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Nautanki to Netflix: From Street Plays to Streaming Platforms

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Abstract

This article investigates the dynamic interaction between ancient Indian folk performance, nautanki specifically, and new digital narrative spaces such as Netflix. Based on the rich narrative and performative tradition of nautanki, the research discusses how its fundamental components—musical narrative, moralistic themes, hyperbolic characters, and audience participation—have evolved to become the framework and genre of contemporary Indian cinema and web series. By means of example case studies, the article illustrates how digital platforms not only function as entertainment tools but also as mediums for cultural retention and reimagining. In combining folk practices with international streaming forms, artists are creating stories that work locally as well as globally. The article frames the analysis in terms of media convergence theory and cultural hybridity to illuminate the evolution of traditional art forms in an increasingly dynamic media environment. The article concludes that this movement away from nautanki towards Netflix is not a loss of tradition, but rather a deliberate relocation and renaissance in the digital age.

Keywords: Nautanki, Street plays, Folk Theatre, Digital Media, OTT Platforms, Cultural Transition, Traditional Entertainment, Convergence, Digital Age

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Nautanki is one of the most popular traditional forms of folk theatre in North India, especially in states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Haryana. It combines music, dance, storytelling, and drama to entertain large village and town audiences. Known for its catchy songs, powerful dialogues, and social themes, Nautanki was often performed in open-air spaces and used minimal stage setup, relying more on the energy of the performers and live music.

The themes of Nautanki were usually based on love stories, historical tales, mythological events, or everyday social issues. Through its entertaining format, it also educated people about morality, justice, and social values. Performances would often last through the night and bring together entire communities, making it a collective cultural experience.

Nautanki was not just a form of entertainment — it reflected rural life and the emotions, struggles, and joys of ordinary people. Over time, however, its popularity began to decline due to the rise of cinema, television, and now, digital media. Yet, Nautanki remains an important part of India's cultural heritage and continues to influence storytelling styles even today.

1.2 ORIGIN OF NAUTANKI

Nautanki originated in North India, particularly in the regions of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, during the 19th century. It evolved from earlier folk performance traditions like Swang and Rasa Leela, which were known for their musical and dramatic storytelling. The word "Nautanki" is believed to come from a famous female performer or character named Nautanki, whose story became so popular that the entire form of theatre adopted her name.

In its early form, Nautanki was performed in village squares or temple courtyards, where people gathered to watch plays that included singing, dancing, and dialogue. It quickly became a popular way to entertain and inform rural communities, as it mixed fun with messages about love, bravery, justice, and social values.

With time, Nautanki developed its own scripts, music styles, and famous performers. It became a key part of festivals and fairs, and sometimes even addressed serious issues like dowry, caste, or women's rights, making it not only entertaining but also socially relevant.

1.3 Historical Importance of Nautanki

Nautanki was more than just entertainment—it served as a mirror of society. During the pre-independence era, Nautanki was used to spread patriotic messages and raise awareness against British rule. It often featured stories of heroes like Rani Laxmibai and Raja Harishchandra to

inspire courage and pride among the masses. Because it was easily accessible to rural people and performed in local dialects, Nautanki became a powerful tool for communication and social change.

1.3.1 Popular Themes in Nautanki

Some of the most famous Nautankis are based on:

- Mythological stories – e.g., Ramayana, Mahabharata
- Love stories – e.g., Heer-Ranjha, Laila-Majnu
- Folk legends – e.g., Raja Salhesh, Amar Singh Rathore
- Social issues – like dowry, caste discrimination, women's rights

These themes allowed Nautanki to connect deeply with its audience by reflecting both their struggles and aspirations.

1.3.2 Language and Style:

Nautanki is usually performed in Hindi or local dialects like Awadhi, Bhojpuri, or Braj Bhasha, depending on

the region. The style is highly dramatic, with exaggerated expressions, rhythmic dialogues, and emotional storytelling. Songs are used to express feelings, progress the plot, and build suspense.

1.3.3 Major Performers and Troupes:

Some performers became household names in the world of Nautanki. Famous troupes like Inder Sabha, and legendary artists like Bhikhari Thakur in Bihar (though more associated with Bidesia), contributed greatly to folk performance. These artists traveled from village to village, keeping the art form alive.

1.3.4 Nautanki vs Other Traditional Forms:

Nautanki is often compared to other traditional Indian art forms like

Tamasha (Maharashtra), Yakshagana (Karnataka), and Jatra (Bengal).

While each has its own unique style, they all share a focus on music, storytelling, and social messages. Nautanki stands out for its specific connection to North Indian rural culture and its musical richness.

1.4 THE DECLINE OF NAUTANKI

The decline of Nautanki began in the mid-20th century, primarily due to the rise of cinema, television, and later digital media. As Bollywood films gained popularity, they offered more polished, visual entertainment with bigger budgets and celebrity appeal, drawing audiences away from folk performances. The spread of television in the 1980s and 1990s further reduced the need for live performances.

Urbanization played a significant role as well. As people moved to cities for better job opportunities and education, the rural audience that once supported Nautanki began to dwindle. This shift, coupled with changing entertainment preferences, caused the traditional form to fade.

Lack of institutional support, poor funding, and the absence of a sustainable model for live performances also contributed to the decline. Many traditional troupes disbanded, and younger generations showed little interest in preserving this form of theatre.

Despite its decline, efforts to revive Nautanki through festivals, academic interest, and modern adaptations are underway, but it remains a shadow of its former self.

1.5 Revival Attempts and Institutional Support

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, several efforts were made to revive Nautanki. Institutions like the Sangeet Natak Academy, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, and local cultural departments began documenting and promoting folk theatre.

Some of the revival strategies included:

- Theatrical workshops for youth to train in Nautanki performance.
- Integration into school curricula and community theatre festivals.

- Government grants and fellowships for traditional artists.
- Collaborations with film and television to adapt Nautanki stories.

1.6 TRANSITION FROM TRADITIONAL TO MODERN MEDIA

The shift from traditional media forms, like Nautanki, to modern media has been profound and widespread, driven by technological advancements and changing societal dynamics. Over the last several decades, the entertainment landscape has undergone significant transformations. The rise of cinema, television, and most recently, digital media platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and YouTube, has reshaped how audiences consume content and engage with media. This section explores the factors behind this transition and how it has impacted both traditional and modern forms of media.

RISE OF MODERN MEDIA

As traditional theatre forms like Nautanki experienced a steep decline, the world witnessed the emergence and evolution of modern storytelling mediums that redefined how narratives were consumed, produced, and experienced. The transition from oral and performative traditions to digital and visual formats was not abrupt but a gradual, layered process shaped by technological advancement, changing audience behavior, and global cultural exchange.

This paper explores the rise of modern storytelling mediums in India— cinema, television, and digital platforms like Netflix—and examines how these formats reshaped narrative techniques, aesthetic standards, and cultural engagement.

1.7 Digital Platforms and the OTT Revolution

The 2010s witnessed a digital explosion with the rise of smartphones, cheap data, and global streaming platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+ Hotstar. These Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms brought a paradigm shift in how stories were created, distributed, and consumed.

OTT platforms introduced non-linear, on-demand storytelling, allowing viewers to consume content at their own pace, location, and language preference. This flexibility marked a significant departure from both the time-bound nature of live theatre and the fixed schedules of television broadcasts.

Crucially, digital platforms enabled the emergence of diverse genres, experimental formats, and niche narratives. Shows like Sacred Games, Delhi Crime, Paatal Lok, and Made in Heaven broke away from formulaic tropes and explored complex themes—corruption, caste, gender, trauma, and identity—with cinematic depth and creative freedom.

Many of these shows drew inspiration from traditional narrative structures (e.g., episodic arcs, morality tales) but recontextualized them for modern sensibilities, blending the essence of old storytelling with the aesthetics of new media.

Furthermore, platforms like YouTube and Instagram have democratized storytelling, allowing independent creators to tell regional, personal, and experimental stories using low-cost production tools and direct audience engagement.

1.8 Are Modern Platforms Preserving the Essence of Traditional Theatre?

Modern platforms are playing a complex role when it comes to preserving the essence of traditional theatre. On one hand, they help in reviving and promoting old forms like Nautanki, by making performances available online and introducing them to new, global audiences. Elements such as strong storytelling, moral lessons, and cultural symbolism are sometimes maintained in digital adaptations. Platforms like YouTube, Netflix, and other OTT services have even made space for theatre-based documentaries, films, or fusion performances that draw inspiration from folk and traditional arts. However, the shift to screen

also brings certain limitations. The live interaction, emotional energy, and communal experience that are central to traditional theatre are often lost in digital formats. Furthermore, traditional forms may be altered to suit modern tastes, faster pacing, or commercial appeal, which can dilute their authenticity. Therefore, while modern media is helping to keep the spirit of traditional theatre alive, it often does so in a modified form that blends preservation with transformation.

1.9 Advantages of the Transition to Modern Media:

- Folk art forms like Nautanki can now be viewed globally through platforms like YouTube and OTT services.
- Audiences can watch performances anytime and from anywhere, making cultural content more available.
- Digital media helps archive old performances and preserve them for future generations.
- Creative Enhancement- Use of music, editing, animation, and visual effects can enhance the storytelling experience.
- Traditional and modern styles can be blended to create new forms of artistic expression.

1.10 Disadvantages of the Transition to Modern Media:

- The emotional connection and interaction found in live performances are often missing in digital formats.
- To appeal to mass audiences, traditional elements may be simplified or changed, losing authenticity.
- Focus may shift from cultural value to viewership and profit, affecting the artistic quality.
- Modern viewers often prefer fast-paced content, which may not suit the slow, immersive nature of traditional theatre.
- Not all traditional artists have access to technology or platforms to showcase their work effectively.
- Less Community Bonding: Traditional performances were community events; digital viewing is often individual and less social.

1.11 Bridging the Gap – Influence of Traditional Media on Modern Media

The transition from traditional media forms, like Nautanki, Jatra, and Tamasha, to modern cinema and digital

platforms has created a dynamic blending of old and new. Traditional media has profoundly influenced modern storytelling, particularly in Indian cinema, where its narrative techniques, character arcs, and social themes continue to resonate. Early Bollywood cinema, such as Pakeezah (1972) and Mughal-e-Azam (1960), drew directly from theatrical traditions, showcasing grand sets, stylized dialogues, and classical music, which were core elements of live performances. In more contemporary films like Lagaan (2001) and Swades (2004), the influence of folk storytelling is evident through village settings, moral narratives, and community-driven plots, mirroring the themes central to traditional theatre. Filmmakers such as Sanjay Leela Bhansali have made a conscious effort to preserve the visual richness of Indian theatre through elaborate costumes, choreographed sequences, and classical music, seen in films like Devdas (2002), Bajirao Mastani (2015), and Padmaavat (2018). Even regional cinema has embraced these influences, with films like Natarang (2010) rooted in the tradition of Marathi Tamasha theatre, blending folk culture with cinematic techniques.

The influence extends to modern digital formats as well. Web series like Gullak, Panchayat, and Laakhon Mein Ek continue the legacy of traditional media by maintaining the rural ethos, community stories, and simple, yet profound narratives, all of which were hallmark features of folk theatre. Modern cinema has also adopted the melodramatic style, direct audience engagement, and breaking of the fourth wall seen in

traditional performances. Films like Gangubai Kathiawadi (2022) use these techniques to emotionally draw in viewers, much like the performers in Nautanki once did with live audiences. Moreover, traditional media's impact on visual symbolism and minimalist backdrops is evident in films like Court (2014) and Masaan (2015), where powerful visuals convey complex ideas, mirroring the theatrical use of symbolic props and simple yet evocative staging.

The role of music and live performance in films has remained integral, serving as a narrative tool rather than just a commercial element. Movies such as Gangs of Wasseypur (2012) incorporate folk music and traditional instruments to enhance cultural resonance, akin to the way music played a central role in traditional theatre. Additionally, the digital era has seen the rise of hybrid performances and experimental theatre, bridging the gap between stage and screen. Recorded theatre on platforms like National Theatre Live and archives from India's Prithvi Theatre demonstrate the crossover between live stage performances and digital content. Interactive and experimental performances, such as The Last Poet or Inside Edge, incorporate theatrical elements, proving that the boundaries between traditional and modern media are fluid.

Thus, modern media not only continues to draw inspiration from traditional theatre but also helps evolve and adapt these forms, ensuring that the essence of cultural storytelling endures in the digital age.

1.11.1 Challenges in the Transition

1. Loss of Cultural Authenticity :

One of the major challenges in adapting traditional forms like Nautanki to modern storytelling mediums is the potential loss of cultural authenticity. Traditional theatre forms are deeply connected to specific cultural contexts, regional dialects, music, and customs that may not easily translate into digital or globalized formats. For instance, the linguistic richness of Nautanki—often performed in local dialects or rural vernaculars—may be lost in translation when adapted for a broader, often urban, audience. In the process of modernization, there is a risk that the nuances of the original tradition, including the moral storytelling, the community-centric performances, and the regional-specific symbolism, may be diluted or oversimplified.

2. Technological Constraints:

The technological demands of modern media can pose a challenge to the traditional forms of theatre. For example, the visual spectacle of traditional performances like Nautanki—which was largely driven by live interaction, colorful costumes, and vibrant sets—might not have the same impact when captured on camera. Film and web series rely heavily on cinematography and editing, which may not always align with the live and spontaneous feel that is inherent to traditional theatre. Moreover, the production costs of adapting these traditions into high-quality films or web series can be a barrier.

3. Commercialization and Profitability:

One of the primary motivations for moving traditional theatre into digital spaces is the potential for commercialization. However, there is a fine balance between maintaining the integrity of the original art form and making it commercially viable. Often, in the rush to appeal to a wider audience and generate profits, the essence of the traditional narrative may be compromised. Modern films and web series may feel pressured to add elements like sex appeal, violence, or sensationalism in order to attract a broad audience, which can clash with the moral clarity and wholesome nature of traditional narratives. For example, the focus on romantic subplots, bold language, or graphic content may alienate audiences who are familiar with the more innocent, wholesome themes of Nautanki.

4. Preservation of Traditional Craftsmanship:

The traditional craft of Nautanki—whether it is in the form of live performance, puppetry, or folk singing—requires hands-on, artisanal skills. As modern media transitions away from physical, live performances to digital content, there is a risk that traditional skills such as puppet-making, traditional costuming, and folk music could be lost or overshadowed by digital and globalized trends. The loss of this intangible cultural heritage poses a threat not only to the craft but also to the cultural identity it represents.

CASE STUDY

Case Studies Summary

- Lagaan (2001)

Merges folk narrative with contemporary film, harnessing song, dance, and unity themes—and demonstrating how traditional material can be embraced by international audiences without sacrificing cultural richness.

- Gullak (2019)

Webseries based on small-town life and family dynamics, recalling folk theatre's emotional intensity, moralising, and character-oriented storytelling.

- Panchayat (2020)

Grabs rural India and community concerns with simplicity and humor. Its narratives borrow from folk traditions and reach international audiences via digital streaming.

- Natarang (2010)

Marathi adaptation of Tamasha, which captures the artistic and social woes of folk actors. It saves folk culture while remaking it for screen success.

- Kumudini (NSD)

A Nautanki performance digitized and saved for the world to access, demonstrating how digital technologies can save and disseminate traditional theatre.

- Theatre on Zoom (COVID-19)

During the pandemic, live performances were repurposed for digital platforms to ensure continuity and discover new digital forms for folk arts.

2.1 Statement of the Problem

The transition from classic forms such as Nautanki to contemporary digital media is both opportunity and challenge. While digital media offers greater access and innovation, they risk watering down authenticity and cultural richness. The issue is to balance the essence of traditional forms with evolving audience tastes and digital spaces.

2.2 Study Objectives

- To follow the historical and cultural importance of Nautanki and other folk theatre genres.
- To learn why they are declining.
- To find out how new media reinterprets old-storytelling.
- To consider evolving audience attitudes and behaviors.
- To evaluate the role of contemporary media in the preservation of folk art.
- To suggest ways to merge old and new storytelling with meaning.

2.1Research Questions

1. What is the history and cultural importance of traditional forms like Nautanki?

2. How has the shift from traditional media to modern platforms (like films and streaming services) affected traditional art forms?

3. Do modern platforms (e.g., movies, online streaming) keep the original feel of traditional art like Nautanki?

4. How does technology help in saving and sharing traditional art in

today's world?

5. What are the effects of making traditional art available on modern platforms, in terms of both money and

creativity?

6. Can traditional and modern media work together, and how?
7. How do today's audiences feel about traditional art like Nautanki?
8. How can we make sure traditional theatre survives and grows in the age of digital media?
9. What role do institutions, governments, and local communities play in keeping traditional media alive?

2.2 Scope and Significance

The scope of this study encompasses the evolution of traditional Indian theatre—particularly Nautanki—and its influence on and transition into modern storytelling platforms, especially digital streaming services like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and similar media. The research covers the

historical roots of Nautanki, its sociocultural impact, its narrative structures, and performance styles, and then analyzes how these elements are either preserved, adapted, or lost in modern forms of storytelling.

Geographically, the focus is primarily on North India where Nautanki thrived, but the study also extends to a broader national context by examining pan-Indian folk traditions that have undergone similar transformations. Temporally, the research spans from the early 20th century—when Nautanki was at its cultural peak—to the present day digital era.

The significance of this study lies in its attempt to bridge the gap between folk heritage and contemporary media, two domains often viewed as separate. By highlighting the ongoing dialogue between traditional and modern forms, this research contributes to the broader discourse on cultural preservation, modernization, and identity. In a rapidly digitizing world, where global content is accessible at the click of a button, local and folk narratives risk being overshadowed. However, as some modern creators return to these roots for inspiration, there

arises an opportunity to revive and recontextualize these traditions for a new audience.

This study is also significant for educators, content creators, policymakers, and cultural preservationists. For educators and scholars, it provides a cultural and analytical framework to understand storytelling evolution in India. For digital content creators, it offers insights into the untapped potential of folk narratives. For policymakers and NGOs

involved in cultural preservation, the study suggests ways to support traditional artists and integrate folk culture into mainstream media.

2.3 Limitations of the Study

1. Narrow Focus on Nautanki:

a. The study specifically focuses on Nautanki, which may limit the findings to this form of traditional theatre, without addressing other forms of folk theatre or traditional media.

2. Geographical Scope:

a. The research mainly considers Indian traditional media and may not explore how traditional media in other cultures and countries have adapted to modern platforms, limiting its global perspective.

3. Availability of Data:

a. Accessing authentic historical data or original performances of traditional media, especially from remote or rural areas, might be challenging, which could hinder the depth of analysis.

4. Technological Barriers:

a. The study may be limited by the lack of digitally archived materials for older performances, making it difficult to analyze the complete evolution of traditional media.

5. Audience Variability:

a. Audience reception to traditional media may differ greatly across age groups, societal classes, and regions, which could affect the consistency of findings in the study.

6. Short-term Nature of Research:

a. Given the rapid changes in digital media and technology, the study may not account for emerging trends or changes in modern media after the research is completed.

7. Commercial Pressures:

a. The influence of commercialization on traditional media adaptations might not be fully explored, as the commercial aspects of digital media can vary widely across different platforms.

8. Evolving Nature of Digital Platforms:

a. The fast-paced development of digital platforms, such as streaming services and social media, might mean that some platforms or trends analyzed in the study may change quickly, affecting the conclusions drawn from them.

9. Subjective Interpretation of Cultural Significance:

a. The interpretation of the cultural significance and authenticity of traditional media may vary, and the study may reflect personal or scholarly biases in understanding what constitutes an "authentic" representation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1_Traditional Media and Cultural Identity

Folk Arts as Cultural Preservers

Folk arts such as Nautanki serve a crucial purpose of protecting cultural heritage by transmitting narratives,

values, and traditions from one generation to another (Kapoor, 2012). They support community identity, particularly in rural communities.

Globalization's Impact

Globalization threatens these art forms by pushing forward modern, Western media. Although it brings in global exposure, it tends to convert traditional performances into entertainment, decontextualizing them from meaning (Mehta, 2014).

3.2_Shift from Traditional to Contemporary Media

Impact on Film

Bollywood has borrowed heavily from Nautanki both in terms of dramatic flair and music. But today, these borrowings tend to be more centered on mass popularity rather than cultural origins (Sen, 2009).

Digital Revolution

YouTube and Netflix have made the folk arts accessible globally, but tend to re-engineer them in keeping with contemporary tastes, at the risk of losing authenticity (Sharma, 2016).

3.3_Technology in Continuing Tradition

Digital Archives

Digital archives preserve performances for generations to come, but lose cultural richness if not properly curated (Roy, 2018).

Virtual Reality (VR) Use

VR provides immersive experiences of folk performances with increased accessibility. Yet, it can dilute live performer-audience interaction (Mishra, 2021).

3.4_Commercialization and Cultural Loss

Authenticity at Risk

Transposing folk arts to commercial media can oversimplify or distort cultural narratives (Rathi, 2017).

Global Media Influence

Global commercialization raises visibility but threatens cultural dilution through content tailoring for global markets (Das, 2020).

3.5_Audience and Media Consumption

Altered Habits

New media platforms have altered audience needs towards quick, adaptive content, threatening traditional long-form content like Nautanki (Joshi, 2015).

Online Engagement

Social media such as Facebook and Instagram present new opportunities for engaging audiences, but need to retain cultural richness, rather than entertainment quotient (Tiwari, 2019).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

The research adopts a descriptive research design to examine cultural and social transformation in traditional theatre, with emphasis on the transformation of Nautanki to digital media.

4.2 Study Area

Lucknow, the state of Uttar Pradesh, is the study area, which is steeped in cultural heritage and where traditional theatre forms like Nautanki have long-standing roots.

4.3 Sample Size

A sample of 100 was taken through purposive and random sampling, involving creators, performers, and consumers of both traditional and digital media.

4.4 Data Collection Methods

A. Primary Data:

Interviews: With the performers of Nautanki as well as audience to know their perception towards going digital

Surveys: Online surveys on audience choice, authenticity in digital formats, and Nautanki awareness online.

B. Secondary Data:

Literature Review: Scholarly sources regarding conventional media, digitalization, and globalization's influence on folk arts.

4.5 Sampling Techniques

Purposive Sampling: For choosing participants directly associated with Nautanki and digital media.

Convenience Sampling: For sending online questionnaires through social media and relevant forums.

4.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative: Closed-ended survey responses were summarized using percentages and graphical charts.

Qualitative: Open-ended answers were grouped by themes..

Grouping: Responses were examined by age, occupation, and media use to identify trends in viewing.

4.7 Limitations

- Sample size is small and may not be representative.
- Concentration on Lucknow may not reflect broader regional tendencies.
- Restrictions in time meant fewer performances were examined.
- Difficulty in accessing participants.
- Response bias because of social desirability.
- Limited access to digital facilities in the countryside for effect on diversity of responses.

DATA ANALYSIS

This research paper presents the data analysis and interpretation of the survey conducted among 100 individuals in Lucknow. The data was collected through Google form is analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, and the findings are presented in tables along with their interpretation.

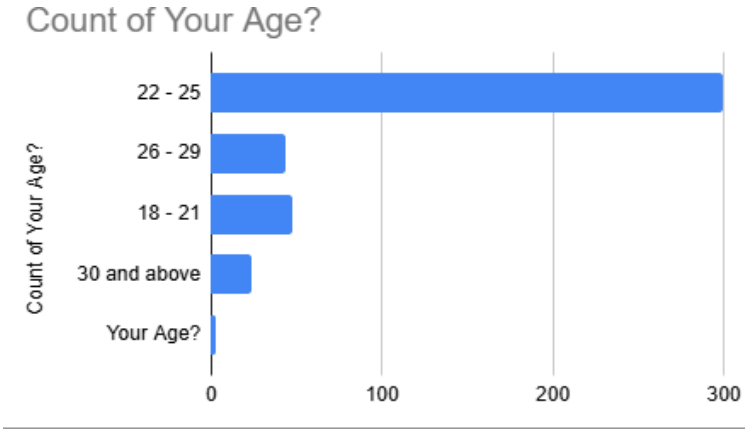
5.1 Section 1 (Demographics)

1. Age?

22 - 25	75	72.12%
18 - 21	12	11.54%
26 - 29	11	10.58%
30 and above	6	5.77%
Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)

Interpretation:

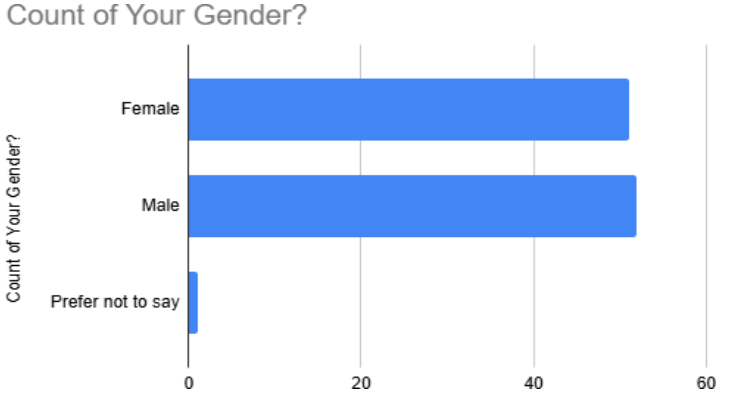
The majority of respondents (72.12%) are in the 22–25 age group, indicating the survey primarily reached young adults, likely college students or early professionals.



2. What is your Gender?

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	52	50.00%
Female	51	49.04%
Prefer not to say	1	0.96%

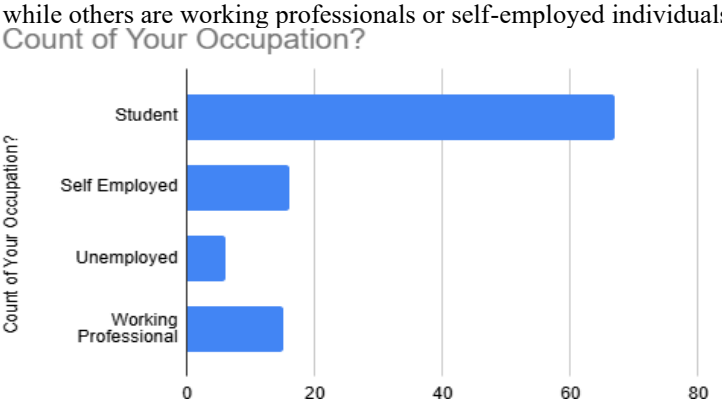
Interpretation: The gender distribution is almost equal, providing balanced perspectives from both males and females in the research.



3. What is your Occupation?

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Student	67	64.42%
Self Employed	16	15.38%
Working Professional	15	14.42%
Unemployed	6	5.77%

Interpretation: A large proportion of respondents are students (64.42%), showing high interest among the youth, while others are working professionals or self-employed individuals.

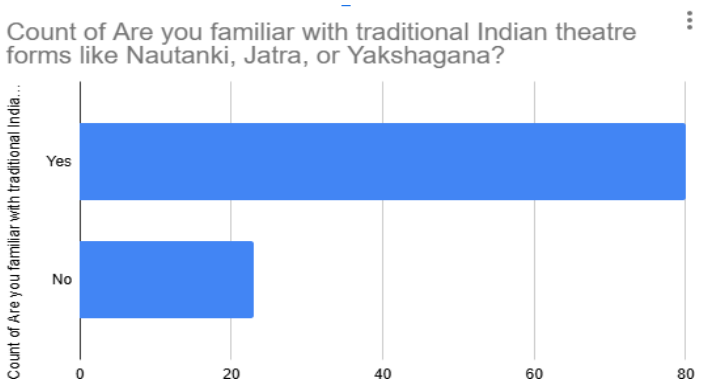


SECTION: 2 Awareness and Experience with Traditional Theatre

4. Are you familiar with traditional Indian theatre forms like Nautanki, Jatra, or Yakshagana?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	80	76.92%
No	23	22.12%
Missing	1	0.96%

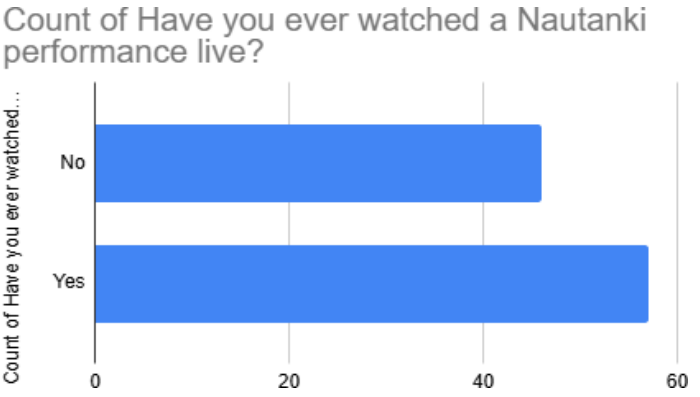
Interpretation: A large majority (over 75%) are aware of traditional Indian theatre forms, indicating cultural familiarity within the sample.



5. Have you ever watched a Nautanki performance live?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	57	54.81%
No	46	44.23%
Missing	1	0.96%

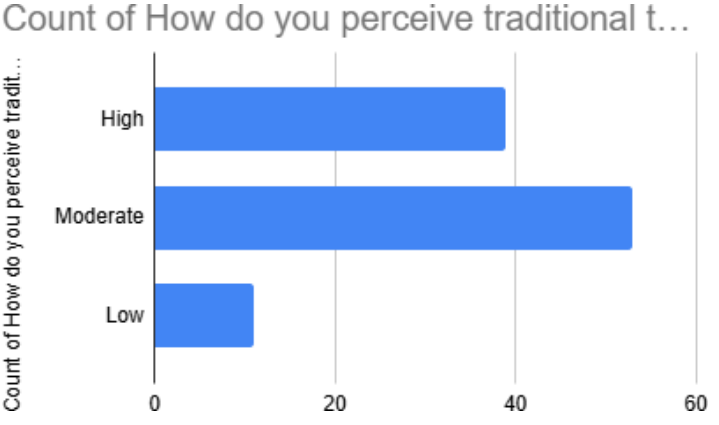
Interpretation: Slightly more than half of the respondents have experienced a Nautanki performance live, reflecting moderate firsthand exposure.



6. How do you perceive traditional theatre in terms of Entertainment value?

Entertainment Value	Frequency	Percentage
Moderate	53	50.96%
High	39	37.50%
Low	11	10.58%
Missing	1	0.96%

Interpretation: Most respondents (50.96%) perceive traditional theatre as moderately entertaining, while 37.5% find it highly entertaining. A small portion (10.58%) sees low entertainment value.

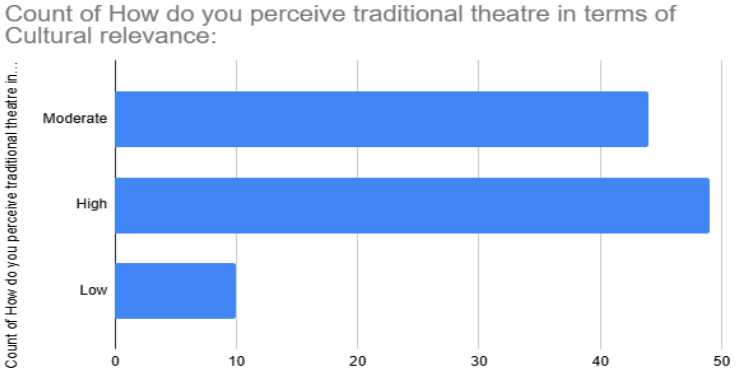


7. How do you perceive traditional theatre in terms of Cultural relevance?

Cultural Relevance	Frequency	Percentage
High	49	47.12%
Moderate	44	42.31%

Low	10	9.62%
Missing	1	0.96%

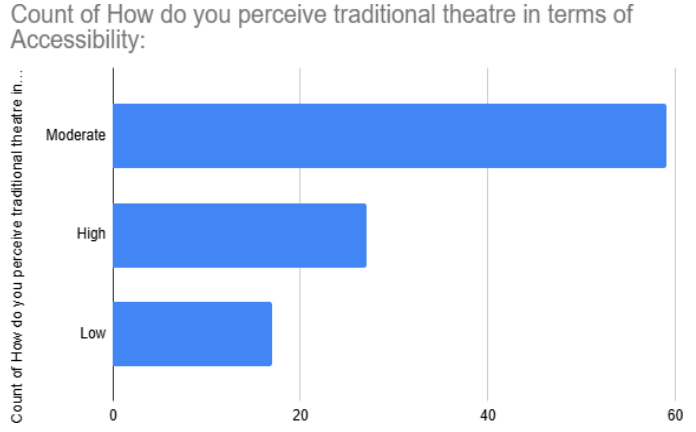
Interpretation: Traditional theatre is widely viewed as culturally relevant, with almost 90% of responses indicating high or moderate relevance.



8. How do you perceive traditional theatre in terms of Accessibility?

Accessibility	Frequency	Percentage
Moderate	59	56.73%
High	27	25.96%
Low	17	16.35%
Missing	1	0.96%

Interpretation: Most people perceive traditional theatre as moderately accessible (56.73%), with fewer viewing it as highly accessible or limited in access.

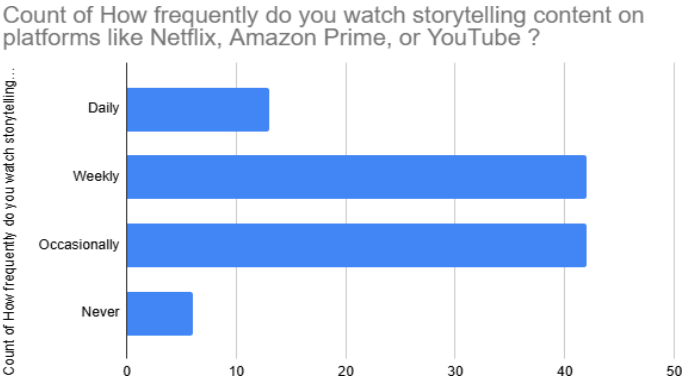


SECTION: 3 Perception of Modern Storytelling (TV/OTT/YouTube)

9. How frequently do you watch storytelling content on platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, or YouTube?

Frequency	Count	Percentage
Weekly	42	40.38%
Occasionally	42	40.38%
Daily	13	12.50%
Never	6	5.77%
Missing	1	0.96%

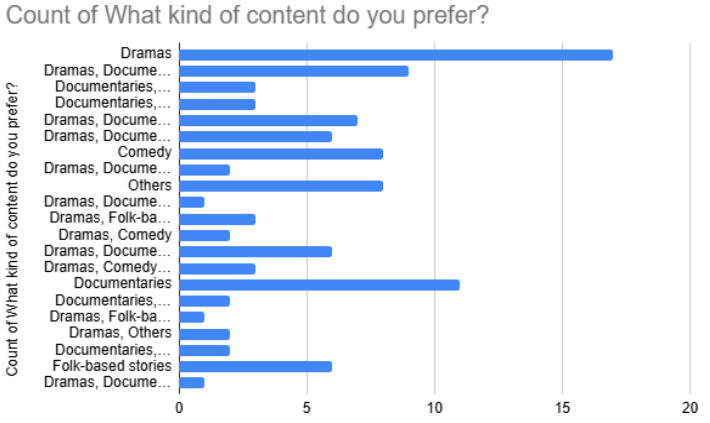
Interpretation: Viewing habits are evenly split between weekly and occasional viewers. Daily watchers form a smaller group (12.5%), and very few never engage with such content.



10. What kind of content do you prefer?

Preference Category	Frequency	Percentage
Dramas	17	16.35%
Documentaries	11	10.58%
Dramas + Docs + Others (Multiple Mixes)	~60	~59%
Comedy (alone or mixed)	~30	~29%
Folk-based stories (alone or mixed)	~25	~25%
Others	8	7.69%
Missing	1	0.96%

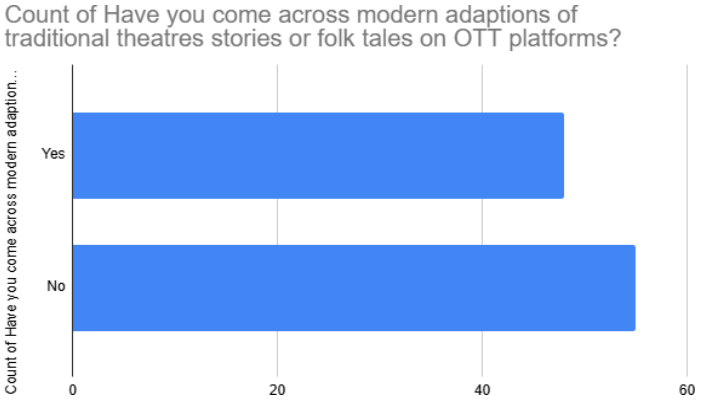
Interpretation: Preferences are diverse, with Dramas being the top solo choice (16.35%). A large portion prefers mixed content involving dramas, documentaries, comedy, and folk-based stories. This indicates broad and blended tastes among viewers.



11. Have you come across modern adaptations of traditional theatre stories or folk tales on OTT platforms?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	55	52.88%
Yes	48	46.15%
Blank	1	0.96%

Interpretation: The audience is nearly split, with slightly more respondents not encountering such adaptations. This may indicate a gap in visibility or promotion of such content.

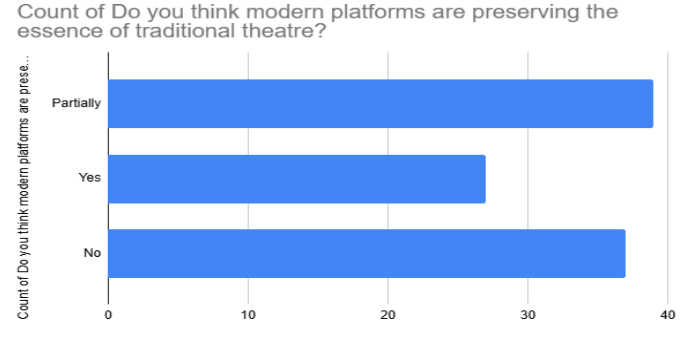


SECTION: 4 Transition from Nautanki to Netflix

12. Do you think modern platforms are preservingthe essence of traditional theatre?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Partially	39	37.50%
No	37	35.58%
Yes	27	25.96%
Blank	1	0.96%

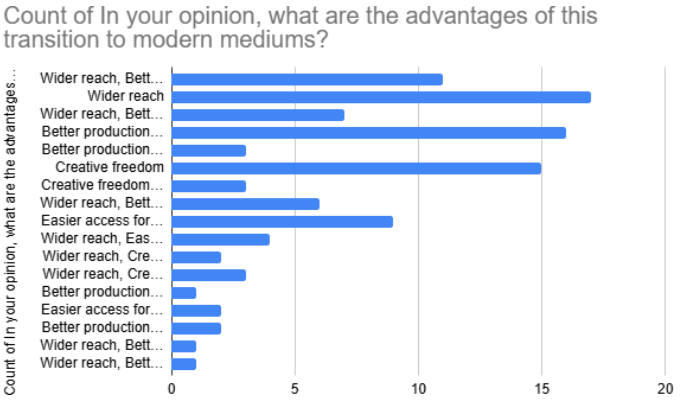
Interpretation: Most respondents feel the essence is only partially preserved or not preserved, highlighting concerns about authenticity in digital adaptations.



13. In your opinion, what are the advantages of this transition to modern mediums?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Wider reach	17	16.35%
Better production quality	16	15.38%
Creative freedom	15	14.42%
All 3 combined (Wider reach + Quality + Freedom)	11	10.58%
Easier access for younger audiences	9	8.65%

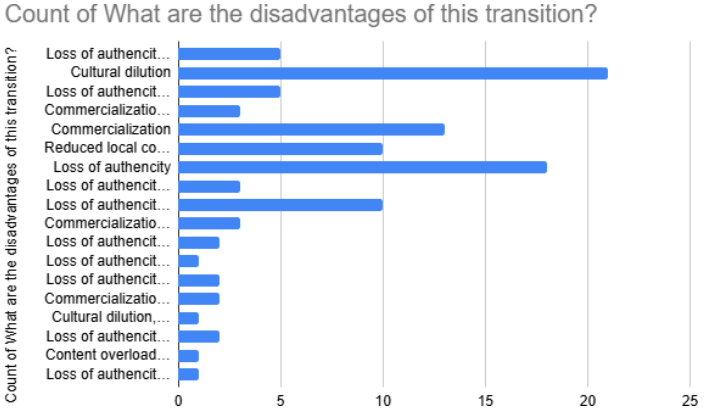
Interpretation: The audience values reach, quality, and freedom most. These features make traditional storytelling more appealing to today's digital viewers.



14. What are the disadvantages of this transition?

Response (simplified summary)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Cultural dilution	21	20.19%
Loss of authenticity	18	17.31%
Commercialization	13	12.50%
Combined concerns (authenticity, commercialization, cultural)	Multiple combinations	

Interpretation: Top concerns are loss of authenticity and cultural dilution, which suggest that modernization may compromise traditional values if not handled carefully.

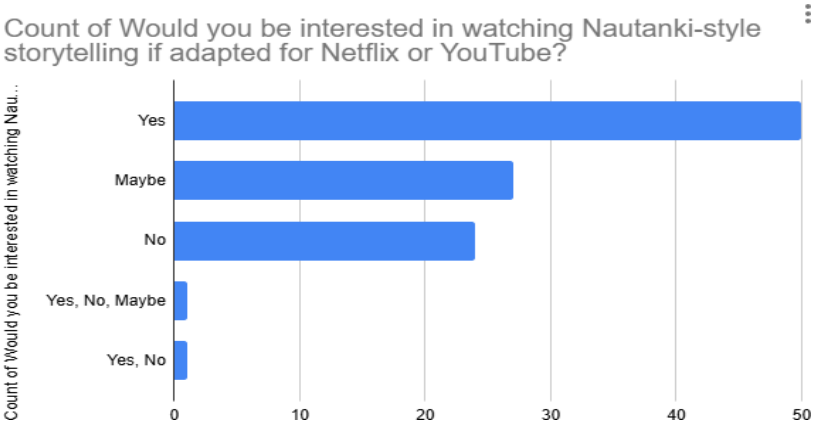


SECTION: 5 Opinion-Based questions

15. Would you be interested in watching Nautanki-style storytelling if adapted for Netflix or YouTube?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	50	48.08%
Maybe	27	25.96%
No	24	23.08%
Multiple answers/Blank	3	2.88%

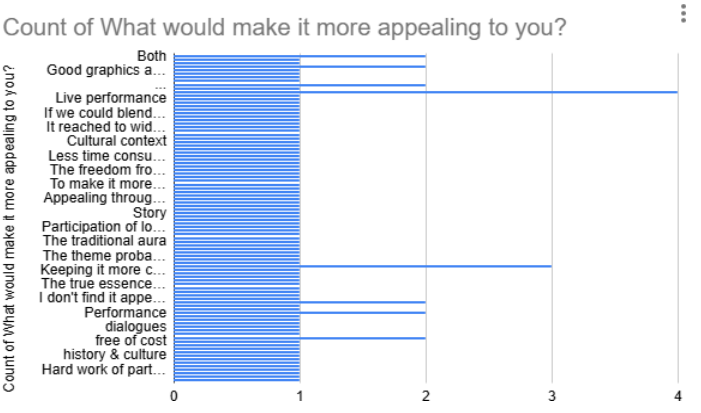
Interpretation: A majority are open to or interested in such adaptations, suggesting good potential if done thoughtfully.



16. What would make it more appealing to you?

Sample Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Nothing	3	2.88%
"." (blank character)	3	2.88%
"Both" (likely referring to formats)	2	1.92%
Multiple unique responses	1 each	~0.96% each

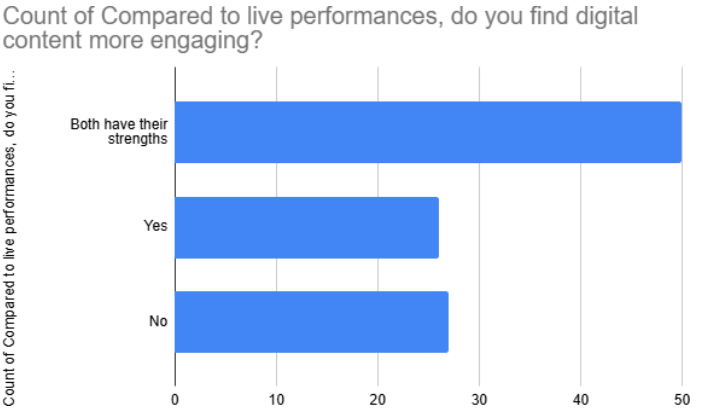
Interpretation: Responses are highly diverse and personalized, indicating that people have unique expectations—ranging from better storylines, production quality, to language preservation. No single trend dominates.



17. Compared to live performances, do you find digital content more engaging?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Both have their strengths	50	48.08%
No	27	25.96%
Yes	26	25.00%
Blank	1	0.96%

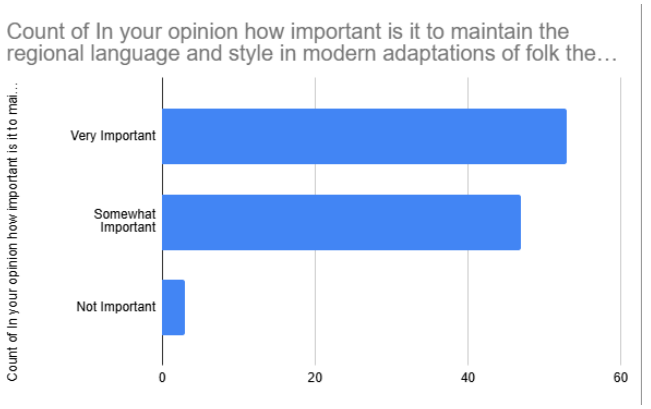
Interpretation: Nearly half the participants appreciate both formats, acknowledging that each has unique value. Digital engagement is somewhat balanced with live performance preference.



18. How important is it to maintain regional language and style in adaptations?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Important	53	50.96%
Somewhat Important	47	45.19%
Not Important	3	2.88%
Blank	1	0.96%

Interpretation: Over 96% believe it is important to preserve regional elements, showing strong cultural sensitivity and value toward authentic representation.

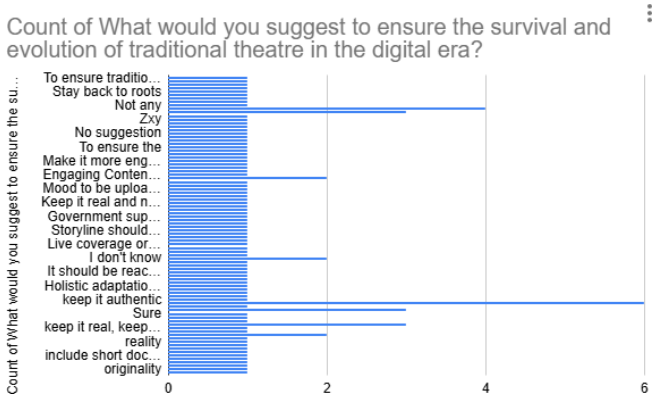


19. Suggestions for ensuring survival and evolution of traditional theatre?

Common themes (each ⩽ 3% due to wide variety):

- Promotion and digitization
- Use of regional language and culture
- Quality content and storytelling
- Modern tools, but authentic roots
- Government and institutional support

Interpretation:
Responses reflect a multi-faceted strategy: from policy-level support to creative innovation. There's consensus on the need for modern exposure while maintaining traditional roots.
20.



FINDINGS

Findings and Insights from the Data:

1 Audience Demographics & Awareness

- Respondents were varied in age, gender, and profession.
- 53% did not know traditional forms of theatre, but 46% had watched digital versions.

2 Perception of Traditional Theatre Digitally

- 74% think that digital media does not or partially holds on to the spirit of traditional theatre.
- 90% appreciate traditional theatre as a cultural tradition.

3 Interest in Modern Adaptations

- 48% are interested, and 26% are willing to watch Nautanki-type content on platforms such as YouTube or Netflix.

4 Engagement Preferences

- 48% like both digital and live equally; just 25% like digital.
- Theatre traditional scores high on entertainment and culture but low on accessibility.

5 Plus Points of Digital Shift

- The plus points are broader reach, improved quality of production, artistic freedom, and access for youth.

6 Minuses Observed

- The primary anxieties: dilution of culture, loss of originality, and commercialization.

7 Language & Style Significance

- 96% emphasize the importance of maintaining regional language and style in new interpretations.

8 Recommendations & Hindrances

- Respondents demand greater exposure, government support, community engagement, and youth-oriented content.

Comparison: Data vs. Literature Review

Preservation of Culture

- Kapoor (2012) and data both emphasize the importance of cultural authenticity and regionalization.

Globalization Impact

- Mehta (2014), Das (2020) point towards cultural loss owing to globalization; audiences concur.

Digital Media as Opportunity & Risk

- Sharma (2016), Roy (2018) observe digital reach versus loss of depth; reflected in audience perceptions.

Commercialization Effects

- Rathi (2017) cautions against oversimplification; similar concerns are voiced by respondents.

Audience Preferences & Change

- Joshi (2015), Tiwari (2019) and findings support that youth prefer online but are receptive to conventional content adapted imaginatively.

CONCLUSION

The transition to modern theatre such as Nautanki to digital media represents a substantial shift in storytelling and audience interaction. This research, undertaken in culturally vibrant Lucknow, brings out the possibilities and issues involved in this shift.

Nautanki had once flourished as an effective vehicle of grassroots entertainment and education. Urbanization, altered lifestyles, and a lack of patronage have caused its decline with many artists leaving their place of origin and spectators—particularly youth—migrating towards quick, cyber content.

Nonetheless, digital media gives new life to Nautanki. YouTube and other such platforms enable artists to get access to international audiences, save content, and experiment with new forms. Though this increases exposure, it threatens to water down authenticity and the live, interactive nature of the art form.

The study indicates audiences welcome traditional content online—as long as it is presented in a creative way. New techniques such as editing and online marketing can engage younger audiences and initiate renewed interest.

To make this development significant, there must be solid support from cultural organizations, governments, and media outlets. Partnerships, training, and educational integration can help ensure traditional theatre not just survives but develops with intent.

Briefly, the transition from Nautanki to Netflix tells us about larger cultural changes. With thoughtful evolution, this blending can retain heritage while opening up to the future.

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