
Digital and Media Promotion of Folk Literature in India

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Article Received: 22/11/2025**Article Accepted:** 23/12/2025**Published Online:** 24/12/2025**DOI:**10.47311/IJOES.2025.7.12.414

Abstract:

Indian folk literature, comprising oral narratives, folktales, songs, regional storytelling, and ritualistic performances, represents the cultural diversity and intangible heritage of the country. With modernization and urbanization, many of these traditions face the risk of fading into obscurity. Digital technologies and media platforms provide a transformative opportunity to preserve, promote, and disseminate folk literature to global audiences. This paper explores the role of digital media in promoting Indian folk literature, highlighting key initiatives, challenges, and potential strategies for sustainable cultural preservation, education, and tourism promotion.

Introduction

Folk literature is a living repository of history, moral values, ethical teachings, and social norms, traditionally passed down orally from generation to generation. Forms include folktales (Panchatantra, Jataka Tales), folk songs, ballads, puppet shows, and theatrical storytelling such as Yakshagana, Terukkuttu, and Kaavad Bachana.

The rapid pace of urbanization, migration, and the dominance of mainstream media threaten these traditions, making digital promotion essential. Digital tools—from social media platforms to virtual reality—enable preservation, documentation, and global dissemination. These technologies allow rural folk artists to reach international audiences, generate income, and revive interest among younger generations.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the role of digital technologies and media in preserving and promoting Indian folk literature.
2. To explore the impact of digital promotion on cultural education, tourism, and community development.
3. To analyze challenges and propose strategies for effective and sustainable digital dissemination of folk literature.

3. Research Methodology

The study is exploratory and qualitative, based on secondary sources including:

- Scholarly articles, research papers, and books on Indian folk literature.

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- Government reports and tourism studies on cultural promotion.
 - Online digital archives, social media campaigns, and multimedia platforms showcasing folk traditions.
 - Case studies of successful digital initiatives in India, such as Kaavad Bachana documentation, Rajasthan International Folk Festival online outreach, and YouTube-based storytelling channels.

4. Digital and Media Promotion of Folk Literature

4.1 Digitization and Digital Archives

Digitization is a foundational tool for preservation:

- **Digital libraries:** The Digital Library of India and IGNCA archives store manuscripts, folktales, and oral recordings for researchers and the public.
- **Video documentation:** Folk performances, rituals, and oral storytelling are recorded for posterity. For example, Karnataka's Yakshagana performances have been digitized and uploaded to online archives.
- **E-books and PDF collections:** Many regional folk tales, in local languages and English translations, are now accessible online.

Benefits include long-term preservation, global accessibility, and use as educational resources in schools and universities.

4.2 Social Media and Online Platforms

Social media has become a key tool for outreach:

- Platforms like **YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok** allow folk artists to perform, teach, and promote storytelling online.
- Campaigns such as #FolkStoriesIndia and #PreserveFolkCulture have generated awareness and engagement among youth and international audiences.
- Example: The *Kaavad storytelling tradition* of Rajasthan has gained worldwide attention via video documentaries and social media promotion.
- Artists monetize content, sell crafts, or attract festival invitations through online visibility.

4.3 Multimedia Storytelling and Animation

Modern technology has transformed storytelling:

- **Animated folktales and digital storybooks** make oral narratives accessible to children and urban audiences.
- **Podcasts:** Platforms like Spotify and Apple Podcasts host folk story series in multiple Indian languages.
- **Interactive storytelling:** Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) experiences allow users to virtually explore folk festivals, puppet theatres, or mythological scenes.

Example: Interactive digital presentations of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* folktales have been developed for classrooms and museums.

4.4 E-Learning and Educational Applications

Digital education platforms integrate folk literature into curriculum and interactive learning:

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- **StoryWeaver by Pratham Books** offers regional folktales in multiple languages with illustrations.
 - Mobile apps provide gamified storytelling experiences for children.
 - Online workshops and webinars on folk literature enhance cultural literacy for students and educators globally.

4.5 Role in Cultural Tourism

Digital promotion enhances tourism by creating curiosity and awareness:

- **Virtual tours and live streaming** of folk festivals attract domestic and international tourists.
- Online content informs tourists about local customs, performances, and handicrafts.
- Example: Rajasthan International Folk Festival (RIFF) broadcasts live performances online, creating a global audience and driving physical attendance.
- Folk literature-themed tours, e.g., guided storytelling walks in Kerala or Karnataka, are promoted digitally to attract cultural tourists.

4.6 Government and NGO Initiatives

Government and civil society play a vital role in digital promotion:

- **Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Tourism:** Digitization of cultural archives, online promotion of folk festivals, and development of mobile apps.
- **IGNCA:** Provides digital access to manuscripts, photographs, and audio-visual recordings.
- **NGOs:** Organizations like Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS) and Bangla Natak Dot Com document folk traditions digitally, conduct workshops, and organize online storytelling competitions.

4.7 Global Collaborations

Indian folk literature has gained international attention through digital media:

- Collaborations with UNESCO for intangible cultural heritage preservation.
- Online cross-cultural storytelling projects connecting Indian folk narratives with global audiences.
- International film festivals, webinars, and online exhibitions showcase Indian folk literature to students, scholars, and tourists worldwide.

4.8 Challenges in Digital Promotion

- **Language barriers:** Regional dialects limit global accessibility.
- **Authenticity:** Adaptation for mass media may dilute traditional narratives.
- **Access and literacy:** Many folk artists in rural areas lack technology or digital literacy.
- **Intellectual property issues:** Protecting oral traditions and folk knowledge is complex in digital formats.
- **Monetization disparities:** Not all artists benefit equally from digital exposure.

5. Recommendations

1. **Training programs for folk artists** in digital tools and content creation.
2. **Translation and subtitling** to overcome language barriers.

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3. **Collaborations with educational institutions** to integrate digital folk literature into curriculum.
 4. **Sustainable monetization models**, such as crowdfunding or digital marketplaces for crafts and performances.
 5. **Authenticity guidelines** for digital adaptations to preserve original narratives.

Conclusion

Digital and media promotion has revolutionized the way Indian folk literature is preserved, disseminated, and appreciated. Through social media, multimedia storytelling, e-learning, and virtual tourism, traditional narratives are reaching global audiences while supporting cultural education, economic development, and tourism. Addressing challenges related to authenticity, access, and intellectual property will be key to ensuring that digital promotion contributes sustainably to the preservation and appreciation of India's rich folk heritage.

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