

Influence of Media and Entertainment on the Preservation of Indian Mythology and Folklore

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Abstract - This study explores the intersection of media, cinema, and cultural heritage in the context of Indian mythology and folklore. Through a survey of 140 respondents, it reveals the transformative impact of modern media on the preservation and dissemination of traditional narratives. The research highlights a paradox: while media and cinema are powerful vehicles for cultural transmission, they also present challenges in maintaining authenticity. The study uncovers a strong public endorsement of media's role in cultural preservation, alongside a desire for more academically informed content. It exposes a tension between modernization and tradition in adaptations, reflecting the complex task of balancing accessibility with cultural integrity. These findings carry significant implications for content creators, policymakers, and cultural institutions. They underscore the need for a collaborative approach between media professionals and cultural historians to ensure both engaging and authentic representations of Indian mythology and folklore. Ultimately, this research contributes to our understanding of how traditional narratives can be effectively preserved and propagated in the digital age, while respecting their cultural significance and appealing to contemporary audiences.

Keywords - *Influence of Media, Cinema, Entertainment and Indian mythology, Entertainment and Indian folklore, Media and Culture.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The intersection of media, entertainment, and cultural heritage has become a pivotal arena for the preservation and dissemination of Indian mythology and folklore in the modern era. As traditional storytelling methods face challenges in an increasingly digital world, the media and entertainment industries have emerged as powerful conduits for keeping these ancient narratives alive and relevant (Chakrabarti, 2020). From blockbuster films to streaming series and mobile apps, Indian mythology and folklore are finding new expressions and audiences, both domestically and globally.

This evolving relationship between media and mythology raises important questions about authenticity, interpretation, and the role of popular culture in shaping cultural memory. While some argue that media adaptations risk oversimplifying complex narratives, others contend that they play a crucial role in engaging younger generations with their cultural heritage (Singh & Patel, 2022). Furthermore, the collaboration between media professionals and cultural historians has the potential to create content that is both entertaining and educationally valuable, bridging the gap between academic knowledge and public interest (Rao, 2021).

This paper aims to evaluate the multifaceted influence of media and entertainment on the preservation and popularization of Indian mythology and folklore, examining both the opportunities and challenges presented by this dynamic interplay.

Research Objectives:

- To evaluate the role of media and cinema in preserving and popularizing Indian mythology and folklore
- To analyze the influence of media and cinema on public interest and awareness of Indian mythology and folklore
- To assess the collaboration between media professionals and cultural historians in the production of content related to Indian mythology and folklore

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The influence of media and entertainment on the preservation of Indian mythology and folklore has been the subject of numerous studies in recent years. Researchers have explored various aspects of this relationship, from the impact on cultural awareness to the challenges of adaptation and representation.

Several studies have highlighted the positive role of media in popularizing Indian mythology. Kumar and Sharma (2019) found that television adaptations of epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata significantly increased public interest in these stories. Similarly, Gupta et al. (2020) noted a surge in online searches and book sales related to mythological characters following the release of popular films and web series.

The impact of digital platforms on myth preservation has been a focus of recent research. Mehta (2021) examined how social media and mobile apps are creating new avenues for engaging younger audiences with folklore. Patel and Rao (2022) analyzed the effectiveness of gamification in teaching mythological concepts through interactive digital experiences. However, concerns about authenticity and misrepresentation have also been raised. Singh (2018) critiqued the tendency of some media adaptations to oversimplify complex narratives for mass appeal. Chakraborty (2020) argued that the commercialization of mythology risks diluting its cultural significance.

The collaboration between media professionals and cultural experts has been identified as crucial. Desai et al. (2021) documented successful partnerships that resulted in critically acclaimed and culturally sensitive productions. Joshi (2023) emphasized the need for more such collaborations to ensure accuracy and depth in mythological content.

Regional variations in myth adaptation have been explored by Reddy and Kumar (2022), who found significant differences in how South Indian cinema approaches mythology compared to Bollywood. Chatterjee (2021) examined the representation of lesser-known folk tales in regional media, highlighting their role in preserving local cultural identities.

The global impact of Indian mythology through media has also been studied. Sharma and Patel (2020) analyzed the reception of Indian mythological content among diaspora communities. Basu (2022) investigated how international co-productions are shaping the global perception of Indian folklore.

Educational aspects have been addressed by Nair (2021), who studied the use of mythological content in school curricula and its impact on cultural literacy. Lastly, Verma and Singh (2023) explored the potential of virtual and augmented reality in creating immersive experiences of mythological narratives.

These studies collectively underscore the complex and evolving relationship between media, entertainment, and the preservation of Indian mythology and folklore, highlighting both opportunities and challenges in this domain.

3. METHODOLOGY

- **Research Design:** A quantitative approach with a close-ended survey to examine the influence of media and cinema on preserving Indian mythology and folklore.
- **Sample Selection:** Individuals aged 18+ from diverse backgrounds have been selected through stratified random sampling.
- **Data Collection:** Data has been collected through an online survey questionnaire based on Demographics, Media Consumption, Perceptions, Professional Roles, and Cultural Preservation.
- **Data Analysis:** Descriptive analysis presenting percentage and means has been done to analyse media effectiveness, to examine engagement and to evaluate professional collaboration.

4. RESULTS & ANALYSIS

The Based on the survey data provided, we can draw several insights about the role of media and cinema in preserving and popularizing Indian mythology and folklore, their influence on public interest and awareness, and the collaboration between media professionals and cultural historians.

Table I

Platform	Percentage	Interpretation
Streaming services	80%	Digital platforms dominate content consumption, with streaming services and YouTube being the most popular. This indicates a shift towards online media for mythological content.
Television	67.9%	
YouTube	60.7%	
Cinema	32.1%	
Other	5.7%	

Media and cinema appear to play a significant role in preserving and popularizing Indian mythology and folklore.

Table II

Response	Percentage	Interpretation
Agree	49.3%	A significant majority (76.4%) agree that media has increased their interest in mythology, suggesting media plays a crucial role in cultivating cultural interest.
Strongly agree	27.1%	
Neutral	17.1%	
Disagree	5%	
Strongly disagree	1.4%	

An overwhelming majority of respondents (85.7%) agree that movies and shows based on these themes help preserve traditional stories. This sentiment is further reinforced by 82.9% of respondents who believe that media and cinema play a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage. The importance of these mediums in cultural preservation is underscored by 87.1% of respondents who agree that increased representation of mythology and folklore in media and cinema aids in cultural preservation.

Table III

Response	Percentage	Interpretation
Agree	50%	A strong majority (82.1%) believe increased media representation aids cultural preservation, reinforcing the perceived positive role of media in maintaining cultural heritage.
Strongly agree	32.1%	
Neutral	13.6%	
Disagree	2.9%	
Strongly disagree	1.4%	

The survey results also indicate a strong public desire for the continuation and expansion of such content. A substantial 85% of respondents consider it important or very important that traditional stories and legends are preserved through media and cinema. This interest is not passive; 90.7% of respondents expressed willingness to support initiatives that promote the creation of media and cinema content focused on Indian mythology and folklore.

Table IV

Response	Percentage	Interpretation
Yes	67.1%	A strong majority believe media representation aids in preserving regional languages, indicating recognition of media's potential role in linguistic preservation.
Maybe	25.7%	
No	7.1%	

These findings collectively suggest that media and cinema are not only perceived as important tools for cultural preservation but also enjoy strong public support in this role.

The influence of media and cinema on public interest and awareness of Indian mythology and folklore is equally significant. A large majority (85.7%) of respondents agree that media and cinema have increased their personal interest in these subjects. Even more notably, 90.7% believe that these mediums have helped increase awareness among younger generations, suggesting a crucial role in intergenerational cultural transmission.

This influence is reflected in viewing habits, with 41.4% of respondents watching content related to Indian mythology and folklore at least once a week, and an additional 30% watching 2-3 times a month. The most popular platforms for accessing this content are YouTube (82.1%), Netflix (60.7%), and Amazon Prime Video (55%), indicating the importance of both free and subscription-based digital platforms in disseminating this content.

The impact of media and cinema extends beyond mere viewership. A significant 85% of respondents have noticed an increase in the quality and depth of content related to Indian mythology and folklore in recent years. Moreover, 87.1% believe that these mediums have made traditional stories more accessible to a

global audience, suggesting a role in cultural diplomacy and international understanding. At a community level, 82.1% have observed an increased interest in Indian mythology and folklore due to media and cinema, indicating a tangible impact on local cultural engagement.

Table V

Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
Sometimes	47.1%	Most respondents perceive collaboration as occasional or rare, indicating a perceived gap in consistent partnerships between media professionals and cultural historians.
Rarely	30.7%	
Often	15%	
Never	5%	
Very often	2.1%	

However, the survey also reveals areas of concern and potential improvement, particularly in the collaboration between media professionals and cultural historians. While 82.9% of respondents view the role of media and cinema professionals in preserving cultural narratives as important or very important, only 55.7% agree that academic input is adequately incorporated into content about mythology and folklore. This discrepancy is further highlighted by the fact that 45% of respondents rarely or never see collaboration between media professionals and cultural historians in producing mythological content.

The desire for improved collaboration is clear, with 90.7% agreeing that media and cinema professionals should consult with cultural historians when producing content related to mythology and folklore. This sentiment likely stems from concerns about accuracy and authenticity, as evidenced by the mixed opinions on the accuracy of current portrayals (47.9% believing they are generally accurate versus 52.1% believing they are not).

Table VI

Response	Percentage	Interpretation
Yes	57.1%	Most respondents believe international productions have influenced Indian mythological portrayals, indicating recognition of global media's impact on local narratives.
Maybe	32.1%	
No	10.7%	

The survey also reveals some tension between modernization and tradition in the portrayal of mythology and folklore. While 60.7% of respondents agree that modern adaptations dilute the original narratives, 65.7% believe that these adaptations respect the cultural significance of the original stories. This suggests a nuanced public perception that acknowledges both the challenges and potential benefits of adapting traditional narratives for modern audiences.

Table VII

Response	Percentage	Interpretation
Yes	62.9%	A significant majority have noticed increased community interest due to media, suggesting media's effective role in stimulating cultural engagement.
Maybe	27.1%	
No	10%	

These findings highlight the complex interplay between media, cultural preservation, and public perception. They suggest that while media and cinema are powerful tools for preserving and popularizing Indian

mythology and folklore, there is room for improvement in terms of collaboration with cultural experts and balancing modern adaptations with traditional authenticity.

5. CONCLUSION

The survey data reveals that media and cinema play a crucial role in preserving and popularizing Indian mythology and folklore. They significantly influence public interest and awareness, particularly among younger generations, and are instrumental in making these cultural narratives accessible to both local and global audiences. The strong public support for these mediums in their role as cultural preservers is evident, with a majority of respondents recognizing their importance and expressing willingness to support related initiatives. However, the data also highlights areas for improvement, particularly in the collaboration between media professionals and cultural historians. There is a clear demand for more accurate and authentic portrayals, suggesting a need for increased involvement of academic experts in content creation.

The survey reveals a nuanced public perception of modern adaptations, acknowledging both their potential to dilute original narratives and their ability to respect cultural significance. This suggests a delicate balance that media creators must strike between modernization and traditional authenticity.

As media and cinema continue to evolve and reach wider audiences, addressing these challenges will be crucial in ensuring the effective preservation and promotion of India's rich mythological and folkloric heritage. The findings underscore the potential of these mediums as powerful tools for cultural preservation and transmission, while also highlighting the responsibilities that come with this influential role.

6. FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study's significance lies in its illumination of media's role in preserving and popularizing Indian mythology. The results can guide media professionals, policymakers, and educators in creating more effective cultural content. Future research could explore the balance between modernization and authenticity in adaptations, the impact of digital platforms on mythological content consumption, and media's potential in preserving regional languages. Researchers could delve deeper into exploring effective ways to enhance collaboration between media professionals and cultural historians, ensuring a balance between modernization and authenticity in mythological adaptations. There's also potential to investigate the impact of digital platforms on the consumption of mythological content, particularly given the shift towards streaming services and online media.

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