



AWADHI FOLK SONGS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN TRADITIONAL MEDIA AND NEW MEDIA PLATFORM

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DOI Number: 10.48047/NQ.2022.20.1.NQ22368

NeuroQuantology2022;20(1): 859-867

1. INTRODUCTION

India is a land full of cultural variations. It is a land of rich and diverse cult across the boundaries. This nation has a number of tribes and non-traditional communities. Across the nation, in various states and territories, there are infinite number of folk cultures, traditions, castes, festivals, languages, customs, ceremonies and other micro and macro elements joining together making a culturally rich and diverse nation. These things derive their credibility from the various religions followed by people in India. Right from the puppetry, the jatakas, the natak, the rath yatra, the ras leela, the ram leela, the yakshagana and many others have their roots in the religious scriptures found in the country. These are the affordable means of communication used by local people, villagers etc. India has been successfully transmitting these values from generation to generation from last many centuries. Known for one of the oldest cultural practices, India has enriched its oral and folk culture through several movements in history. Evidences say that most of the early traditions were carried orally and verbally. The "shruti parampara" has given us one of the most trusted upon

literature of Kabir Dasa. Now, with the advancements in scientific innovation and information communication technology, the oral traditions can now be documented in forms of Audio-Visuals. These advancements have resulted in the decentralization of cultural values. The waves of this cultural transmission moves from zero to infinity and vice versa

2. THE CONCEPT OF FOLK MEDIA

Folk means the race of people across the globe. The old, traditional ways of amusement or communication comes under folk mediums. These trends are carried orally from generations to generations. It becomes a slice of daily life where locals use the popular culture to propagate existing ideas and values. Folk media is a very powerful tool for grass root level of communication as the locals adhere much to their cultural practices, customs and celebrations.

2.1 TRADITIONAL FOLK MEDIA

There is no particular grammatical structure as such in which the folk media can be performed. It is largely dependent on the oral and functional transmission and so the source remains unknown. Mostly found in any religious gathering, traditional folk media is



seen during *keertanas, durga pujo festivities, chhath puja, ramleela, rassleela*, wedding songs like *banna-banni, sohar, kajri, faag, biyah geet etc.* These are the songs that celebrate daily happenings in the lives of people.

Folk art is a form of self-expression that satiates the hunger of moral values with entertainment which is full of drama and cult practices. The basic characteristics of folk media is that it preserves the tradition and culture of the ancestors. Puppetry, dance, songs, drama and others are the basic forms of folk culture in India. And because Indian economy is largely based of agriculture and cottage and small scale industries, the communication can be fruitful only when the grass root level is achieved. These ways are helpful in the rural development.

2.2 FOLK SONGS

The locals have a great connection with their folk culture and songs whether it is *keetanans, jagratas, mata ki chauki, sohar, banna banni, kajri, faag, naktaura etc.* getting more closer to them we can find these folk songs popularly sung in wedding functions, birth of a child, exhibitions, fairs etc. These songs are mostly in local dialects, can be seen singing in farms while harvest etc. This is an easy way of communicating with the locals.

Folk songs helps extension and outreach programmes. These songs are composed on the subjects which are to be communicated to the people. They are in the form of a story with some moral. The tune of the song is usually popular and local to which the villagers are accustomed to.

3. THE CONCEPT OF NEW MEDIA

As the name implies, the term *New Media* is a newer form of media including digital modes of transmission and use of computer technology of course. This is because the new media is a by-product of Information and communication revolution. New media can be anything that involves the usage of digital modes of communication. Any web portal, any audio visual content, blog, social media platforms etc. are a part of new media. With the fast running lives these days, people find it very hectic to take out time for reading books or newspaper or sit back to watch

television. For the saviour, comes the new media which gives access to all these utilities in a single click system. While driving a car or while working at office or while cooking at home, new media gives us all in a very less time and a lesser space. Everything is available to us inside a single smartphone.

The concept of New Media is more specified when a comparison between the traditional and new means of communication is drawn. Today the most popular means of communication is Internet which gives power in every hand and this is what it makes it different from other modes of communication. In even easier ways we can say that the content distributed through the means of internet, best known as a New Media.

4. THE CONCEPT OF AWADH AND AWADHI

Awadh, the region of modern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, earlier known as Avadh or Oudh during the British reign. Primarily synonymous to the scriptures of Jain, Bauddh and Hinduism, the Awadh is bounded by the Ganga Doab in south west and by Rohailkhand in Northwest, Nepal in the North and Purvanchal in the east. The natives of this area are known as Awadhi or Awadhiya. Awadh has its roots back in Mughal Empire and was later on ruled by Nawabs. The capital of Awadh was Lucknow, which is the current capital of modern Uttar Pradesh.

The region of Awadh is popularly known for its *Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb*, a cultural mix of Hindu and Muslim religion. It can be better understood as the fusion of Hindu religion under the Indo Persian culture. The region of Awadh has a vast population of Hindus and a strong presence of Muslims in the urban belt of the area. Established in 1722, Awadh had Faizabad as its capital before *Nawab Asif-ud-daula* shifted it to Lucknow. This area historically was very famous for the Nawabi lavish lifestyle which majorly included the culture of having courtesans and dancers in their area. This gave birth to new forms of music and revamped many old styles. The *ghazals, thumri, qawwali* and other folk music forms came into existence in this area.

Not just bound to the walls of court, the folk music came beyond and was majorly sung during the festivities or ceremonies. The Awadh region is a very culturally rich area of the state which performed a number of folk arts. These art or dance forms were largely based on the stories of *Lord Rama* who was born in Ayodhya and *Lord Krishna* who was born in Mathura(not a part of Awadh, but the stories of Lord Krishna's childhood is popularly sung in folk songs).

Awadhi folklore is majorly derived from the daily deeds of society. The Vedic description of human life is divided in to 4 major ashrams:-

- Bramhacharya
- Grihastha
- Vanaprastha
- Sanyas

And all the folk lore which is considered as the major media for communication is derived from the various rituals performed during these four stages of life. It ranges from the birth to the death. All the *solah samskars* of *Sanatan Dharma* are different rituals and stages of human life on which these folk songs are made. The Hindu Mythology talks about the life dominated by work. We have always read about work being worship. The results of our deeds follow us throughout the seven lives which a human is believed to have in Hindu Mythology. It is mentioned in Mahabharata "कर्मप्रधानविश्वरचिराखा "

The Hindu Mythology talks about various different stages of human life, right from its conception to death. These are known as *solah samskara*. These *solah samskars* are-

1. गर्भाधान
2. पुंसवन
3. सीमन्तोन्नयन
4. जातक्रम
5. नामकरण
6. निष्क्रमण
7. अन्नप्राशन
8. चूडाकर्म
9. विद्यारम्भ
10. कर्णवेध
11. यज्ञोपवीत
12. वेदारम्भ
13. केशांत

14. समावर्तन

15. विवाह

16. अंत्येष्टि

Awadhi folklore has stories and songs for all the above mentioned stages of life

4.1 AWADHI FOLKSONGS

Most popular genre of Awadhi songs

- *Sohar*
- *Badhayi*
- *Chhathi*
- *Annprashan*
- *Devi geet*
- *Vivah geet*
- *Naktaa*
- *Sawan* etc

SOHAR: - This is mainly sung on the birth of child. *Sohar* has a great importance when it comes to folk songs. These, according to rituals are divided into major two parts. One includes the satirical description of the relationship of a lady with her inlaws, whereas other includes the songs of rites performed after the birth of child.

जादिनलालनतुमभये, मैबलिजईहौरै
चननकेरीपलकियागजओबरीबिछाबहुरे

BADHAYI: - This is sung when the child is born and father's sisters come home with gifts and sweets. This is sung by them to congratulate the mother.

देखीबिरजमाबाजेबधईया

कौनेछुरवातेनारूछिनायो, काहेकेजलअन्हावायो|

सोनेकेछुरवातेनारूछिनायो, जमुनाकेजलअन्हावायो ||

CHHATTHI: - These songs are sung after the six days of the birth of the child. On this day the entire family is invited for feast. The cooks are hired for them, food isn't cooked at home. In Awadhi region, it is mandatory to cook *Urad daal vada* on this day. It is said that on this day child breast feeds his mother for the first time. Also the mother eats food after six days of delivery. Meanwhile she is fed with other healthy and nutritious ayurvedic foods.

अलवेलीजचामेरीखूबबनी, बेटाजाईजचामेरीखूबबनी

पियारीजचामेरीसैरेशमलच्छाजचामेरीकेसबने ||

ANNAPRASHAN: - This is one of the most important *samskar* of the 16s. On this day the child is fed cereal for the first time. Usually

celebrated after the six months of birth as per the best day and time, this ritual is celebrated at a grand level by family. Any kind of cereal before six months will be harmful to the infant. All these rituals are also having scientific validations.

कोमोरेचाउरबेसाहेऔगौएँदुहावै

कोमोरेखिरियाबनावैलालनकैपसनिया||

DEVI GEET: - Also known as chachar, devi geets are sung at usually all the occasions. These songs are made all in the praise of Goddesses.

दरसनदेयोमाय , मोरमनुलागोदरसकयिहाँ

मैयाछाँहतौनीकीनीम्बीकेरीजहाँजुडलीबयार||

VIVA AH: - Usually sung during the various rituals of Hindu Marriage in the Awadhi region.

बाजनबाजेदुआरे , श्रीरघुबरजीबियाहनआये

गईयाकेगोबरासेअंगनालिपाओ, गावोमंगलचार

श्रीरघुबरजीबियाहनआये ||

NAKTA: - It is one more marriage ritual where when all the male members of the family go to baraat, all the female members play different games and dramas for their entertainment.

फलवरमंगवादोबाहरेबलम |

कलकत्तेनाजायो , बम्बईनाजायो, नखलऊसेमंगवादेओबाहरेबलम |

SAWAN: - Sung during the sawan month of Hindu calendar which falls during July to August according to Gregorian calendar, is a kind of song celebrating the feel of love and romance during monsoon. This is also based upon the relation of a daughter with her father's home.

पांचपेड़निम्बियालगायकैमोरेभईयाचलेपरदेसरे

बारहिबरसभईयाबाहुरे , सासूकाहबैठनकादेयुरे ||

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand the various aspects of Awadhi language and for doing a deeper analysis we need to divide the history of Awadhi language into timeline. The history of development of Awadhi language dates back to thousands years. It is as older as the history of Hindi and it's a quite tough task to divide them both. Dr. Jagdish Piyush, the founder of Awadhi Akademia and Priyadarshini Mahila Vidyapeeth has formulated the timeline of Awadhi as follows-

- i) Ancient Awadhi Literature: 11th century to 14th century

- ii) Medieval Awadhi Literature: 14th century to 19th century

- iii) Modern Awadhi Literature: 1900-1960

- iv) New Awakening Era: 1960 - till date

As per the Awadh Granthawali part 2 by Dr. Jaddgish Piyush, published by Vani Prakashan, "Awadhi serves an area which has been historically important from ancient times. Here stands Ayodhya (also known as Saketa), the capital of the Kosala kingdom which was very important up to the Buddhist period. Faizabad and Lucknow played a very important part during the reign of the later Moghals. The Nawabs of Oudh have been famous for their culture, gaiety and splendor. The Rulers of Rewa have not only been great patrons of learning and art but have themselves been poets and literary men. TanSen, the Prince of Indian musicians, was in the court of Maharaja Ram Chand Singh from where he was taken away by Akbar. The literary field Awadhi stands immortalized in the Ramacharita-manasa of Tulsidas.

5.1 PROMINENT WORKS

The prominent works done in the Awadhi language starts from the works done by Ameer Khusro and goes to Malik Muhammad Jayasi and Goswami Tulasidas. Ameer Khusro better known as the father of Quawwalli has started the genre of Ghazals in India. He has done a lot of work in Awadhi language.

“खुसरोदरियाप्रेमका, उल्टीवाकीधर

जोउतरासोडूबगया, जोडूबासोपार”

Kutuban has done his works in “Premakhyan” in Awadhi which can be termed as Romanticism in English language. “Mrugawati” is one of the most famous works of Kutuban. It is a tale of a king and his two queens. It is a romantic tale of love and sacrifice.

“रुकमिनिपुनिवैसहिमरिगईकुलवंतीसतसोंसतिभई||

बाहरवहभीतरवहहोईघरबाहरकोरहेनजोई||

विधिकरचरितनजानैआनूजोसिरजासोजाहिनिआनू||”

Manjhan has written Madhumalti in Awadhi which is again a romantic tale whose key characters are played by apsaras of heaven. They are the planners of entire love and separation.

“देखतहीपहिचानेउतोहींएहीरूपजेहिछँदरयोमोही”

Kabir Das, a mystic saint and poet of 15th century has done great works in Awadhi language. He was being critical to both Hinduism and Islam.

“साधुभूखाभावका, धनकाभूखानाहि।

धनकाभूखाजीफिरै, सोतोसाधूनाहि”

6. AWADHI SONGS IN BOLLYWOOD MOVIES

Awadhi songs are not all over the Bollywood, they are often being overlapped by Bhojpuri. Here are some popular Awadhi songs in Hindi movies in many years-

- Inhin Logon Ne - Pakeezah.
- Hamari Atariya - Dedh Ishqiya.
- Ambwa Taley - Javed Bashir & Humera Channa—Coke Studio — Pakistan.
- Paayaliya - Dev D.
- Hare Hare Baans - There are many versions of this folk song, the coke studio version is quite good. *originally by Ameer Khusro which was a mix of Awadhi and Braj.
- Chaap Tilak : a graceful mix of Awadhi and Braj written originally by Ameer Khusro.
- Rang Barse - Silsila. *sung by Amitabh Bachchan and written by Harivansh Rai Bachchan.

- Palanhare - Lagaan. All songs in Lagaan have a strong Awadhi influence.
- Kaun Disha Mein & Sanchi Kahein - Nadiya Ke Paar.
- Kahe Ko Byahi Bides - Umrao Jaan. It has a beautiful version sung by Malini Awasthi too.
- Ek Rahen Eer - Amitabh Bachchan.
- Mangal Bhavan Amangal Hari - Geet Gata Chal.

The instrumentation of this paper involves the content analysis of the Awadhi language songs in Bollywood and Awadhi language songs channel on YouTube during the time period of last five years. This starts from year 2017 till 2021, where I have tried to compare the rise in Awadhi language songs channel on YouTube which is a new media platform to the usage of Awadhi songs in Bollywood movies.

6.1 BOLLYWOOD MOVIES IN YEAR 2017

In the year 2017, the total number of films made by Bollywood are 126, out of which following are the top rated movies of that year

1	Secret Superstar	₹977 crore
2	Tiger Zinda Hai	₹570.83 crore
3	Hindi Medium	₹334.36 crore
4	Toilet: Ek Prem Katha	₹311.5 crore
5	Golmaal Again	₹311.05 crore
6	Raees	₹308.10 crore
7	Judwaa 2	₹227.59 crore
8	Tubelight	₹211.14 crore
8	Kaabil	₹208.14 crore
9	Badrinath Ki Dulhania	₹200.45 crore

While 115 other films were made, we could find the usage of Awadhi background in the movie *Jolly LLB 2*. *Begum Jaan*, a period drama made on the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, showcased the lives of courtesans and their homes situated at the borders of both the countries. As already

6.2 BOLLYWOOD MOVIES IN YEAR 2018

1	Sanju	₹586.85 crore
2	Padmaavat	₹571.98 crore
3	Andhadhun	₹456.89 crore

discussed earlier the area of early Awadh, especially during the British reign, predominantly saw the culture of having courtesans. This film has a song *Prem me tohre aisi padi main...* sung by Asha Bhonsle is originally the song of famous singer of Awadhi folk, *Begum Akhtar*.

4	Simmba	₹391.68 crore
5	Thugs of Hindustan	
6	Race 3	₹303 crore
7	Baaghi 2	₹254.33 crore
8	Hichki	
9	Badhaai Ho	₹221.44 crore
10	Pad Man	₹212.02 crore

The year 2018 witnessed the making of 103, where the highest grossing films of the year were-

Amongst the above mentioned films, *Padmavat* was based on the epic *Padmavat* written by *Malik Muhammad Jaysi* in Awadhi. *Padmavat* (or *Padmawat*) is an epic poem written in 1540 by Sufi poet *Malik Muhammad Jayasi*, who wrote it in the Hindustani language of Awadhi. In the 93 other films, around 4 films were shot in the

background of Lucknow including *Mulk*, *Raid*, *Mukkebaaz* and *Saheb Biwi and Gangster*. Although there is no such mention of any Awadhi folk song or even the use of Awadhi language in these 103 films in year 2018 made by Hindi film industry.

6.3 BOLLYWOOD MOVIES IN YEAR 2019

The year 2019 saw the making of 125 Hindi films. The following films have the highest collection during the year 2019.

1	War	₹475.50 crore
2	Saaho	₹433 crore
3	Kabir Singh	₹379.02 crore
4	Uri: The Surgical Strike	₹342.06 crore
5	Bharat	₹325.58 crore
6	Good Newwz	₹318.57 crore
7	Housefull 4	₹296 crore
8	Mission Mangal	₹290.59 crore
9	Gully Boy	₹238.16 crore
10	Dabangg 3	₹230.93 crore

In the above and the other 115 films, we the film *Ram ki janmabhoomi* made by *Jitendra Narayan Singh Tyagi*, made on the controversial *Ram Mandir* and *Babri Masjid* issue. The film's plot is set in *Ayodhya* which is an eternal part of the *Awadh* region. The *keertan-bhajan* and the sound score of the movie is given by *T-series*, which is completely based on *Awadhi* music. A film, *The family of Thakuranj* directed by *Manoj.k.Jha* was shot in the *Awadhi* background but no mention of the same language is there. A few parts of the film *Bala* was also shot in *Lucknow*.

6.4 BOLLYWOOD MOVIES IN YEAR 2020

In the year 2020 the Hindi film industry made 104 films, the top rated among whose are following-

1	Tanhaji	₹368 crore
2	Baaghi 3	₹137.05 crore
3	Street Dancer 3D	₹97 crore
4	Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan	₹86.39 crore
5	Malang	₹88.50 crore
6	Chhapaak	₹55.44 crore
7	Love Aaj Kal	₹52.63 crore
8	Jawaani Jaaneman	₹44.77 crore
9	Thappad	₹44.54 crore
10	Panga	

The year 2020 could not see much of theatrical releases due to pandemic COVID-

19. The releases started happening on the OTT platforms which is yet another form of



New Media. The film *Gulaabo-Sitaabo* was released on Amazon Prime Video on 12 July 2020 which is entirely shot and set in the areas of old Lucknow. The film showcases the Awadhi lifestyle and Nawabi culture. The set of the film is an old house of Nawabi Architecture situated in the Kaiserbagh area

of old Lucknow and is known to be a heritage site, a home of successors of Nawabs.

6.5 BOLLYWOOD MOVIES IN YEAR 2021

In the year 2021, the Hindi film industry popularly known as Bollywood, produced 103 films. The highest collection films at box office were-

1	Sooryavanshi	₹294.91 crore
2	83	₹193.73 crore
3	Antim: The Final Truth	₹59.11 crore
4	Bell Bottom	₹50.58 crore
5	Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui	₹41.23 crore
6	Tadap	₹34.86 crore
7	Roohi	₹30.33 crore
8	Mumbai Saga	₹22.29 crore
9	Bunty Aur Babli 2	
10	Radhe	₹18.33 crore

This year could not see any production in Awadhi or any involvement of Awadhi as a language or folk or even culture in the films. Although a film *Ramprasad ki Tehra Vin* was plotted in a family at Lucknow which could not say much about the Awadhi culture.

7. THE YOUTUBE CHANNELS AND AWADHI FOLK SONGS

The New media platforms give powers in the hand of common man. This makes everyone, a content creator. While looking for the YouTube channels in Awadhi I found that there are uncountable number of channels on which the Awadhi folk content is available. I am hereby presenting the data of most popular five channels of Awadhi folk and their statistics.

- **Malini Awasthi with 1,58,000 subscribers**
Official YouTube channel of Legendary Folk Singer Malini Awasthi. Joined Apr 9, 2011 and currently having 19,388,404 views. This channel has a playlist of more than 1000 folk songs of Uttar Pradesh which includes Awadhi, Bhojpuri and Maithili too.
- **Indian Desi Folk with 11.6thousand subscribers.**
Joined Apr 26, 2017 has currently 3,267,174 views. This channel has a playlist of more than 500 folk songs with an identified playlist of Uttar Pradesh that has over 38 Awadhi folk songs. This channels includes the folk songs of the following folk artists – Sangeeta Roy,

Menaka Misra, Pradeep Singh, Shipra Dayal, Mithilesh Tiwari and many more.

- **Sharda Sinha with 20.5thousand subscribers.**

Joined on 15 October 2018, currently have 1,791,507 views. She has also sung the song *kahe tose saajan tohri sajanिया* from the film *Maine Pyaar kiya* and *Taar bijli se patle hamare piya* from the film *Gangs of Wasseypur 2*. She has also won PadmaShri for her contribution in the folk songs.

- **Folk singer Rashmi with 19.9thousand subscribers.**

Joined Jul 23, 2017, currently have 2,800,210 views. Her channel has a playlist of all major genre of Awadhi folk songs.

- **Awadhi Kai Arghan with 7.61thousand subscribers.**

Joined Sep 26, 2017, this channel has 789,227 views. Solely made for Awadhi folk content, this channel gives a complete solution to all kinds of Awadhi folk songs which are usually sung by locals and not by any particular artist.

8. CONCLUSION

After seeing the data available to us following points came as a result-

1. The Hindi film industry has a lesser contribution to the enrichment of Folk cultures of India. This implies that

Bollywood is making lesser films on regional areas and its content.

2. The new media and especially the platforms like YouTube gives immense power in the hands of locals to generate local folk content.
3. New mediums are easier, cheaper and affordable ways of generating more content. These contents are reliable when we refer to verified handles.
4. In the last few years Bollywood has done lesser regional films. Although the OTT platforms are coming up with newer and more localized content, it is still a part of new media no matter who is the content producer for it.
5. The traditional media has been overshadowed by new media platforms which are more affordable and has a wider reach. To watch a movie we have to go to cinema hall or multiplexes or wait till the movie is broadcasted on television. But in case of platforms like that of YouTube, the access is in every hands and a common man is both the producer and the consumer of the content.
6. Giving a new media platform like that of YouTube to commoners will definitely enhance the chances of bringing folk songs into mainstream.

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