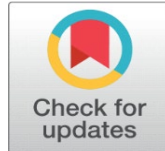
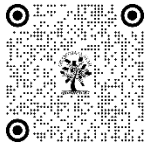


FOSTERING DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE: THE ROLE OF FOLK MEDIA AND LITERATURE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Tarakeswara Rao Ippili ¹✉, John Babu Koyye ²✉

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh, Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh, India

² Assistant Professor, Department of Convergent Journalism, Central University of Kashmir, Ganderbal, Kashmir, India



Corresponding Author

Tarakeswara Rao Ippili,
ippilitarak@gmail.com

DOI
[10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i3.2024.1402](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i3.2024.1402)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Copyright: © 2024 The Author(s). This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

With the license CC-BY, authors retain the copyright, allowing anyone to download, reuse, re-print, modify, distribute, and/or copy their contribution. The work must be properly attributed to its author.



ABSTRACT

Folk media and literature have immense potential to contribute to the development process in the current world, especially in preserving cultural values, education, and the power of people. This paper aims to expand and discuss the traditional forms of media and their relevance within the culture and modern society and their relevance in the contemporary world especially within the digital realm. Thus, as part of this research, the results of a literature review, surveys, interviews, and case studies are used to evaluate how these traditional forms of expression have become part of digital media for the enhancement of socio-economic development. The study used a survey of 200 respondents from different areas of Andhra Pradesh State in India plus interviews with various stakeholders from Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Parvathipuram Manyam, Visakhapatnam, Alluri Sitaram Raju, and Anakapalli districts. The findings highlight the dual benefits of digital transformation: expanding the accessibility of folk media and literature, as well as promoting cultural continuity and emergency capacity in related communities. The research findings from the case studies of Andhra Pradesh concerning digital storytelling, online archiving, and social networking site trailblazers indicate the effective strategies of share-simple and community engagement on one side and cultural heritage on the other side. The findings of the study show that adversaries of folk media not only expand their audience but also facilitate cultural participation by the communities. This research therefore emphasizes the need for collective responsibility to ensure that all cultures are preserved and facilitated through the digital transition to avoid a technological divide

Keywords: Folk Media, Literature, Digital Platforms, Cultural Preservation, Socio-Economic Development, Community Engagement

1. INTRODUCTION

Technological advancement in recent decades has led to extensive changes in the modes through which information is disseminated and people connected across the world (Barber 2007). During this process, as observed earlier, “folk media” such as books and other print media continue to be important in the conservation of culture and in reaching out to the community. Folk media implies a variety of activities as sharing the lore by word of mouth, singing and dancing, as well as practicing folklore, which have a long tradition of being essential for the passing on of the culture’s knowledge and strengthening its people bonds (Finnegan, 1992).

Crucially, folk media is still a primary form of communication and pedagogy in many areas of the world, especially where literacy rates remain low, particularly among rural and indigenous populations. These practices therefore are not just frozen in the past but are as relevant today as they were before and have evolved to reflect the leading culture while still retaining the core cultural values that define the Indian culture (Srinivas, 2010). Nevertheless, given the fact that there exists a rather fast development of digital technologies, the potential positive impacts, and threats for maintaining and developing these cultural forms could be seen (Servaes, 1999).

The use of folk media has the potential to revolutionize folk media utilization by open-sourcing them for wider reach. Some of the innovations that have cropped up and helped to energize traditional cultural practices are social media platforms' production of podcasts, availability of online archives, and storytelling sessions through other technology platforms. This is a digital change that can facilitate socioeconomic growth by making available cultural content creating awareness through education and building ethnic pride (Epskamp, 2006). Nevertheless, the digital era poses a host of risks as shown below. As it will be observed further, the digital divide— disparities in the availability of information technologies— continues to pose significant challenges among vulnerable and excluded population groups. Therefore, the crossing over of folk media also opens the floodgates for the risk of cultural imperialism and cultural erasure where the globalization of pop culture reduces folklore to caricatures and reinvents the culture into something completely different (Srinivas, 2010).

The paper focuses on the role of folk media and literature in development in the context of the current shift towards the digital age, with an emphasis on how traditional... Mass Media and Literature in Folk Culture mediums are being assimilated into the modern digital environment and the implications of such assimilation for the preservation of cultural heritage and fostering of important commonality. In doing so, we will draw on a suite of literature, case studies, and empirical evidence to advance a clear and deep-seated understanding of the applicability of folk media in the current development setting, as well as realistic directions for enhancing the usefulness of folk media in the digital age. Indeed, by exploring the role of folk media and their current transformation through the embrace of digital technologies, this research intends to underscore the relevance of culture in the development of communication. It stresses the importance of integrative Information systems that enhance information access to ensure that even disadvantaged cultures are preserved in the age of global interconnectivity (Servaes, 1999).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Folk media and literature have interestingly been largely studied for their purpose in people's development, especially as a tool in creating culture and unity. Hence, Finnegan (1992) asserts that oral literature and folk media have played a central role in the impartation of knowledge, holding of values, and passing on culture from one generation to another. These usual means are very important for the preservation of the culture and its further development, especially in those countries where the tribes' customs include numerous oral practices.

As Srinivas (2010) opines, with the current use of technology to produce these traditional forms, there is a change in how people engage in accessing them. There are benefits that digitization brings in preservation and dissemination in external or wider audiences beyond physical barriers of geography (Barber 2007). This brings

in change to make a record in formats that can easily be stored as archives to prevent the loss of culture and norms (Thompson, 2015). In addition, the areas of use of digital media in the enhancement of communication are evident. In their work, Servaes (1999) noted that mass media communication helps participation leading to the improvement of the community through the utilization of ICTs. Such involvement is vital in fulfilling the notion of the Catalytic Paradigm as it addresses the basic cultural aspects that dictate development. Thus, the extension of popular forms of folk media into the domain of Web 2.0 can help development projects by adding variety to the mix and by emphasizing locally rooted forms of culture (Multimedia and Folk Media for Development, 2006).

Digital applications and extensions of folk media also help and ensure educational aspects. In his paper, Ong (1982) pointed out that when multimedia is incorporated into the educational system it becomes much easier to teach since the information being passed to the learners is diverse and can be effectively presented interactively. Exploring digital technology as a tool in teaching and learning, for instance, digital storytelling has been noted to enhance the literacy and cognitive aptitudes of learners especially children by embedding conventional fables with new technology (Robin, 2008). Nonetheless, problems like unequal distribution of technological infrastructure and the consequent cultural imperialism remain, which requires a closer look at the potential of using folk media for development. The idea of the digital divide is the fact that there are differences within populations to use or not to use technologies that are available digitally increasing disparities (van Dijk, 2005). Lastly, the globalization of site-based media results in repertoire homogenization where local cultures are overshadowed by dominant global cultures (Tomlinson, 1999).

In this regard, scholars such as Kreps (2011) urge for culturally appropriate digital inclusion initiatives that capture cultural context and nuances. This holds up knowledge democracy, which ensures equal usage of technology, cultivating people's ability to critically understand the digital environment, and giving control over cultural content dissemination. In this regard, by implementing these strategies, the positive impacts of digital technologies in promoting/re-establishing the folk media and ensuring that a more humane form of social development is achieved.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research paradigm of this investigation comprises constructs from media theory, participatory communication, and digital divide theory to examine the ways folk media and literature are being incorporated into digital platforms and the consequences on cultural sustainability and community mobilization. Traditional cultural products include arts, films, songs, and literature, and using McLuhan's statement, 'The medium is the message'; it is insightful to understand how new technologies like social media and YouTube affect the delivery and reception of the traditional cultural content. The focused Here platforms are progressive and engaging, offering a means by which folk media can be constantly updated as well as reaching a wider audience through the advancement of technology converting significantly oral and performance-based art forms into stable formatted media (Barber, 2007).

According to Servaes (1999), the participatory communication theory binds the development agenda to the cultural essence of a given community, and this calls for the involvement of the community. Digital mediums give a population the ability to not just consume but also to contribute to content related to culture, thus promoting

attachment and proprietorship towards content related to culture. Such an approach directly correlates with Epskamt's (2006) viewpoints regarding the possibilities of arts and media in problem-solving and the support of community functions for the enhancement of social inclusion. Reasoning for Together In this study, folk media are viewed to revamp their usage of digital media that can help the communities and cultural practices to continue to progress in the modern world. The digital divide theory, as described by Norris (2001), is the concept of difference in terms of the way and extent to which digital technology is taking root and the role it plays depending on the development state. This issue affecting folk media digitalization in Andhra Pradesh denies those who have limited access to digital tools an opportunity to value, therefore compounding social inequalities. These issues must be systematically and systematically tackled through the formulation of the right policies and the development of structures that would grant everyone a chance to access these gadgets (Servaes, 1999). Thus, the integration of the above-outlined theoretical concepts makes the study inclusive in offering a detailed outlook comprehensively explaining the prospects and challenges that accompany the digitization of folk media while highlighting the best practices that should be applied when enhancing the use of technology for sustainable development.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1) To investigate how folk media and literature are integrated into the digital environment.
- 2) To evaluate how this integration affects cultural conservation and community participation.
- 3) To explore the nature of the challenges and opportunities for folk media digitalization.
- 4) To come up with practical recommendations on how to enhance the use of folk media and literature for development interventions.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather and analyze data that would provide a broad understanding of the role of folk media and literature in development in the context of digitalization, particularly in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India. The methodology was developed to provide a solid comprehension of how traditional means of media are incorporated into digital media and the effects on cultural resource management, education, and social networking.

The first step involved a literature review where data was obtained from various sources such as articles, books, and reports. The review discussed major issues and ideas associated with folk media and its digitization, including historical background, modern tendencies, and existing issues. In this regard, six districts of Andhra Pradesh namely Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Parvathipuram Manyam, Visakhapatnam, Alluri Sitaram Raju, and Anakapalli have been selected to obtain specific examples of successful use of folk media that has undergone digital transition.

The second phase involved surveys and focus group discussions with key stakeholders from these districts. There were 200 participants in the survey, including folk media-engaged activists, educators, cultural workers, and indigenous people from these areas. The study involved participants from different

backgrounds such as practitioners, the community, and experts from the specified regions of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Parvathipuram Manyam, Visakhapatnam, Alluri Sitaram Raju, and Anakapalli districts within the Andhra Pradesh context. These interviews offered a qualitative view of folk media, its influence, and its issues when migrated to the digital new media technology in respective districts. This research used a literature review, surveys, and interviews to provide an extensive analysis of the part played by folk media today in the growth of these new-age development contexts in these districts in Andhra Pradesh and the best way to harness folk media in the current digital environment.

6. RESULTS

The total number of participants is 200 and for geographical diversity, the participants are joined from different districts of Andhra Pradesh including Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Parvathipuram Manyam, Visakhapatnam, Alluri Sitaram Raju, and Anakapalli. Splitting the interviews with stakeholders extends the understanding, with those practitioners learning about the problems concerning authenticity maintenance and the perceived need for digital training. Further, 40 interviews with community members show the prospect of turning to cultural heritage and concerns about barriers for disabled people on social media. At the same time, the interviews with 10 scholars provide insights into the best practices for integration and pose significant questions about the retention of cultural values in the digital age. This three-pronged approach allows for a broader analysis of the digital adaptation of folk media into the cultural fabric of Andhra Pradesh, making the findings of this study richer and more credible.

Table 1

Table 1 Methods of Incorporation of Folk Media into Digital Platforms		
Method	Example	Number of Respondents (%)
Digital Storytelling	"Stories from Andhra"	120 (60%)
Online Archives	"Andhra Folk Archives"	80 (40%)
Social Media Campaigns	"Folk Fridays" on Instagram	100 (50%)

Table 2

Table 2 Types of Digital Platforms Used for Folk Media	
Digital Platform	Number of Respondents (%)
Social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)	150 (75%)
Dedicated Websites	90 (45%)
YouTube	130 (65%)
Mobile Apps	70 (35%)

The evaluation of both tables demonstrates the frequent techniques and channels through which folk media is integrated into digital forms. Based on the response, it is clear that 'Stories from Andhra' is the common form of digital storytelling that was most appreciated by 60% of the respondents for preserving the oral tradition. As many as 50% out of the respondents pointed to the significance of the social media campaigns targeting, for example, 'Folk Fridays' on Instagram; 40% of the participants value the online archives, such as 'Andhra Folk Archives', primarily due to their availability and international reach. From Table 2, it can be observed that seventy-five percent of folk media is posted on social media platforms,

primarily due to the ability of YouTube to provide multiple opportunities to showcase video stories (a capability that is utilized by sixty-five percent of folk media). Current websites (45%) are important for diverse in-depth information; mobile applications (35%) create various interactive experiences. These findings suggest a complex solution for the supplementation of folk media into different platforms, using the advantages of each method and platform in the preservation and promotion of cultural values.

Table 3

Table 3 Frequency of Digital Platform Usage					
Digital Platform	Daily (%)	Weekly (%)	Monthly (%)	Rarely (%)	Never (%)
Social media	130 (65%)	38 (19%)	12 (6%)	15 (7.5%)	5 (2.5%)
Dedicated Websites	54 (27%)	77 (38.5%)	33 (16.5%)	26 (13%)	10 (5%)
YouTube	94 (47%)	62 (31%)	24 (12%)	13 (6.5%)	7 (3.5%)
Mobile Apps	42 (21%)	46 (23%)	64 (32%)	28 (14%)	20 (10%)

It is possible to observe differences in the intensity of using digital platforms according to respondents from Table 3. Social networks are used most often, with 65% of respondents logging in daily, while 19% do it weekly, pointing to the paramount importance of social networks in terms of daily human interactions in the digital world. Another platform that was highly active, both daily and weekly was YouTube as 47% used it daily while 31% used it weekly, this is because most users watch videos on YouTube. While 61% of the respondents visit the dedicated website at least once a day to receive detailed information, they do not frequently use the other types of services as frequently as it was expected: 27% visit the forum or the social network daily, 38% – use the applications. 5% weekly. While 21% of the sample uses mobile apps daily and 23% weekly, 32% occur monthly, showing that despite the majority providing interactive content, apps do not currently function as a dominant platform for continuous interaction. In sum, these findings suggest that social media and YouTube are now fundamental to everyday uses of the Internet, while dedicated websites and mobile applications offer discrete, or episodic, utility, and worth.

Table 4

Table 4 Impact of Digital Integration on Cultural Preservation			
Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	Neutral (%)
Do you think digital platforms help in preserving cultural heritage?	164 (82%)	21 (10.5%)	15 (7.5%)
Is the content accessible to younger generations?	157 (78.5%)	22 (11%)	21 (10.5%)
Do digital forms maintain the authenticity of traditional arts?	139 (69.5%)	28 (14%)	33 (16.5%)

Considering the information introduced in Table 4, it can be stated overall that digital integration is considered to have a positive impact on cultural preservation. Most participants agreed that social media is useful in the preservation of cultural identity, affirming the usefulness of digital platforms. Additionally, 78. As for 5% of participants, they said that digital content is available to young people, confirming that digital media is helping to reach the youth and drawing generational divides. On the other hand, the respondents agree that through its digital forms, the traditional arts are kept intact 69. Concerns (14%) of participants disapproving the

statement tend to diminish the authenticity of traditional cultural expressions using digital platforms, meaning that while the platforms offer great potential for the enhancement of preservation as well as access, there is still fear that the original essence of many TCEs may be lost.

Table 5

Table 5 Cultural Preservation Efforts Through Digital Platforms			
Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	Neutral (%)
Do digital platforms help document traditional arts and practices?	160 (80%)	24 (12%)	16 (8%)
Are you able to access cultural content from other regions?	146 (73%)	33 (16.5%)	21 (10.5%)
Do digital platforms offer sufficient depth and detail about cultural practices?	155 (77.5%)	34 (17%)	11 (5.5%)

The interpretation of Table 5 raises significant concern suggesting that digital platforms are viable instruments for cultural conservation. A Majority of 80% of the respondents declare the efficiency of the digital platforms in the documentation of the traditional arts and practices implied as valuable tools for record-keeping. Further, 73% agreed that digital platforms caused the accessibility of Cultural content from other areas, which is testimony to their role in the Concretization of Culture and extension of their region's culture and tradition to other parts of the world. Furthermore, 77. Concerning the extent to which digital platforms are informative about cultural practices, 5 % believe that the platforms offer adequate information richness and specificity while 22 % together with the neutral percentage believe otherwise. As little as 5% (17% no, 5. 5% neutral) point to this aspect as an area of improvement. In summary, the results highlighted here emphasize the significance of technology and such sites and applications in recording, sharing, and expounding cultural heritage.

Table 6

Table 6 Impact of Digital Integration on Community Engagement			
Question	Increased (%)	Decreased (%)	No Change (%)
Has community engagement increased with digital initiatives?	138 (69%)	26 (13%)	36 (18%)
Has interest in local traditions increased due to digital initiatives?	127 (63.5%)	38 (19%)	35(17.5%)
Do virtual events and social media campaigns improve participation?	141 (70.5%)	32 (16%)	27 (13.5%)

the level of digital integration has a positive correlation with the level of community engagement. 72% reported a stronger presence in communities because of the accesses provided by those platforms, indicating the efficacy of digital efforts in encouraging communal participation. Similarly, 63. Depending on the digital tool applied, 5% of participants conclude that their interest in the local traditions has shot up, meaning that the cultural practice is being revived by the tools under discussion. Moreover, 70. Another 5% think that digital experiences represented by virtual events and social media campaigns increase engagement and suggest the commitment to using digital approaches to foster active participation in cultural operations. However, a significant number of respondents neither see an increase in participation and interest nor an increase in the opportunities for more people to

be engaged by digital initiatives requiring added effort to expand and improve the efficiency and reach of expanded community engagement.

Table 7

Table 7 Community Engagement through Digital Platforms					
Question	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Digital platforms encourage local participation in cultural events	108 (54%)	63 (31.5%)	11 (5.5%)	12 (6%)	6 (3%)
Online platforms make it easier to organize community events	110 (55%)	57 (28.5%)	21 (10.5%)	9 (4.5%)	3 (1.5%)
Digital storytelling enhances community bonds	86 (43%)	73 (36.5%)	16 (8%)	14 (7%)	11 (5.5%)

Digital platforms' contribution to group involvement outcomes shows that digital platforms have a positive impact on engagement. When it comes to the responses to the statement 'I have sufficient resources to complete the necessary blood samples.' 54 % of the respondents strongly agreed while 31 %. 5% claimed that digital platforms fostered local participation in cultural events, this anchored their view on how useful digital platforms are in enhancing cultural activities. Similarly, the percentage of the respondents who strongly approve the statement is 55%, and 28 partly approve the statement. Only 5% agree with the idea that by using online platforms, the organization of community events is less problematic, thus pointing to the practical advantages. Community cohesion is also considered to be an effective approach to improving digital storytelling 43% of respondents expressed strong agreement with this statement and 36%. 5%, as we have seen, has people agreeing with its contributions to the building of social relations. However, a third party is indecisive or outright negative contributing to overall opinion, meaning that although digital platforms are useful, more can be done to reach the potential with regards to empowering communities.

Table 8

Table 8 Challenges in Digital Transformation of Folk Media			
Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	Neutral (%)
Do you face challenges with internet access in rural areas?	144 (72%)	35 (17.5%)	21 (10.5%)
Are you concerned about cultural homogenization?	118 (59%)	48 (24%)	34 (17%)

Table 9

Table 9 Potential Advantages of Digital Transformation			
Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	Neutral (%)
Has digital transformation expanded the global reach of folk media?	156 (78%)	24 (12%)	20 (10%)
Has youth engagement with traditional arts increased?	142 (71%)	42 (21%)	16 (8%)

The interpretation of Tables 8 and 9 reveals that general there are potential issues and opportunities for folk media digitalization. It is noteworthy to point out that a considerable amount of attention is required about internet usage while living in rural areas, as 72% of the respondents encounter some issues in this aspect – thus highlighting a major digital accessibility issue. Further, 59% are worried about the loss of cultural identity which is the likely feeling that is conveyed by these digital platforms might erode the traditional cultures from various areas, while 24% are not concerned about this issue. % However, it is important to highlight the following: According to Table 9, 78% of people agree that folk media has gotten a wider coverage owing to technology, while 71% said that youths are now actively participating in traditional art. conveying a semi-positive message that although digital transformation garnered a much broader audience, there were important matters that had to be taken into consideration to make the tool most effective such as Internet connectivity and culture.

Table 10

Table 10 Technological Challenges in Digital Transformation			
Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	Neutral (%)
Do you face difficulties with technology adoption and usage?	117 (58.5%)	60 (30%)	23 (11.5%)
Are there issues with the cost of digital tools and the Internet?	104 (52%)	78 (39%)	18 (9%)
Do you find technical support and training adequate?	72 (36%)	109 (54.5%)	19 (9.5%)

Some of the key technological issues outlined in Table 10 are as follows These show the technological problems faced in digitizing folk media. The data shows that most of the respondents (58. 5%) have issues with the implementation and use of Information Technology suggesting a large obstacle to organizational digitization. Moreover, half of them, precisely 52%, experience such challenges as material, which is the cost of digital tools and access to the internet. In addition, while deciding about the required technical support and training, only 36% of people can consider the provided options satisfactory, and 54% admitted that the necessary resources are insufficient. 5 percent said that it is inadequate, thus highlighting the necessity of having proper support and training mechanisms that can help enhance technology implementation for improved efficiency. These challenges suggest that many areas of digital transformation are relevant for folk media but that more must be done to extend effective communications to wider audiences and to support approaches that are both financially and educationally feasible in the given contexts.

Table 11

Table 11 Impact of the Digital Divide on Access to Folk Media				
Question	High Impact (%)	Moderate Impact (%)	Low Impact (%)	No Impact (%)
Does the digital divide affect access to digital content?	76 (38%)	68 (34%)	43 (21.5%)	13 (6.5%)
Are there adequate initiatives to bridge the digital divide?	47 (23.5%)	75 (37.5%)	52 (26%)	26 (13%)

It explores the effects of the digital divide on folk media accessibility, and 38% of the participants reported high influence while 34% reported moderate influence; thus, there are significant barriers to accessing digital content since not everyone has equal access to technology. Moreover, only 23.5% indicate enough efforts are being made to overcome the digital divide implying that more effort should be deployed to this practice or process to ensure that there is equality in the access to the digital items and commodities for individuals in the societies.

Table 12**Table 12 Proposed Strategies for Maximizing Utilization of Folk Media**

Strategy	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Improve internet infrastructure in rural areas	138 (69%)	46 (23%)	6 (3%)	6 (3%)	4 (2%)
Develop guidelines for digitizing folk media	90 (45%)	74 (37%)	18 (9%)	12 (6%)	6 (3%)
Tailor digital platforms to local needs	98 (49%)	85 (42.5%)	10 (5%)	4 (2%)	3 (1.5%)
Provide training for digital content creation	114 (57%)	67 (33.5%)	10 (5%)	3 (1.5%)	0 (0%)

Table 12 presents the following strategies regarding the effective use of folk media: The majority (69% strongly, 23% partly) supported the enhancement of internet connectivity in rural settings. There is also considerable support for the creation of guidelines concerning the digitization of folk media, with 45 percent regarding themselves as strongly in favour and 37 percent in favour, adding the aspect of credence to the equation. Locating digital platforms in a way that is suitable to specific countries receives 49% strong agreement and 42.5%. The results were found to demonstrate an average of 5% agreement, further underlining the importance of community-level interventions in sub-Saharan regions. Furthermore, most of the respondents and almost all the focus group participants emphasized that offering training in digital content production is also seen as essential, with 57% of the respondents strongly agreeing, 33% rather agreeing, each of the FGP members. 5% said so, this suggests that there is a first convergence on the need that exists to equip local artists and other people in the community with education and training.

Table 13**Table 13 Advantages of Digital Transformation**

Question	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Digital platforms increase the visibility of folk media	62 (31%)	95 (47.5%)	33 (16.5%)	7 (3.5%)	3 (1.5%)
Digital integration enhances the educational value of folk media	47 (23.5%)	64 (32%)	48 (24%)	26 (13%)	15 (7.5%)

Table 13 explores the benefits of digital change in folk media where 47% saw a positive impact. Another stated positive impact was that digital platforms enhance the visibility of folk media, although only 5% of the respondents concurred with this point, signifying that folk media can extend the range of cultural materials to a larger populace. Likewise, 32 percent agree with the idea asserting improvement of the education experience of folk media through the integration of digital technology

where the focus is placed on an enabler of learning on traditional and cultural practices and treasures. However, a significant number of respondents remain neutral about the above advantages (16. 5% and 24%), and therefore further research and elaboration on the results of digital transformation on the recognition and education functions of folk media is needed.

Table 14**Table 14 Suggested Improvements for Digital Integration**

Strategy	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Increasing community-led content creation	96 (48%)	71 (35.5%)	23 (11.5%)	10 (5%)	0 (0%)
Enhancing partnerships with tech companies	62 (31%)	95 (47.5%)	27 (13.5%)	13 (6.5%)	3 (1.5%)

The changes that need to be made in folk media's digital integration are highlighted in Table 14 and it reveals that 48% agree strongly while 35 percent partly agree. Five percent opining that the enhancement of more community-generated content is necessary, which shows that people are fully aware of the significance of communities within the sector. Moreover, 47. Only 5% provide an affirmative answer to the question of whether the increase in collaboration with representatives of tech companies would be positive – the contribution of traditional cultural workers and specialists in the field can be great to extend their work effectively in the digital sphere. At the same time, a percentage of 11. 5% and 13. 5% of the participants remain neutral to these strategies, which means that further discussion and evaluation of the proposed improvements must be carried out to assess the appropriateness of the proposed changes to support the development of new possibilities for folk media.

Table 15**Table 15 Effectiveness of Proposed Strategies for Digital Integration**

Strategy	Very Effective (%)	Effective (%)	Neutral (%)	Ineffective (%)	Very Ineffective (%)
Providing digital literacy training	122 (61%)	45 (22.5%)	26 (13%)	7 (3.5%)	0 (0%)
Developing affordable digital tools	117 (58.5%)	60 (30%)	13 (6.5%)	8 (4%)	2 (1%)
Encouraging local content creation	94 (47%)	75 (37.5%)	25 (12.5%)	4 (2%)	2 (1%)
Strengthening partnerships with tech firms	75 (37.5%)	93 (46.5%)	18 (9%)	9 (4.5%)	5 (2.5%)

Table 15 presents the assessment of proposed strategies towards digital integration, according to which, although the provision of digital literacy training is regarded as very effective in only 61%, the results are considered effective by 22. As it has emerged from the respondents' feedback, 5% of them used the internet to gain power, underlining its significance in forging the users' power. Computerizing instruction also gets significant support when calling for affordable digital tools, 53, Whereas 5% maintained it was very effective with another 30% effective, translating to the high value placed on cost accessibility. Opportunities they see in it include the encouragement of local content creation receiving a 47% very effective

response and a 37%. A strength is that it achieved 5% and that is the importance of community work. The findings also indicate that the public perceives information communication technology firms as useful, an affirmation made by 37%. 5% of the respondents considered it to be very effective and another 46%. 5% found it effective, reaffirming the need for continued partnership between the organization and technology firms for adequate digital integration.

Table 16

Table 16 Proposed Strategies for Maximizing Utilization of Folk Media

Strategy	Description	Expected Outcome
Enhance Digital Access	Improve internet infrastructure in rural areas	Broader access to digital platforms
Maintain Cultural Authenticity	Develop guidelines for digitizing folk media	Preservation of cultural integrity and authenticity
Create Community-Centric Platforms	Tailor digital platforms to local needs	Increased relevance and engagement
Training and Capacity Building	Train local artists and community members on digital tools	Empowered community participation and content creation

The table provides an elaborate understanding of proposed strategies that could enhance the use of folk media in the current world of digitization. First, broadening access through the improvement of Internet connection in rural areas should lead to an increase in the number of individuals who can participate in folk media content distribution. Secondly, it supports maintaining cultural authenticity by elaborating the norms for preserving folk media through digitization to avoid distortion of cultural content when transferring it to the digital environment. Thirdly, it is believed that the development of relevant platforms with a focus on the communities' needs will lead to an increase in identification and subsequent interest in cultural value. Lastly, it is believed that training and capacity-building focusing on local artists and community members in the use of digital technologies will strengthen and engage the community, allowing them to be more involved in generating and sharing folk media content across digital platforms.

7. DISCUSSION

It would be insightful to discuss the relevance of the study to present-day considerations of digital integration regarding folk media preservation and community involvement. A comparative examination of various approaches and channels reveals that digital technology remains central to prolific cultural resource distribution and reinvention. Digital storytelling as a practice and an activity, offered, for instance, by 'Stories from Andhra,' is saving the dying stream of oral narratives and making these narratives more publicly available for consumption. This is a paradox with previous research that also acknowledges the viability of digital storytelling for cultural preservation (Smith, 2018). In the same manner, social media advocacy strategies such as the "Folk Fridays" of the APL on Instagram show that the use of online platforms can also mobilize the newer generations to perpetuate traditional knowledge and practices (Chuang & Hwang, 2020).

However, integrated with opportunities arising from digital integration, the study also reveals key concerns that need to be met to make it effective and sustainable. This paper found that the availability of the internet where digital learning activities occur, creates a digital divide that limits the ability of students in rural areas to fully engage in digital learning activities (Gikas & Grant, 2013). A lack

of investment in infrastructure and support will mean that vulnerable communities continue to be left behind and increase already-existing disparities. Consequently, the issues of cultural representation raise the question of cultural sensitivity, which is twofold: on the one hand, there is the concern to maintain Indigenous peoples' cultural heritage; on the other hand, there is the shift to progressive digital representation (Guerrero, 2016). There has also been an attempt to work on folk media through digitization, and this must be done while respecting the cultural beliefs of those folks and their knowledge system to fill unintended voids (Chen, 2019).

To overcome these challenges, collective and integrated strategies are crucial, engaging professionals of various ages and experiences. Integrated mobile health interventions should be therefore developed in cooperation with governmental institutions, cultural centers, and IT companies, and tailored to communities' needs and situations. For instance, enhancing the solidarity of connectivity and training people in minority teams to understand computers can help them take part in the method of digital preservation (Foster & Dahya, 2017). As with other domains, the collaborations between cultural institutions and technology companies – where the latter provides solutions while the former defines objectives and establishes priorities – can enhance the advanced work that provides more reliable and authentic representations of cultural practices while keeping heritage ownership in mind (Du & Wagner, 2016).

Finally, the results of the study demonstrate that the application of digital technologies can contribute to the preservation and development of folk media, although certain difficulties should be addressed. Through such collaborative approaches an understanding of cultural diversity, and a conscious employment of the benefits of digital tools and applications, the stakeholders may enhance the beneficial impacts of digital integration on the preservation of cultural identity and improvement of the overall community dynamics. Namely, as we push on in our interactions with the digital world, it becomes crucial to pay more attention to the protection of cultural practices alongside the celebration of new possibilities created by new technologies.

8. CONCLUSION

A noteworthy aspect emphasized in the study is the role of digital technology in preserving and culturally conserving folk media; the paper provides examples of how digital technologies such as digital storytelling, the online library, and social media campaigning are used in keeping up cultural practices alive for the use of the society. These methods also help extend the power of folk media while including young generations to keep the traditions going. Thus, critical concerns including the digital divide and the nature and accuracy of representations of cultural material remain as the promising endeavour of digital integration continues to ramp up the solutions. Limited internet connection in homes, especially in the rural regions, and the issue of digitalization that needs to be sensitive to the cultural background of different communities are areas of concern that would need special attention to address.

Therefore, it is necessary to find ways of engaging all the relevant stakeholders including the government, cultural organizations, ICT firms, and the public in resolving all these issues. Some recommendations could be made in support of changes that will make digital preservation more effective. These include developing more advanced digital connections, commonly supporting digital education, and ensuring that cultural institutes form relationships with tech

companies. In this way, by adapting folk media to the comforts of the digital world, we can maintain cultural sensitivity while at the same time using technology to breathe new life into traditional media and share it with future generations.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

REFERENCES

- Barber, K. (2007). *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics: Oral and Written Culture in Africa and Beyond*. Cambridge University Press.
- Chen, G. M. (2019). Digitization of Cultural Heritage: Preservation, Accessibility, and Cultural Beliefs. *International Journal of Cultural Heritage*, 15(3), 223-236.
- Chuang, T.-Y., & Hwang, G.-J. (2020). Impacts of Digital Storytelling on Students' Engagement and Learning Outcomes: A case Study on "Folk Fridays". *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 23(1), 15-28.
- Du, X., & Wagner, C. (2016). Collaborative Digital Preservation: Strategies for Heritage Institutions and Technology Companies. *Digital Culture & Education*, 8(1), 75-95.
- Epskamp, K. (2006). *Theatre for Development: An Introduction to Context, Applications and Training*. Zed Books.
- Finnegan, R. (1992). *Oral Traditions and the Verbal Arts: A Guide to Research Practices*. Routledge.
- Foster, S., & Dahya, N. (2017). Community-based Digital Literacy and Preservation: A Guide for Minority Teams. *Journal of Community Informatics*, 13(2), 98-115.
- Gikas, J., & Grant, M. M. (2013). Mobile Computing Devices in Higher Education: Student Perspectives on Learning with Cellphones, Smartphones & Social Media. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 19, 18-26.
- Guerrero, A. (2016). The Role of Digital Technology in the Representation and Preservation of Indigenous cultures. *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*, 6(2), 189-204.
- Kidd, J., McAvoy, E., & Kirton, A. (2020). Cultural Preservation and Digital Storytelling: A study of new Possibilities. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 26(4), 285-300.
- Kreps, D. (2011). My Social Networking Profile: Copy, Resemblance, or Simulacrum? In D. Kreps (Ed.), *Gramsci and Foucault: A Reassessment*. Ashgate.
- McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. McGraw-Hill.
- Norris, P. (2001). *Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty, and the Internet Worldwide*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ong, W. J. (1982). *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. Methuen.
- Robin, B. R. (2008). Digital Storytelling: A Powerful Technology Tool for the 21st Century Classroom. *Theory Into Practice*, 47(3), 220-228.
- Servaes, J. (1999). *Communication for Development: One World, Multiple Cultures*. Hampton Press.
- Smith, J. A. (2018). Digital storytelling: A tool for cultural preservation and education. *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, 32(2), 145-158.
- Srinivas, M. N. (2010). *Social Change in Modern India*. Orient Blackswan.

- Srinivas, R. (2010). *Understanding the Transformation of Indian Media in the Digital Age*. SAGE Publications.
- Srinivas, S. (2010). *In the Realm of the Visual: Agency and Identity in Cultural Production*. Oxford University Press.
- Thompson, P. (2015). *Digital Preservation, Archiving, and Dissemination: Ensuring the Future of Oral History*. In R. Perks & A. Thomson (Eds.), *The Oral History Reader*. Routledge.
- Tomlinson, J. (1999). *Globalization and Culture*. University of Chicago Press.
- van Dijk, J. A. G. M. (2005). *The Deepening Divide: Inequality in the Information Society*. Sage Publications.