



ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PROMOTING FOLK DANCE: A REVIEW STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO BIHU DANCE OF ASSAM

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ABSTRACT

One of the fundamental characteristics of India has been its unity in diversity. People from different castes, subcastes, tribes, religions, and linguistic groups coexist throughout India. Indians are unique among all nations in the world because of their uniqueness. In terms of social and cultural diversity, our nation has different folk dances from each of the states, which make India rich in culture and diversity. Folk dance is a type of entertainment that also reflects the culture of the community in which it is performed. A folk dance form is crucial to the religion and rites of passage of its culture, and it serves as a vital instrument for maintaining intragroup cohesion. The Assamese culture and the bihu festival are both closely tied to the indigenous folk dance known as the bihu folk dance from the Indian state of Assam. As the years passed, the inventions of new technology influenced the joy of entertainment in conventional gadgets, which gave birth to social media. The increased chances for representation, payment, and creative control that go along with the new platforms and modes of production complicate the commercial usage of web-native video graphic and folk dance traditions. In this paper, an effort has been made to shed light on the aim of identifying whether social media helps in promoting the folk dance of our nation with reference to the folk dance of Assam.

KEYWORDS – Folk dance, Bihu Dance, social media, promotion

1. INTRODUCTION

Every person has a distinct perspective on dance as an art form. Everyone has a unique connection to the discipline of dance. It's about the sensations and emotions we portray through dance, not just certain times. There are more languages in India than in other countries due to its diversity. There are more than 100 different dance styles in India, if we talk about dancing. Every country, state, and place has its own distinct music and dance. Every human ethnic group over time has incorporated dancing. In most countries, dance is a common occurrence and an essential component of culture. From the dawn of society, this ubiquitous phenomenon has been a part of it. So, it is a topic that should pique anthropological interest, but oddly, there hasn't been as much done on it in academic circles. There are several distinct cultures and customs in India. Because of its richness in all spheres, Indian culture is quite unique. The different socioeconomic situations and enduring traditions are reflected in the folk and tribal dances of India. Dances are performed in India during the practically daily festivals and celebrations to demonstrate joy and festivity. Social Media" describes online platforms that share user-generated content and frequently post relevant experiences. These posts can be stored or shared online for quick access by other customers who may be impacted by them. The term "social media" technically refers to a broad variety of applications that enable users to "Post," "Tag," "Dig," or "Blog" online. These applications generate a variety of fresh and evolving information sources which are online that are used by consumers, shared and created, and also released, in order to provide information about issues related to products, services, and brands (Blackshow, 2006).

Folk Dance

A kind of ritual, art, or entertainment is folk dancing. It transcends the strictly utilitarian goals of the movements made in the workplace or during physical activity to convey emotions, ideas, or moods; tell a tale; satisfy social, political, or religious obligations; or just be an enjoyable, thrilling, or visually stunning experience. Dancing has psychological benefits in addition to physical ones. Sharing rhythms and motions may help a group feel more cohesive and allow for the expression and communication of feelings and ideas (Nehkholum Haokip, 2015). Folk dance is seen as a tradition that is passed down from generation to generation and is distinctive to the general populace of a nation or region. Whatever the reason, people congregate and carry out such rituals for a long time, forming relationships with one another and connecting with the area where they now or have lived their daily lives (Giannoulakis, 2018). Folk dance is a distinct third aspect of this topic since it combines literary and musical folklore to complete the principal realm of folklore. Folk dance is sometimes referred to as traditional dance, ethnic dance, or folk choreography. Since folk dance is a collaborative creativity, it highlights the shared, representative qualities of the traits and personalities of the people from the community in which it originates and develops through syncretic acts produced in the framework of dance movement. The most common type of dance in a community is folk dance, which is performed for ceremonial, ritualistic, or entertaining purposes as well as communication to spread or validate norms and convey feelings, attitudes, and beliefs (Şuşu, 2018). The author claims that folk dances are performed for every imaginable occasion, such as weddings, the start of a new season, childbirth, and other festivities. There are very few steps and maneuvers used in the ancient dances. India has a vibrant and



active folk dance tradition. Men and women may dance together in certain shows while doing separate solo dances in others. The literature also notes that India has more than 100 different types of folk dance (Manishsiq, 2023).

Bihu Dance

Among the northeastern state, Assam state comprises of rich history and vivid culture. At local level the markets in Assam are seen to sell beautiful handicraft and paintings. The identification of ethnicity of the state is presented through its various handicrafts, arts and most importantly the bihu dance. (Chatterjee, 2020). In India we find different dances and festivals related to seasonal harvesting. With no difference, the agro-based seasonal festival is also allied to the bihu dance. Though Bihu dance is related to Bohag Bihu but the Bihu dance has become a cultural identity of Assam. For any joyous moent or celebration related to Assamese culture the bihu dance is performed. However, the Bihu dance that is performed during Bohag bihu is different. In this traditional dance, young people from both sexes often dance in different groups or together in open spaces, such as along a riverbank or beneath a big tree, while listening to the sounds of instruments like the Gogona, Taal, Dhul, Pepa & Toka, as well as the beat of Bihu songs (Hazarika & Rumi Das, 2022). Assamese culture is embodied in bihu dancing. An essential component of Bihu culture is Bihu dance and singing. In Assam's many areas, the bihu dance and songs take on a variety of forms that are regarded as folk media. Folk music, dancing, instruments, and tunes provide depth to the Assamese identity (Gogoi, 2010). The tribe of Deori term Bihu, which meaning "excessive joy," is the source of the name Bihu. This kind of Bihu is still celebrated by the different indigenous tribes of Assam, such as the Chutias, Sonowal Kacharis, Thengal-Kacharis, Morans, Deoris, and Motoks (in great numbers). These clans were called Sadiyal Kacharis because they lived in the Sadiya kingdom. The other Bodo-Kachari branches, such as the Bodos, Dimasas, Rabhas, Tiwas, and so on, have likewise observed Bihu since the dawn of time. It is known by the names Bushu, Pisu, and Dumsi to the Dimasas, Tiwa, and Rabha, respectively, while the Bodos call it Baisagu (Gogoi D., 2015). Beginning with Ahom's reign, the Bihu dance spreads to families from its original setting, i.e., open fields or forests. Bihu dancing has never been acknowledged before. However, after the Ahoms bought Bihu for the family and expressed their gratitude, the community gradually came to accept the dance in public. Thus, on the first day of Bihu, the people of the community—the men only—began to conduct Husori together in each house. After performing the Bihu dance and enjoying the tunes of the Bihu Geet and other musical instruments, the homeowner acknowledges the blessings by offering a small amount of token money. Women performing bihu sometimes wear costumes such as Muga Sador Mekhela, Muga Blouse or Red Blouse, Raw Silk or Assam Silk Riha, Hasoti, etc. In addition, they wear traditional Assamese jewellery like muthi kharu, or traditional bangles, and accessories like kakoi and gogona, even though they don't wear them throughout the performance but do when hair atonement is necessary. Furthermore, in terms of accessories and cosmetics, they wear traditional Assamese bangles called muthi kharu as well as gogona and kakoi, even though they don't wear them throughout the performance but do

when hair atonement is necessary. Additionally, there is a push to use artificial orchids in place of live Kopuful (*Rhynchostylis retusa*) and to substitute ready-made Mehendi for organic henna or a combination of turmeric and lime for henna on hands (Hazarika & Rumi Das, 2022).

Social Media (SM)

The word "social media" first appeared in the Matisse online media ecosystem in Tokyo in 1994. The early years of the commercial Internet saw the development and public launch of the first social media platforms. The quantity of social media platforms and their active users has been increasing over time, making it one of the most significant Internet applications as the days go by. (Thomas Aichner, Matthias Gruñfelder, Oswin Maurer, & Deni Jegeni, 2021). Our phrase "scalable sociality" describes how social media has occupied and mixed the traditional broadcast system and private individual communication, where individuals are allowed to choose their group size and level of secrecy (Miller, et al., 2016). There are numerous online platforms for social media which may include product reviews pages, photo sharing pages, social gaming, forums, microblogs, business networks, group projects, enterprise social networks, social bookmarking, video sharing, and virtual worlds are referred to as "social media" in research (Aichner, 2015). There are many various variables that must be taken into account while evaluating students from a dance viewpoint, such as individual feedback, assessments of public performances, and ongoing creative development on stage that must be continually watched. By leveraging social media platforms as brand-new performance venues, these millennial kids' negative perceptions of social media use have been changed into a sort of creative and participatory learning for the twenty-first century. Additionally, social media is a part of the history that is dependent on the anachronistic changes that have emerged as the new benchmarks for the Malaysian dance business. (Fairul, Aimi Nabila binti Anizaim, & Aileen Sufiah binti Mahumar Gadaffi Sorilaut, 2022). Dancers' social media accounts play a crucial part in portraying them in good ways; if they are to be perceived as competitive, their number of followers on social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, must demonstrate a consistent increase (Laos, 2019).

Promotion

The terms "promotion" and "producing sales" both apply to increasing consumer knowledge of a good or service and developing brand loyalty. Along with the four Ps (pricing, product, promotion, and placement), this is one of the four fundamental components of the market mix (McCarthy, 1960). It is, in fact, the platform that the business uses to achieve the customer distribution of information about their goods. Thus, it is essential to the accomplishment of corporate goals. Publicity, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations, and marketing are all components of the marketing promotions mix. These components have a role in informing consumers, clients, or future users about the goods or services offered in a variety of ways (Adesoga & Van Scheers Louise, 2015). Promotion is a marketing strategy used to create a channel of communication between suppliers and customers. This is what the business owner performs in an attempt to sway and convince customers to purchase their goods or services. It helps to publicise the



company, its products, and services. The corporation uses this procedure to enhance its image. This marketing strategy has the power to pique consumers' interest and win them over as devoted clients (Kotler & Kevin Lane Keller, 2011).

2. OBJECTIVES

The study's objective is to uncover the function of social media in promoting Indian folk, with a special reference to the Assamese folk dance Bihu.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section of the paper explains how the pertinent studies were found through a review of the literature on bihu dance, folk dance, and the usage of social media in promoting national folk dance.

Review Method

The methodology used in this study is a narrative literature review because various studies and theoretical databases are being combined in order to identify the various social media

platforms' roles in promoting the various folk dances, which is the primary goal of this paper. Also, there is a need to identify the role of social media with reference to bihu dance.

Database search

This study seeks to highlight the cultural importance of our folk dances from the 28 states of India, which have their own dance forms to express their feelings of joy and happiness. For this purpose, the most relevant literature using internet databases, which include Google Scholar, Shodhganga, Research Gate, and Mendeley, was searched. Papers were found using the keywords "folk dance," "bihu dance, social media," and "promotion". In the first step of the initial process, several conceptual elements such as the title and abstract of the articles were analysed, and, after following this approach in the second process, other articles were studied in order to include the most pertinent literature associated with different folk dances of our country, and then special reference was made to the dance form of Assam that is Bihu.

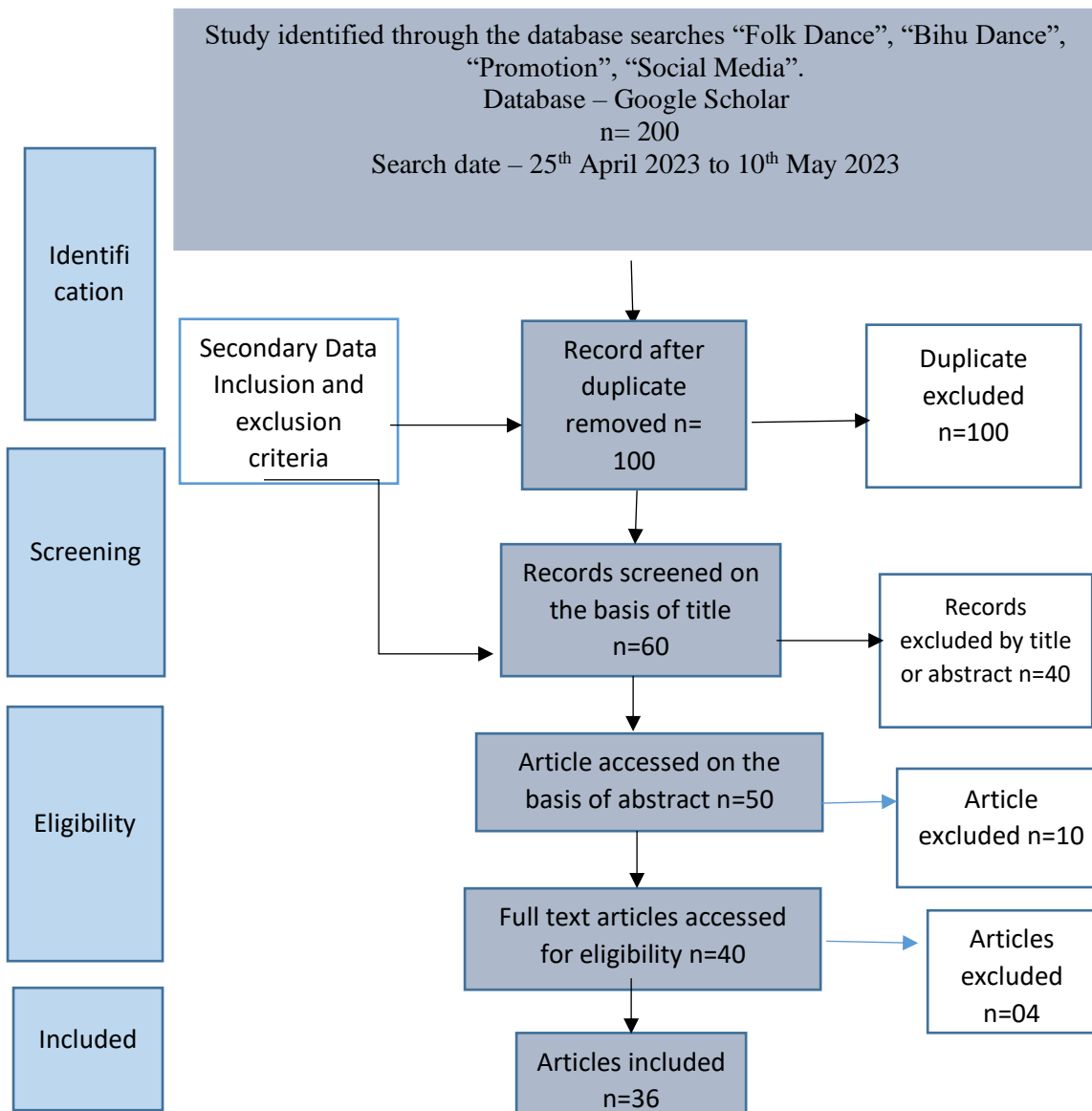


Figure 1: Prsima Model for Literature Search
Source – (Haq, Rehan Ahmed Khan, & Raheela Yasmin, 2019)



4. FINDINGS

All measures that aid in preventing the loss of all the dance steps that our ancestors developed over the years but which cannot be retained in any savable form are referred to as preservation. Folk dances have been recorded, digitalized, and recreated as part of these activities. Modern information technology has made it possible to preserve traditional dances in novel ways that might help resolve the aforementioned problems. Additionally, it can aid in the greater acceptance and spread of folk dances, the significance of which should be emphasised once again since, when performed, folk dances automatically involve communal ties (Kico, Nikos Grammalidis, & Yiannis Christidis, 2018).

The development of media has altered how we connect, communicate, teach, and learn. The number of individuals interested in dance and dance education has grown significantly as a result of the development of social media, video sharing websites, particularly YouTube, and telecommunications. Students may think about their learning, communicate their ideas, and solve problems in new ways because of technology. Increased connectedness across all facets of the industry, including art making, education, and performance, is helping dance instructors and artists recognize the impact of the digital revolution. The development of instructional technology seems to be consistent with the goals and approaches of current policy in the field of art education. These changes have given students additional opportunities to customise and guide their own learning. (Parrish, 2016). A new kind of client, the cultural participant, has emerged as a result of social media. One person may readily share their opinions regarding cultural items with the public thanks to social media technologies. As a result, customers are better able to advertise the product than cultural institutions, whether in a positive or negative way. Whether it's an image, a movie, or a blog entry, social media technology enables users to produce and share their own works of art. Due to the fact that everyone may now be an artist, this has altered how the general public views cultural hierarchy (Bonita, 2013). The creation of genuine digital narratives by artists that boost audience exposure and emotional involvement through social media is a crucial part of cultural branding. Also, as a tool and medium for their artistic expression, artists use digital technology. YouTube and other types of online video art have been made possible by digital technology as tools (SAM DANIS, 2018).

Social media's role in promoting folk dancing

The fastest-growing and most intriguing area of marketing today is internet marketing communication. For marketers aiming to reach new and more demanding, observant, and dispersed consumers as the globe gets more connected, staying up to date on changes and trends is crucial. It seems nearly difficult to stay current with the most recent trends given how quickly technology and software are evolving. All events interested in expanding their present success and bringing in new attendees are changing and adjusting to the internet environment. The "digital revolution" has fundamentally altered the way that media is produced, and traditional media is just now beginning to accept that the digital era is here to stay. Beyond everyone's expectations, it has also kept progressing

quicker. The only way to continue reaping the benefits of the web's evolution is to stay current with its moving, expanding, and changing nature. Traditional marketing techniques have been reinvented as a result of how consumers now receive news, communicate, make purchases, and make decisions. The information landscape is becoming increasingly social through the use of blogs, wikis, social networks, and news websites, to name just a few examples (Oklobdžija, 2015). The new forum for cultural interaction is YouTube. Through YouTube, the new generations may learn about the customs of people living in other locations. The literature is familiar with the customs and rituals practised by many civilizations. YouTube is helping to distribute information about festivals, folk music, and dance. Similar to this, the media and entertainment sectors have been utilising YouTube to promote other cultures through their own shows. Moreover, YouTube has contributed to the creation of new artistic forms and the distribution of existing ones (Mishra, 2020). Skilled performers (or contest winners) make money from their talents by opening teaching and training facilities in metropolitan areas. While these training facilities have proliferated in towns like Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, and Rajkot, they are now adopting the new technology of social media, such as YouTube channels, to showcase their talents worldwide (Chavda, 2019). The artists of Bharatanatyam dance recognised a chance to showcase their work to a worldwide audience rather than simply a national one with the introduction of social media platforms like Youtube and Instagram, which enable an instantaneous audience. There is no longer the implicit but acknowledged requirement of a specific number of years of training in order to take the stage or present a work. A dancer may be created with only a good camera, appropriate lighting, and appropriate music. Another result of this burst of talent-showcasing was the sudden abundance of instructors willing to instruct in this field. Dancers who were previously unknown might take advantage of new prospects for instructing pupils thanks to simple exposure and economical promotion. Social media has made it possible to view and enjoy the performances of renowned dancers, which will aid dancers in honing their abilities. One can communicate with specialists to understand the finer details through webinars. With social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and others, publicising is simpler, quicker, and more widespread, whether it be a straightforward post or an event invitation. This increases demand for tickets and offers a fantastic chance for up-and-coming artists to demonstrate their talents in front of a larger audience (Kulkarni, 2019).

Social media's contribution to the promotion of Assamese folk dance, specifically Bihu

Agriculture and production are connected to folk festivals in India. The main components that make up these festivals include social manners, customs, habits, etc. The most significant symbol of cultural integration in Assam that connects the numerous indigenous tribes and other ethnic members of Assamese society is the bihu. It is an assemblage of the customary dances, songs, and musical instruments from the various Assamese indigenous castes, subcastes, and tribes. Being a kind of performing arts, folk festivals have long been important parts of neighbourhood life and culture. Social media has had a big impact in that sector, even though they urge



people to express their identities through the various events they host throughout these festival periods. Due to them, some elements of mainstream culture have begun to influence how these traditional festivals are observed (Das, Umme Hani, & Shri Harsha Andukuri, 2017). The emergence of social media, which enables people to interact, watch, and share content, has changed the paradigm of communication. As a new form of technology, social media has changed artists' lives, and this has had a significant effect on the sustainable tourism sector. Social media has developed into an essential tool for businesses, allowing artists to maintain good communication with their audience. Social networking sites allow artists to produce their own content, films, images, or artistic creations, providing them with a platform to share various online media assets with a wider audience. A plethora of handicrafts, visual arts, and traditional Bihu dance, shared online, showcase the cultural diversity of the state (Chatterjee & Nigel Raylyn Dsilva, 2021). The most characteristic aspect of the Bohag Bihu festivity is the Bihu dance. Bihu dancing is the expression of joy, love, and enjoyment. People gather to dance to the beat of the gogona, pepa, and dhol, regardless of their age. There are several styles of Bihu dance: the Husori, which is performed in the village courtyard; Mukoli Bihu, a type of dance performed in an open space with boys and girls; Jeng Bihu, which is performed in an open space by women; Rati Bihu, which is performed by women alone at night; and Gos Tolor Bihu, which is performed under a tree and is nearly identical to Mukoli Bihu. The Husori performance is still a favourite among all of these. This is the beauty of social media, where a person living in another place can enjoy the folk dance of Assam (Bora, Bihu: The Festival of Assam, 2018). People's desire to learn new things has increased with the release of COVID-19, and the artist is taking advantage of this trend by using the advantages of digital transformation to promote the dance video. Online events may be a smart approach to interact with guests and maintain human connection during uncertain times. Social media has several benefits, including accessibility, lower expenses, and the capacity to reach a larger audience (Estanyol, 2021)

5. FUTURE SCOPE AND CONCLUSIONS

From the above findings, it can be said that YouTube acts as a platform for folk dancing, which has proven itself to be interesting and attractive for the learners of the new generation. The learners have started accepting it as one of the most prominent learning sources due to the attractive presentation formats of the content. However, the users are also doubtful about the authenticity of the content on YouTube, and there are barriers such as internet connectivity and power supply. At the same time, policymakers should establish YouTube as a better learning resource. Future studies could focus further on figuring out what exactly makes social media so important for spreading our country's culture and folk dancing around the world. The future researcher can adopt other folk dance forms of our nation, as this study is only restricted to the folk dance of Assam.

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