockdown Scenario

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Abstract

The paper aims to explore the differences in the use of the internet by the male and female consumers of India as a medium to facilitate the functioning of their lives during the unprecedented and inconceivable situation created by the Covid-19 Pandemic and the consequential lockdown which circumscribed the world to their homes. On investigating using the Media Dependency Theory, which was proposed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur in their path-breaking work, had observed that factors such as instability and uncertain times affect the dependency of the consumers on media. Using Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytical theory, it was observed that people react in different ways to a situation based on mental health, childhood memories etc. The research applies both quantitative and qualitative approach to have a holistic and organic understanding of the issue. Convenience sampling technique was used to gather the primary data using structured questionnaire and to conduct in-depth interviews,in order to justify its descriptive research design.

The study makes an attempt to understand the inner drives of the consumers that lead to the dependency on media (i.e. internet here) in the context of social situational factor (such as pandemic). It will explore the intensity of internet dependency to meet the unconscious needs among the two genders in comparison to the normal pre-Covid time. The expected outcome of the study will contribute towards the discipline of consumer psychology in understanding the consumers' online behavior and motivation behind internet usage. It will also provide inputs to the companies for the effective decision making of digital marketing of their brands.

Keywords: Internet usage, Media dependency theory, Psychoanalytical theory, Defense mechanism, Consumer's online behavior, gender differences, user needs

Introduction

The expeditious development of mobile applications and increased accessibility of the internet has influenced mankind in inconceivable ways. Over a period of time, internet has become a prerequisite of present life irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity or occupation. Several studies have reinstated the different factors responsible for the acceptance of any technology and its usages in daily life. However, the disparity in the usage among the internet users based on their genders has been observed[12345].

Majority of the studies relatedto howthe internet is used differently by the male and female internet users. However, no conclusive studies related to the difference in usage of internet was found. This study attempts to understand the veiled needs of individuals that lead to the usage of the internet differently. The existing studies have only focused on the behavioral outcome of the internet users but a more in-depth study has to be done in order to investigate the various factors which may affect the internet usage among the men and women. It is important to understand the needs which determine the different behavior of the users online. The lockdown has brought further changes in their behavior. Being trapped in their home, users resorted to their digital life to curb the stress brought by the pandemic. This has provided the researchers a scope to investigate the transitions in the online behavior of Indians due to this situational factor. The study will further help to understand the new needs that have come up during the pandemic situation.

The lionization and potential of the digital media has attracted companies from all sectors and hence, it has captivated the attention of the researchers to understand the consumer's online behavior. The difference of the usage among the genders, based on their needs could help the business fraternity for better targeting of the potential customers. It would help marketers for

[1](Bimber, B. (2000). Measuring the Gender Gap on the Internet. Social Science Quarterly, 81(3), 868-876. Retrieved October 5, 2020, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/42864010

[2]Thanuskodi, S, (2013), "Gender Differences in Internet Usage among College Students: A Comparative Study" Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal). Paper 1052. http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1052

[3] Dr. Richard Joiner, Jeff Gavin, Jill Duffield, Mark Brosnan, Charles Crook, Alan Durndell, Pam Maras, Jane Miller, Adrian J. Scott, and Peter Lovatt (2005). Gender, Internet Identification, and Internet Anxiety: Correlates of Internet Use CyberPsychology& Behavior. Volume: 8 Issue 4. Pg 371-378. http://doi.org/10.1089/cpb.2005.8.371

[4] Ahmad, S., Rafiq, M. and Ahmad, S. (2018), "Gender disparities in the use of internet among graduate students of a developing society: A case of Pakistani universities", Global Knowledge, Memory and Communication, Vol. 67 No. 4/5, pp. 226-243. https://doi.org/10.1108/GKMC-11-2017-0092

[5]Eun Young Choi, MA, Youngsun Kim, PhD, Edson Chipalo, MSW, Hee Yun Lee, PhD, MSW, Does Perceived Ageism Widen the Digital Divide? And Does It Vary by Gender?, The Gerontologist, Volume 60, Issue 7, 1 October 2020, Pages 1213–1223, https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnaa066

strategizing online marketing programs. The huge population of India provides immense opportunities and challenges to the marketers for capturing the business. Complexities of online behavior have only added to this. Hence, understanding the needs that drive action will be a starting point to uncover these complexities.

According to a report of Mc Kinsey[6] , 2019, — " India is one of the largest and fastest-growing markets for digital consumers, with 560 million internet subscribers in 2018, second only to China. Indian mobile data users consume 8.3 gigabits (GB) of data each month on average, compared with 5.5 GB for mobile users in China and somewhere in the range of 8.0 to 8.5 GB in South Korea, an advanced digital economy. Indians have 1.2 billion mobile phone subscriptions and downloaded more than 12 billion apps in 2018. Our analysis of 17 mature and emerging economies finds India is digitizing faster than any other country in the study, save Indonesia—and there is plenty of room to grow: just over 40 percent of the populace has an internet subscription."

During the pandemic, when the general entertainment sources were beyond reach, telecom companies saw a huge surge in data consumption (13% since the nationwide lockdown)[7] for various activities. According to the Telecom ministry of India, this jump in internet usage could be credited to the increased streaming content and logged on to work from home. The digital revolution is not constrained to the urban areas of India. A growth of 45% has been registered in the year 2019 compared to urban India's usage percentage of 11%. According to the report released by Nielsen and the BARC i.e. the Broadcast Audience Research Council,it was found during the lockdown period "that internet usage has grown sharply in cities over the last one month, touching 54 per cent. In other words, every second individual in cities is using internet, says the study."

[6]McKinsey Global Institute (2019), Digital India: Technology to transform a connected nation. https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/McKinsey/Business%20Functions/McKinsey%20Digital/Our%20Insights/Digital%20India%20Technology%20to%20transform%20a%20connected%20nation/MGI-Digital-India-Report-April-2019.pdf

[7]Livemint (2020), Covid-19 to push India's monthly active internet user base to 639 mln: Kantar https://www.livemint.com/news/india/covid-19-to-push-india-s-monthly-active-internet-user-base-to-639-mln-kantar-11588758259831.html

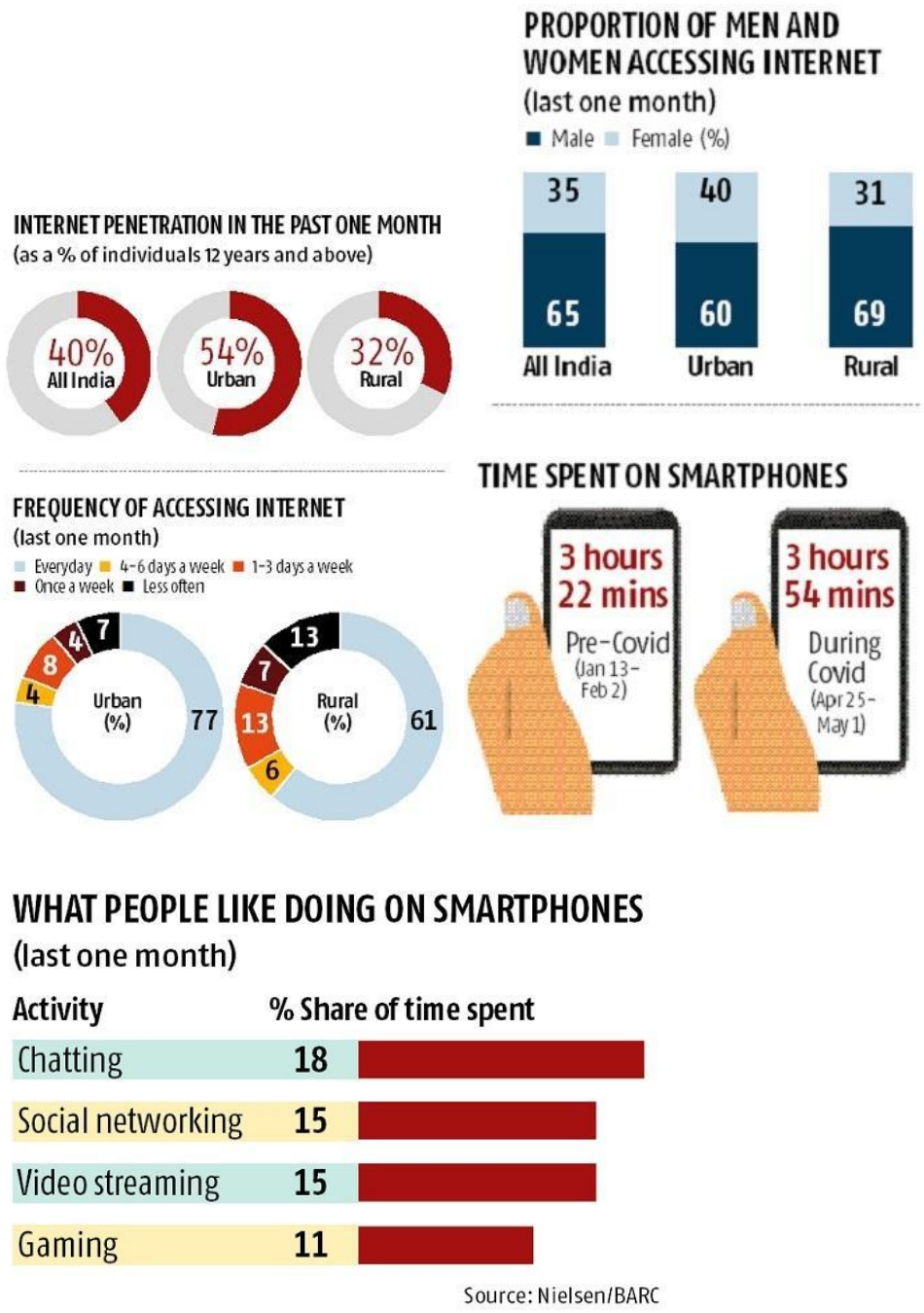

Figure 1: Diversity of internet usage

The extended lockdown in India obviously left the users with more time to spend on the internet. This led to the explorations (which was not a normal pre-COVID-19) of the new avenues like work from home, online education etc., apart from the regular social networking and online gaming. There was not only an increase in the time spent on internet but also the type of content accessed. The gargantuan jump in data consumption adds to this

understanding. Based on data from the Indian Readership Survey (IRS) 2019[8], a research found that nearly 70 percent of the active internet population in India are the daily users. The average time spent on the Internet continues to be higher in urban India compared to the rural India.According to Economic Times[9], "There has been a surge in online' searches and interests with 40 per cent increase in WhatsApp Usage, 313 per cent increase in interest for online meetings on Google trends, 4 per cent increase in searches related to online banking and a whopping 73% increase in live *Aarti*[10] searches and increase of 3 per cent in online grocery."

From the study conducted by Mindshare India and Vidooly report[11], the following observations recorded during the lockdown period, were found to be interesting and thought provoking for the researchers. The observations are as follows :- 1)There was a steep increase in the online content consumption among the Indians 2)The difference in the average timing which was spent on social platforms by the Indians before and after the lockdown was around 4 hours 3)Youtube alone had garnered over 300 billion views in the first quarter of 2020,which is around 11% more than the first quarter in 2019 4)The study found that the Millennials[12] between the ages of 18 to 34 years of age were the most active user of You tube in India and compose of 70% of the viewership 5)Covid related content witnessed a surge of 98% in terms of viewership. 6)There was a spike of 120% in the number of uploads in the Education category post lockdown, followed by the Food and recipe genre(52%),Information (42%) and Gaming(23%).The various observations of this study need to be studied to see how the choice of content has changed and the underlying factors leading to those. This study tries to find out such kind of an online viewership pattern by engaging respondents belonging to the different demographic categories. The study will also help in understanding the consumption behaviour of the internet among the Indians and, therefore, can help companies take necessary actions accordingly.

[8]Livemint (2020), Covid-19 to push India's monthly active internet user base to 639 mln: Kantar https://www.livemint.com/news/india/covid-19-to-push-india-s-monthly-active-internet-user-base-to-639-mln-kantar-11588758259831.html

[9]Economic Times (2020), India goes online in lockdown, https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india-goes-online-in-lockdown/75349365, accessed on October 6, 2020

[10]**Aarti** also spelled arti, is a Hindu religious ritual of worship, in which light (usually from a flame) is offered to one or more deities.

[11]http://www.businessworld.in/article/Mindshare-India-Vidooly-Report-On-Impact-Of-COVID-19-On-Online-Video-Consumption-Trends/21-04-2020-189805/ (accessed on October 6, 2020)

[12]Nielsen Media Research has defined**millennials** as the adults who are between the ages of 22 and 38 years old in 2019.For this study ,the age group's lower limit was taken as 18+ to include students as respondents.

Literature review:

The pandemic Covid 19 has brought an unprecedented change in the world,a world which was circumscribed to the four walls of home.World became connected virtually and started depending on internet as a means of functioningduring the various stages of lockdown.The entire world tried to get back to normality by the use of internet which became all the more important for the people to carry out the most important function of staying connected to the people that mattered to them –i.e.their family members,friends and work place people as well as the means to pass the surplus time to which they had now access to owing to the fact a substantial amount of time which was earlier invested in commuting was now saved.It is, however, important to go through the existingliterature to understand the various aspects of internetusage.

One of the studies has revealed that one of the major factors which motivate an individual to use internet is to alleviate issues such as loneliness and depression. This study also showed that individuals, who were leading a solitary life or lacked socializing skills,could develop compulsive Internet usage behaviors or an internet addiction which would result in an impairment of the ability to carry on routine activities such as attending office, maintaining personal relationships. Such negative outcomes would nudge the individuals into a more reclusive lifestyle and hence, over a period of time, impair their abilities to develop healthy social bonds.[13]

One also needs to investigate if there is any association between the usage of the internet and the age of the internet user. In a study which was conducted to understand the impact of internet usage on people who are of an older generation like post retirement phase etc., overall positive and direct association was found between the use of the internet and the overall mental well- being of the older generation.The older generation was found to have developed their interaction levels and as a result of this new found confidence and enthusiasm they could connect with more members of the community and felt more empowered at the

[13]Kim, J., LaRose, R., &Peng, W. (2009). Loneliness as the cause and the effect of problematic Internet use: The relationship between Internet use and psychological well-being. *Cyber psychology& behavior*, *12*(4):pp. 451-455.

end of the day.[14]Thus, we can see that internet usage can have different impact on the people belonging to different age groups and having different personalities. It also needs to be studied whether there is any difference in the usage of Internet based on the gender of the user.

In a study which was conducted among the British Internet users,asmall but significant gender differenceswereobserved in the usage of Internet. It was also found that there exist differences in the internet usage on the basis of occupation and marital status. There is a difference in the way married and employed male internet users utilized the internet versus the employed and married female internet users.The article concludes that other factors which are part of a particular stage of life like age, number of children etc.impactsthe way in which the male and female users utilize the Internet.[15] Women have been found to lag behind men in terms of ownership and level of confidence in terms of usage of technology and also get lesser opportunities to acquire technological skills. Men have been found to use the Internet more than women, spend more time online, and show more interest in learning digital skills[16].In addition to this, many cultural factors such a social conditioning may act as a deterrent for the women to accept new technology.[17]Women and men are conditioned differentlywhen it comes to the usage of technology. Although more women have access to the Internet over the last decade; men use it more frequently and use it in a more diversified mannerlike looking forjobs, e-banking, gaming, surfing for information etc.The responsibilities of completing household chores, looking after the needs of the family, caring for the children etc., are primarily taken care of by women irrespective of whether they are stay-at -home mothers,or employed. This leads to a gendering of leisure time and hence women only look for relevant and limited content on the internet. [18]In the United States of America and Australia, both the genders use the internet in nearly equal measure, whereas in Asian countries of Japan, India and China, men continue to use more internet. Women generally use the internet as a tool for helping them perform their tasks better rather than treat

[14]Forsman, A. K., &Nordmyr, J. (2017). Psychosocial links between Internet use and mental health in later life: a systematic review of quantitative and qualitative evidence. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, *36*(12):pp.1471-1518.

[15]Helsper, Ellen Johanna. "Gendered internet use across generations and life stages." *Communication research* 37.3 (2010): pp.352-374.

[16]Livingstone, S., &Helsper, E. (2007). Gradations in digital inclusion: Children, young people and the digital divide. *New media & society*, *9*(4):pp.671-696.

[17]Terry, A., & Gomez, R. (2010). Gender and public access computing: An international perspective. *The Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries*, *43*(1):pp.1-17.

[18]Fallows, D. (2005). How women and men use the Internet. *Pew Internet & American Life Project*, *28*, 1-45.

it as a technology which needs to be mastered. Womens' continued discomfort and the struggle with technology thus, continues to be the epicenter of the social construct of gender and technology.[19]

Theoretical framework

The study uses the framework provided by the *Media Dependency theory* which was proposed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur.This theory identifies that users are dependent on media in order to fulfill certain needs such as understanding self and their surroundings,to take necessary actions required to incorporate various changes in their lives.This theory has its foundation in Sociology and states that media(in its various forms) and its interaction and relation with the audiences should always be studied in the context of the society at large and it's various sub-systems to have a better picture and understanding. The Media Dependency theory tries to establish the consanguinity of the social systems and the mass media. The theory lays down the basic dependency hypothesis, according to which the greater a person depends on media to meet his or her different needs, the more momentous that media will be in that person's life.

The Media dependency theory states two specific conditions under which the peoples' media needs and their dependency on it increases. The first condition of increased media needs occurs when media is integral to the functioning of a nation or a society and the Government as well as the citizens are dependent on media. Examples can be drawn from several places across the globe like in the USA, media acts and is considered as the fourth branch of the Government, the media is also used extensively to alert its citizens in case of national emergencies as is the case of Japan. Therefore, the more developed a country or nation becomes, the more it starts becoming dependent on media to meet a number of needs.

The second condition of increased media needs occurs when a society is undergoing a major upheaval or a change, an unnatural incident, a civil war or conflict, in short anything that is out of normal .Examples are the terrorist attacks, floods, and the latest example is the global pandemic due to which people have turned the media for information, for work, for communicating and for passing leisure time in the event of being forced to stay inside their homes. Therefore, people turn to media to help understand the events better and therefore, providing more scope to media to exert its influence during such time.

[19]Singh, S. (2001).Gender and the use of the Internet at home. *New Media & Society*, *3*(4), 395-415.

The theory mentions about the different types of dependencies. People use different media in order to understand themselves and their society better (Understanding Dependency).People then use a multitude of ways to seek guidance from media to develop and design their behaviour and they also aim to interact more with their surroundings (Orientation Dependency).People also use media as a tool for relaxation and enjoyment. Sometimes they do so alone and sometimes in a group with their friends, family members, and acquaintances (Play Dependency).Therefore,the needs can be summarized as a)The need to understand the social world in which one exists(surveillance)(*Understanding needs)* b)The urge and the need of acting meaningfully and usefully in a social setting(social utility)*(Action needs)*c)The need to escape from the society and the world in which one exists when the stress is high(fantasy escape*)(Play needs).*

Thus, consumers or users decide upon which media to use and how to use depending upon what motive they want to fulfill. Further, it has been regarded that media use leads to the media dependency. This paper aims to study the Internet usage by the Indians in order to fulfill various needs and objectives during the lockdown period and to find out if there was any difference in the way men and women belonging to various demographic groups used the internet during the above mentioned period.This study also tries to analyze if the consumers used internet as a means of coping or as a defense mechanism during the period of being locked inside the four wall of their house,devoidof any social interaction.

Another theory which has been used to understand and frame the objectives is the Psychoanalytical theory by Sigmund Freud.Sigmund Freud was the founder of psychoanalytic theory.Freud divided the human mind into distinct levels, each level or component of the mind has its own roles and functions.He was of the opinion that the human mind is responsible for both the conscious and unconscious decisions that one makes in his or her lifetime and is the foundation or basis of the various urges and drives the person .The three levels or components of the human mind as identified by Freud are *The Id, The Super Ego, The Ego.*The *Id* is the unconsciouscomponentsthat seek pleasure. Peoplesometimes act in certain ways which are least expected and mostly in an unconventional manner. The id which holds most basic and primal instincts such as instant gratification, sexual urges etc.

The *Ego*is the conscious component which helps the people to maintain a connection with reality.The ego balances between pleasure and pain by setting realistic goals and ideas. Although, the ego cannot know the difference between right and wrong, it is aware that not

all drives can be met at a given time. The ego takes into account the ethical and cultural ideals as determined by the society in which the individual lives and in turn balances out the primal instincts or desires which may arise in the id. Although both the id and the ego are unconscious, the ego has close contact with the reality and hence acts as the balancer or mediator.

Super-ego is the 'moral' component of the mind and starts to develop from around age four or five. This component incorporates the ideals and socially accepted morals of society or human kind. It can be considered as the conscience of the mind due toitsability to differentiate between reality and imagination. In the absence of the superego, Freud believed that people would always act out with violence and other socially unacceptable behaviors as the mind (the ego)would have no way of differentiating between right and wrong. Therefore, the Super ego helps the individuals to behave in socially acceptable behaviors.[20]

The *Psychoanalytical theory* by Sigmund Freud has identified the various ways in which people try to protect themselves in case of psychological stress.Freud proposed a number of coping or defense mechanism that a human adopts in onerous situations.[21] Freud stated that it is necessary for an individual to have some mechanism to cope or survive in an unfavorable event. Freud focused on how the ego defends itself from any form of unacceptable thoughts and impulses. These defense or coping mechanisms are used to handle the conflict between the id, the ego, and the superego.

Freud noted that a major cause of concern for all was anxiety.When anxiety occurs, the mind's first response is to find different ways of escaping the situation by taking the help of the defense mechanisms. These mechanisms are ways developed by the ego in order to deal with the id and the superego. Sigmund Freud noted a number of ego's defense mechanisms which were further refined and elaborated by his daughter Anna Freud.[22] The defense mechanisms as summarized by Anna Freud are as follows

1)by*compensating* for a part of our personality or our behavior by projecting a more acceptable version of ourselves to others as well as to self (e.g. filters used in Instagram to

[20]https://www.simplypsychology.org/psyche.html (accessed on 29/09/2020)

[21]http://changingminds.org/explanations/behaviors/coping/defense_mechanisms.htm (accessed on 30/09/2020).

[22]https://www.dummies.com/education/psychology/understanding-the-id-ego-and-superego-in-psychology/ (accessed on 29/09/2020).

edit pictures) 2)by *denying*or rejecting a concept of self or the notion that we in fact know is true, but that is not ideal.(e.g. Denial of unhealthy eating habits by glorifying either anorexic or obese people.3) by *displacing* by which we let out our feelings and frustrations on a different target altogether that is not the actual target of our emotions(e.g. internet trolling)4) by *identifying*with an image that we see as ideal to our ego by associating with groups,and people we see as who we wish to be(e.g. joining online communities or interest groups) 5) by *introjecting*and accepting unrealistic standards to avoid being scrutinized. 6) by *projecting*our negative self-concepts of our self onto others (e.g. online trolling and bullying, hate groups)7) by *forming* a reaction in which we hide our negative emotions by doing the exact opposite of what that concept or emotion exhibits (e.g. following an unhealthy or dangerous trend)8) by *rationalizing*and telling ourselves to make ourselves feel better about something 9) by *regressing* to infantile defenses (e.g. picking up online fights over comments etc.) 10) by*repressing* painful memories out of our conscious awareness.11)by *undoing*some type of unacceptable behavior by masking it with a positive behavior, or ritual 12)By *sublimating* one takes negative self-concepts and diverting them into more socially acceptable concepts that are beneficial. This study aims to study the usage of internet as a defense mechanism by the Indian users during the lockdown.

Karen Horney[23],one of the first women to be trained as a Freudian psychoanalyst, had theorized that there are three styles of coping or defense mechanisms that children and young people adopt in response to anxiety or unfavorable situation,these are a)moving towards people(looking for societal approval and company) b) moving away from people(isolation and avoidance), and 3) moving against people(rebellion).

Therefore, this paper tries to find out the ways in which the internet may have been used by the users in India to cope with the unforeseen events which have been brought by the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown.

[23] A psychologistwho is known for her theory of neurotic needs. Her path breaking research on feminine psychology, and her critiques of Freud's work. In addition to this, she made important contributions to the areas of self-psychology and her emphasis on the role that self-analysis and self-help play in mental health.

Objectives of the study

1. To assess the difference in the nature of internet usage in the lockdown scenario among men and women with respect to other demographic factors.

2. To identify the differences in the need for consumption of internet among men and women in lockdown scenario.

Research methodology.

Due to the advancement in the area of research, using a single method or *Mono-method* research is slowly making way to the adoption of a number of methods or *Mixed method*research.In practice, most of the modern day researchers have spoken in favour of combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques .The Mixed method produces a richer and more comprehensive understanding of a specific research area. It cannot be denied that themethods on their own have specific limitations as well as particular strengths. Therefore ,in order to reduce the or compensate for the disadvantages and increase their strengths, qualitative and quantitative methods should be combined .This study therefore uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative data for proper validation of the data and findings as well as for the production of a more coherent and complete picture of the topic under study.

In order to fulfill the objectives of the study, exploratory research design has been followed. As the study aims to explore the online behavior of the internet users, the population of the study are the Internet users of India. The data was collected in two phases using Convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling that involves the sample being drawn from that part of the population that is close to hand.In this case the questionnaire was forwarded to the acquaintances of the researchers and data was collected. For the purpose of this study the genders considered were the individuals identifying themselves as either male or female.

The first phase consisted of circulating a structured questionnaire among respondents belonging to different demographic profiles. The same questionnaire was administered so

that the differences in responses on the basis of the demographic variables can be studied.Questionnaires were used as this is a quick and efficient way of obtaining large amounts of information from a large sample of people .Data collection became easier by forwarding the questionnaire online as the researchers could not be present everywhere, especially in times of the pandemic where travelling is limited and restricted. The questionnaire has been self structured. It had 4 sections consisting of a) demographic information b) understanding needs c) action needs and d) play needs .The categories were chosen according to the ones as stated in the Media Dependency theory. The questionnaire used 5 point Likert scale[24] for responses.

A total number of **200** respondents with diverse background across the country responded. As the data set did not follow the normal distribution, the analysis was done using Mann Whitney U Test[25] and Kruskal-Wallis H test[26] .

The following hypothesis has been considered for the present study

Hypothesis 1

H_0: There is no significant difference in the nature of internet usage in the lockdown scenario among men and women.

Hypothesis 2

H_0: There is no significant difference in the underlying needs for internet usage in the lockdown scenario among men and women with respect to other demographic factors.

Hypothesis 3

[24]A type of psychometric response scale in which responders specify their level of agreement to a statement typically in five points: (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (**5**) Strongly agree.

[25]The **Mann Whitney U test**, also called the **Mann Whitney** Wilcoxon **Test** or the Wilcoxon Rank Sum **Test**, is **used to test** whether two samples are likely to derive from the same population (i.e., that the two populations have the same shape)

[26]The Kruskal–Wallis test by ranks, Kruskal–Wallis H test, or one-way ANOVA on ranks is a non-parametric method for testing whether samples originate from the same distribution. It is used for comparing two or more independent samples of equal or different sample sizes.

H_0: There is no significant difference in the nature of internet usage within the genders in the lockdown scenario

The above hypotheses have been tested for 4 other demographic variables – age, education, family size and marital status.

The second phase consisted of in-depth personal interviews which were conducted using online meeting platforms such as Zoom and Google meet.Interview method was chosen as this is the most effective method of collecting responses for *qualitative* research. This method helped in having a better understanding of the research subjects' or interviewees' opinions, behavior, experiences, body language, phenomenon, etc. Interview questions were usually open-ended questions. A total number of **6** people belonging to three age groups were interviewed (a)students (one male and one female) (b)working professionals in their 30s(one male and one female) and (c) self-employed professionals in their late 50s(one male and one female) were interviewed using an interview schedule so that in-depth information was collected, which further supplemented the findings of the study conducted in the first phase. The responses were reviewed and each of the interviews were analyzed and presented in the form of case studies.The case studies helpedthe researchers in getting a comprehensiveidea about the reactions of the individuals towards the event therefore, leading to the better understanding of the occurrence within a real-life context.

This study is an example of Multi-disciplinary approach and the findings of this study can be conclusive from the point of Consumer behaviour, Media studies as well as Womens' studies. Data triangulation was done to ensure the validity and to substantiate the relevance of the research.As explained earlier, a variety of methods was used to collect the relevant data on the topic.It helped in testing the consistency of the findings obtained through different instruments used by the researchers and helped in minimizing the threats or factorsaffecting the results of the study such as biasness, lack of face to face interaction etc.The findings and observations of this study were spread across the lockdown period across India which had occurred in different phases.

Analysis

It has been observed in the literature, that the presence or absences of certain situational factors induce action. In this study it had been attempted to explore that the actions taken by the respondents in the situation of lockdown imposed to control the pandemic. The

primary objective is to understand the differences in the action towards internet by different genders. The data collected have been analyzed for different demographic factors like age, education, occupation, marital status and family size.

On the basis of Media System Dependency theory, the questionnaire contained question related to the three needs- understanding, action and play. Different activities done to fulfill each need, has been analyzed to understand the difference in the nature of internet usage among male and female internet users during the lockdown period under the different demographic conditions (Hypothesis 1). SPSS package has been used to conduct the Mann Whitney U Test for the same.

Analysis of the responses(Questionnaire) collected using Quantitative techniques.

TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLE MANN WHITNEY U TEST ON THE BASIS OF AGE

Sl no.	Particulars	18 yrs -27 yrs	28 yrs -37 yrs	38 yrs - 47 yrs	48 yrs - 57 yrs	58 yrs and above
1	I used internet to improve myself during lockdown	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
2	I used internet to improve knowledge in different segments during lockdown	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
3	I used internet to understand society, people, philosophy and life	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
4	I used internet to improve / change my lifestyle following different online content during lockdown.	Reject the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
5	I used internet to be updated about current affairs during lockdown	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis

In Table 1, the highlighted boxes indicate that the null hypothesis for the corresponding statements have been rejected as the p-value was <0.05. In the rest of the cases the null

hypothesis was accepted indicating no gender difference for the related internet usage in the corresponding age groups.

TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLE MANN WHITNEY U TEST ON THE BASIS OF EDUCATION

Sl no.	**Particulars**	Under Graduate	Graduate	Post Graduate	Doctorate
1	I used internet to improve myself during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
2	I used internet to improve knowledge in different segments during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
3	I used internet to understand society, people, philosophy and life	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
4	I used internet to improve / change my lifestyle following different online content during lockdown.	Reject the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
5	I used internet to be updated about current affairs during lockdown	Reject the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis

In Table 2, education groups, the highlighted boxes indicate that the null hypothesis for the corresponding statements have been rejected as the p-value was <0.05. In the rest of the cases the null hypothesis was accepted.

TABLE 3: COMPARISON OF RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLE MANN WHITNEY U TEST ON THE BASIS OF FAMILY SIZE

Sl no.	**Particulars**	**2 MEM-BERS**	**3 MEM-BERS**	**4 MEM-BERS**	**5 MEM-BERS**	**MORE THAN 5 MEM-BERS**
1	I used internet to improve myself during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesi	Retain the null hypothesi	Retain the null hypothesi	Retain the null hypothesi	Retain the null hypothesis

		s	s	s	s	
2	I used internet to improve knowledge in different segments during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
3	I used internet to understand society, people, philosophy and life	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
4	I used internet to improve / change my lifestyle following different online content during lockdown.	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis
5	I used internet to be updated about current affairs during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis

In Table 3, the highlighted boxes indicate that the null hypothesis for the corresponding statements have been rejected as the p-value was <0.05. In the rest of the cases the null hypothesis was accepted.

TABLE 4: COMPARISON OF RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLE MANN WHITNEY U TEST ON THE BASIS OF MARITAL STATUS				
Sl no.	**Particulars**	Single	Married	Others
1	I used internet to improve myself during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
2	I used internet to improve knowledge in different segments during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
3	I used internet to understand society, people, philosophy and life	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
4	I used internet to improve / change my lifestyle following different online content during lockdown.	Reject the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
5	I used internet to be updated about current affairs during lockdown	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis

In Table 4, the highlighted boxes indicate that the null hypothesis for the corresponding statements have been rejected as the p-value was <0.05. In the rest of the cases the null hypothesis was accepted.

TABLE 5: COMPARISON OF RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLE MANN WHITNEY U TEST ON THE BASIS OF OCCUPATION					
Sl no.	**Particulars**	Self Employed	Service holder	Homemaker	Student
1	I used internet to improve myself during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
2	I used internet to improve knowledge in different segments during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
3	I used internet to understand society, people, philosophy and life	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
4	I used internet to improve / change my lifestyle following different online content during lockdown.	Reject the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis

5	I used internet to be updated about current during lockdown	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis

In Table 5, the highlighted boxes indicate that the null hypothesis for the corresponding statements have been rejected as the p-value was <0.05. In the rest of the cases the null hypothesis was accepted.

TABLE 6: COMPARISON OF RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLE MANN WHITNEY U TEST ON THE BASIS OF AGE

Sl no.	Particulars	18 yrs -27 yrs	28 yrs -37 yrs	38 yrs - 47 yrs	48 yrs - 57 yrs	58 yrs and above
1	I started taking up more online certificate courses during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
2	I learned more life skills during lockdown using internet.	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
3	I picked up more technical skills during lockdown using internet.	Reject the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
4	I joined many new interest based online communities during lockdown.	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
5	I used internet to get back to my forgotten hobbies during lockdown	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
6	The use of internet helped me to develop new hobbies during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
7	I made more connections with my family, friends, peers during the lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
8	I improved my professional network during the lockdown using internet	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis

In Table 6, the highlighted boxes indicate that the null hypothesis for the corresponding statements have been rejected as the p-value was <0.05. In the rest of the cases the null hypothesis was accepted.

TABLE 7: COMPARISON OF RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLE MANN WHITNEY U TEST ON THE BASIS OF EDUCATION

Sl no.	Particulars	Under Graduate	Graduate	Post Graduate	Doctorate
1	I started taking up more online certificate courses during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
2	I learned more life skills during lockdown using internet.	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
3	I picked up more technical skills during lockdown using internet.	Reject the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
4	I joined many new interest based online communities during lockdown.	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
5	I used internet to get back to my forgotten hobbies during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
6	The use of internet helped me to develop new hobbies during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
7	I made more connections with my family, friends, peers during the lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
8	I improved my professional network during the lockdown using internet	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis

In Table 7, the highlighted boxes indicate that the null hypothesis for the corresponding statements have been rejected as the p-value was <0.05. In the rest of the cases the null hypothesis was accepted.

TABLE 8: COMPARISON OF RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLE MANN WHITNEY U TEST ON THE BASIS OF OCCUPATION

Sl no.	Particulars	Self Employed	Service holder	Homemaker	Student
1	I started taking up more online certificate courses during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
2	I learned more life skills during lockdown using internet.	Retain the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
3	I picked up more technical skills during lockdown using internet.	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
4	I joined many new interest based online communities during lockdown.	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
5	I used internet to get back to my forgotten hobbies during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
6	The use of internet helped me to develop new hobbies during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
7	I made more connections with my family, friends, peers during the lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
8	I improved my professional network during the lockdown using internet	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis

In Table 8, the highlighted boxes indicate that the null hypothesis for the corresponding statements have been rejected as the p-value was <0.05. In the rest of the cases the null hypothesis was accepted.

TABLE 9: COMPARISON OF RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLE MANN WHITNEY U TEST ON THE BASIS OF MARITAL STATUS				
Sl no.	**Particulars**	Single	Married	Others
1	I started taking up more online certificate courses during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
2	I learned more life skills during lockdown using internet.	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
3	I picked up more technical skills during lockdown using internet.	Reject the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
4	I joined many new interest based online communities during lockdown.	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
5	I used internet to get back to my forgotten hobbies during lockdown	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
6	The use of internet helped me to develop new hobbies during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
7	I made more connections with my family, friends, peers during the lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
8	I improved my professional network during the lockdown using internet	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis

In Table 9, the highlighted boxes indicate that the null hypothesis for the corresponding statements have been rejected as the p-value was <0.05. In the rest of the cases the null hypothesis was accepted.

TABLE 10: COMPARISON OF RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLE MANN WHITNEY U TEST ON THE BASIS OF FAMILY SIZE						
Sl no.	**Particulars**	**2 MEMBERS**	**3 MEMBERS**	**4 MEMBERS**	5 MEMBERS	MORE THAN 5 MEMBERS
1	I started taking up more online certificate courses during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
2	I learned more life skills during lockdown using internet.	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis
3	I picked up more technical skills during lockdown using internet.	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Reject the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
4	I joined many new interest based online communities during lockdown.	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
5	I used internet to get back to my forgotten hobbies during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
6	The use of internet helped me to develop new hobbies during lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
7	I made more connections with my family, friends, peers during the lockdown	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis
8	I improved my professional network during the lockdown using internet	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis	Retain the null hypothesis

In Table 10, the highlighted boxes indicate that the null hypothesis for the corresponding statements have been rejected as the p-value was <0.05. In the rest of the cases the null hypothesis was accepted.

For the Play needs, all null hypotheses were accepted except three.

Further the research, explored the overall differences in the understating, action and play needs.

TABLE 11: Test Statistics[a]

	TOTAL_UNDERSTANDING	TOTAL_ACTION	TOTAL_PLAY
Mann-Whitney U	4090.000	3774.000	4429.000
Wilcoxon W	10418.000	9990.000	10757.000
Z	-2.077	-2.758	-1.231
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.038	.006	.218
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)	.038	.006	.219
Exact Sig. (1-tailed)	.019	.003	.110
Point Probability	.000	.000	.000

a. Grouping Variable: GENDER

Based on the theory of Media System Dependency, multiple statements on each need were marked by the respondents on the 5-point Likert scale. Mann-Whitney U test has been done to find the difference in the needs that drive internet usage (Hypothesis 2). The table 11 indicates the gender difference towards the internet usage for the fulfilling different needs. It can be observed that there is significant gender difference in the internet usage for understanding need (0.038) and action needs (0.006) as the p-value is <0.05. On the other hand, no significant gender difference is observed for play needs (0.219) as the p-value is >0.05. Hence the null hypothesis of Hypothesis 2 is rejected for understanding and action need whereas null hypothesis is accepted for play need.

Further to understand the behaviorobserved between the two genders, the demographic factors were used to analyze the differences between the male and female respondents for understanding and action needs (Hypothesis 3). For this purpose, Kruskal-Wallis H Test was applied using SPSS. In case of understanding need,significant differences in internet usage within female have been observed on the basis of age, occupation and marital status (as indicated in Table 12, 13 &14). However, significant difference within male gender was observed in few activities related to the need and not for all. No significant differences within both genders were observed on the basis of family size and education.

In case of Action needs, No Significant difference within genders is observed on the basis of age, marital status and family size (as indicated in Table 15, 16 &17). However for few activities for female users, it has been found significant. Significant difference within genders is observed on the basis of occupation and education.

Tables for *Understanding needs*

TABLE 12: Test Statistics[a,b]

GENDER		UNDERSTANDING_SELF_IMPROVEMENT	UNDERSTANDING_SELF_KNOWLEDGE	UNDERSTANDING_SELF_SOCEITY	UNDERSTANDING_SELF_LIFESTYLE_IMPROVEMENT	UNDERSTANDING_SELF_CURRENT_AFFAIR
MALE	Kruskal-Wallis H	1.734	1.734	5.210	12.007	4.170
	df	4	4	4	4	4
	Asymp. Sig.	.784	.784	.266	.017	.383
FEMALE	Kruskal-Wallis H	25.318	25.318	4.218	15.342	10.663
	df	4	4	4	4	4
	Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.377	.004	.031
a. Kruskal Wallis Test						
b. Grouping Variable: AGE						

TABLE 13: Test Statistics[a,b]

GENDER		UNDERSTANDING_SELF_IMPROVEMENT	UNDERSTANDING_SELF_KNOWLEDGE	UNDERSTANDING_SELF_SOCEITY	UNDERSTANDING_SELF_LIFESTYLE_IMPROVEMENT	UNDERSTANDING_SELF_CURRENT_AFFAIR
MALE	Kruskal-Wallis H	.026	.026	1.915	6.340	1.962
	df	2	2	2	2	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.987	.987	.384	.042	.375
FEM	Kruskal-	13.552	13.552	3.024	9.094	4.437

ALE	Wallis H					
	df	3	3	3	3	3
	Asymp. Sig.	.004	.004	.388	.028	.218
a. Kruskal Wallis Test						
b. Grouping Variable: OCCUPATION						

TABLE 14: Test Statistics[a,b]

GENDER		UNDERSTANDING_SELF_IMPROVEMENT	UNDERSTANDING_SELF_KNOWLEDGE	UNDERSTANDING_SELF_SOCEITY	UNDERSTANDING_SELF_LIFESTYLE_IMPROVEMENT	UNDERSTANDING_SELF_CURRENT_AFFAIR
MALE	Kruskal-Wallis H	1.927	1.927	3.863	8.523	2.257
	Df	2	2	2	2	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.381	.381	.145	.014	.324
FEMALE	Kruskal-Wallis H	19.825	19.825	4.847	9.697	6.562
	df	2	2	2	2	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.089	.008	.038
a. Kruskal Wallis Test						
b. Grouping Variable: MARITAL_STATUS						

Tables for *Action Needs*

TABLE 15: Test Statistics[a,b]

GENDER		ACTION_ONLINE_COURSE	ACTION_LIFE_SKILLS	ACTION_TECHNICAL_SKILLS	ACTION_JOIN_COMMUNITIES	ACTION_RETRIEVE_HOBBIES	ACTION_NEW_HOBBIES	ACTION_CONNECTIONS	ACTION_PROFFESIONAL_NETWORK
MALE	Kruskal-Wallis H	6.832	10.280	1.001	8.604	4.053	3.540	5.557	3.434
	df	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.033	.006	.606	.014	.132	.170	.062	.180
FEMALE	Kruskal-Wallis H	3.422	17.572	10.068	4.362	12.217	2.347	1.439	1.465
	df	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	Asymp. Sig.	.331	.001	.018	.225	.007	.504	.697	.690

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: OCCUPATION

TABLE 16: Test Statistics[a,b]

GENDER		ACTION_ONLINE_COURSE	ACTION_LIFE_SKILLS	ACTION_TECHNICAL_SKILLS	ACTION_JOIN_COMMUNITIES	ACTION_RETRIEVE_HOBBIES	ACTION_NEW_HOBBIES	ACTION_CONNECTIONS	ACTION_PROFFESIONAL_NETWORK
MALE	Kruskal-Wallis H	1.621	1.163	.498	.759	.057	2.738	7.127	5.381
	df	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.445	.559	.779	.684	.972	.254	.028	.068
FEMALE	Kruskal-Wallis H	.110	14.382	13.152	6.466	.248	.945	3.541	2.680

	df	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.946	.001	.001	.039	.884	.624	.170	.262
a. Kruskal Wallis Test									
b. Grouping Variable: EDUCATION									

TABLE 17: Test Statistics[a,b]

GENDER		ACTION_ONLINE_COURSE	ACTION_LIFE_SKILLS	ACTION_TECHNICAL_SKILLS	ACTION_JOIN_COMMUNITIES	ACTION_RETRIEVE_HOBBIES	ACTION_NEW_HOBBIES	ACTION_CONNECTIONS	ACTION_PROFFESIONAL_NETWORK
MALE	Kruskal-Wallis H	7.391	3.356	1.988	4.913	.686	2.040	8.246	2.273
	df	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.025	.187	.370	.086	.710	.361	.016	.321
FEMALE	Kruskal-Wallis H	3.758	8.244	8.069	6.789	18.386	1.314	5.895	.108
	df	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.153	.016	.018	.034	.000	.518	.052	.947
a. Kruskal Wallis Test									
b. Grouping Variable: MARITAL_STATUS									

Analysis of the in-depth structured interviews.

Case study 1

Interviewee is a 32 year old, married woman named Ms. Mauchumi Das, who lives with her spouse and her 3 year old child in the heart of Kolkata. She is a Government employee. During the interview she did mention that the lockdown meant more work for her as her house-help was not reporting for work as per the safety norms and she was also 'working from home'. On being asked, she responded that she used her Laptop and smart phone for accessing the internet. Before lockdown she used to spend 30 minutes online every day, but post lockdown, due to her official work and the online classes of her toddler, her average time spent online had increased to 2 hours. Early in the morning before her husband and child uwake up, she watched some workout videos online. If she had any free time, she mostly

surfed for content related to travel and pandemic. During lockdown, she was never active on any social media platform as she found it tiring to follow other people's lives and instead mostly browsed for web series and information related to travel and healthy lifestyle. Ms. Mauchumi had sheepishly replied that she did not look for any current affairs related content during the lockdown. She replied"I never felt like browsing through such content and since my online time dedicated to recreational purpose was very less, I spent only 25% on watching either web series or videos on Youtube, negligible time on social media, around 2% and my highest online time was dedicated to my official work, sports is something which I never watch!". She claimed to have picked up new hobbies of gardening and sketching, which helped her relax during the lockdown. She never tried learning any kind of technical skills online and felt that she did not need to do so.'' I did not have enough spare time as I had to do my official work as well as household chores and look after my child, but whatever spare time I had, the internet did help me relax and stay sane!"

Case study 2

The interviewee is a 59 year old, married self -employed man named RatanChetri from Assam. He lives in a family of 6 members. He uses his mobile phone to access the internet. Before the lock down, Mr. Chetri used to surf the internet for around 1.5 hours which later increased to around 3.5 hours during the lockdown period. On being interviewed, he mentioned that he went through a lot of articles on Facebook and also watched lot of motivational videos during the lockdown. " Internet during the lockdown helped me to learn about a number of things like disease prevention, healthy living etc. Facebook takes up majority of my online time as I like to keep a tab on the things around me and also for being in touch with my near and dear ones" . According to him, he mostly ended up browsing the internet for Facebook videos, news articles and some sports news. He did not feel the need to enroll in kind of online classes during this period. "My online consumption mainly consisted of same kind of content during the lockdown. I subscribed to channels related to news and sports to keep myself updated.Facebook,news and sports always top my list. I got more time to surf the internet. I did not learn any new hobby but yes, internet was a great time killer and company during the lockdown!"

Case study 3

Interviewee is a 20 year old student named DorioliBaruah. She stays in a sub-urban area of Assam and her family consists of 6 members. She uses mobile and laptop to access the internet and has a Jio-fi connection at home. She admited that having access to high speed internet helped her to do a number of things specially attending her online classes without any interruptions. Before the lockdown, Dorioli used to spend on an average 4 hours per day online which increased to 10 years post lockdown. **"**The lockdown situation was very sudden. So to keep myself sane, I used to watch various suggestions given by the doctors and survivors. Also I started watching OTT series or movies to keep myself distracted from the real world situation. At the same time I also attended my college classes. I started doing workouts after watching videos about fitness. I also used internet to bring back my long lost hobbies like dancing, martial arts, reading books. I started cooking new delicacies by watching YouTube too". The interviewee looked for content related to human psychology and philosophy as she felt that she had many queries and the internet provided her with answers to those queries during the lockdown. Her choice of online content diversified during the lockdown. She mostly looked for entertainment, science, various theories, Medical videos, philosophical views, animations. In terms of current affairs,she mostly focused on Covid 19 related affairs. Her university encouraged her to join online classes and she actually did enroll in online classes during lockdown. Primarily, her online time mainly was devoted to entertainment(35%), followed by watching informative content (25%),Social networking (15%) and doing online classes(10%). During lockdown she picked up new cooking recipes online as well as basic video and photo editing skills. She made videos of her sister's and her dance performances and hence picked up video editing skills. On being asked, she said with a smile that "Internet has helped me to start dancing again". She admited to having enough spare time to do a lot of online surfing during the lockdown.On an ending note she mentioned "The internet helped me a lot to keep myself kept busy and successfully distracted me from the suffocating lockdown!"

Case study 4

The interviewee is a 35 year old IT professional named Mr.BiswajitRana, residing in Bengaluru with his wife. The lockdown was a very difficult phase for home as "work from home" for him meant more screen time as a lot of other industries were dependent on the IT industry for support and smooth functioning. Mr. Rana used the laptop and his smart phone to access the internet. Before the lockdown, the average time he used to spend online was

10hours which increased to 15 hours during the lockdown. “My company has webcast which provides insights into how to preserve one’s mental and physical health during the pandemic. This was very helpful.I have found a new interest in the stock market and share trading and hence,I used my free hours to learn more about the economic state of the country as well as the world economy. Apart from this,I read online about health, Covid, cancer, vaccines and travel.I have reduced my time etc. on social media as I believe that people do not believe in the freedom of speech anymore !.I have therefore, utilized that time in other things like subscribing to informative channels like Bloomerang ,Quint. In short, education and news are the areas which take up most of my online time. I had to help my wife in her chores and so I did not have much spare time. I have to utilize my time very diligently and hence, surfed only for interest based content. Thus, I can say that internet did help me stay informed, safe and sane during the pandemic!”

Case study 5

Interviewee is a58 year old, married woman named Ms.LipiSaikia, who lives with her retired spouse, in the heart of Guwahati city. Both her children are married and stay in different cities owing to their jobs. She is self-employed and has an educational institution providing specialized vocational courses. Due to the safety norms, she had to keep her institution closed. During the interview she mentioned that the lockdown meant more work for her as her house help was not reporting for work. On being asked she responded that she used her smart phone for accessing the internet. Before lockdown she used to spend around 4 hours online every day, but post lockdown, her average time spent online increased to 7 hours. ”I primarily used the internet to look for things that interest me, Cooking is a hobby and I like to watch cooking related videos on Youtube .I use Facebook and WhatsApp to stay in touch with my siblings, family members and my friends. I am not at all interested in sports and my husband provides me with details of interesting matches if any.I have conducted seminars online for my employees and students.I did not have the time to pick up new hobbies as I had to utilize my online time properly.My eyes hurt if I surf the net too much .However, I did look for videos on DIYs related to house décor as after a long time I had the time to take care of my care of my potted plants and also redecorate the house with the help of my husband. My little granddaughter loves to see the changes in the décor when she comes to visit me. Thanks to WhatsApp video call, I have been able to stay in touch with my children and my grandchild! I mostly subscribed to channels related to food, religion and spirituality .I

judiciously looked for news related to the Covid pandemic and the investigation to the mysterious death of a young movie star. In short, yes, internet gave me company and helped me in my work during the lockdown. It would have been very difficult to work if internet and my smart phone were not around me!'

Case study 6

The interviewee is a 20 year old student named VinayGolchha. Vinay who is from Rajasthan,lives in an extended family consisting of 12 members.He used the mobile and his laptop to access the internet.Prior to the lockdown,he used to spend around 3hours online, while during the lockdown, his internet consumption timing increased to 8 hours." During the lockdown, more than leisure, I used my online time to attend my college classes, enrolled myself into 3 certification courses, read e-books, joined online dancing classes and picked up the tricks and trades of gardening. Gardening is something which I have started liking due to the increased amount of time that I got to spend at home. Sometimes, I have queries related to life, philosophy, religion andscience, I am a curious person by nature and internet has always helped me to learn about a plethora of things. I have learnt many new things on a number of issues during the lockdown .Not going out and saving a lot of time in commuting, has given me time to think about a number of issues affecting me." The interviewee believes that internet has helped him to control his anxiety and stress. On being questioned about the break up percentage of his online surfing timings during the lockdown, Mr.Golchcha replied, "I mostly attended online classes and courses (about 60%) during the lockdown, followed by entertainment content (25%), social networking (10%) and news(5%)." His new found love for photo editing was interest based and was aided and nurtured by the internet during the lockdown." I have subscribed to new channels in areas of education; travel shows (helped me control my wanderlust!) and news. I did not have 'leisure hours' to surf the internet as I had a lot of online classes and I was always busy!"

Findings

As per the findings of the quantitative study, gender differences have been observed in various aspects of internet usage by Indians during the lockdown period. In depth analysis leads to the understanding that gender difference is significant in the age group of 18 yrs - 27 years for the fulfillment of their understanding and action needs. Gender difference is observed for the internet usage towards lifestyle improvement. Gender difference was also

observed in the way internet is used to pick up life skills and technical skills. These differences were consistent in the analysis of different demographic factors. While addressing the overall gender differences between the needs that drives internet use, it was found that there are significant differences in the internet usage among the genders while fulfilling understanding needs and action needs. However same was not found in case of play need. Hence, it can be concluded that the internet usage for relaxation and distressing remains the same for both the genders. However, when the internet usage is concerned about their well being or related to their day to day lives, significant differences are there.

On further investigation within the gender it has been found significant differences in internet usage within female users have been observed on the basis of age, occupation and marital status in case of fulfilling understanding needs. However, same was not observed for the male users. There are differences also in case of action needs. Education, occupation and family size have shown differences in internet usage in fulfilling action needs in case of females. Such differences have been found in cases of male users in respect of occupation and marital status.

The findings of the qualitative study being carried out have found that as expected, the time spent online had increased significantly during the lockdown. Millennials were found to use the internet more, be it for official work, attending online classes, or for entertainment purpose. Learning new courses on the areas of interest was seen among the two students and the working professionals in the 30+ age category with the male interviewees being more interested in technical courses and the female interviewees being more interested in acquiring life skill knowledge. As highlighted by the findings and supplementing the ways in which people cope with an unknown situation or defend themselves *(Psychoanalytical Theory)*, the same was observed in the online behaviour of the interviewees who used the internet to cope with the lockdown situation, to combat loneliness, to compensate for the lack of social contact or to understand the accepted behaviour in the world of the internet.Furthermore, in conclusion, the choices of categories of programs were different among the male and female interviewees across the different age groups.Health care and Covid related information was the highest searched for content across all the age groups and genders.

Managerial Implications and Conclusion.

Internet has been a platform for various purposes. Also, its potential to reach huge audience in minimum time has its own implications and benefits. Dependency on internet for individual needs and business has made the medium even more powerful. Though it had made the reach easy but at the same time induced more competition. Hence, it becomes imperative for professionals dealing with this media to understand its usage and users to make an optimum decision towards developing content and using it for marketing purposes. This research attempted the same. It has been already seen that internet is being accessed by all and transcends age groups, gender and socio-economic groups. This pandemic has just provided an extra boost towards the digitization process and varied usages. This study has found that the underlying needs can be an instrumental factor towards internet usage and the kinds of digital channels one will opt to fulfill those needs. As the study explored the usage based on the user, the findings become pertinent for the product and service providers for better targeting. By understanding the profile of the users and what they are looking for, it would be profitable for the media professionals to choose the right kind of digital channel for the right audience using right kind of content. In the pandemic, with many social constraints, it became an obvious choice for the product and service providers to resort to internet for various purposes and reaching out to the maximum audience. It is interesting to note how the internet has been used by Indians during the lockdown. The study unraveled the fact that there are significant differences in the internet usage of the male and female users. It could be easily gathered from the study, that individuals from different section of the society is using internet but the needs that drive usage is often different based on several demographic factors. The findings will help the decision makers to identify the opportunities to reach the consumers in a more efficaciousmanner. The study has found that due to different demographic factorss there are differences in usage among the genders. However, the researchers do acknowledge the fact that the study is based on the data collected during the lockdown, and hence more comprehensive and continuous studies need to be carried out in the future to have a better insight of the changes in the pattern of internet consumption and usage to have a better understanding of the phenomenon.

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