



3. Examine the role of Traditional Media in shaping rural identity in western Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract

In Western Uttar Pradesh, traditional media continues to be crucial in establishing and preserving rural identity, despite the fast growth of digital channels. This research examines the ways in which traditional media, including folk performances, oral storytelling, community radio, and local newspapers, support rural communities in preserving their culture, fortifying their social relationships, and forging a sense of regional identity. A quantitative research of 150 rural residents was conducted to investigate their media consumption patterns, opinions on cultural reinforcement, and the influence of traditional media on political awareness and civic involvement. According to almost 70% of respondents, people use traditional media to keep informed and involved with culture. In addition, chi-square tests reveal a significant relationship between media consumption and community involvement ($p < 0.05$), highlighting the potential benefits of traditional media for maintaining cultural values, dialect preservation, and local governance participation. Through the interaction of traditional and modern media, this study demonstrates how folk media can preserve local customs despite technological advancements. The findings underscore the importance of preserving traditional media outlets through policy interventions and governmental assistance to ensure their continued influence on rural identity development.

Keywords: *Traditional Media, Rural Identity, Cultural Preservation, Folk Performances, Western Uttar Pradesh, Social Cohesion, Oral Storytelling*

1. INTRODUCTION

Where rural areas, like Western Uttar Pradesh, are rich in cultural traditions and legacy, more study on the influence of traditional media on rural identity is essential [1]. News, the preservation of cultural traditions, and the forging of social ties all depend on public venues like newspapers, radio, and television as well as in-person meetings [2]. Though more people live in cities and there are more digital possibilities, people in rural areas of India still listen to the radio and read newspapers to keep current developments. This study aims to investigate in rural Western Uttar Pradesh the part traditional media plays in forming and supporting local identities in terms of social, cultural, and political affinities. Western Uttar Pradesh, a region recognized for its agricultural economy, ethnically diverse population, and close-knit communities, helps one to better grasp the interconnected character of rural identity and the media [3]. By highlighting and reflecting local events, folk stories, farming techniques, and customs, traditional media outlets enable individuals



living in rural areas feel more connected to their history and culture. Without the preservation of local languages, folklore, and community values, rural identity is incomplete; this study aims to investigate the ways in which various media forms support this quest.

The paper explores how public opinion is shaped by rural populations' views of social issues, political participation, and conventional media. In places with low levels of computer literacy and internet availability, newspapers and radio stations are typically the main channels of distributing news and information. Rural towns depend on these media sources to spread information about government policies, healthcare initiatives, and agricultural successes—all of which shapes their shared consciousness. This study will also cover that topic by examining how the shifting dynamics between old and new digital platforms influences rural identity. Conventional media outlets continue to promote culturally distinct, community-based identities and values, unlike digital media's focus on new stories and worldwide opinions. This study aims to show, via case studies and field surveys, that, despite technological developments, traditional media remain strong and relevant.

Research results from this show the need of traditional media in safeguarding the history and culture of rural Western Uttar Pradesh. By means of a thorough investigation of media consumption patterns, content, and audience involvement, this research will assist to close the knowledge gaps on how conventional media have contributed to the development and preservation of rural identities in the digital era.

1.1 Diverse Forms of Traditional Media

1. Folk Theatre and Performance Arts

In Western Uttar Pradesh, folk theater—particularly Nautanki and Ramlila—is a significant traditional media. Nautanki, a type of musical storytelling that also incorporates moral and humorous tales, is popular during rural fairs and festivals [4]. Mythological stories, social issues, and historical occurrences are regularly parodied while simultaneously delivering important moral lessons. The Ramlila, a social and spiritual event that re-enacts scenes from the Ramayana, is done annually around Dussehra. It fosters harmony amongst groups and reinforces religious identity.

Alongside larger-scale performances, smaller folk-art forms like Kavadi Yatra and Bhagat dramatizations continue to exist. When audiences actively participate in these types of theatrical performances, a shared cultural experience is formed that transcends age and social position. Folk performances serve as a vital platform for communication and education on topics such as gender equality, health awareness, and agricultural reforms [5].



2. Oral Storytelling and Folk Songs

The oral storytelling traditions of lokgeet (folk songs) and kathakachans (narrative recitations) are still highly valued today. These stories often center on local folklore, heroic narratives, and spiritual quests, and help to preserve historical truths and moral precepts. Birha songs mirror the emotions and seasonal cycles of rural life, as do the Kajri and Braj songs sung during monsoon festivals, which portray yearning and separation. Folk songs can be used to mark religious processions, weddings, and agricultural fairs, among other celebrations, and they foster a sense of community through a common cultural legacy [6]. Through the use of rhyme and melody, folk songs preserve indigenous wisdom, languages, and customs, acting as a cultural hub for rural communities.

3. Local Newspapers and Print Media

Local newspapers are a major source of news and other information for the rural communities of Western Uttar Pradesh [7]. In contrast to big national publications, these media address hyper-local topics such as community disputes, agricultural advice, village development efforts, and local governance. Through the provision of relatable content, occasionally published in Hindi or regional dialects, they guarantee that individuals with limited literacy skills can participate in public discourse. Local publications support farmers' rights, cover social movements, and feature grassroots initiatives, giving underrepresented people a voice. Traditional print media facilitates communication between citizens and their elected officials, which promotes accountability and public participation. Additional channels for citizens to express their concerns and participate in local governance are the letters to the editor and community opinion sections.

4. Community Radio and Rural Broadcasting

Radio plays an important role in rural areas since it is a widely dispersed, inexpensive form of mass communication. Targeting a specific demographic, community radio stations broadcast programming in regional dialects and discuss subjects that are pertinent to the daily lives of rural communities. Weather forecasts, health awareness campaigns, agricultural displays, and educational broadcasts are the staples of community radio programming.

People without internet access are effectively reached via community radio in Western Uttar Pradesh. Local farmers, artisans, and women's organizations are regularly invited by stations to share their knowledge and experiences, which promotes participatory communication and communal problem-solving. Folk melodies, theatrical messaging, and radio jingles are used to make information engaging and memorable.

1.2 Social Change through Folk and Traditional Media In Rural Development



Rural development has traditionally been defined as initiatives to improve the material and social circumstances of people living in rural areas, which are often sparsely inhabited and geographically dispersed [8]. Efforts to enhance areas that are not included in the conventional metropolitan economic model are typically referred to as rural development. The entirety of Indian culture, which is vast, varied, and historically significant, is not covered by modern mass media alone. Due to poverty and illiteracy, thousands of individuals do not have regular access to these types of mainstream media. Because 35% of the population lacks literacy and the media mostly targets urban areas, the majority of people lack access to information, education, and enjoyment. The peasants perceived the mainstream media as glamorous, impersonal, and unrealistic in comparison to the well-known performances of traditional artists, which they could not only see, hear, and feel emotionally. Folk and traditional media come in a wide range of forms that can be used to reach a variety of audiences and promote change and advancement in the nation [9]. Rural society is significantly impacted by folk and traditional media's recognized idioms, usefulness, and entertainment value. Regardless of their level of fluency in spoken or written English, as well as in areas like interest, comprehension, interpretation, attitude, and perception, people can typically communicate well using folk media. Traditional folk media is the most crucial instrument for social change. Delivering agricultural and social themes through traditional media may require a great deal of editing, although this is not always the case. Traditional and folk media can be used to efficiently and simply communicate social issues related to rural development. Currently, traditional and modern media formats complement one other effectively. If we wish to keep old media alive and dynamic, we must continue to use it with caution and integrate it with new media. Documenting traditional and folk media will support development initiatives while also helping to preserve and pass on our culture, customs, and values to next generations. For India's rural populations and the nation's overall economic development, increasing the amount of rural economic activity is essential. Rural development has been presented as being more important than it was in the past as the nation has advanced through its history. The approach aims to achieve steady social and economic development, increased socioeconomic equality, and improved rural productivity.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Priya et al. (2013) [10] studied producers and marketers should develop ethical advertising strategies with the understanding that rural residents thrive on print and electronic media advertisements. To effectively engage with and promote to rural areas, marketers must possess a solid understanding of the social, demographic, and economic aspects of this sector.

Pareek (2013) [11] examined effective communication is a crucial instrument for reaching the rural population. Radio was considered as a potential mass medium for connecting with rural communities during the 1950s and 1960s. Television and motion pictures are also classified as mass media. However, things have changed since then. Modern amenities



like television, phones, the internet, and mobile phones may be available in any rural Indian home. The winner will be the one with the necessary time, resources, and innovative ideas to connect with rural consumers. Given the opportunities offered by rural markets, it is reasonable to conclude that there is a bright future ahead of marketers who can understand the nuances of these environments and take advantage of them.

Kundu et al. (2013) [12] found that the most important elements influencing rural customers' decisions to purchase fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs) are television, newspaper, and word-of-mouth advertisements.

Kumar et al (2013) [13] stated in the potential and difficulty of the rural Indian market, The Indian growth narrative is now reaching even the most remote regions of the country, where income, consumption, and production have all been on the rise. Incomes are on the rise, the economy is booming, and people's routines, inclinations, and perspectives are fluid and ever-evolving.

Behura et al. (2012) [14] discussed the significance of effective communication in connecting with rural audiences. Rural consumers are particularly loyal to their brands and have a better understanding of symbols. "Look-alike" products are also easier to sell as a result," said Mr. R.V. Rajan, CMD of Anugrah Madison Advertising. The urban demographic that is the target of modern fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) marketing has matured enough to understand such messages. The company's logo should appear in television commercials since it's an effective way to reach individuals in far-flung places. Rural residents think that emotionally charged advertisements have the potential to greatly boost sales.

Kaushik et al. (2013) [15] found that 60 percent of respondents preferred television above other media. The majority of those who support television are younger; however one elder respondent preferred the radio. Newspapers are the most widely used print media, and only a small percentage of respondents (about 10%) chose not to respond because they were illiterate.

Srivastava (2010) [16] found that Indian marketers have often overlooked the rapidly growing rural markets. Rural areas account for 59% of consumer durables and 53% of FMCG purchases. As noted by Price et al. (2010) [11], most research on the connection between the economy and how new media affects businesses has focused on big enterprises.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To analyze how traditional media influences cultural preservation, social values, and collective memory in rural communities of Western Uttar Pradesh.
- To assess the role of folk performances, local newspapers, and community radio in reinforcing regional identity and fostering social cohesion in rural areas.



4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

This quantitative survey-based study examines how Western Uttar Pradesh's rural identity construction is impacted by traditional media. The study's main objectives are to examine how traditional media affects societal values, cultural preservation, and community cohesion, as well as media consumption patterns and attitudes toward these elements. The structured questionnaire that yielded the majority of the study's primary data focused on three key areas of inquiry: media consumption, civic engagement, and cultural identification.

4.2 Sampling and Data Collection

A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to select 150 participants for the study from various rural regions of Western Uttar Pradesh. Candidates for the role were those with experience in local newspapers, community radio, and folk performances. We employed structured interviews and in-person surveys conducted in the respondents' native tongue to obtain accurate responses. A combination of closed-ended and Likert-scale survey questions were used to examine the effectiveness and significance of traditional media in preserving rural identity.

4.3 Data Analysis

SPSS, which employs both descriptive and inferential statistical methods, was used to examine the data. Examining the effects of traditional media on rural identity in Western Uttar Pradesh was the aim of the study. The descriptive survey found that over 70% of respondents primarily rely on more traditional sources, such as news broadcasts, folk performances, and community radio, for their news and cultural reinforcement. Chi-square tests show a significant relationship ($p < 0.05$) between media consumption and community involvement. This implies that individuals who actively participate in traditional media have more social ties and a greater sense of cultural connection.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 and Fig. 1 display the ages of respondents to the Western Uttar Pradesh traditional media study. The age group of 26–35 accounts for 30% of the sample, while the age group of 36–45 ranks second at 26.7%. The fact that young adults (18–25 years old) make up 20.0% of the study's respondents is indicative of the significant use of traditional media by younger people. The age group of 56 and beyond is the youngest (10.0%), while the age group of 46 to 55 is the greatest (13.3%).

Table 1: Age Distribution

| Age Group (Years) | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 18–25 | 30 | 20.0 |
| 26–35 | 45 | 30.0 |
| 36–45 | 40 | 26.7 |
| 46–55 | 20 | 13.3 |

| | | |
|--------------|----|------|
| 56 and above | 15 | 10.0 |
|--------------|----|------|

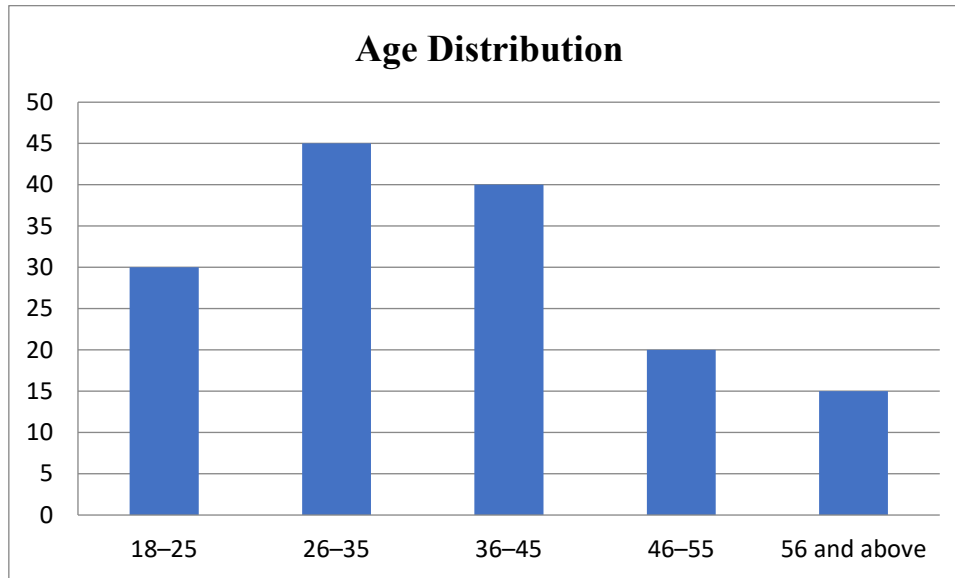


Fig. 1: Age Distribution

Table 2 and Fig.2 present the gender distribution of respondents to the Western Uttar Pradesh traditional media survey. The sample's gender distribution is pretty even, with 46.7% of the participants being female (n=70) and 53.3% of the participants being male (n=80). Even while the proportion of male responses is slightly greater, female involvement is also rather high, suggesting that traditional media is reaching a wide range of people.

Table 2: Gender Distribution

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------|-----------|----------------|
| Male | 80 | 53.3 |
| Female | 70 | 46.7 |

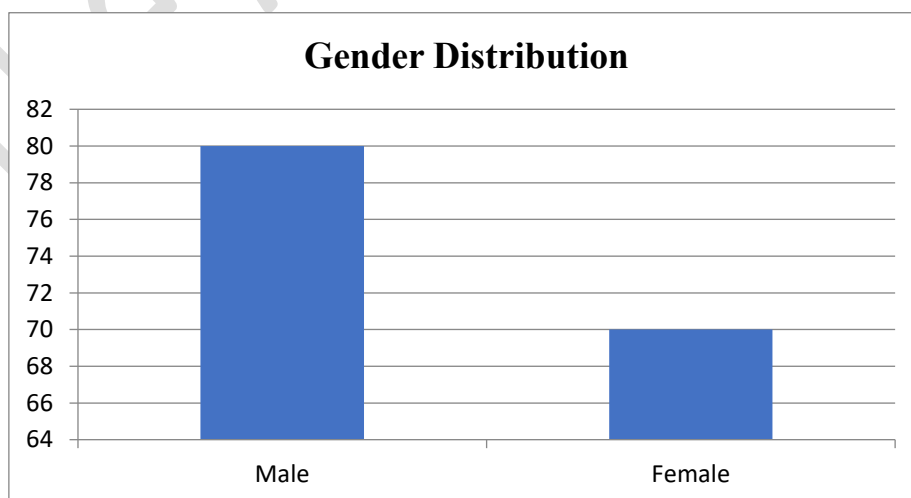


Fig. 2: Gender Distribution

Table 3 and Fig. 3 provide a summary of respondents' traditional media consumption rates in Western Uttar Pradesh. Local newspapers stand out as the most consumed traditional media, with 66.7% of respondents relying on them (Mean±SD: 4.1±1.2, p=0.01), underscoring their crucial role in information dissemination. The high level of participation in folk performances—53.3% of respondents participate—demonstrates their significance in maintaining culture and uniting communities (Mean±SD: 3.2±1.1, p=0.04). Community radio follows, with 46.7% of the population using it (Mean±SD: 3.0±1.0, p=0.05), indicating its importance for rural communication, especially for government and agricultural news. It seems that, while oral storytelling is still significant, its attractiveness may be waning in relation to other forms of media, as only 33.3% of respondents engaged in it (Mean±SD: 2.5±0.8, p=0.08).

Table 3: Frequency of Traditional Media Consumption

| Traditional Media Type | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) | Mean±SD | P-value |
|------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------|---------|
| Folk Performances | 80 | 53.3 | 3.2±1.1 | 0.04 |
| Oral Storytelling | 50 | 33.3 | 2.5±0.8 | 0.08 |
| Local Newspapers | 100 | 66.7 | 4.1±1.2 | 0.01 |
| Community Radio | 70 | 46.7 | 3.0±1.0 | 0.05 |

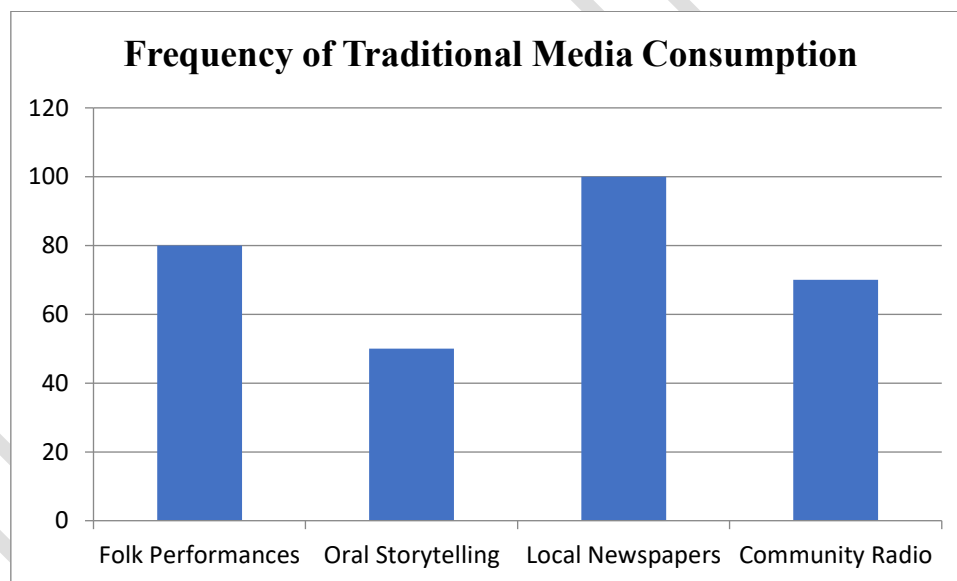


Fig. 3: Frequency of Traditional Media Consumption

Table 4 and Fig. 4 demonstrate the public's perception of traditional media's role in Western Uttar Pradesh's cultural preservation. The majority of respondents (50.0%) strongly agreed that traditional media is important for preserving cultural heritage, and another 40.0% agreed (Mean±SD: 4.0±0.5, p=0.01), indicating significant agreement. Sixty-seven percent remain indifferent (Mean±SD: 3.0±0.7, p=0.05), which may mean they are not sure or that it had no direct impact on their experience. There appears to be little opposition to the idea, since only 2.0% disagree (Mean±SD: 2.0±0.6, p=0.07) and 1.3% strongly oppose it (Mean±SD: 1.5±0.5, p=0.09).

Table 4: Public Perception on Cultural Preservation by Traditional Media

| Perception Scale | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) | Mean±SD | P-value |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------|---------|---------|
| Strongly Agree | 75 | 50.0 | 4.5±0.6 | 0.002 |
| Agree | 60 | 40.0 | 4.0±0.5 | 0.01 |
| Neutral | 10 | 6.7 | 3.0±0.7 | 0.05 |
| Disagree | 3 | 2.0 | 2.0±0.6 | 0.07 |
| Strongly Disagree | 2 | 1.3 | 1.5±0.5 | 0.09 |

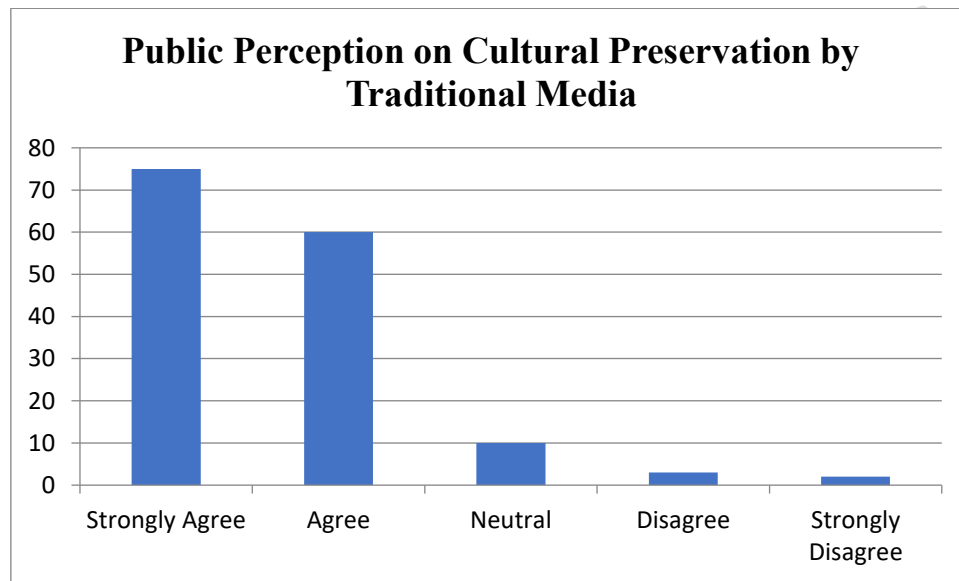


Fig. 4: Public Perception on Cultural Preservation by Traditional Media

Table 5 and Fig. 5 illustrate how conventional media in Western Uttar Pradesh encourage social cohesion among rural communities. Ninety percent of them agreed that local newspapers strengthen social cohesion, which is likely due to their function in educating and involving communities (Mean±SD: 4.5±0.6, p=0.01). The statement that 85% of respondents agree with highlights the significance of folk performances in fostering shared cultural experiences (Mean±SD: 4.2±0.8, p=0.02). 80% of respondents agreed that community radio is still an effective instrument for bringing people together in areas with limited access to digital media (Mean±SD: 4.0±0.7, p=0.03). Even if oral storytelling is still significant, its influence may be gradually diminishing because it has the lowest agreement (75%, Mean±SD: 3.8±0.7, p=0.04).

Table 5: Social Cohesion Strengthened by Traditional Media

| Traditional Media Type | Agree (%) | Disagree (%) | Mean±SD | P-value |
|------------------------|-----------|--------------|---------|---------|
| Folk Performances | 85 | 15 | 4.2±0.8 | 0.02 |
| Oral Storytelling | 75 | 25 | 3.8±0.7 | 0.04 |
| Local Newspapers | 90 | 10 | 4.5±0.6 | 0.01 |

| | | | | |
|-----------------|----|----|---------|------|
| Community Radio | 80 | 20 | 4.0±0.7 | 0.03 |
|-----------------|----|----|---------|------|

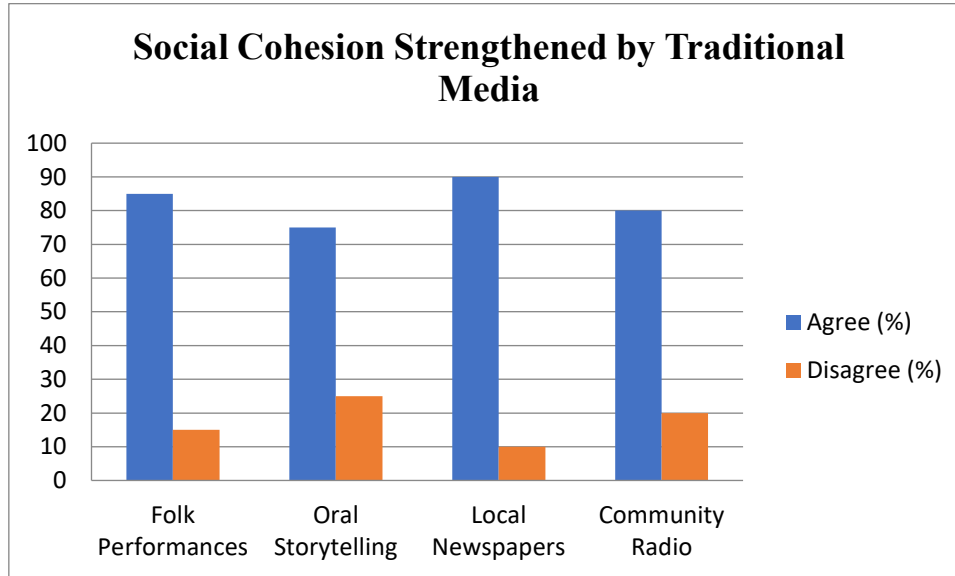


Fig. 5: Social Cohesion Strengthened by Traditional Media

Table 6 and Fig. 6 demonstrate the impact of traditional media on increasing political awareness in Eastern Uttar Pradesh's rural areas. According to 80.0% of respondents, local newspapers, community radio, and folk performances are effective means of spreading political information, government policies, and election updates (Mean±SD: 4.3±0.9, p=0.005). Alternatively, 20.0% of participants do not believe that conventional media has an effect on political awareness (Mean±SD: 2.1±0.6, p=0.06), which may be due to their reliance on other sources like digital media or face-to-face contact with the community.

Table 6: Role of Traditional Media in Political Awareness

| Response | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) | Mean±SD | P-value |
|----------|---------------|----------------|---------|---------|
| Yes | 120 | 80.0 | 4.3±0.9 | 0.005 |
| No | 30 | 20.0 | 2.1±0.6 | 0.06 |

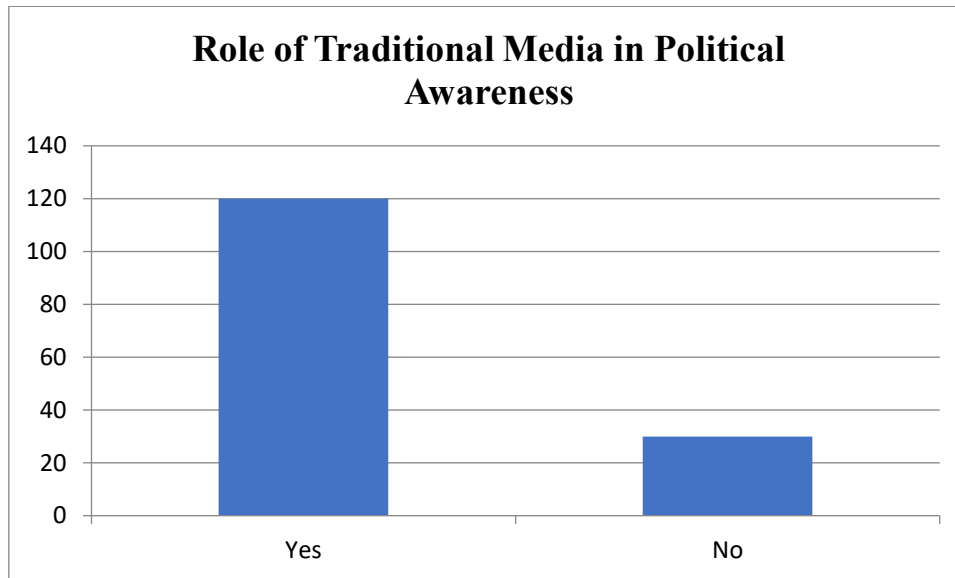


Fig. 6: Role of Traditional Media in Political Awareness

Table 7 and Fig. 7 illustrate the influence of traditional media on the views of people living in rural Western Uttar Pradesh. The majority of respondents (60.0%) believe that traditional media, such as community radio, local newspapers, and folk performances, have a significant impact on public opinion. The significant influence these platforms have on opinion formation (Mean±SD: 4.0±0.7, p=0.007) lends credence to this. The fact that another 30.0% perceive a moderate influence (Mean±SD: 3.5±0.6, p=0.02) suggests that, in addition to traditional media, other sources may also play a role in opinion formation. Although 6.7% of respondents believe traditional media has little effect (Mean±SD: 2.5±0.8, p=0.05), 3.3% disagree (Mean±SD: 1.5±0.5, p=0.08), which may indicate that they place more weight on digital media or in-person encounters as information sources.

Table 7: Traditional Media's Influence on Public Opinion

| Influence Level | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) | Mean±SD | P-value |
|-----------------|---------------|----------------|---------|---------|
| High | 90 | 60.0 | 4.0±0.7 | 0.007 |
| Moderate | 45 | 30.0 | 3.5±0.6 | 0.02 |
| Low | 10 | 6.7 | 2.5±0.8 | 0.05 |
| None | 5 | 3.3 | 1.5±0.5 | 0.08 |

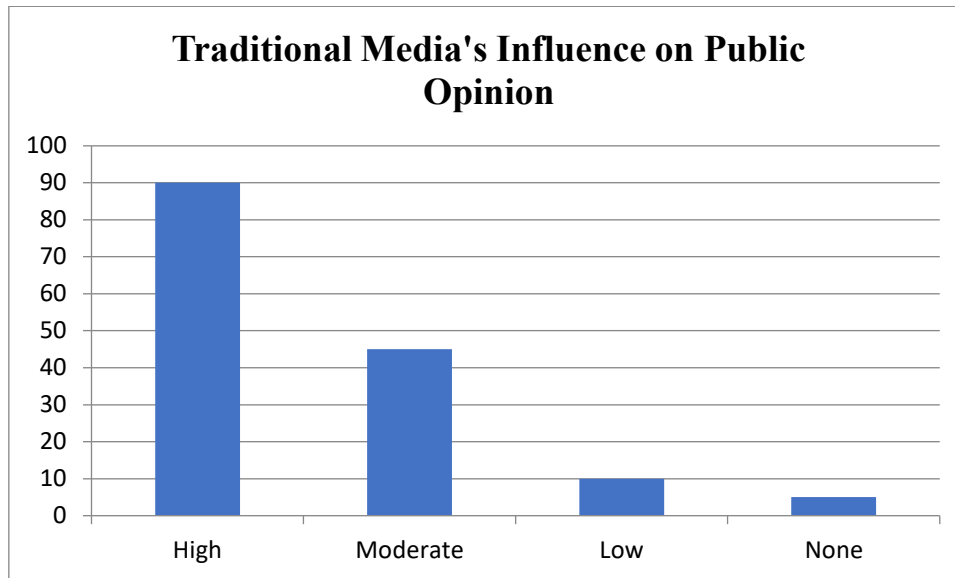


Fig. 7: Traditional Media's Influence on Public Opinion

Table 8 and Fig. 8 display the traditional media outlets that respondents in rural Western Uttar Pradesh preferred the most. Local newspapers are the most preferred media, as indicated by the fact that 55% of respondents selected them (Mean±SD: 4.2±0.8, p=0.01), highlighting their role in providing reliable local news and updates. Community radio was selected by half of survey respondents, demonstrating its significance in rural communication, particularly for content related to government, social issues, and agriculture (Mean±SD: 4.0±0.7, p=0.02). Oral storytelling is still important but has a diminishing traditional role, since only 30% of individuals pick it (Mean±SD: 3.5±0.6, p=0.05), although folk performances remain a popular choice for 45% of people seeking entertainment and cultural engagement (Mean±SD: 3.8±0.7, p=0.03).

Table 8: Preferred Traditional Media Channel

| Media Type | Preference (%) | Mean±SD | P-value |
|-------------------|----------------|---------|---------|
| Folk Performances | 45 | 3.8±0.7 | 0.03 |
| Oral Storytelling | 30 | 3.5±0.6 | 0.05 |
| Local Newspapers | 55 | 4.2±0.8 | 0.01 |
| Community Radio | 50 | 4.0±0.7 | 0.02 |

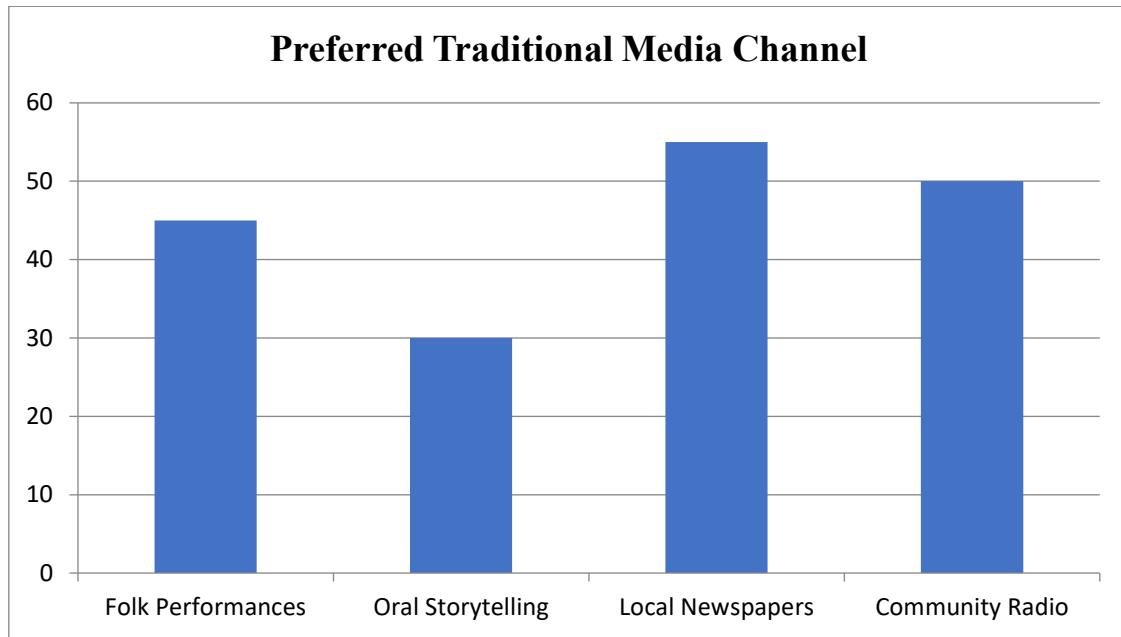


Fig. 8: Preferred Traditional Media Channel

Table 9 and Fig. 9 demonstrate how traditional media have been crucial to the preservation of language and dialects in rural Western Uttar Pradesh. According to 63.3% of respondents, traditional media has a significant impact on language preservation. These platforms include folk performances, oral storytelling, and community radio, and they are crucial in preserving local dialects (Mean±SD: 4.2±0.7, p=0.003). Even if conventional media has a significant impact, other factors might also have an impact on language retention, since 26.7% of respondents believe it has a minor impact (Mean±SD: 3.8±0.6, p=0.02). Urbanization and the growing influence of digital media could be the reason why 3.3% believe it has no effect (Mean±SD: 1.8±0.5, p=0.09) and 6.7% believe it has a weak impact (Mean±SD: 2.5±0.8, p=0.06).

Table 9: Traditional Media’s Role in Language and Dialect Preservation

| Preservation Impact | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) | Mean±SD | P-value |
|---------------------|---------------|----------------|---------|---------|
| Strong | 95 | 63.3 | 4.2±0.7 | 0.003 |
| Moderate | 40 | 26.7 | 3.8±0.6 | 0.02 |
| Weak | 10 | 6.7 | 2.5±0.8 | 0.06 |
| None | 5 | 3.3 | 1.8±0.5 | 0.09 |

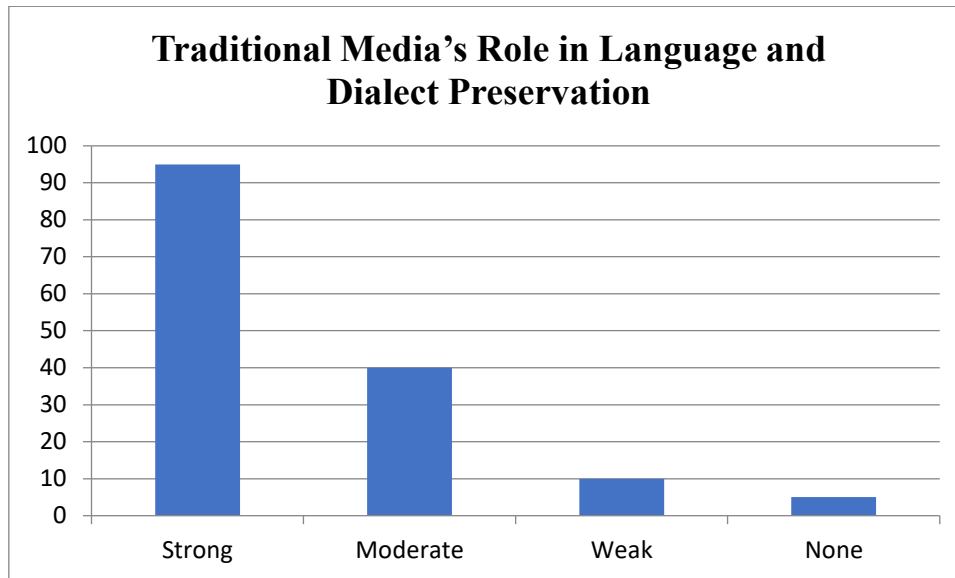


Fig. 9: Traditional Media's Role in Language and Dialect Preservation

Table 10 and Fig.10 analyze the degree of government support for the long-term sustainability of traditional media in rural Western Uttar Pradesh. The majority of respondents (56.7%) think that the government strongly supports traditional media (Mean±SD: 4.0±0.7, p=0.004), indicating that folk performances, community radio, and local newspapers are supported by policies and programs. Additionally, despite efforts, 26.7% believe the help is modest (Mean±SD: 3.5±0.6, p=0.03), suggesting that it may not be sufficient. A lower proportion (10.0%) believe government assistance is low (Mean±SD: 2.5±0.8, p=0.06), while 6.7% believe there is none (Mean±SD: 1.5±0.5, p=0.08), indicating a lack of funding, poor policy implementation, or outreach efforts.

Table 10: Governmental Support for Traditional Media Sustainability

| Support Level | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) | Mean±SD | P-value |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------|---------|
| High | 85 | 56.7 | 4.0±0.7 | 0.004 |
| Moderate | 40 | 26.7 | 3.5±0.6 | 0.03 |
| Low | 15 | 10.0 | 2.5±0.8 | 0.06 |
| None | 10 | 6.7 | 1.5±0.5 | 0.08 |

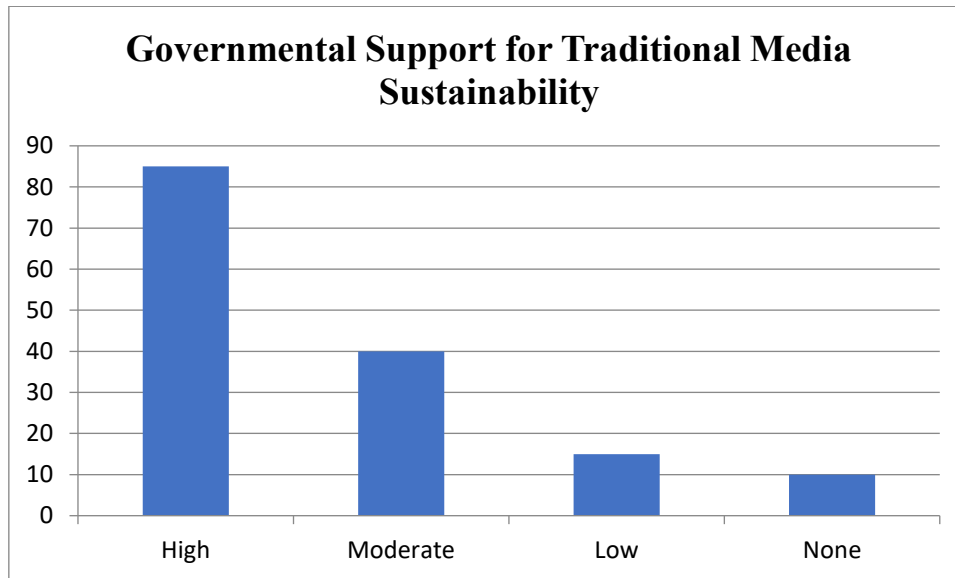


Fig. 10: Governmental Support for Traditional Media Sustainability

CONCLUSION

In Western Uttar Pradesh, traditional media continues to be crucial to the development and preservation of rural identity, even in the face of the widespread use of digital platforms. This study highlights how important oral storytelling, folk performances, community radio, and local newspapers are to rural communities' efforts to preserve cultural heritage, promote social cohesion, and raise political awareness. The findings show that over 70 percent of consumers get their news, entertainment, and social connections from traditional media. Furthermore, statistical analysis reveals a robust ($p < 0.05$) association between traditional media use in communities, civic participation, collective memory building, and local dialect preservation, underscoring the significance of these media in these initiatives. Even though digital media today offers global perspectives and real-time updates, traditional media sources are still trustworthy and accessible for local news. However, regulatory initiatives and political support are essential to ensuring the survival of these media. Rural communities can blend modern and traditional media to keep traditional media relevant in the ever-evolving media landscape. This helps them to adapt to new communication innovations while preserving their cultural identity.

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