RELEVANCE OF CHAUPALS IN RURAL COMMUNICATION IN POST MODERN ERA: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ANUJ

MZU REGISTRATION NO.: 2200203

Ph.D. REGISTRATION NO.: MZU/Ph.D./1872 of 30.08.2021

DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION

SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, MANAGEMENT

AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

DECEMBER 2024

RELEVANCE OF CHAUPALS IN RURAL COMMUNICATION IN POST MODERN ERA: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

BY

ANUJ

DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION

SUPERVISOR

DR. DHEERAJ KUMAR

Submitted

In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Mass Communication of Mizoram University, Aizawl.

MIZORAM **UNIVERSITY**
Department of Mass Communication
Aizawl, Mizoram-796004
Post Box No.:190, Phone: 7598015205

CERTIFICATE

I certify that the thesis entitled "**RELEVANCE OF CHAUPALS IN RURAL COMMUNICATION IN POST MODERN ERA: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION**" submitted to Mizoram University for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Mass Communication by **Anuj** bearing **MZU Regn. No. 2200203** and **Ph.D. Regn. No. MZU/Ph.D./1872 of 30.08.2021** is a record of research work carried out during the period of August 2021-December 2024 under my guidance and work carried out under my guidance and supervision, and that this work has not formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other titles in this university or any other university or institution of higher learning.

Date: **Dr. Dheeraj Kumar**

Place: Mizoram University   Assistant Professor and Supervisor

                                                                   Mizoram University

i

I ANUJ, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to do the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the **Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Mass Communication.**

(Anuj)

Research Scholar

Head of the Department

(Dr. Dheeraj Kumar)

Supervisor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Aizawl, Mizoram   **Anuj**

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

List of figures

ABBRIVATIONS

DJ	Disk Jockey
GDP	Gross Domestic
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
IDIS	In-Depth interviews
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activists
FMCG	fast-moving consumer goods
NCR	National Capital Region
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
NGOS	Non-Government Organisations
ICT	Information and communication technologies
TV	Television
AI	Artificial Intelligence
Iot	Internet of Things

Relevance of Chaupals in rural communication in Post Modern Era: with Special Reference to National Capital Region

Abstract

As time rapidly changes, people's preferences and dislikes evolve alongside. Individuals still frequent public spheres, though these spaces vary based on personal preference, age, and cultural background. Jürgen Habermas' Public Sphere Theory (1962) highlights the essential role of public spheres in fostering democracy, identifying core elements like civil rights, opinion sharing, freedom of expression, and assembly. While extensive research has been conducted globally on public spheres, including the emerging digital public sphere, the traditional public sphere has seen a noticeable decline in engagement. This research examines the continued relevance of the conventional "Chaupal" in the National Capital Region of Delhi. It explores the challenges these community spaces face as social dynamics shift. The researcher used snowball sampling to identify traditional Chaupal sites across several villages in Delhi NCR, as the region undergoes significant changes due to urbanisation. Urban expansion has absorbed numerous villages, and many former residents have shifted to modern housing complexes. The researcher collected data through interviews with Chaupal representatives, structured questionnaires, and focus group discussions. Habermas's Public Sphere Theory provided the theoretical foundation for the study. Quantitative analysis reveals that while Chaupals remain spaces for sharing perspectives, they encounter notable constraints. Some traditional limitations persist despite societal advancements, with a marked decline in youth participation compared to previous generations. Qualitative insights suggest that older generations hold Chaupals in high regard, viewing them as spaces deserving respect.. A balanced approach that respects tradition while allowing flexibility may enhance their relevance in the future. This research contributes to a deeper Understanding of how traditional public spaces like Chaupals can adapt to remain meaningful in an evolving social landscape, highlighting the broader implications for community engagement in an era of digital transformation.

Keywords: Chaupals, Public Sphere, Decentralisation, Rural Communication, Digital Public Sphere.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Public sphere

The public sphere can be understood as a concept deeply rooted in liberal ideals, traditionally viewed as an intermediary space between the private and public domains. As our world rapidly evolves, the notion of a global Public Sphere has become increasingly relevant (Giri, 2020). Generally, people see the Public Sphere as a social realm distinct from the family, market, and state, where individuals can gather to deliberate, engage, and share ideas on matters of public concern. However, no universally accepted definition exists for the Public Sphere. According to Sussane Hober Rodolph, the Public Sphere is an autonomous, non-state domain dedicated to empowering citizens, fostering social trust, and facilitating meaningful communication with the state. India has a long-standing and profound relationship with the concept of the Public Sphere. For centuries, various movements and discussions have advocated for a space where citizens can freely engage in social discourse and drive collective action. This study examines the historical evolution and current dynamics of the Public Sphere in India, including the cultural significance of traditional gathering places like the Chaupal, which has been essential for fostering community dialogue and citizen empowerment. This research will address how the Public Sphere concept has adapted within India's unique socio-political context, highlighting its challenges and ongoing role in promoting participatory democracy and social cohesion. This study is therefore essential for understanding the interplay between India's historical context and the modern realities of a globalised Public Sphere, considering both local institutions like Chaupals and the broader implications for public engagement in an interconnected world. (Rodolph at al., 2020)

Individuals actively come together in the public sphere to engage in discussions and exchange ideas on issues of public interest. This deliberative process is fundamental in shaping public opinion, a cornerstone of a healthy democracy. Individuals express their thoughts through public discourse and the exchange of

ideas, which collectively shape social, economic, and political perspectives, thereby contributing to the evaluation and Development of society. In a democratic society, citizens are encouraged to engage in meaningful dialogue that contributes to developing an informed and progressive community. This engagement in political discourse assumes critical importance in any democracy, enabling citizens to engage with issues that affect their society's governance and future direction. In the framework of social mediation, the public sphere functions as a dynamic medium for discussion, where individuals engage directly or through representation. Traditional and new media play an instrumental role in facilitating this exchange. Traditional media—including print, radio, and television—has historically provided the public with access to information, thus contributing significantly to developing an informed public sphere. As society transitions to digital platforms, new media offer more interactive public engagement spaces. The influence of media in simplifying complex issues and presenting them in an accessible way underscores its power in the public sphere. Beyond just delivering information, the media shapes the opinions and attitudes of society, sometimes steering the public discourse itself. This interplay between the public sphere and media platforms enhances people's abilities to think critically and engage in meaningful discussions. Thus, media in all its forms are highly regarded within society, as they hold the potential to facilitate public dialogue, inform opinion, and ultimately contribute to the social and political fabric of a democracy. (fischer et al., 2024)

The role of the public sphere is to actively influence society's governance by advocating for members' rights and interests, promoting social justice, and holding the government accountable for its actions.

1.1.1 A proponent

The public sphere plays an interactive role with the government, especially regarding policy development and implementation. It serves as a platform through which citizens and organisations can engage with governmental authorities, raising inquiries about the benefits policies offer and evaluating how effectively these serve the public interest. This interaction allows the government to receive feedback,

3

enabling improvements and adjustments before formalising policies. Numerous non-governmental organisations (NGOS) in India actively implement and assess public projects, exemplifying how the public sphere can contribute to more accountable and responsive governance.

1.1.2 Protection

Public sphere organisations actively safeguard and uphold individual rights. Additionally, they strive to ensure equitable access to justice for individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

1.1.2 Transparency

The public sphere has made steadfast efforts to enforce legislation such as the Right to Information, Lokpal, and Lokayukta.

The public sphere and social media work in tandem, each offering platforms for self-expression and community engagement. Traditional folk media, including music, theatre, and other folk arts, serve as a powerful cultural tool that adapts to reflect contemporary issues. Every form of folk art acts as a medium of expression, carrying messages that resonate with the community. Through these messages, folk art prompts public discussion, creating space for societal debate and reflection on important issues. (Rober, B. et al, 2024)

1.2 Public Sphere and Folk Media

Cultural Transmission: Folk media is a vital conduit for transmitting cultural heritage, preserving and sharing traditions, values, and narratives across generations. This medium fosters moral and ethical dialogue within communities, encouraging individuals to engage with shared cultural experiences. Through folk arts, such as music, dance, storytelling, and drama, folk media cultivates a collective cultural identity and strengthens social cohesion by reinforcing shared values and social bonds. This transmission of cultural knowledge contributes significantly to

community continuity and unity, bridging generational gaps and nurturing a sense of belonging within society. (Rober, B. et al, 2024)

Political Mobilization: Folk arts convey political messages and educate individuals about political issues. These art forms utilize various methods, including storytelling, music, performance, symbols, flags, folk tales, proverbs, and representations of folk heroes. Historically, folk art has served as a powerful symbol of the struggle for freedom, inspiring communities to advocate for their rights and raise their voices to support social and political change. By engaging audiences through relatable narratives and culturally resonant expressions, folk arts reflect the political landscape and mobilise individuals to participate in the political discourse, fostering a sense of collective identity and empowerment within society. (Kumar, A. 2023)

Community Engagement: Folk media enhances communication within the public sphere by providing a platform for exchanging diverse ideas. This public realm allows individuals with varying perspectives to engage equitably, promoting inclusivity and understanding among community members. Moreover, folk media fosters social connections and encourages active participation, creating a sense of belonging and community cohesion. Folk media facilitates dialogue and interaction through its various forms, ultimately enriching the social fabric and enhancing community engagement. (Andrew, 2022)

1.2.1 The digital public sphere

As society has evolved, the public sphere has expanded beyond traditional, physical spaces to include a dynamic digital realm, transforming how people communicate, exchange ideas, and participate in public discourse. The emergence of the digital public sphere, driven by the rapid rise of the Internet and advancements in digital technology, has opened up new possibilities for civic engagement and collective dialogue. This shift enables individuals to access a variety of platforms through which they can express views, share information, and organize around issues

of mutual concern. Today, digital media is an inclusive, widely accessible space that complements the traditional public sphere by reaching broader, more diverse audiences. This digital transformation has reshaped communication channels, allowing for instantaneous interaction and exchanging ideas that can transcend geographic and social boundaries. Consequently, the digital public sphere has become a powerful tool for shaping public opinion, holding institutions accountable, and fostering a more participatory society responsive to its people's changing needs and voices. (Fuchs, C., 202)

Equity and Engagement: The digital platform is structured to ensure equal rights and opportunities for expression among all participants, thereby fostering an inclusive environment in which every voice holds the potential to be acknowledged. Its accessibility from any location enables participation from a diverse spectrum of individuals, bridging differences in background and geography. This inclusive access facilitates engagement from those who might otherwise remain excluded from conventional spaces of public discourse, thus reinforcing the foundations of democratic participation. (Dagmar et al., 2024)

The impact of misinformation: Misinformation is leading individuals to fall prey to digital scams. The digital public sphere provides limited opportunities for open and constructive debate. Although it has advantages, the digital public sphere can sometimes contribute to heightened social discord. (Dinar et al., 2024)

The public sphere plays a crucial role in participating in and shaping a society's governance. It advocates for the rights and interests of its members, promotes social justice, and holds the government accountable for its actions.

1.3 Folklore

1.3.1 Folklore Communication

A specific group or individual expresses and preserves their cultural identity through the dynamic medium of folklore. Folklore encompasses a rich tradition of oral communication, including stories, proverbs, and jokes. It also includes various elements of material culture, such as traditional architectural styles and crafts like handmade toys. Additionally, folklore incorporates traditional knowledge, practices, and rituals associated with celebrations such as Holi, Diwali, and weddings. Folk dances and initiation rites, whether performed individually or collectively, are considered important artefacts of folklore.

The transmission of folklore occurs across regions or through successive generations, primarily through oral traditions. However, folklore is not typically included in formal academic curricula, and the fine arts syllabus often covers only a limited selection of folkloric elements. The academic study of folklore, known as folkloristics, seeks to analyse and understand these cultural expressions in greater depth. Transmission is an essential part of folklore. It is passed from one generation to the next by the informal method of communication. As a new generation emerges, new folklore or something new is added to traditional folklore. India is a very diverse country based on religion and culture. It is difficult to generalise about Indian folklore as a whole. (Ben-Amos, D., 2020)

1.4 Communication in Rural Areas

Rural communication is an interactive process that facilitates the exchange of knowledge, skills, and information relevant to development between farmers and extension or advisory services. The role of communication has been very significant in rural and urban development. The folk theatre is a crucial instrument for communication. In addition to other forms of communication, this one also incorporates many other significant elements, including dance, music, pantomime, versification, and regional art. The name of Himachal Pradesh is Dev Bhoomi, which

is evident in all of the celebrations, fairs, cultural events, etc. that take place there. Folk theatre is an effective communication medium in rural areas, where communicators actively convey appropriate messages to the local populace. Folk theatre has become less successful as times have changed. Folk theatre is still very effective, even in the twenty-first century. This rural communication medium reflects the community's cultural legacy and customs."

Himachal Pradesh is home to the folk theatre Karyala. Folk theatre dates back to the Karyala era—improvisational theatre with no set script that artists perform. Dhols, drums, and nagaras are traditional musical instruments in this folk theatre. Folk theatres are an extraordinarily successful and reasonably priced source of entertainment and communication. People who share a common language, culture, or religion are called "folk." The term "media" refers to the communication medium. Folklore is the area of culture that uses folk arts to describe people's sociocultural systems, attitudes, values, and beliefs. Traditional media is a more widely recognised form of communication in rural places. Folk music, folk art, folklore, and folk drama are all included in the broader category of folk media (Shandil, M., 2023).

1.4.1 Rural Media

Rural media is a type of media that targets the primary audience outside a metropolitan area. Types of rural media

Conventional media

Non-conventional media

1.4.1.1 Conventional media or Mass media

This medium can reach millions of people simultaneously, making it a highly effective form of communication. The audience for this type of media is diverse. Strategies for rural communication differ from those aimed at the general public. Examples of conventional media include radio, television, print materials, and cinema.

1.4.1.2 Non-conventional or Traditional media

Traditional, non-electronic media in India play a vital role in cultural transmission, bridging generations and reinforcing values within communities. This type of media includes haats (local markets), melas (fairs), puppet shows, wall paintings, and regional theatre, all deeply woven into rural India's social fabric. Life in these rural areas can be demanding, given infrastructure challenges and extreme weather, yet it remains culturally vibrant, with music, art, and folk traditions integral to daily expression. In rural India, mass media have started to gain ground, but it often requires a foundational level of literacy and access, which are sometimes limited in these areas. Traditional folk media, therefore, occupies a unique space, overcoming these barriers through storytelling, songs, dances, and visual art that resonate with rural audiences on a personal level. Folk media encompasses a wide range of oral, musical, and visual expressions that transmit knowledge, values, and communal identity from one generation to the next. This form of communication fosters a strong sense of community, making it invaluable for rural engagement. In many rural regions, traditional media preserves cultural heritage and serves as a primary channel for community-based communication. Through enduring practices, traditional media continues to adapt alongside modernity, retaining its significance in rural life and contributing to a cultural continuity that reflects the values and identity of rural Indian society.(Imo-Ter Nyam, I., et al 2018).

1.4.1.2.1 Nagada for Communication

The text delves into the significance of folk arts and traditional tools as central elements in indigenous communication methods, particularly through instruments like the Nagada. This historic percussion instrument has been a staple in rural Indian culture for centuries, deeply embedded in communal practices and messaging. Despite technological advancements, the Nagada's relevance endures in modern celebrations, where its resonant, echoing sound acts as both a cultural emblem and a call to gather. Historically, the Nagada was a musical instrument and a means of communication. In rural settings, it was used to transmit messages across distances, functioning as an early, auditory form of mass communication. For example, villagers continue bringing a large, wheeled Nagada to the central Chaupal during the Holi festival, a common space where community discussions and

celebrations occur. The drum's rhythmic beat invites community members from their homes to the Chaupal, where they gather for collective celebration, storytelling, and social bonding. This ritual underscores the Nagada's role as more than just an instrument; it is a unifying force that reinforces community ties, supports cultural continuity, and brings people together in shared experiences. The continued use of the Nagada and similar folk art forms reflects a broader cultural commitment to preserving traditional communication methods, which hold unique value in rural societies. Such practices foster a sense of belonging, affirm cultural identity, and serve as resilient, low-barrier channels for connecting people across generations. In many rural communities, traditional media like the Nagada and Chaupals fulfil roles that modern media cannot, providing accessible, meaningful ways for communities to maintain their cultural heritage and social cohesion. (Singh Kachhawa, R., et al 2021).

1.4.1.2.2 Puppetry

Puppetry has long been a prominent form of communication in rural areas, with roots tracing back approximately 3,000 years. Among the many puppetry styles, shadow and string puppetry are particularly well-regarded in India, yet numerous other forms contribute to this rich tradition. This storytelling method employs puppets to communicate messages effectively across a wide audience, allowing educational and social themes to be conveyed in an accessible manner that resonates with diverse community members. Puppetry's versatility makes it an invaluable tool for rural education and social messaging. Puppetry can simplify complex topics like child psychology, hygiene, civic responsibilities, history, geography, and even poetry through engaging narratives and characters. This format enables audiences of all ages to understand and connect with critical information. Moreover, puppetry performances often occur in central community spaces like Chaupals, where villagers gather to discuss issues, share stories, and learn from one another, fostering a shared learning environment. The art of puppetry in rural contexts serves as a communication method and helps preserve cultural heritage. Puppets, often designed with traditional attire and reflective of local customs, reinforce communal identity

while conveying messages. This unique combination of education, entertainment, and cultural preservation ensures that puppetry remains a relevant and impactful medium for personal expression and public outreach in rural areas. (Kumar, P., 2022)

1.4.1.2.3 Patachitra Katha

Pattachitra Katha, also known as Pattachitra, is a distinctive form of storytelling through visual art, deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of Odisha (formerly Orissa) in India. Derived from the Sanskrit words "Patta" (cloth) and "Chitra" (picture), Pattachitra involves intricate paintings on cloth, which are traditionally used to narrate mythological tales, historical events, and spiritual stories. This art form originated as early as the 12th century, strongly linked to the worship of Lord Jagannath and the temple rituals surrounding him in Puri, Odisha. In a typical Pattachitra, artists use natural colours and hand-made brushes to depict vivid scenes that are characterised by bold lines, vibrant colours, and detailed ornamentation. Stories often centre on episodes from Hindu epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, as well as various legends surrounding deities, with a particular emphasis on the stories of Lord Jagannath. These paintings are not only visual but also serve as tools for storytelling, with artists narrating tales to an audience as they unfurl each painted scene. In Odisha, Pattachitra paintings are still revered and practised, preserving an artistic tradition that has been passed down through generations. Many artists gather in community centres or Chaupals to work on these artworks collectively, infusing the tradition with a strong sense of community. Today, Pattachitra continues to be a cherished symbol of cultural heritage in Odisha, celebrated for its storytelling power and its ability to connect the past with the present through timeless narratives. (Kargatia, J., et al 2024)

1.4.1.2.4 The act of narrating a narrative

The practice of storytelling is one of the oldest forms of human expression and serves as a vital medium of folk art, particularly for communication in rural communities. Storytelling predates written language and has been instrumental in preserving history, culture, and moral lessons across generations. Many tales, often

rich with cultural significance, remain undocumented or unrecorded, passed down orally from one generation to the next. These narratives frequently recount the adventures and trials of various heroes, heroines, and notable figures, serving not only to entertain but also to educate and reinforce societal values. In India, storytelling manifests in numerous forms, each with its unique style and cultural significance. Prominent among these are Harikatha and Lokgan. Harikatha combines storytelling with music and dance, typically narrating the life stories of deities, especially Lord Krishna, while emphasising moral teachings and spiritual lessons. Lokgan, on the other hand, is characterised by its use of folk songs and is often performed in community gatherings or Chaupals, where performers engage directly with their audiences, fostering a shared cultural experience. These storytelling traditions not only entertain but also play a crucial role in community cohesion and identity, ensuring that cultural heritage is preserved and passed on. Through these vibrant forms of narrative, rural populations maintain a deep connection to their history and values, making storytelling a dynamic and essential aspect of their cultural landscape. (Madgulkar, V., et al 2023)

1.4.1.2.5 Nautanki

South Asia, particularly North India, recognizes Nautanki as one of the oldest forms of folk operatic theatre. Prior to the rise of cinema, Nautanki enjoyed widespread popularity across India, captivating audiences with its dynamic performances. Villagers strongly desire to engage with stories that reflect their current circumstances and societal issues. Nautanki serves as a vital medium for raising social awareness by addressing important topics such as the dowry system and the dangers associated with the use of toxic substances in agriculture. Additionally, it tackles pressing concerns like unemployment and illiteracy, making it relevant to the lives of its audience. Through its engaging narratives, Nautanki not only entertains but also educates, fostering dialogue and reflection on these significant issues within the community. The performances often occur in communal spaces, such as Chaupals, where the interactive nature of the theatre allows for a direct connection between the performers and the audience. This communal engagement enhances the

impact of the stories, ensuring that the messages resonate deeply with the spectators. By combining elements of drama, music, and humor, Nautanki effectively reflects the struggles and aspirations of rural society, solidifying its role as a crucial form of cultural expression that continues to thrive today. Through this art form, the community preserves its cultural heritage and promotes a collective consciousness that encourages social change and empowerment. Thus, Nautanki remains an essential aspect of traditional Indian folk culture, demonstrating the enduring power of storytelling in shaping public discourse and community identity. (Sharma, D., 2020)

1.4.1.2.6 In Nautanki, comedy conceals the underlying message

Fairs and festivals play a significant role in communication within rural India, serving as vibrant forums where individuals gather to exchange ideas, celebrate traditions, and foster community bonds. These events are imbued with vitality, colour, tranquillity, and human connection messages. In West Bengal, the grand celebration of Durga Puja draws people together to honour the goddess and partake in cultural festivities. Similarly, Baisakhi is celebrated in Bengal, marking the harvest season with joyous festivities. In Maharashtra, the exuberance of Ganesh Chaturthi brings communities together to worship Lord Ganesha and partake in various cultural activities. Tamil Nadu's Pongal celebrates the harvest, emphasising gratitude and community spirit, while Kerala's Onam reflects a rich hospitality and cultural pride tradition. During these fairs and festivals, attendees often exchange sweets and messages of goodwill, reinforcing social ties and enhancing community cohesion.

Furthermore, these gatherings frequently serve as platforms for arranging marriages, allowing families to connect and solidify relationships between young men and women. The celebration and shared joy foster an environment conducive to forming new partnerships and strengthening existing ones. Fairs and festivals thus represent more than mere celebrations; they are vital expressions of cultural identity and communication. They facilitate sharing stories, traditions, and values, allowing rural communities to maintain their rich cultural heritage while adapting to contemporary

society. By participating in these events, individuals contribute to a collective memory that shapes their community's identity and reinforces their social fabric. In this way, fairs and festivals serve as powerful mediums of communication that bridge generational gaps and enhance the sense of belonging among community members. (Sharma, D., 2020).

1.4.1.2.7 Traditional dances

Regional variations play a significant role in distinguishing folk dances across India, with each area showcasing its unique styles that reflect local customs and traditions. Folk dancing is a powerful medium for expressing a wide range of emotions, capturing the essence of community life and cultural identity. In rural India, traditional folk dances are vital communication tools that convey messages relevant to the community. They often address social issues, celebrations, and shared experiences, allowing individuals to connect through performance. While mainstream media may have a strong presence in urban settings, rural areas primarily rely on face-to-face communication methods, including these expressive dance forms, to engage and inform their audiences. This emphasis on folk dance highlights its importance not just as an art form but as a means of preserving cultural heritage and fostering community ties, ensuring that the narratives and values of rural life continue to thrive (Mohanty, A., et al, 2018).

1.4.1.2.8 Ragini Folk Song style of Delhi NCR

Ragini is a genre of music that holds a vital place in the realm of Indian folk music. With a rich and storied history, music and dance have flourished in India, and Ragini is particularly gaining traction in Northern India, especially in the state of Haryana. A vibrant display of colours, diverse musical styles, varied tones, rhythms, and expressive movements characterises Ragini's performances. Sung in a local dialect of Hindi, Ragini reflects the cultural nuances of the region. Efforts are underway to preserve recordings of Ragini, a genre traditionally transmitted orally

from one generation to the next, without the benefit of written documentation. This oral tradition played a crucial role in maintaining its legacy. The themes explored in Ragini are diverse, encompassing mythology, sociopolitical issues, education, women's empowerment, social awareness, and nationalism. These themes are woven into the musical fabric of Ragini, making the performances highly accessible and relatable to local audiences. Each ensemble typically consists of a lead singer supported by four to six additional singers, creating a collaborative and community-oriented performance atmosphere. (Dutta, S.2024).

Ragini songs feature a variety of instruments, including drums, harmoniums, microphones, guitars, and others. The intertwining of folk writing with Indian folk culture and literature makes it a complex subject to dissect. Traditional arts exhibitions in India attract many tourists, yet tracing the original roots of these ancient practices can be pretty tricky. Folklore scholars suggest that Ragini has been part of the cultural landscape for centuries, with its foundations perhaps solidified by the insights in the Natyashastra. Composed by Bharat Muni, this foundational text consists of 36 chapters that outline the principles of drama and performance. The structure of a Ragini performance can be broken down into three key components: (i) a slow verse, (ii) an energetic chorus and bridge, and (iii) a soothing chorus that concludes the piece.Regarding structural elements, Ragini's performances are similar to those of ancient Greek plays. For hundreds of years, the state of Haryana has upheld the tradition of Ragini, which has evolved into a significant form of entertainment. Performances occur on stages accessible to audiences and utilise various musical instruments. Ragini uniquely blends the Hindi language with local dialects, enriching its appeal. Although many listeners reside in rural areas, a lack of familiarity with the dialect may hinder their understanding of the songs. The sound of Ragini is distinctly different from that of modern pop music. In Haryana, people consider Ragini a vital aspect of their cultural identity, while their enthusiasm for popular culture remains limited. There is a desire to share perspectives and engage in discourse in various contexts, necessitating spaces for such exchanges. Jürgen Habermas delineates the difference between private life and the public sphere,

asserting that neither holds more importance; both contribute positively to society. Individuals may have multiple motivations for sharing their ideas. The public sphere serves as a forum where people interact; it is a space free from authority, allowing for expression through face-to-face conversations, written communication, and digital platforms. The main goal of the public sphere is to ensure equitable understanding among all participants. For a shared opinion to form, society must openly engage with topics in this public domain. Within this realm, individuals collaborate to establish a common viewpoint, maintaining order while the government refrains from unnecessary interference. (Mukherjee, D. 2020).

1.4.1.2.9 Sang

Art as a medium is intrinsically connected to the people who create it. Understanding folk arts does not require any special equipment. When a listener is part of the same community and comprehends the language of the folk art, they can engage more deeply with the work and grasp its intended message. In Haryana, both Ragini and Saang exemplify local folk art. While Ragini can be performed independently, Lokin Saang cannot exist without Ragini. In this region, folk theatre is called Saang, whereas folk songs are called Ragini. These art forms not only share socio-cultural knowledge but also provide enjoyment to their audiences. Various national festivals, village fairs, and national celebrations offer platforms for these folk performances. Today, digital media plays a crucial role in promoting and disseminating these traditional art forms. (Attri, S. 2023).

1.5 Gandhi's Swaraj

Gandhiji held a strong belief in democratic principles and the Swaraj concept. In terms of democracy, Gandhi held views distinct from those of Westerners. Following Gandhi's departure, individuals who believed in Gandhi's ideas expanded the scope of his ideas even further. In India's rural areas, Gandhi witnessed the country's true nature. In his travels, Gandhi covered a significant portion of the nation. Gandhi

advocated for the village to be the source of power instead of the city. Gandhi did not advocate for only twenty individuals to manage India's democracy; instead, he advocated for every individual living in rural areas to run the country's democracy. Gandhi had envisioned a rural republic, and his colleagues often asserted that the lowest Indian should hold the same status as the king. Mahatma Gandhi advocated for the Panchayati Raj and envisioned a decentralised administration. Every countryside hamlet will manage its development. Gandhi officially referred to this concept as Gram Swaraj. Gandhi preferred the term "swaraj" rather than the plural form of democracy. Gandhi's concept was to distribute political authority among the many villages in India. Gandhi built this democracy on the foundation of unrestricted liberty. Gandhi's democracy allows for individual liberty, self-education, self-government, and self-sufficiency, but only when the individual can participate. Gandhi also expressed his vision of Gram Swaraj as a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its needs, yet interdependent when necessary. Gandhi proposed Gram Swaraj as a human-centred, non-exploitative, decentralised, simple rural economy that offers full employment and voluntary participation. This allows them to become self-sufficient regarding food, clothes, and other essentials. In Gandhi's view, the only way to integrate the masses into a democratic system was through the implementation of Gram Swaraj. When these principles of Gandhi are considered, it is impossible to imagine establishing a panchayat or swaraj without communication. (Bose, T. 2019).

Strong local communication was something that Gandhi placed much importance on. Even today, the panchayat still places a significant weight on the general population's point of view.

1.5 Chaupals and its types:-

Chaupals serve as community hubs in rural India, primarily frequented by men who gather to discuss various issues. These spaces facilitate conversations on important matters but also foster laughter, joy, and the sharing of happiness and sorrow. In smaller villages, Chaupals are often located under large trees, such as the

Peepal or Banyan tree. In larger villages, Chaupals may be housed in buildings known as Mehman Khana, or community guesthouses. Chaupals are vital gathering places where people come together in formal and informal settings. Announcements about government policies and other community news are made during informal gatherings. Entertainment is also a part of these meetings, with performances such as 'Ragini' and local plays. Ragini, a folk singing tradition from Haryana, conveys important social messages, including themes related to female feticide, illiteracy, sex ratios, and the stories of local heroes and their contributions. Rural residents often respect Chaupals, viewing them as "sacred places" where individuals can discuss challenges, celebrate joys, and share personal burdens. These gathering spots are the focal point of village life, with Chaupals' leaders wielding considerable influence in decision-making processes. Historically, the governance of communities was influenced by religious texts, and Chaupals have long held the authority to regulate village activities and establish local laws. They have remained instrumental in managing community affairs and upholding social order since ancient times. (Bharne, V. 2019)

In villages where Chaupals exist, the leaders establish ethical guidelines for the community, and residents typically adhere to these rules since they are widely accepted. For instance, in certain villages in Faridabad, the elders of the Chaupals have determined that they will not permit a Baarat (wedding procession) to enter the village if it is accompanied by loud music and a DJ (disc jockey). In other villages, when a Baarat arrives with a DJ, only the guests are allowed to enter, while the DJ must remain outside the village. India, the world's second-most populous country, often experiences delays in the justice system, making the legal process lengthy and complicated. In many cases, resolution can take an extended period. Consequently, various disputes are resolved by the leaders of Chaupals. There are no fees involved, but understanding the background of each case may require some time. Individuals familiar with the situation are encouraged to share their insights. If both parties accept the decision made by the Chaupals, it is also considered legally binding by the courts. When someone violates community rules or misbehaves, they may find themselves ostracised; for example, they may be denied the offer of Hukka (a

traditional smoking pipe) and excluded from social events. This exclusion is viewed as a social stigma, referred to as "Hukka Pani Band." Chaupals also act as a centre of communication, where elderly individuals congregate to connect with their peers and communicate with their children or grandchildren. While nursing homes are becoming more common in cities but virtually nonexistent in villages. The elderly in rural areas often experience fewer lifestyle-related health issues, such as anxiety and insomnia, because they actively engage in discussions and share their experiences with others. (Bhattacharya, P. 2024).

Every society has its patterns, rules, and norms constituting intangible culture. These cultural elements are typically passed down from one generation to the next through oral traditions. Older individuals play a crucial role in this transmission, sharing their life experiences and wisdom with the younger generation. This cultural transfer primarily occurs through language, which acts as a bridge between generations. Chaupals have recently significantly contributed to the youth's knowledge and awareness of living standards and societal issues. Historically, Chaupals were vital social hubs for community interaction and engagement. However, in today's postmodern era, many young people are increasingly absorbed in their mobile devices and laptops, spending more time in virtual environments rather than participating in traditional communal gatherings.(Suthar, S. K., 2022)

In India's democracy, Gram Sabhas function as open forums for community participation. They exemplify the principle of decentralisation, which is crucial for a robust democratic system. Gram Sabhas receive government funding and have the authority to enact various regulations. Participants are encouraged to express their opinions and engage actively in the general sessions of the Gram Sabha. Notably, women's reservation in Gram Sabhas was implemented long before it was established for Lok Sabha seats, reflecting the male dominance in politics. This initiative has yielded positive results; Tamil Nadu recorded the highest number of female panchayat chiefs according to national data from 2012. In addition to gender, caste also plays a role in determining reservations within Gram Sabhas, further enhancing the spirit of democracy. Gram Swarajya represents the ideal of a perfect democracy, with decentralised governance having deep roots in various segments of Indian

society. Both village councils and the modern public sphere coexist, illustrating the enduring significance of grassroots participation in democracy. (Dash, B. B.2020).

People in earlier societies were often intensely focused on their work. The social structure was not exceptionally uniform, and individuals had little time for leisure, rest, or socialising. Completing tasks was the primary concern. Throughout history, civilisations have developed complex organisational systems that dictated daily life. During those times, distractions were minimal due to smaller populations, allowing people to dedicate their attention to work. However, they typically gathered in communal spaces in the evenings or at night to share opinions, stories, and thoughts. These gatherings served as a platform for resolving disputes and discussing shared joys, sorrows, and collaborative efforts. When individuals stopped expressing their emotions—whether happiness, sadness, success, or failure—in these communal spaces, it marked a significant change. The Chaupal, a traditional meeting place, was vital in fostering community ties and facilitating communication among villagers. Such spaces helped establish commonalities among people, reinforcing social bonds within the community. (Hong, P., et al 202) Chaupal is a common feature in rural communities. Traditionally, gatherings were held under trees, as not everyone had access to large, permanent homes. In the past, people would come together in these open spaces to discuss various issues and share their opinions. The concept of democracy is reflected in these gatherings, where every attendee has the right to express their views freely. Historically, even in ancient democracies, individuals would meet in a central location to voice support for candidates or decisions. In contemporary times, the traditional Chaupal has evolved. While it once existed openly beneath trees, it has now been replaced by more permanent structures. Importantly, no single family or individual can claim ownership of the Chaupal; it remains a communal space accessible to all residents. Each villager is granted equal rights and the opportunity to participate in discussions that shape their community. (Kawathekar, V. 2020)

Chaupal is a common feature in rural communities. Traditionally, gatherings were held under trees, as not everyone had access to large, permanent homes. In the past, people would come together in these open spaces to discuss various issues and

share their opinions. The concept of democracy is reflected in these gatherings, where every attendee has the right to express their views freely. Historically, even in ancient democracies, individuals would meet in a central location to voice support for candidates or decisions. In contemporary times, the traditional Chaupal has evolved. While it once existed openly beneath trees, it has now been replaced by more permanent structures. Importantly, no single family or individual can claim ownership of the Chaupal; it remains a communal space accessible to all residents. Each villager is granted equal rights and the opportunity to participate in discussions that shape their community. (Kumari, M., 2023).

1.5.1 Chaupal and the public sphere

The public sphere is considered to be the foundation of modern democracy. Without a Public sphere, democracy will also disappear. A democracy must protect the individual's space to be considered genuinely liberal. By limiting the state's power and shielding the populace from its overwhelming might, the Public sphere defends the rights of the people. Modernisation and industrialisation are to blame for the rise of the Public sphere in Western nations. People regard America as a nation that values free speech and expression, similar to the Westphalian Declaration, Magna Carta 1215, and the French Revolution. India referred to the Public sphere even earlier. "Janasya gopah," which means "protector of people and wealth from cattle," supported an elderly community in the village. The Rajanya committee used to have participation from the general public as well. Interestingly, women served on these committees, with the committee's primary goal being the king's election. Prajapati regards the committee and the legislature as his two daughters. "Narista" is the name of the location where the learned man once had discussions. In the past, people used the term "goshthi" to refer to Chaupal; however, in modern times, Chaupal encompasses a wide range of meanings. (Narayan, B., 2021).

1.5.2 Chaupals by Organised Sectors

1.5.2.1 Dak Chaupal

In addition to traditional and online churos, various government and non-government organisations have arranged churos across the country, following the model of historic village churos. These modern Chaupals enable open discussions in rural communities, allowing residents to express their thoughts among their peers freely. Government departments organise Chaupals as platforms for direct community interaction, much like traditional Chaupals. The Department of Posts, for instance, organises Dak Chaupals, also known as the Dak Community Development Program. Much like a village Chaupal, Dak Chaupals provide services directly to the public, expediting the resolution of community issues. These gatherings offer multiple services, such as updating Aadhaar information, applying for new Aadhaar cards, and registering for programs like Pradhan Mantri Samman Nidhi and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Dak Chaupals also inform communities about government programs such as Ayushman Bharat, Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, and more, creating an accessible platform for updates on various schemes. Beyond service delivery, Dak Chaupals play an educational role by informing people about available financial aid and detailing the benefits of various government programs. In 2023, 5,750 Dak Chaupals were conducted nationwide, assisting around 756,000 individuals through these direct, community-centred sessions. (India Post, 2023)

1.5.2.2 Traffic Chaupal

Chaupals continue to serve as platforms for informing rural populations about critical social issues. They provide a space where elders and other knowledgeable community members communicate directly with younger generations, often in their native language, to ensure mutual understanding. In rural communities, the opinions of influential figures are particularly valued, and these individuals frequently lead discussions at the Chaupal. Government officials, police, and traffic officers often participate in these gatherings, offering their insights alongside community leaders. Road safety is a frequent topic of concern in Chaupals, as traffic accidents claim a

substantial number of lives each year in India. The emotional and financial losses experienced by families when a primary breadwinner is lost to an accident are profound. This impact extends beyond individual families to the broader community, and with highway accidents reducing India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by an estimated 3–4%, it also represents a national economic burden. Through gatherings like Chaupals, the community can address these shared concerns, emphasise the importance of road safety, and foster a collective sense of responsibility and action. (Mangla, A., et al 2020) In partnership with numerous non-governmental organisations, the government has launched a campaign to reduce road accidents across the country. This evening's Chaupal event gathered over 250 people, where Atma Ram Ji emphasised the importance of adhering to five key road safety guidelines to help decrease traffic-related injuries and fatalities. Shweta Bhardwaj, Traffic Manager of Rajasthan Roadways, highlighted factors essential to following traffic rules, such as civic awareness and family education, stressing that family influence plays a pivotal role in promoting safe driving habits. During the event, five primary risk factors were addressed: drinking and driving, speeding, helmet use, child safety seats, and seat belts. These factors are frequently linked to road incidents, and adherence can substantially improve safety. In an interview, Mr. Dhar Singh, a duty officer from Rajasthan Roadways, emphasised the importance of prioritising personal and community safety over post-accident apologies. Assistant Sub-Inspector Prakash Singh Rathore reinforced that strict adherence to traffic rules benefits individuals, society, and the nation. Increased penalties for driving under the influence have led to a reduction in these cases. Mahadev Ji, a prominent community figure at the Chaupal, noted that negligence, especially disregard for road rules, is a major contributor to road accidents, which in India occur at a rate three times higher than in many developed nations. The evening's Chaupal featured a dramatisation based on a real-life road tragedy, a powerful reminder of the risks of careless driving. By the end of the event, nearly all participants, particularly the youth, pledged to follow road safety rules diligently. (Sarangi, S. K. 2018)

1.5.2.3 Mahila Chaupal

Chaupal functions as a communal space where people come together to discuss and voice opinions, supporting open communication and democratic expression. Traditionally, the Chaupal is accessible to all community members; however, it has generally been male-dominated, with women historically sharing their views indirectly through male family members. Today, the concept of women's Chaupals is gaining attention. Though still developing, these gatherings offer an essential platform for women to express their perspectives. In Sohna tehsil, Haryana, a government initiative recently opened the Chaupal to women, marking a significant step in addressing gender disparity in public spaces. For the first time in this village, including women in the Chaupal reflects the state's efforts to promote gender equality. The village of seventy residents, including seventeen women, has actively worked to enhance female representation on the Chaupal, promoting an inclusive decision-making environment. This initiative has inspired other villages, such as Bibipur in Jind, Haryana, where a dedicated women's Chaupal has become a central meeting space for women to discuss issues and pursue knowledge. The library, "Lado Pustkalaya," associated with the women's Chaupal, has encouraged more women to read and become involved in community matters. In Haryana's cultural context, the Chaupal holds symbolic significance, often viewed as sacred, akin to a village temple. The changes also reflect shifts in customs—where once women were required to wear veils even in female-only spaces, there is now greater freedom, marking progress toward gender equality in community engagement. (Sinha, A., et al 2020).

1.5.2.4 Police Chaupal

The police use Chaupals as community forums to help reduce crime and increase awareness in rural areas. These gatherings serve as platforms to educate villagers on safety measures, particularly for women, to prevent harassment and cybercrime. Police officers inform attendees about resources like Women Power Line 1090 and emergency Dial 112 and provide guidelines on internet safety, such as avoiding video calls from unknown numbers, never sharing one-time passwords, and

only downloading applications from trusted sources. These proactive measures aim to reduce digital crime through heightened awareness. Additionally, police Chaupals encourage villages to handle disputes internally, with mutual consent from both parties, to avoid unnecessary court or police involvement. Local police officers, village leaders, and residents participate in these Chaupals, fostering cooperation between law enforcement and the community to create a safer environment. (Bhattacharya, C. D. S., et al, 2021).

1.5.2.5 Cyber Chaupal

Through Cyber Chaupal, the government educates individuals about the dangers of cybercrime. The government utilises Chaupals in the village or any other gathering place for this purpose. In addition, senior officials from the district administration and the police department are present at the location. These folks also avoid engaging in criminal activity online and do not become victims of cybercrime. Cyber experts also recommend a variety of precautions to take when using the internet and a phone to prevent falling victim to fraudulent schemes. After being a victim of fraud on Cyber Chaupal, they educate people by informing them of the guidelines they need to adhere to from that point forward.

1.5.2.6 Rahat Chaupal

According to The Hindu, the Uttar Pradesh government is conducting 'Rahat Chaupal' meetings in flood-affected areas to coordinate flood relief and educate communities on safety measures. During floods, individuals should prioritise personal safety by following official evacuation orders, moving to higher ground, and keeping emergency supplies like clean drinking water, non-perishable food, first-aid kits, and essential documents within reach. Effective flood preparedness involves knowledge of local emergency contacts, staying informed on weather updates, and avoiding floodwaters, as they can be dangerous and often contaminated. The 'Rahat Chaupal' initiative, led by Uttar Pradesh Relief Commissioner GS Naveen Kumar, highlights preparedness by training communities in essential survival skills and the steps to take if rescue operations are delayed. The Chaupals involve representatives

from various government departments, including police, health, and municipal services, to streamline communication, ensure public safety, and educate citizens on each department's role in disaster response. (The Hindu 2023)

1.6 Traditional Chaupals

Traditional Chaupals are community spaces where people gather to discuss various topics, from critical issues to everyday matters. Typically located at the village centre, Chaupals offer a forum for sharing ideas and expressing opinions. They host formal and informal gatherings: formal meetings often involve decision-making, Panchayat sessions, and discussions about government programs, while informal gatherings focus more on socialising, entertainment, and general conversation. Cultural activities such as folk songs, dances, and performances are held daily at Chaupals. Ragini's performances, particularly in western Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, convey social messages or critique societal issues. Chaupals are integral to life-cycle events like marriage processions, where the community gathers to celebrate. Historically, human settlements have been the subject of various studies due to their rich socio-economic, cultural, and historical contexts. The layout and management of these areas have also been studied, especially in rural regions, where the design of residential spaces reflects social values and communal ties. Over time, the architectural styles of rural settlements have evolved, often revealing differences in cultural and social influences that shape the way these spaces are used and perceived. (Chakraborty, M. W., et al, 2018).

The architectural styles of cities ruled by invaders and those that were conquered and subdued often exhibited distinct differences. Humanity is inherently social, meaning people form groups such as families, clans, or other social structures. Indian architecture reflects a blend of various artistic influences, making it a synthesis rather than a pure form. As populations grew, people sought spaces to share experiences, resolve issues, and celebrate challenges and achievements. A large, shaded tree often served as a central gathering spot, ideally located near a place of worship, a well, or a communal fire, providing ample space for the community.

26

Traditions, festivals, agricultural exchanges, and communal celebrations could inspire these gatherings. Residential areas were also divided to accommodate the storage of goods, food grains, other essentials, and housing.. (Vishek, Y., et al 2021).

In ancient times, the Chaupal was the primary communal space in villages. It was commonly regarded as a platform where individuals could freely express their thoughts and share the truth. Traditionally, Chaupals were not enclosed structures but open spaces, often situated under large banyan trees, providing shade and a central location for villagers to gather. Today, Chaupals are commonly located in designated community areas. Due to the many participants, many Chaupals are still held in open spaces to accommodate everyone. The primary function of a Chaupal is to encourage collaborative decision-making and resolve local issues. This tradition of communal gathering persists across India under various names. In Tonk, Rajasthan, Dr. Rajendra Singh Tonk runs a community health clinic known as Swasthya Chaupal, a nonprofit organisation akin to the traditional Chaupal format. These health Chaupals offer essential services, including general health check-ups, treatment for critical illnesses, and educational programs. Community health programs facilitated by Swasthya Chaupal include mother-child health initiatives, awareness programs, and services in physiotherapy, dentistry, and ophthalmology. Through these programs, Chaupals serve as vital hubs for public engagement, health services, and collective community support. (Sinha, A., et al 2020).

1.7 E-Chaupals

ITC launched e-Chaupals in India, a digital initiative connecting rural farmers directly to markets via the internet, allowing them to sell their agricultural and aquaculture products without intermediaries. This system was developed primarily for professional and economic purposes, aiming to commercialise agriculture and assure fair prices for farmers' produce. Both government and non-government agencies collaborate on e-Chaupal to maximise benefits for farmers, providing resources and bypassing traditional middlemen who often purchase produce at reduced prices for higher profit margins. The e-Chaupal initiative starts at the village level, rooted in the traditional concept of the Chaupal as a gathering space for

community discussions. By integrating the internet, e-Chaupal enables farmers to access buyers directly, eliminating labour and rental costs and providing valuable market data. ITC's e-Chaupal, established in 2000, facilitates information on optimal selling times and prices, helping farmers increase their income. Additionally, it offers insights into international market trends and commodity rates. With an expansive network, ITC's e-Knowledge Hub has 6,100 installations across 35,000 villages, impacting numerous farmers. For farmers without smartphones, the mKRISHI platform also provides support. The eKgaon "One Village, One World" network furthers this connectivity by uniting individuals on a single digital platform. E-Chaupal enhances market access and accuracy in planning by incorporating AI, IoT, and other advanced technologies to refine agricultural processes and optimise opportunities. (Rao, K. V. G. et al 2023)

1.7.1 Limitations of ITC's E-Chaupal

The agent's revenue model is currently seeing a minor decrease in profitability compared to its previous state. The transportation of products in the mandi has now rendered many labourers unemployed. The community splits based on a variety of criteria. Not all villagers can access the e-Chaupal, as it is located at the operator's premises. As a result of the significant disparity in income, most individuals are unable to afford a computer, including women, who are also unable to use computer technology. (Rao, K. V. G. et al 2023)

1.7.2 Social Media Chaupals

People participate in Social Media Chaupals exclusively through virtual platforms, connecting via various online groups. Information and communication technology has significantly impacted various parts of the world. Technology influences a vast range of sectors that are impossible to measure. Agriculture utilises Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Scientists worldwide now convene on a virtual platform to engage in agricultural research, discuss, and draw conclusions. We collect data and facilitate communication with stakeholders. This

technology's use has significantly facilitated agricultural research. We provide Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Extension, and Advisory Services. Technological advancements allow advisory firms to guide individuals through digital platforms. These proposals initiated the evaluation of the rural market. We use technology to broadcast various radio and TV programs specifically designed for farmers. The farmers benefited from this. (Shahid, S., et al, 2019).

1.7.3 Digital Mandi

A digital market refers to an electronic trading platform. This platform facilitates interactions between farmers and dealers, enabling in-depth discussions about grains and other commodities. Numerous dealers participate in the online market and communicate directly with farmers. Additionally, many companies in the digital market are interested in online payment solutions. (Joshi, J., et al, 2020, April)

1.7.4 Easykrishi

Easykrishi is a recently established firm. He aims to accelerate the pace of agricultural development in India. The partnership comprises 12 farmer producer organisations (FPOS) and 150 ground organisations. Using the Easykrishi app, farmers can collectively monitor the cultivation process in real time. This application is accessible to agricultural leaders and anyone with a basic understanding of society. The group can accommodate a range of 300 to 1000 farmers. This software enables the farmer to fulfil the need for seeds and other agricultural products. If someone is familiar with the standard operation of Internet telephony, they can input this information twice in a given period. (Das, A et al. 2022)

1.7.5 Social Sphere

Participants create a social sphere as a domain of activity where they come together to share understanding, establish norms, and develop procedural guidelines. This

shared understanding shapes individuals' approaches to various processes. In the public sphere, citizens convene to discuss public affairs, exchange ideas, deliberate, and ultimately form collective public opinion. This study highlights the critical role of the social sphere in supporting society. The reproduction of human capital directly influences economic, social, and lifestyle dimensions. Factors such as geographical location and job satisfaction significantly affect the nature and quality of social interactions. Indicators of work-life quality include employee income levels, organisational structure, job relevance, opportunities for career advancement, the development of industrial democracy, respect for individuals, and overall sanitary conditions. The relationship between state trade unions and administration is evident, and the quality of working life entails a comprehensive evaluation of development and management within the social sphere. Several challenges hinder the establishment of a robust domestic social sphere, including the absence of well-defined strategic priorities in social policy, inadequate funding, a lack of focus on social issues within fiscal policy, significant social stratification and income inequality, ineffective state transfer policies, and deteriorating demographic conditions and living standards. Implementing public-private partnerships is likely to succeed, aiming to create innovative social sector institutions and upgrade existing ones to align with global standards in technology and operational criteria. The primary goal of social sphere development should be to achieve an enhanced standard of working life in all its dimensions. If any component of the social sphere operates inefficiently, it can adversely affect the overall quality of working life. Therefore, the advancement of the social sphere should focus on assessing working conditions comprehensively, preventing a decline in standards and facilitating improvement through adaptation. A network of interconnected elements supports effective societal development.(Kyryliuk & Ryabokon, 2021)

Recent studies have shown a renewed interest in the concept of the social sphere, particularly in the fast-changing technological, social, and cultural environment. The social sphere encompasses social interactions, relationships, institutions, and cultural norms that influence the behaviour of individuals and groups within a society. Therefore, it is a crucial field of research for comprehending the broader

consequences of social dynamics and transformations. According to Fuchs (2019), the digital social sphere is a space where people interact through technical interfaces, engaging in social practices facilitated by connectedness and sociability. This viewpoint emphasises the substantial influence of digital media on the organisation and operation of social media. For instance, the emergence of social media platforms has changed how people connect and shaped and maintained social conventions and relationships.

1.8.1 Democracy and Public sphere

Public discourse is only one of the functions of the public sphere in a democratic society. The public sphere also serves as a channel for various societal interactions and activities. While modern society utilises contemporary conveniences, it also incorporates historical and cultural artefacts, reflecting a blend of tradition and innovation. Unlike earlier societies, where the public sphere functioned primarily to support shared accountability and public discourse, today's society provides multiple platforms for expressing viewpoints and sharing ideas. These include digital platforms, which facilitate public discussion and engagement more widely than traditional face-to-face forums. The public sphere serves as a space for public expression and as a hub for information exchange, debate, contestation, political discussion, and civic engagement, often using broadcasting and cyber media as channels. Historically, face-to-face interaction was central in public discourse, but in today's digital society, multimedia and computer technologies play an increasingly significant role. Traditional media, such as radio and television, were once primary sources of information, often controlled by the state. However, public discourse has expanded in the digital age, allowing for broader participation and less centralised control. The Internet has transformed democratic engagement by fostering a new public sphere, emphasising increased participation, trust in democratic processes, and enhanced access to political debate. This digital public sphere facilitates the exchange of ideas and engagement in democratic processes, enabling diverse forms of discussion and interaction not previously available on this scale. (Cohen, J., Fung, A., et al 2021).

Jürgen Habermas has analysed the public sphere as a framework for potential democratic transformation. Over time, as more people gained access to the public sphere, the state's control over this domain began to diminish, setting the stage for the rise of modern democracy. The public sphere became a place where people could gather without state-imposed restrictions, engage in discussions, and share their opinions. With the advent of digital technology and information tools, the public sphere has largely transitioned to a virtual realm, creating a new democratic space that facilitates public expression and the exchange of ideas on a broad scale. This virtual platform attracts diverse voices, encouraging the generation of new ideas and fostering a vibrant public discourse. Historically, scholars, politicians, and other prominent figures would gather in the public sphere of early European societies to discuss issues affecting the city or state. Though the entire citizenry could not gather physically in these settings, such as the royal courts of European monarchs, the issues and challenges discussed there often held widespread significance for both the city and the state (Barnett, C., 2019).

1.9 Post-modernity

Postmodernism is a broad concept that originated in the 20th century, describing a shift in various fields, including literature, science, and technology. Following modernism, the postmodern movement evolved as a response to the Enlightenment period of the 17th and 18th centuries, when individuals increasingly valued rational thought over inherited beliefs. Modernity prompted a "renaissance" that fostered progress, leading religion to become more of a personal matter. Modernity, deeply inspired by art and philosophy, began in the late 19th century, coinciding with industrialisation. It signified a move away from traditional constraints such as superstition and religious orthodoxy, emphasising rationality and self-consciousness. This philosophical movement encouraged rethinking art, philosophy, architecture, and societal structures in a way that prized rational living. Modern artists were noted for their creativity and innovation, viewing rationality, culture, and freedom as essential to the intellectual achievements of this era. Postmodernism, arising in the early 20th century, took a fundamentally different

approach by transcending traditional boundaries and definitions. This open-ended and complex framework encouraged a fresh societal perspective, suggesting that all individuals possess inherent creative potential. It also marked the beginning of popular culture, with movements such as pop art and Fluxus, championed by artists like Andy Warhol, whose works reflected pop culture's transient, consumable, and mass-produced nature. Initially termed the "art of life," pop art and postmodernism emphasised everyday life as a subject of artistic expression, sparking what would become a hallmark of contemporary culture. (Keane, J., 2018)

1.10 Theoretical Framework

Public sphere terminology in a democracy, at the heart of the participatory approach, is the essential approach to democracy. The public sphere is the area where people come together. Share views and build public opinion on issues related to the public. It is a special area where people gather; it is the infrastructure of communication by which citizens exchange information, and public opinion is formed. Good governance is the central aspect of the public sphere. Without a democratic public sphere, government employees cannot be accountable for their work. The public sphere is a prescriptive idea. This is ideal for a good and responsible government. It is necessary for the free dissemination of information, freedom of expression, and the right to debate. Habermas first mentions the public sphere in his 1962 book 'The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere'. Small groups, including relatives, acquaintances, or subordinates, met in a single hall during the feudal era to share information about current events. In the past, people gathered elsewhere to issue orders. People of the bourgeois class addressed political topics and democratic ideas in public settings such as coffee shops and salons. A gathering spot where individuals can engage in discourse further reinforces people's faith in democracy.We often live in democracies that guarantee free speech. A democracy organises several forums to voice opinions. In these forums, we can voice our opinions. The forums are well-organised, providing ample storage spaces. Habermas pointed out that the state has a rational public wanting meaningful

conversations about significant issues. We want to talk about publicly interesting topics. Since he views the public sphere as the foundation of democratic political, moral, and epistemic values—equality, liberty, reason, and truth at their core— Habermas has devoted much attention to the word. The public domain may be a protective barrier, separating the real world from the system. The public sphere is a realm of social activity characterised by expressing public opinion, which may include some form of debate. Despite the potential failure to achieve these objectives, the primary goal of public sharing is to aid in decision-making. There should be no room for controversy when it comes to public spaces and public shares.

Public Share offers a platform that is accessible to everyone. It does not allow the construction of a healthy public sector to be associated with the place where it allows the public sector to be affiliated. This public sharing functions as a forum. We desire to communicate our perspectives on various aspects of life. Additionally, we require a platform to exchange and discuss concepts. Jürgen Habermas has divided it into personal life and the public realm. In personal and public life, one is equally important. Both are consistently beneficial. The objective of expressing your concept can vary. The public sphere is a communal space where individuals gather and interact freely. It is a public domain, devoid of exclusive ownership, where people can exchange ideas through mediums such as direct conversation, printed materials, and internet communication. The primary objective of the public sphere is to foster universal comprehension. In public discourse, society must cultivate a collective viewpoint through open and transparent deliberation about a given matter within a shared domain. In public discourse, individuals convene to collectively shape their perspective on a shared matter while maintaining a state of affairs devoid of unwarranted governmental intervention.

Public sphere theory refers to a social space where individuals gather, engage in discussions, and attempt to understand societal ills; the response to these events is viewed as a political decision. In social life, the public sphere serves as a platform for forming or modifying public opinion. People sitting here evaluate the government.

The characteristics of the public sphere

Inclusiveness: All kinds of people have access to the public sphere; this access is beyond any social strata, gender, or position.

Debate: A logical and open debate takes place in the public sphere. The public sphere is where ideas are discussed and logical discussions occur.

The public sphere, where logical debates occur, shapes public opinion and influences the capacity to make political decisions.

Autonomy from the state and the market: The public sphere must always be autonomous, independent of government and economic influence. The smooth running of the public sphere is essential.

1.11 Statement of Problem

Chaupals are commonplace in the village and are a centre of people who come and share their opinions and views on various topics. People can discuss every subject there, including Regional, National, and International. Chaupals help people by educating them about the language, culture, values, and rules of society. However, gadgets and other technologies influence today's youth in this digital world. They spend more time on mobile phones, the internet, and other devices. After this pandemic, the young generation has become formally and informally dependent on smart gadgets. Therefore, the young generation is showing interest in the virtual world by making new friends on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and many others, as they are not interested in knowing about the actual society. Aristotle, the esteemed Greek philosopher, famously stated, "Man is by nature a social animal; an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human." Every society serves as an educator, instilling knowledge, culture, traditions, and values in its members. This research focuses on how youth are connected to Chaupals, how their participation can be further strengthened, and the role of folklore in enhancing the significance of Chaupals. In the National Capital Region, Ragini is a style of folk singing sung by the performer, where they give a message with the help of songs. Women are helping

men in all fields. This study will also reveal the status of women in Chaupals. This study will also find out if there are any limitations based on gender. These studies will explore the relevance of Chaupals in women's empowerment and gender equality. Most of the literature shows that Chaupals have existed from ancient times, but today we live in the most advanced era of civilisation based on technological advancement. This research will find out why Chaupals exist only in rural areas and not in cities, and why the Chaupals system is not expanding to cities.

1.12 Significance of the Study:

The study's primary purpose is to find out the communication patterns of Chaupals. Governments are spending much money on Chaupals. This research will also find out the status of women in Chaupals. This study will also try to discover how Chaupals are relevant in the postmodern era. The researcher will also try to discover how Chaupals are important cultural and communication centres. This research will find the role of folklore in Chaupal. This study will also find out why Chaupals are limited only to rural areas and why Chaupals do not exist in advanced cities.

1.13 Organisation of Chapters

This research study examines the relevance of Chaupal in the modern era. The work is divided primarily into five main chapters and additional sub-sections. A brief explanation of each chapter is as follows:

1.13.1 Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 provides an in-depth exploration of foundational concepts such as the public sphere and the digital public sphere. It also examines folklore and the dynamics of rural communication, focusing specifically on the traditional institution of the Chaupal. This chapter discusses various Chaupal gatherings, detailing their functions and forms within rural social structures. Through a thorough analysis, this

section sets the stage for understanding how these traditional modes of community interaction evolve within, and contribute to, contemporary public discourse in the digital age.

1.13.2 Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the literature pertinent to this study. It thoroughly examines the foundational scholarship on the topic, incorporating key theories and perspectives essential for understanding the concept of the public sphere. This chapter emphasises the foundational "Public Sphere Theory," analysing how it has been utilised and modified to understand democratic participation and dialogue better. Additionally, it investigates the traditional structure of the Chaupal, focusing on its function in rural communication and community engagement. The chapter also highlights the necessity of a strong public sphere within democratic systems, underscoring its impact on promoting civic participation and collective discussion. This literature review establishes a crucial framework for the study, positioning it within the broader academic conversation on the relationship between traditional rural structures and modern democratic thought.

1.13.3 Chapter: 3 Research Methodology

This chapter comprehensively explains the research methodology used in the study. It discusses selecting appropriate research approaches, outlining the criteria for determining which methods best align with the study's objectives. The chapter explains the techniques used for data collection, including methods for gathering both quantitative data and qualitative insights through interviews. Additionally, it describes the systematic process for collecting and analysing these data. This section also examines how the research questions and objectives are addressed, focusing on reaching well-founded conclusions based on the evidence collected. By establishing a rigorous methodological framework, this chapter lays the groundwork for effectively navigating and resolving the study's research aims.

1.13.4 Chapter: 4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data gathering and interpretation form the basis of this chapter. Data were gathered through structured questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions, ensuring a diverse and representative range of responses. Specifically, the data were collected from villages in the Delhi region, providing a localised perspective on the research topic. The data analysis includes tables and pie charts to facilitate a visually compelling presentation, visually depicting key findings and trends. This structured approach to data analysis allows for in-depth interpretation and insight into the study's core questions.

1.13.5 Chapter: 5 Findings, Discussions, Implications and Scope for Further Research

This chapter presents the study's key findings, addressing the research questions and objectives in detail. It provides an in-depth discussion of the responses gathered, analysing them to derive meaningful insights related to the study's aims. The analysis section interprets the data comprehensively, critically assessing how these findings answer the core research inquiries. Additionally, this chapter outlines considerations for future research in this area, emphasising aspects that should be addressed in subsequent studies. The academic challenges encountered during this research are also documented, offering guidance for future researchers who may build upon this work. This reflective analysis aims to support and inform continued exploration within the field.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter delves into an extensive examination of the public sphere, rural communication, and the role of the Chaupal as a public sphere. The literature reviewed has been carefully selected to align with the objectives and framework of the research. A systematic analysis of the available scholarly works highlights the extent of research conducted within a defined timeframe on these interconnected topics. Additionally, the chapter identifies the gaps in existing studies related to the Chaupal and its significance in the context of the public sphere and rural communication. These gaps provide critical insights into areas that require further exploration. This chapter seeks to fill these research gaps by offering a deeper insight into the Chaupal, exploring its dual role as both a cultural and social institution and a space for discourse and interaction in rural contexts. Furthermore, the analysis underscores the evolving relevance of the Chaupal, particularly in light of modern developments in communication technologies and the dynamics of participatory governance. This study seeks to enrich academic discourse by bridging these research gaps and providing practical implications for policy and community engagement strategies.

A literature review plays a crucial role in providing a strong foundation for research and is an indispensable component of all types of scholarly work. It contributes significantly to the advancement of knowledge by systematically synthesising existing information. Moreover, it guides the development of policies and practices by offering a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. A well-constructed literature review directs research toward new avenues, ensuring the study builds upon previous work while avoiding unnecessary duplication. By analysing prior studies, the literature review helps identify research gaps, offering valuable insights into underexplored areas. This process establishes a framework for future research and supports the development of hypotheses and research questions. By grounding a study in a thorough review of past literature, the overall quality of research improves significantly. Furthermore, literature reviews strengthen the

research community by fostering collaboration and shared understanding. They create a knowledge base that benefits both individual scholars and the academic community as a whole, helping to set a clear path for the continuous evolution of theories and methodologies (Chigbu, U. E., et al, 2023)

2.1 Rural Communication

A study titled "Rural Communication: A New Way to Rural India" (Sinha, 2019) highlights that all developing nations, including India, are progressing toward modernity in the current globalised era. Urban and rural populations in India are becoming increasingly aware of this transformation. Scholars understand modernity as a pathway to development, achievable through effective communication. Communication is the key tool for linking communities with various governmental and non-governmental development agencies. In rural regions, traditional media such as newspapers, radio, television, and other conventional communication methods play an important role in disseminating information. Community opinion leaders also play a part in facilitating mass communication through these channels. Moreover, e-governance has become vital in rural communication, offering essential resources that support farmers and other rural populations in agriculture, fishing, and other livelihood activities. Therefore, rural communication plays a critical role in driving rural development.

This study found that rural communication involves a dynamic exchange of information, knowledge, and skills between farmers and service providers to foster development. Various channels—including print, electronic, and new media platforms, collectively called 'information and communication technologies' (ICT)—disseminate information widely. Individuals involved in this process assume multiple roles as creators, mediators, and receivers of information and knowledge. This process aims to empower rural communities with essential knowledge for informed decision-making and to equip them with the skills necessary to improve their standard of living. In this context, scholars conceptualise communication as a non-linear process characterised by the mutual exchange of data and information. (Fao et al, 2019)

2.1.1 Some Challenges in Rural Communication

Lack of information

Various institutions in society work towards the development of different sectors and organisations. Despite numerous agricultural universities, think tanks, and Non-Government Organisations (NGOS), the research and innovations generated by these institutions are not effectively reaching the farming community. In many rural areas, traditional practices remain prevalent. The distribution of information related to new research and advancements often fails to reach the general public in a timely manner.

Conflicting Messages

In this era of information overload, determining the accuracy and reliability of information has become more challenging. What information should be deemed trustworthy, and what should be considered unreliable? In today's market-driven environment, numerous factors contribute to confusion among individuals. While advertising and promotions can provide benefits, those who are uninformed or lack awareness may face various disadvantages.

There is a fragmented market for information, with numerous individual clients. Groups;

There are various markets for the dissemination of information. Some target individuals, while others serve groups. The information market is highly fragmented, as each person has distinct goals. The absence of a unified platform for consolidating all this information further exacerbates the issue.

2.2 Public sphere

Stated in Riafh e Aam Club, Lucknow: The concept of the public sphere, especially in urban India, has a broad scope. It serves as a platform for sharing ideas and opinions, and it is a space where power dynamics are actively at play. The study further suggests that the public sphere is characterised by being open yet congested, fragmented, and incomplete, with room for improvement. Although it may be partially regulated, it remains an area where public interaction takes place. (Batul,

n.d., 2019)The study on gender politics and the public sphere mentions that Pragash is a band from Srinagar with all female members. The band performed at a local concert, after which Jammu and Kashmir's chief cleric, Mufti Bashiruddin Ahmed, issued a fatwa against them, declaring the band's activities as haram in Islam. Societal pressures compelled women to decide, while men faced no such restrictions. While restrictions are sometimes implemented for the betterment of society, when they are selectively applied, they create problems. The public sphere is where people gather socially and freely express their views. It is considered a place where anyone can discuss any issue without discrimination. However, many feminist thinkers argue that Habermas' theory of the public sphere predominantly applies to men. (Susewind, 2020)

Sociologist Jürgen Habermas was the first to explore the idea of the public sphere in his seminal work, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society. The term "public sector" is not new and has evolved through different historical phases. In his book, Habermas asserts that terms such as "public," "private," "public sphere," and "public opinion" cannot be replaced by any other discipline, highlighting that public opinion itself is a key subject of study. People consider events and occasions public when they remain open to all. He also mentions that "publicity" involves an element of fame or recognition among the masses, and the term "public reputation" is closely linked to public opinion. The public domain is not a simple term referring only to a specific realm, such as the contrast between the public and private domains. In Germany, the public sector was part of the public sphere. In ancient Greek societies, public spaces were available to free citizens, where a distinction between public and private life existed. This public realm persisted into the Renaissance, and Roman law formalised distinctions between the public and private spheres. Virtues such as insignia, dress, behaviour, and rhetoric actively differentiated public and private life, serving as strict codes that governed noble conduct. (Habermas, 1991)

Habermas explains that, in ancient times, there were no fixed locations for public gatherings; for example, a knight could call a public meeting anywhere. During antiquity, institutions of the bourgeois public sector were closely linked to

aristocratic society as it separated from the court. Large groups of people formed in theatres, museums, and concerts, reflecting their bourgeois social origins. Habermas describes the public sphere as a social arena where people gather to deliberate and discuss matters of common concern.

The concept of the Public Sphere was introduced by the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, referring to the collective coming together of society and a social arena where people engage in reasoned and critical discourse. People gather as equals in the public sphere to discuss and deliberate on issues of public importance, thereby shaping public opinion that influences political decision-making. These discussions include debates on political and social matters, cultural and artistic expressions, and exchanging ideas and information. The public sphere is vital in democratic societies because it allows citizens to participate in open, free debate and hold those in power accountable. It provides a platform for diverse viewpoints to be heard and for public concerns to be critically examined. However, there is debate about whether the public sphere is genuinely accessible to all individuals and groups. Critics argue that the public sphere is often dominated by the interests of the powerful, with marginalised voices being suppressed or ignored. (Susen, 2023)

Contested Representation: Dalits, Popular Hindi Cinema, and Public Sphere. United States: Lexington Books.) Theorists and experts state that the public sphere is relevant across various fields, including social sciences, the arts, the humanities, and other disciplines. The public sector is where personal motives are shared with the public, helping individuals form their opinions and assisting in the state's and its institutions' voting process. In essence, people gather from different places into one common space, and this assembly is often facilitated by media tools such as print, electronic, and new media. Public opinion can become so strong that it may even challenge the government. The state also uses the public sphere to seek the opinions of its citizens, and public opinion is usually formed through reasoning and discussion. In many modern societies, individuals can express their views without state interference. This freedom is exercised through discussions, articles, seminars, and research. According to Jürgen Habermas, the public sphere is where individuals can express their opinions openly. Its main principle is that it should be accessible to

all citizens, allowing them to gather voluntarily and discuss without compulsion. Habermas also refers to the "bourgeois public sphere," an idealised social space that emerged during the Enlightenment period, where people would gather to discuss issues of public concern. However, in contemporary times, the public sphere has been somewhat transformed, as it is now significantly influenced by the media. (Rai, D. 2022).

Habermas divides society into two parts: (a) the lifeworld, which is governed by the laws of communication, and (b) the system world, which is governed by the strong imperatives of wealth and power that underpin democracy. The public realm serves as a concise approach through which potential is revealed, constructed, and reconstructed. This occurs in both direct and indirect forms. Direct means include Chaupal (a public space in North Indian villages), tea or coffee houses, parks, and other places for public discussion. Indirect forms include media such as news channels, radio, the Internet, cinema, newspapers, novels, magazines, pamphlets, and literary clubs. Crouch's work suggests that cultural geography has provided critical insights into how leisure is valued through individuals' interactions with space, contributing to self-realisation, local knowledge, and identity processes. As urbanisation progresses, the availability of public spaces in towns is shrinking, with increased industrialisation also playing a role. The physical space significantly impacts the public realm within urban environments. This study highlights the importance of public spaces for the free exchange of ideas in society. It advocates for creating green public areas in every country and city. Public squares and other interaction points should be developed to emphasise the significance of the urban public and green zones. Crouch also notes that "space is a participative and dynamic component of cultural processes." (Habermas, 1987)

The terms "post-truth," "pandemic," and "public sector" are frequently brought up while discussing COVID-19. A new political and epistemological paradigm known as "post-truth" is defined by conspiracy theories, "alternative facts," and "fake news." Either the truth is completely ignored or it is distorted electronically. The scientific community and knowledge are publicly denounced by Democratic populists. There are moments when the enigma of truth is revealed. Even

at the worst of the epidemic, individuals were becoming their own health specialists, and many well-known personalities and leaders prayed for financial gain. The public sector is not benefiting from any of this. The truth functions in a competitive market in today's age of information overload, whereas fiction is what may grab our interest, validate our preconceptions, or just make us feel good.(Kantomaa et al., 2008)

Participation in civic life and journalism are closely intertwined. The news media plays a crucial role in fostering public discourse and promoting democracy. In a democratic society, public institutions and sources of information should be easily accessible to the general public. Technological advancements have provided audiences with additional avenues for engagement. These public spaces enhance democracy by promoting diversity in public involvement and increasing public participation. However, they are also becoming more specialized, and the scope of political engagement is declining. There is a growing disparity in the typical frames of reference that individuals use. One of democracy's fundamental requirements is that if a public forum is offered, it must be accessible within the region. The public expects this forum to be available and easy to reach. As social and political agents, citizens can participate in public discourse, self-representation, and decision-making by utilising the opportunities provided by journalism.(Mathisen et al., 2022)

2.3 Folklore

The term "folklore" encompasses many elements, including stories, music, and more, all as ancient as human society. The study of folklore is relatively new in academic research, but the concept of folklore is ancient. Folklore studies began in Europe during the 19th century, particularly in Germany. Folklore has traditionally been considered simpler than high classical art. It has been effectively recognised as part of rural or agricultural culture. While often categorised in specific ways, folktales are unique in their own right. They cannot be separated solely by geographical or literary terms, as they relate to people of the same caste, gender, religion, or profession. Folktales can transcend geographical boundaries, bringing people closer together. With the help of modern technology and science, folklore can

adapt to present needs. Folklore is part of a shared cultural heritage, and tools like television, computers, and telephones have influenced all aspects of folklore, including humour, music, stories, and legends. These tools are very effective in the exchange and formation of folk culture. While the definition of folklore has evolved over time and across different regions, the core meaning of folk art has remained consistent. For example, many comedies and proverbs may lack modern social relevance but still belong to folk culture. Folklore may sometimes include elements of exaggeration or fiction, but that does not mean it is entirely false. It is also deeply rooted in the material life of people and tradition. Folk songs, too, are closely connected to social life. Folklore can be categorised geographically, regionally, nationally, internationally, or as private and public.. (Ananthamurthy, U.R et al, 2018)

Folklore refers to a community or culture's ancient traditions, customs, stories, and practices. Myths, stories, proverbs, songs, dances, and customs are forms of oral traditions passed down from generation to generation. Folklore is a significant part of cultural heritage because it provides insight into a community's history, values, and way of life. It often reflects a group's collective wisdom and can be used to reinforce societal norms and values. Additionally, it fosters a sense of identity and belonging among individuals who participate in its traditions. (De Seta, 2019)

Computer-mediated communication and internet use have given rise to digital folklore, a contemporary form of cultural expression in virtual environments. Digital folklore encompasses various traditions, stories, jokes, memes, and customs shared through digital platforms. It is vital in enabling people from diverse backgrounds to easily interact, exchange ideas, and engage in cross-cultural communication. By providing a space for the creation and dissemination of new forms of cultural expression, digital folklore enhances global connectivity and helps preserve cultural diversity, even in the digital age. This research paper explores multiple approaches to understanding computational media and the internet through the framework of folklore studies. It examines how digital tools have facilitated the creation of new, digital-based traditions while raising concerns about the potential disappearance of traditional folk practices due to the rapid pace of modernisation. The risk of losing

these older customs becomes more pronounced as technology evolves. Nevertheless, digital folklore offers a new avenue for cultural adaptation and reinvention. Digital folklore goes by several names, including "computerlore," "screenlore," "tech lore," "cyber folklore," "new lore," "e-lore," and "netlore." This shift to digital folklore has become especially pronounced as we migrate from traditional websites to more interactive platforms, apps, and mobile devices. This evolution has given rise to entirely new genres of digital storytelling, memes, viral content, and other forms of expression distinct to the digital age. As we adapt to new technological platforms, digital folklore will likely continue to expand and evolve, reflecting the constantly changing nature of online interactions and communication. (HARTLAND, 2020)

Folklore encompasses the traditional beliefs, customs, stories, songs, and legends characteristic of a particular culture or community. Often transmitted orally from generation to generation, folklore is a living repository of a community's history and values. This rich tapestry frequently incorporates mythology, religion, and superstition elements, making it a vital means of expressing cultural identity. Examples of folklore include fairy tales, legends, proverbs, riddles, and folk melodies, each reflecting the unique experiences and perspectives of the people who tell them. Moreover, folklore extends beyond mere storytelling to encompass various aspects of everyday life, including folk medicine, folk art, and traditional festivals and celebrations. These elements collectively contribute to a community's social fabric and reinforce its cultural heritage. In this research paper, the author highlights the increasing significance of folklore studies in educational settings, recognising that such studies can enhance understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural narratives. Every culture possesses a rich tradition of storytelling, deeply rooted in its history. In ancient times, narratives of great kings, queens, princes, and princesses were commonplace, captivating people's imaginations across generations. This storytelling process is ongoing, as each generation adds its interpretations and lessons, thereby enriching the collective wisdom of the culture. These stories provide valuable insights and help shape individuals' frames of reference based on their cultural and societal contexts. In Indian folklore, women have played pivotal roles, often depicted as strong and capable figures alongside their male counterparts.

Historical narratives illustrate how women participated actively in battles and governance.Additionally, figures like Queen Laxmibai of Jhansi are celebrated for their courage and leadership, as they fought valiantly for their rights and sovereignty. These representations underscore the essential contributions of women to the cultural narratives of India, challenging traditional gender roles and highlighting their significance in history and folklore. (Ojha et al., 2019).

2.4 Decentralization

The constitutional separation of powers is fundamental to India's success as a democracy. This principle lies at the heart of India's governance structure, ensuring that authority is divided among different branches of government, which promotes accountability and prevents the concentration of power. Decentralisation is a crucial element that underpins the effectiveness of any political governance system. The history of decentralisation in India is extensive and deeply rooted. It serves as the cornerstone of good governance, enabling local communities to participate actively in decision-making processes that affect their lives. With the enactment of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments in 1993–94, India officially recognised Panchayati Raj as a three-tier political system. This landmark legislation established frameworks for the Gram Sabha (village assembly) and Ward Committees, thus empowering local self-governance and enhancing democratic participation at the grassroots level. Decentralisation significantly strengthens democracy by allowing power to be distributed more evenly across various levels of government. In the Indian context, village governance and swaraj (self-rule) concepts have deep historical roots, tracing back to the Rigvedic society around 1200 BC. During this period, village assemblies played a crucial role in local governance, with the gram sabha as a vital link between villagers and higher authorities. The traditional role of the gramin (village headman) facilitated communication and ensured that officials heard the villagers' voices. While this system is now known as Panchayat, its essence remains intact, reflecting the enduring importance of local governance. Even during the Mughal era, although the power of local institutions may have diminished, the concept of decentralised governance persisted. Thus, the evolution of

decentralisation in India demonstrates a commitment to empowering local communities and fostering democratic ideals. By encouraging active participation from citizens at the village level, the Indian governance model exemplifies how decentralisation can contribute to the overall strength and resilience of a democratic system (Datta, 2019)

Decentralisation significantly strengthens the functioning of democracy. Effective governments enhance the tools of constitutional decentralisation by implementing appropriate measures that empower local authorities and communities. In contemporary governance, policymakers increasingly recognise decentralisation as a pathway to fostering democracy and development. For instance, decentralisation is regarded as a crucial element of industrialisation in countries like China, facilitating economic growth and regional development. Similarly, the new economic policy introduced in 1990 significantly bolstered decentralisation efforts in India. This policy streamlined the previously cumbersome licensing processes, reducing bureaucratic hurdles and enabling more regions and localities to engage in economic activities freely. At its core, decentralisation refers to redistributing power, authority, or control away from a central organisation or system. It involves delegating decision-making responsibilities to various individuals or groups rather than relying solely on a single central authority to make all decisions. This concept can manifest in multiple political, economic, social, and technological spheres.

Political decentralisation, for example, involves transferring power from a central government to local governments or regional authorities, allowing for greater local representation and responsiveness to community needs. On the other hand, economic decentralisation refers to the distribution of economic activities across different regions or sectors, aiming to mitigate the dominance of a particular market player or industry. The benefits of decentralisation are manifold. It can lead to increased efficiency and innovation, as local authorities are often better equipped to understand and address the specific needs of their communities. Additionally, decentralisation empowers individuals and communities by giving them a voice in decision-making processes, which can reduce instances of corruption and abuse of power. Moreover, a decentralised system is typically more resilient and flexible,

enabling it to adapt to changing circumstances and challenges more effectively. However, decentralisation also presents particular challenges. Various factors— including the specific context, objectives, and stakeholders—influence the optimal level and approach to decentralisation. Ultimately, finding the right balance in decentralisation is essential for maximising its benefits while mitigating potential drawbacks, thereby contributing to a more democratic and effective governance framework. (Banamali, 2018)

Governance frameworks integrate decentralisation intricately into the planning process. Decentralisation and planning play vital roles in driving development, often defined as society's positive evolution toward improved economic, social, and cultural conditions. While decentralisation is frequently used interchangeably with terms such as devolution, delegation, and deconcentration, it is important to recognise that these terms carry different implications. At its core, decentralisation involves the transfer of authority from a central government to regional or local authorities. Authorities may delegate responsibilities to field officers who implement policies at the regional level or devolve powers to local authorities and community-based organisations. The relationship between decentralised democratic systems and the degree of bias, whether based on class, gender, caste, or other social categories, has been the subject of significant study. Decentralisation can realign power dynamics within specific states or geographical areas, promoting greater equity and representation. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the challenges many regions face worldwide, including rising unemployment, natural disasters, enforced lockdowns, and increased feelings of isolation and physical distance. In response to these challenges, Gram Swaraj emerged as a powerful idea to revitalise rural areas and promote self-sufficiency. Translated, "Gram" means village, and "Swaraj" signifies self-rule, self-governance, or self-reliance. Thus, Gram Swaraj embodies the goal of achieving autonomy and self-sufficiency within villages. Mahatma Gandhi, while not an economist, championed the principles of Gram Swaraj as a means to empower rural communities and foster economic independence. In Gandhi's vision, the foundation for Gram Swaraj rested on developing high human values. He believed that before

discussing broader societal issues or concepts of equality, self-sufficiency, and cooperation, individuals must first cultivate a strong sense of personal integrity and ethical responsibility. Gandhi's framework for Gram Swaraj encompassed ideals such as decentralisation, Nai Talim (or new education), and the promotion of full employment as essential components for nurturing human values. His notion of Swadeshi, which emphasises the importance of local industries and self-reliance, was deeply influenced by the principles of village industry. Gandhi derived the concept of Swadeshi from the idea of Swadharma articulated in the Bhagavad Gita, which calls for individuals to fulfil their duty by nature and societal role.In summary, Gandhi's vision of Gram Swaraj and Swadeshi highlights the importance of decentralisation in fostering economic development and ethical growth within communities. These concepts seek to create a more equitable and resilient society by promoting self-rule and empowering local populations. (Kakati, 2021)

Village governance forms an essential part of regional administration, serving as a vital mechanism for decentralisation. Decentralisation refers to transferring power and authority from a central governing body to local institutions, thereby facilitating decision-making and management at the grassroots level. This power transfer typically occurs from a superior authority to subordinate or equivalent bodies, enabling communities to take charge of their governance and development. In the context of village governance, substantive and traditional forms of authority coexist. Substantive authority refers to the formal powers granted to local governing bodies, enabling them to enact laws, manage resources, and make decisions that directly impact the community. On the other hand, the community's customs, practices, and cultural norms shape traditional authority. This blend of authority allows village governments to function effectively, reflecting the values and needs of the local population. One significant aspect of village governance is the community's ability to manage its property. This management includes original communal assets and resources acquired through various village operations, such as agricultural initiatives or local enterprises. This capacity for resource management exemplifies what is known as passive decentralisation. Passive decentralisation occurs when local communities are empowered to oversee and utilise their assets, allowing them to

respond effectively to their needs and aspirations. By facilitating local governance structures, decentralisation enhances community participation and fosters a sense of ownership among residents. This empowerment can improve resource management, enhance accountability, and increase responsiveness to local issues. Ultimately, strong village governments contribute to the overall stability and development of regional governance, creating a more dynamic and resilient democratic framework. (Pinori, 2020)

Decentralisation shifts responsibility for planning, management, resource mobilisation, allocation, and other functions from the central government and its agencies to regional branches of central ministries, lower levels of government, public entities or companies with some degree of autonomy, and non-governmental or nonprofit organisations. This process enhances decision-making capacity at local levels. Swaraj refers to the management and development of economic resources by local communities. Local Self-Government constitutes the third tier of government in India, following the national and state governments. Panchayati Raj is an Indian system of rural local self-government that promotes people's participation in the democratic process. The three-tier structure of Panchayati Raj consists of the District Panchayat, the Intermediate Panchayat, and the Gram Panchayat.(Choudhury et al., 2016)

2.5 New Media and Public Sphere

The advent of social media has given rise to a new public domain, fundamentally transforming how individuals engage with each other and with society at large. This new public sphere theory emerged in response to the proliferation of new media technologies, which have reshaped global communication dynamics. One of the key principles of the public sphere is that meaningful change does not occur overnight; rather, it is a gradual process influenced by various social, cultural, and political factors.

In the Indian context, the public sphere is divided into two distinct eras: the period preceding colonial rule and the post-colonial period. This historical

bifurcation is crucial for understanding how the nature of public discourse and civic engagement has evolved in India. According to Jürgen Habermas, a prominent public sphere theorist, its manifestation in India can encompass a wide range of settings, from urban coffee shops that facilitate casual conversations to village squares where community members gather for discussions. The introduction of the European concept of the public sphere into the Indian social fabric has sparked various reactions, particularly about the notions of individuation and freedom. While the public sphere suggests a space where individuals can gather to discuss and deliberate on matters of shared interest, it also raises questions about the degree of individual autonomy and the influence of collective identities within this space. Furthermore, the Indian public sphere is characterised by its diversity, encompassing numerous groups and cultures with varying interests and perspectives. Structural social disparities—such as those based on caste, class, and gender—further complicate the landscape of public discourse. These disparities can lead to unequal participation in public discussions, where marginalised voices may struggle to be heard. Additionally, the ambiguous notions of "public" and "private" in the Indian context contribute to the complexity of the public sphere. The intertwining of personal and communal identities often blurs the lines between public discourse and private expression. As a result, understanding the public sphere in India requires a nuanced approach that considers these multifaceted dynamics. In conclusion, emerging a new public domain influenced by social media presents opportunities and challenges for public engagement in India. The evolution of the public sphere reflects a complex interplay of historical, cultural, and social factors that shape how individuals and communities interact within their society. As scholars continue to explore these dynamics, it is essential to acknowledge the diverse voices and experiences that contribute to the ongoing discourse within this newly formed public sphere. (Dey, 2020)

Digital media comprises several subsections, each influencing various aspects of society, including political participation. Today, easy access to the Internet has empowered youth to become active participants in the political landscape. In this context, the number of individuals engaging in online democracy has surged,

whether psychologically, socially, or technologically. This phenomenon often represents what is referred to as the new public sphere. Social media has made it possible to strengthen democracy through enhanced communication. Individuals can now express their views and concerns more readily during democratic processes, thanks to their participation on these platforms. However, defining the distinction between e-democracy and e-governance remains a complex challenge. Two-way communication is essential in a democracy. User behaviour may vary significantly as online and offline environments intertwine within social contexts. This variability is often attributed to what is known as the disinhibition effect. The disinhibition effect describes how individuals behave differently in social media compared to real life, influenced by the perceived "anonymity" of the Internet. Consequently, this can lead to heightened openness and emotional detachment in online interactions. "New public sphere" refers to the transformative ways digital technologies have reshaped public discourse and political participation. Historically, the public sphere existed primarily as a physical space where individuals gathered to discuss and debate issues of shared concern. Such spaces included town halls, community centres, and public squares. The public sphere has expanded into new dimensions with the advent of digital communication technologies, including the Internet and social media. Today, individuals can engage in public discourse and political discussions through various digital channels, such as social media platforms, online forums, and video conferencing tools. This new digital public sphere offers both advantages and challenges. On the positive side, it allows for a broader range of voices and perspectives to be heard, facilitating greater engagement and participation from individuals who may not have been able to attend physical events. However, it also carries risks, such as increased susceptibility to misinformation, echo chambers, and polarisation, as individuals may gravitate toward like-minded communities and engage primarily with those who share their views. The emergence of the new public sphere presents significant opportunities and challenges for democracy and civic engagement. Individuals and society as a whole must navigate these new spaces in responsible and constructive ways. (Hrčková, 2018).

Scientific knowledge and academic expertise form the foundation of the modern knowledge society, playing a vital role in developing and disseminating information. Individuals utilise the public sphere as a communication network to express their opinions and engage in dialogue. This concept underscores the importance of interaction within designated physical or virtual spaces. Scholars identify three distinct levels of the public sphere: (a) the encounter public sphere, (b) public events, and (c) mass media. Spontaneous communication characterises the public sphere, where speakers and listeners frequently alternate roles, especially during public events. This dynamic interaction cultivates a vibrant exchange of ideas and opinions, enhancing civic engagement and participation. The advent of the Internet has profoundly transformed the public sphere. Unlike traditional settings, the Internet reshapes communication dynamics by reducing the influence of gatekeeping, where authorities filter or control information. Instead, digital platforms democratise information dissemination, amplifying a broader and more diverse range of voices.

2.5.1 Subcategories of online public sphere:

Mass Media Arena: This includes online news platforms that provide information to a broad audience. Traditional media outlets have transitioned to digital formats, enhancing their reach and accessibility.

Expert Arena: Scientific journals and academic publications represent this category, where specialised knowledge is shared among professionals and researchers. These platforms facilitate scholarly communication and contribute to the advancement of knowledge.

Collaborative Public Arena: Websites like Wikipedia exemplify this arena, where collective contributions from users create and maintain content. This model encourages collaborative knowledge-building and reflects the power of communal input.

Individual/Public Sphere Arena: Social media platforms like Facebook serve as examples of the individual or personal public sphere. Here, users share

personal opinions and experiences, allowing for a more intimate form of engagement that contrasts with more formal public discourse.

Discussion Arena: This category encompasses various forums and discussion boards where individuals express their views and opinions on various topics. These spaces promote dialogue and debate, fostering a culture of participation and engagement.

In conclusion, the evolution of the public sphere, particularly with the rise of digital communication, has transformed how individuals interact, share knowledge, and engage in public discourse. Understanding these different arenas is crucial for navigating the complexities of communication in today's knowledge society. (Huber et al., 2019)

The Renaissance, a pivotal period in European history, significantly influenced the concepts of individuality and democracy, inspiring the development of the online public sphere. This new digital landscape serves as a critical foundation for democracy, enabling open discourse and citizens' active engagement. A well-organised public realm is essential, as it fosters robust debate and facilitates the expression of diverse public opinions, allowing for a more vibrant democratic process. The evolution of the public realm has occurred at an unprecedented pace, primarily driven by rapid advancements in economic, social, and technological domains. The rise of the Internet and digital communication technologies has transformed how individuals interact and share information, making it easier for people to connect across geographical boundaries. This transformation has led to a more interconnected and informed citizenry, which is crucial for the functioning of a healthy democracy. One of the fundamental causes of this shift is the impact of globalisation and the emergence of a knowledge-based economy. As societies become increasingly interconnected through trade, technology, and communication, they also become more reliant on the free flow of information and ideas. This globalisation has given rise to the concept of the network society, a new social structure characterised by decentralised communication and collaboration. In this network society, individuals can engage in various forms of public discourse through

digital platforms, from social media to online forums. This democratisation of information allows many voices to be heard, enriching the public sphere and encouraging civic participation.

Nevertheless, technology introduces specific challenges, including the proliferation of misinformation and the formation of echo chambers, where people only encounter perspectives that align with their beliefs. In general, the interaction between the Renaissance's focus on individuality and democracy and the rapid advancements of modern society has significantly influenced the online public sphere. As this digital landscape continues to evolve, individuals and communities must navigate these new spaces thoughtfully, ensuring they contribute positively to the democratic process. (Del Valle et al., 2020).

A democratic society necessitates an open sphere. Members of modern democracies are regarded as equal and free individuals within the political culture. These individuals possess a strong sense of justice, logic, and righteousness. Each person has a unique range of priorities, characteristics, capacities, social positions, and resources. The digital public sphere provides easy access to a much broader array of information, political perspectives, and narratives. It is common knowledge that a few companies control the infrastructure of the digital public sphere. For instance, Google dominates both domestic and international search engines. It is essential to ensure that social media services are not merely offering information pipelines. As previously noted, a technologically mediated public sphere broadens access to various opinions. The findings of this research paper indicate that the online platform lacks sufficient gatekeeping mechanisms.(Bernholz et al., 2020) Online media includes various discursive spaces and forms, such as anti-climate science forums, conspiracy theory websites, and similar platforms. The author also references several theories related to "anti-publics" (McKenzie Wark et al., 2018). The internet has created a media landscape where traditional gatekeepers can be easily circumvented, allowing radical or misleading content to spread quickly. This intersectionality on the right is also evident in the acceptance of anti-climate science rhetoric by far-right political parties, such as Australia's One Nation and Germany's Alternative für Deutschland, as well as anti-vaccination discourse by One Nation (Davis, 2021)

In this research, the author states that the plural public sphere is essential to media research and communication. The public sphere continually evolves. Most studies show that it is an area designated for communication where anyone can express their views. Any topics worthy of discussion among people are addressed. In contemporary society, the public sphere is also utilised in politics to form opinions, make decisions, and more. Several studies suggest that the public sphere is a crucial pillar in forming social identity, enabling individuals to perceive themselves as members of a particular society or community. Currently, the public sphere is classified into several categories, such as online, hybrid, net-public, algorithmic, digital, and networked. Some studies also suggest that discussions should now include the concept of the "post-public sphere." Advances in technology have consistently brought about changes in the public sphere. Its nature changed with the rise of printing technology; after the advent of newspapers, radio, and television, the public sphere began to be divided into many more levels. Artificial intelligence is also expected to contribute to the diversification of public spheres over time. Applications of artificial intelligence increasingly influence the public arena.(Eisenegger & Schäfer, 2023)

This study stated that the "digital public sphere" serves as a platform through which people's opinions are shaped. While the "digital public sphere" may not encompass everything, its influence on public opinion cannot be overlooked. This concept refers to a democratic space where individuals can freely express their views and engage in discussions. However, there is a pressing need to improve the quality of discourse within the digital public sphere. One primary reason is the lack of active and meaningful participation from various stakeholders, including peers and colleagues. To cultivate a more democratic and constructive public space, collaboration is essential between governments, corporate entities, nonprofit organisations, and citizens. As participants in the public domain, individuals hold democratic responsibilities as authors, readers, listeners, viewers, and contributors to social and communicative actions. Whether within traditional mass media or the digital public sphere, the pursuit of truth requires citizens to be media literate. This entails critically assessing and distinguishing between accurate information and

propaganda. Developing these skills is crucial to ensuring that discussions in the digital public sphere are productive and aligned with democratic values. (Cohen & Fung, 2023)

Jürgen Habermas's work on public sphere theory is fundamental to understanding how public discourse operates within society. Habermas posited that the public sphere is a crucial platform where "private individuals come together as a public" to challenge public authorities and push them to address and discuss the broad rules governing societal interactions. By examining this argument closely, it becomes apparent that political discourse thrives within the public domain, providing a space where citizens can actively engage with governmental institutions and other sectors of society. Historically, venues such as coffeehouses, salons, table societies, and publications like books, periodicals, and critical reviews played an essential role in facilitating discussions within the public sphere. These spaces allowed citizens to debate and deliberate on matters of public interest. However, with the rise of modern media, these traditional public forums began to decline, giving way to more structured forms of communication. The current era is marked by the rapid exchange of information, reshaping the production and consumption cycle, while corporate interactions become increasingly formalised. Habermas viewed the bourgeois public sphere as a "tension-charged field" between citizens and the government. This sphere serves as a democratic forum for debate and discourse. In the ideal public sphere, equality is upheld, whereby differences and inequalities are "eradicated" by disregarding individuals' previous social or political standings. Within this space, all individuals are granted an equal opportunity to express their opinions, and it is accessible to anyone willing to participate in the debates. For a healthy democracy, diverse public spheres across various sectors are preferable to a singular, homogeneous public sphere encompassing all citizens. Public spheres operate on multiple levels—local, national, and global—allowing for discussions that reflect different scales of societal concerns. In today's world, the public domain is inseparably linked with the Internet. The digital public sphere has emerged as a powerful tool for public discourse, offering new opportunities for expression and engagement. However, this comes with challenges, such as debates around free

speech limitations. Cyberspace, while providing a vast platform for communication, is also subject to censorship by governments. An example is China, where stringent government control over the Internet illustrates how free speech can be restricted and public discourse suppressed through online censorship. (Wang, 2020)

The public sphere is central to deliberative politics and the democratic process. It serves as the space where citizens engage in dialogue and participate in decision-making, contributing to the democratic governance of a society. The concept of the political public sphere is rooted in the idea that individuals can come together to discuss matters of common concern and hold public authorities accountable. As we examine this space more thoroughly, the intersection between politics and capitalism becomes increasingly evident. This link highlights how economic forces shape the nature of political discourse and the functioning of democracy. In recent years, the rise of social media has dramatically altered the contours of the political public sphere. The growing prominence of these platforms has made it increasingly difficult to distinguish between the public and private spheres. Traditionally, society regarded the public sphere as a space for political debate and collective decision-making, while reserving the private sphere for personal matters. However, on social media, this distinction has become blurred. While these platforms offer new opportunities for public participation, they also present challenges in terms of maintaining the progressive values traditionally associated with the public sector.The emergence of a semi-public or unstructured public sphere requires careful attention to ensure that superficial or polarising interactions do not undermine democratic deliberation. As we continue to navigate the evolving landscape of digital democracy, it is essential to find ways to preserve the integrity of the public sphere and foster a more inclusive, transparent, and deliberative democratic process. (Susen, 2023)

2.6 Female Chaupals (Mahila Chaupal)

This study finds that the roles of males and females in society differ significantly. Society divides responsibilities and roles between men and women, reinforcing gender-specific expectations. The study emphasises that politics should

be clearer and more transparent. The researcher observes that male hegemony dominates both private and public spheres. After India's 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, the government introduced the Panchayati Raj system as the third tier of Indian democracy. It is well-established that this system has provided more opportunities for women to participate in elections. The Panchayati Raj system was implemented based on the recommendations of the Shri Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, which stipulated that at least two women should be co-opted as members in the Block Level Panchayat Samiti, which consists of 20 members. However, many women enter politics directly from domestic roles without proper training or experience. Although women are political representatives, they frequently lack real power. These politically influential women are often viewed as a means of enhancing family status rather than being seen as independent actors. In many cases, elected women are considered "proxy members" or absentee members. The term "Sarpanch Pati" is commonly used to describe situations where the elected female leader (Sarpanch) does not attend meetings or public gatherings, and her husband represents her instead. This practice undermines the true purpose of women's political representation. The study also highlights that reservations for women in the Panchayati Raj system have played a significant role in improving the social status of women, even though challenges persist in ensuring their full participation and influence in decision-making processes. (Nayak, 2018).

Chaupal was organised in the Mata Sita Dwar temple complex of Ikauna under the Mission Shakti Abhiyan in Shravasti, Uttar Pradesh. In this Chaupal, women constables made women and girls aware of cybercrime, women's power, respect, and self-reliance. During this Chaupal, they were informed about the existing laws and rules to prevent violence against women, such as molestation, sexual harassment, etc. Along with these schemes, information was also given about old age pension, widow pension, Chief Minister Kanya Sumangala Yojana, National Family Benefit Scheme, etc. All this information was given at the Mahila Chaupal. According to the report, even after seven decades, the situation of women in Nepal has not changed significantly. The public sphere remains predominantly controlled by men, and it is argued that male hegemony continues to exert a significant

influence. Although women have gained more access to the public realm compared to the past, greater efforts should be made to enhance their active participation. Women face various challenges when expressing their opinions in the public domain. Since the Panchayat era, women's participation in Nepal has increased significantly. Dwarika Devi Thakurani, Nepal's first Deputy Minister, represented women, and her role contributed to the rise in women's political engagement. However, both formal and informal institutions, along with visible and invisible patriarchal systems, continue to marginalise women, particularly those who face multi-level discrimination and exclusion from the public sphere. (Kailash Rai, 2021).

According to the findings of this study, women's representation increased with the establishment of reservations for women in the Panchayati Raj system. Women were given priority in seating, which i   s a significant step towards their emancipation. This initiative is intended to encourage active and voluntary participation in local governance. While women directly participate in elections, as seats are constitutionally reserved, many women representatives exercise their authority through male family members, such as sons, husbands, fathers, or other male relatives. In most cases, the spouse acts on behalf of the elected woman, a phenomenon often referred to as Sarpanch Pati in the media and scholarly studies. This study also found that Sarpanch Pati are becoming obstacles to women's empowerment. (Priyanca, 2023)

2.7 North-east

Arunachal Pradesh is one of the central states in northeast India. Like other states in the region, it is known for its distinct tribal identities and traditions. Several tribal groups contribute to the vibrant cultural tapestry of Arunachal Pradesh through their unique customs. Each of these tribal groups has its own administration that oversees the day-to-day operations of the village, presented in a modern system governed by various rules. Almost all indigenous settlements in this state have traditional courts operating concurrently. The Adi tribal Kebang in Arunachal Pradesh is recognised as a traditional court. This community has always maintained its independence. The Kebang is responsible for overseeing the various communities

within the Adi tribe and is acknowledged as a village authority. It manages the social, economic, and political affairs of the village. The former Chief Justice of India has commended Arunachal's Kebang system. The Adi tribes include Pasi, Padam, Minyong, Bori, Bokar, Karko, Pangi, Simong, Milang, Pailbo, Ramo, and Adi Samoa. The Kebang is further subdivided into the social Kebang and the judicial Kebang. The term Kebang refers to a village council composed of senior citizens discussing community issues. Simply put, the Kebang is a gathering of locals who meet to deliberate on village matters. The Gram Sabha manages the village in accordance with its traditions and customs. There is no written record of the Adi tribe's entire cultural legacy; all of it is maintained orally and by mutual consent. The Kebang is governed by village elders known as Kebangbus. Experienced villagers are sought for assistance in exchange for their cooperation. At the Kebang, serious discussions and general meetings are held with the village authority. (Koyu & Singh, 2020)

If we examine the history of *Chaupal* and *Kebang*, they serve as community spaces for socio-cultural discourse. These traditional venues have long been sites for demonstrating democratic power. People come to *Kebang* and *Chaupal* to engage in discussions that range from general issues to particular concerns. Social, political, and economic topics are predominantly addressed in these forums. *Chaupal* and *Kebang* are essential components of the public sphere, allowing individuals to express their views without hesitation. In addition to discussions, *Kebang* also formulates rules for the welfare of society. The presence of village and community elders is mandatory in Kebang's formal meetings. While *Kebang* does not receive any external funding, there are occasionally provisions for financial penalties commensurate with the offences committed. Social control is effectively established through *Kebang*, strengthening the fabric of unity within the nation. (*Interrogating Chaupals & Kebangs as Alternative Sites of Power : A Comparative Study*, 2023). This research states that Habermas was not the first to discuss public sphere theory. Before Habermas, philosopher Immanuel Kant examined this topic in his 1784 essay, "What is Enlightenment?" According to Habermas, a public sphere is essential for a functioning democracy. With the advancement of technology, social media began to

be regarded as a component of the public sphere. In the 17th century, the "coffee shop" served as a space where people decided on protest tactics; in addition to broad discussions, the everyday issues of regular citizens were also addressed. This location had become a "public sphere" during that time. People began expressing their personal beliefs publicly as society transitioned from a monarchical state to a democracy. (Almuqren, 2023)

2.8 Post Modernism

In this research paper, the author states that post-modernism and modernism are contributions of the 19th century from the perspective of English literature. After the Second World War, literature and all aspects of life changed rapidly. The roots of the consequences of the Second World War have deeply penetrated society, politics, culture, traditions, and customs. We observe this change in various dimensions of life. Writings produced after 1980 are considered part of post-modern literature. Writers of this period include Raja Rao, Salman Rushdie, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Khushwant Singh, Vikram Seth, Bharati Mukherjee, and Sameer Chaudhary. Chetan Bhagat has also established himself as a prominent writer in the fiction field. He holds a special place among contemporary authors. In addition to being a novelist, Chetan Bhagat also writes a newspaper column. His writing style has attracted a new audience. Many films have been adapted from Chetan Bhagat's novels, which showcase his post-modern writing style. Chetan Bhagat advocates writing in straightforward language.(Karthik & Post, 2018)

According to this study, the present era of globalisation represents a significant transitional phase characterised by the rising influences of neo-communism and neo-rightism. This phenomenon can be understood as a component of the broader process of detraditionalisation, which reflects a departure from established norms and practices. Over the past decade, the work of Jürgen Habermas has evolved in response to both critiques of his original ideas and his reflections on the contemporary interplay between media and politics. Habermas acknowledges the existence of alternative public spheres, recognising their potential to contest and challenge dominant narratives. This acknowledgement highlights the dynamic nature

of public discourse and underscores the importance of diverse voices in shaping societal dialogues. By engaging with these alternative spheres, Habermas emphasises the role of media in facilitating democratic participation and fostering critical debate within the public domain. (Fenton & Downey, 2003)

In his novel Panch Parmeshwar, Munshi Premchand vividly depicts the rural landscape of a hamlet and the significance of the Chaupal as a social gathering place. The narrative illustrates how the villagers and opposing factions collaboratively agreed to establish the panchas at the Chaupal, highlighting the communal approach to governance. The author describes the Chaupal as being convened under a large tree, symbolising the community's natural authority and collective wisdom. Villagers perceived the justice meted out in the Chaupal as aligned with a divine conception of fairness, leading them to refer to the selected individuals as Panch Parmeshwar. The process of appointing a panch, someone who prioritises justice and can deliver verdicts without bias or personal connections, is emphasised in the narrative. Through descriptive scenes of the panchayat gathering at the village Chaupal, Premchand reveals another dimension of the traditional Jajmani system within the hamlet. The atmosphere is rich with communal engagement, as people of the village converse, share a hookah, and the local barber prepares chillies, creating a vivid tableau of rural life.Furthermore, the narrative contrasts the informal panchayat system with formal judicial processes, as evidenced by a character who prefers the decisions made in the Chaupal to the complexities of the court system. This choice underscores the community's reliance on collective norms and the acceptance of various power dynamics, regardless of individual importance. In the Chaupal, every community member can express their opinion, fostering an environment of open dialogue. The effectiveness of the village justice system, deeply rooted in the Chaupal, relies on the community's collective understanding regarding the circumstances of each meeting and the rationale behind its proceedings. Most villagers know the offenders, and the discussions surrounding these matters occur publicly, ensuring transparency and accountability. Premchand's narrative illustrates the enduring art of storytelling, which serves multiple functions, including entertainment, education, and the preservation of cultural values. The human

capacity to listen to and share stories distinguishes individuals from other species, reflecting a fundamental aspect of human experience. The findings from this research reveal a rich tapestry of stories conveyed through diverse media such as poetry, drama, myths, novels, and tales of royalty, all of which captivate audiences with real and imagined narratives. Traditional media platforms—encompassing print, electronic, television, radio, film, and digital formats—play a crucial role in disseminating these stories. Moreover, storytelling remains a vital method through which adults impart historical knowledge and cultural heritage to younger generations (Singh, M. P., et al, 2022)

2.9 Chaupal

This research paper highlights that soil testing programs were organised in Bihar as part of efforts to improve agricultural productivity. Experts emphasise that soil testing is essential for increasing crop yields. Soil testing programs were conducted through various methods to raise awareness, including seminars and Chaupals. It was found that Chaupals were more successful than seminars because they are an integral part of rural life in India. Malik, K. et al. (2020) discussed the role of community radio in South Asia, mentioning a case study from Bundelkhand. The authors noted that the Chaupal is an ordinary village meeting or gathering place. It is a space where people of different ages, castes, and faiths come together, central to formal and informal community activities. In many villages, Chaupals are segregated by caste, reinforcing social hierarchies, and they are often viewed as centres of power and communication. The Chaupal plays a significant role in community life, but its accessibility is restricted based on gender. Women, for the most part, are not allowed to sit in the Chaupal. They may only participate in Chaupal activities during special meetings or when required. The study also notes that only educated women have the privilege to sit in the Chaupal, while married women are traditionally excluded, as local social norms dictate that it is inappropriate for them to be present in such spaces Singh, A et al., 2020)

The Chaupal serves as a communal extension of the baithak (a traditional sitting area), functioning as a central space for gatherings within the village.

Historically, it has been a male-dominated area where men come together to participate in various social and communal activities. These activities range from playing cards and engaging in casual conversations to discussing pressing matters that affect the entire community. Decisions made at the Chaupal often have significant implications, as it serves as an informal forum for resolving disputes, making collective decisions, and reinforcing social norms. The Chaupal is typically located at the heart of the village, symbolising its central role in daily life. Every evening, it transforms into a hub of social interaction, as villagers gather to exchange news, share stories, and discuss personal and community-wide issues. It fosters a sense of unity and camaraderie among the male members of the village, functioning as both a social space and a platform for governance. Although women are technically allowed to visit the Chaupal, their role in this space is limited. Traditionally, the Chaupal is a male-centric domain, and women primarily enter the space for specific purposes, such as cleaning and maintenance. Occasionally, women may be summoned to the Chaupal during meetings or special events, but these instances are typically tied to specific circumstances rather than regular participation. Underscores the gendered nature of the space, where women's involvement is peripheral compared to the dominant role of men. The cultural dynamics of the Chaupal reflect broader societal norms, where gender roles are clearly delineated, and public spaces are often divided along these lines. Despite the limitations on women's participation, the Chaupal remains a crucial site for communal governance, social cohesion, and the informal exchange of ideas and knowledge. It serves as a microcosm of village life, highlighting how tradition and modernity intersect in the rural context (Siwach, P., 2020)

In this research paper, the author highlights the Chaupal as a traditional and central gathering place within the village, serving social and administrative functions. In many rural villages, Chaupals are crucial due to the lack of hotels or guesthouses where visitors, including officials or new residents, might otherwise stay. The Chaupal is recognised as a shared and neutral space that is accessible to all members of the community, thus embodying the inclusive spirit of village life. The study notes that Chaupals often host meetings of the elected village body,

underscoring their role as central venues for communal decision-making and governance. When government officials visit villages to provide essential services, such as pension distribution, health checkups, or other official work, the Chaupal is frequently used as the designated location for these public engagements. This makes the Chaupal a key space for daily village interactions and important administrative and social services. An illustrative example from Chhatera, a village in western Uttar Pradesh, further highlights the Chaupal's versatility. When new teachers were appointed to the local government school, they initially stayed at the chaupal due to the absence of other accommodations in the village. This example demonstrates the Chaupal's role as a multifunctional space, accommodating not just community gatherings but also meeting the practical needs of temporary residents or government visitors. Through such cases, the research underscores the enduring importance of the Chaupal as a cultural, social, and logistical hub in rural life. (Chandhoke et al 1977)

In this research paper, the author explains that the Chaupal is not limited to a formal, constructed building; it can also be a semi-constructed shelter, an open space, or simply an area under the shade of large trees like Peepal or Banyan. This versatility allows everyone in the village to gather in the Chaupal, making it an actual communal space where no individual or family holds ownership. Instead, it belongs collectively to the entire village. The Chaupal welcomes people of all ages, castes, and backgrounds to come together, fostering open discussions on various community issues. Here, village elders and Panches (village leaders) often convene to resolve disputes and make collective decisions that reflect the community's interests. The author also highlights that Chaupal is not a new concept in India; its origins trace back to the Vedic period. Gandhi Ji's vision for gram panchayats (village self-governance) was similarly inspired by the community-centric ideals found in the Chaupal. His disciple, Vinoba Bhave, known for initiating the Bhoodan Andolan (Land Gift Movement), also relied on Chaupals as venues to spread his message of land redistribution and communal harmony. The paper further explores how Chaupals have been represented in Indian literature by notable writers like Munshi Premchand, Phanishwarnath, and Baba Nagarjuna, who depicted Panches—often regarded as just and wise figures—as Panch Parmeshwar or godly figures. These

leaders were seen as symbols of hope, and both parties in disputes would approach them with trust in their impartial judgments. Moreover, the influence of Chaupals extends to media and film. All India Radio has produced several radio programs named Chaupal, reflecting its cultural significance. In Indian cinema, Chaupals frequently appear as central settings for community life and discussion scenes. The Chaupal has even inspired elements of the Indian judiciary, such as Lok Adalats (People's Courts), which echo the Chaupal's role in community-based dispute resolution. The paper concludes by noting that Chaupals remain a prominent feature in contemporary village life; for instance, Delhi's rural areas alone host over fifty Chaupals. This enduring institution continues to be a cornerstone of social life, embodying both traditional values and democratic principles in rural India (Mishra, K.K., October 2002)

In this research paper, the author discusses the concept of Chaupal as a traditional meeting place where villagers gather for social interaction, business, and decision-making. The Chaupal is a community space where villagers can connect, which is ideal for formal discussions and informal gatherings. Due to its central location and open access, the Chaupal also attracts traders and vendors who use it as a marketplace to sell or buy products, thus embedding economic activity within the village's social fabric. Recognising the pivotal role of Chaupals, efforts are underway to create a digital extension in the form of "e-Chaupal." This virtual Chaupal aims to replicate the traditional function by allowing people to buy and sell products online, expanding access to rural markets and enhancing the commercial reach of villagers. While e-Chaupals offer modern benefits, their foundation remains deeply rooted in the cultural and social functions of the traditional Chaupal (Dangi, N., et al, 2020)

The researcher further explores the social aspects of Chaupals, emphasising that they are often located at the village centre and serve as hubs where villagers can spend their leisure time. In addition to discussions about community matters and local news, the Chaupal is where the "hookah culture" thrives. Villagers, especially elders, often come to the Chaupal to smoke hookah, which has become a customary part of these gatherings. This role offers Chaupals a space for relaxation, storytelling,

and sharing experiences, solidifying their place as a cultural epicentre of village life. (Modi, 2012)

The researcher stated that people traditionally gather at the Chaupal for social interactions and important communal events. During these gatherings, individuals often sit on khatiyas (woven cots), a staple of rural seating that adds a relaxed, informal ambience. Most participants sit cross-legged on these khatiyas, reflecting comfort and openness in conversation. Alongside those on the cots, other villagers stand or sit nearby, becoming part of the gathering and creating an inclusive environment where everyone, regardless of age or background, can engage. The Chaupal serves as a platform for exchanging ideas, fostering community bonds, and making collective decisions, emphasising its role as a central element of village life. (Jain, R.K., 2018) The researcher noted that two types of teachers were historically commonly found in villages. The first type provided personal or home-based tuition, often visiting students' homes to offer individualised instruction. The second type of teacher conducted group lessons in the Chaupal, the public centre of the village. Since the Chaupal served as a neutral gathering place accessible to all, it became an ideal location for communal learning, allowing multiple students from various backgrounds to gather for group study sessions. Teaching in the Chaupal promoted an inclusive learning environment where students could benefit from shared knowledge and collective discussion, reinforcing the Chaupal's role as a central hub for educational and social development in the village. Yadav, A. (2007)

This paper highlights the government's collaborative initiatives with the private sector to advance the objectives of the Swachh Bharat Mission. The researcher discusses how these combined efforts are making strides in promoting cleanliness and waste management. Regular Chaupals have been organised across various areas in Varanasi, where community members gather to discuss and actively participate in waste disposal strategies. These Chaupals serve as effective platforms for engaging the local population in awareness-building efforts around cleanliness, waste reduction, and sustainable practices. Additionally, several corporations are contributing through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, aligning their

missions with the goals of the Swachh Bharat Mission. By supporting these initiatives, companies significantly encourage community participation, enhance public infrastructure for waste management, and promote sustainable environmental practices within Varanasi and beyond. Singh, N. (2018)

This study identifies Chaupals as vital spaces, akin to Gaon Sabhas, where village-level decisions are made. Serving as a public sphere in India, Chaupal is a communal space owned collectively by the village residents, rather than any individual. It is an inclusive environment where people of all ranks, ages, castes, and faiths gather to discuss various issues—from matters affecting the community to lighter, informal conversations. The tradition of Chaupal can be traced back to the Vedic period, highlighting its longstanding role as a centre for social interaction and communal governance. Over the years, Chaupals have also attracted the attention of activists, politicians, and cultural figures who recognise their influence on public opinion and local governance. Notably, Mahatma Gandhi leveraged the Chaupal to connect with rural communities, emphasising its importance in mobilising grassroots efforts. Politicians, planners, writers, and filmmakers have since utilised Chaupals as spaces for communication, engagement, and storytelling. As a result, Chaupals have cemented their role in fostering local decision-making and supporting broader social movements and cultural expressions, making them crucial pillars of rural Indian society. (Cokley, D. J., 2019)

The research paper highlights that Chaupal is an essential gathering place within villages, where residents come together for discussions, fostering a sense of community. It notes that Chaupal is particularly significant for the socialisation of children, as it allows young villagers to observe and participate in community interactions, learning cultural values and social norms from their elders. By spending time in Chaupal, children gain a sense of belonging and understand the importance of communal bonds. In addition to its role in socialisation, the Chaupal acts as a versatile community centre, becoming a central venue during religious ceremonies, festivals, and any significant events that require large gatherings. It is a place where villagers assemble for celebrations and participate in rituals, reinforcing community

ties. The study underscores the importance of Chaupals as multi-functional spaces that contribute to the social fabric of rural life, offering a venue not only for everyday interaction but also for cultural preservation, collective decision-making, and the continuity of traditions through generations. (Habibulla A., 2017)

The study highlights that India's media enjoys greater freedom than other countries, which plays a crucial role in promoting democratic values, especially in rural areas. *Chaupal* is a key element in rural democracy, serving as a public forum for villagers to discuss issues, make decisions, and foster a sense of community governance. Reflecting on Mahatma Gandhi's vision of village self-reliance, the study underscores his belief that "India lives in villages," advocating for communication channels that strengthen rural connectivity and support the socio-economic fabric of village life. Mahatma Gandhi was a staunch advocate for self-reliance in villages, emphasising that effective communication within rural communities is essential for their development. Through *Chaupals*, rural communication is made accessible, allowing residents to share ideas, deliberate on local issues, and foster collaborative decision-making, thus embodying the essence of grassroots democracy. The study also draws attention to the economic significance of villages, noting that many production industries rely on primary agricultural output from rural areas. With agriculture playing a substantial role in India's GDP and national income, rural infrastructure development becomes critical. However, the research points out a significant gap in infrastructure within Indian villages, suggesting that addressing these needs is fundamental to economic growth. Strengthening infrastructure boosts productivity and is key to sustaining rural livelihoods. In the context of third-world countries, the study emphasises that rural development is a linchpin for overall national progress. Investing in rural infrastructure, communication, and education through community spaces like *Chaupals* promotes economic empowerment, enhances social welfare, and reinforces democratic practices at the village level. This interconnected approach to rural development aligns with broader sustainable growth and equity goals across urban and rural landscapes. (Das, S. A., 2021)

The study found that television is an effective medium for communication in rural areas, providing accessible visual information that resonates across different age groups. However, radio remains popular, especially among older adults, due to its affordability, portability, and ease of use. Unlike newspapers, radio does not require literacy, allowing everyone to access news and entertainment regardless of education level. When newspapers are available, they are often read aloud by an educated villager, allowing illiterate listeners to benefit from current news and updates. Among literate individuals in rural areas, newspapers are valued for their in-depth reporting and continuous coverage of events, making them a trusted source of information. The study also highlighted the media's significant influence on shaping public opinion and guiding consumer behaviour. Television, radio, and newspapers are instrumental in informing people about social and economic developments, influencing opinions, and fostering awareness of issues affecting rural communities. In many cases, the media's coverage of social issues and new products impacts daily choices and the decision-making process within rural households. Furthermore, the study observed that traditional gatherings, such as village fairs and weekly markets (haats), are becoming less frequented in some rural areas. The convenience of accessing information through media has led some villagers to rely less on these gatherings for news, products, and community engagement. Chaupals continue to serve as invaluable community hubs, offering face-to-face interactions that complement the information villagers receive through media. As such, Chaupals remain an irreplaceable part of rural social life, supporting direct communication, social cohesion, and shared experiences that digital media cannot fully replicate. This balance between media and traditional gathering spaces like Chaupals demonstrates the evolving landscape of rural communication, where both new and traditional channels play crucial roles in shaping informed and engaged rural communities. (Jain, M., et al 2019)

In his article "Gender Digital Divide in India: Impacting Women's Participation in the Labour Market," the author highlights the rapid increase in mobile phone penetration and the spread of digital transactions across India. By 2016, the number of wireless telephone subscribers exceeded one billion, and it was

estimated that smartphone users in the country would reach 530 million. Despite this growth and the digitalisation of the economy and labour market, women's participation in these sectors has not seen a commensurate increase. The researcher suggests that policy reforms are necessary to ensure women can benefit from the emerging digital economy and fully participate in the labour market. Although connectivity and digital access are expanding, data shows that over half of the world's population remains offline, indicating a persistent digital divide. The Digital India Initiative is a significant reform to bridge this gap by providing public services directly to citizens, especially in rural and underserved areas. Additionally, the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme has been instrumental in reducing the need for intermediaries, ensuring that government benefits reach individuals directly, which enhances transparency and simplifies access to various services. However, traditional norms and cultural practices in specific areas continue to restrict women's access to technology. In 2016, for instance, a village-level governing body in Basauli, Uttar Pradesh, implemented a ban on mobile phone use by unmarried girls, citing cultural concerns. Similar restrictions have been imposed in villages across Gujarat, Bihar, and Haryana, where local authorities have restricted mobile phone usage for women and girls. Such practices highlight ongoing social barriers that contribute to the gender digital divide and reinforce the need for educational programs and community-driven initiatives that promote equitable digital access for women and girls. Through these observations, the article underscores the complex dynamics of the digital divide in India, where socio-cultural norms sometimes limit progress in technological connectivity. The Digital India Initiative and similar reforms are significant steps forward; however, additional efforts are required to create an inclusive digital ecosystem that embraces rural communities and women, thereby supporting India's goals for a digitally connected and economically empowered population. (Sinha, S., 2018)

The concept of folklore highlights storytelling as a fundamental aspect of cultural and folklore communication. Historically, storytelling was predominantly oral, passed down through generations without being documented. In ancient times, people shared stories verbally, often imbued with moral lessons, cultural values, or

historical events. Today, storytellers increasingly connect traditional tales to real-life events, attempting to bridge the gap between the past and present. Despite the modern shift towards written formats, a large portion of folklore remains oral, making it challenging to trace the exact origins of many stories. Folklore as a formal field of study emerged in the nineteenth century, marking a shift from casual, community-based storytelling to a structured academic exploration of cultural narratives and practices. As a research discipline, folklore encompasses many theories that interpret and understand the diversity and meaning behind folk traditions. Some of the prominent theoretical approaches include the historical-geographic approach, which explores the diffusion and variation of tales across regions; the ideological theory, which examines the influence of societal beliefs on folklore; and the functional theory, which investigates how folklore serves social purposes, such as reinforcing community values or providing entertainment. Other significant theories include psychoanalytical approaches, which delve into the subconscious meanings behind folktales, interpreting symbols and archetypes within stories. The structural approach looks at common narrative structures, identifying shared patterns across different cultures. Meanwhile, cross-cultural studies explore folklore across diverse societies, emphasising both unique and universal aspects of storytelling. Lastly, the contextual theory considers the social and cultural contexts in which stories are told, recognising how environment and audience influence the narrative. Together, these approaches allow researchers to dissect and appreciate the complexities of folklore, preserving the nuances of oral and written traditions while highlighting their ongoing relevance in contemporary societies. Today, folklore studies bridge the past and present, offering insights into the human experience and cultural expression. (Khan, F. 2018)

It is argued that the ancient world was the foundation for modern European civilisation. The demonopolization of truth—the breakdown of a single, centralised version—helped lay the groundwork for modern society, ultimately leading to the Hellenistic era, marked by significant cultural, intellectual, and scientific advancements. As society progressed, the 1960s marked the onset of the postmodern era, a cultural and philosophical movement that responded to various identity crises

and embraced a questioning of traditional norms. This era emphasised the fluidity of truth, scepticism towards absolute narratives, and acceptance of multiple perspectives. The postmodern era is often characterised as a reaction to rapid technological advancements, particularly the advent of computers and digital communication. These developments have facilitated a substantial shift from tangible social interactions to virtual engagements. The shift to virtual living—where social life increasingly unfolds online—presents opportunities and challenges, as the virtual world influences real-life perceptions, relationships, and experiences. This phenomenon has led to the development of a "virtual society," blurring the lines between digital and real-life interactions and impacting individual and collective identities. Scholars describe postmodern society as one founded on the notion of "truth without truth"—a society where objective truths are often viewed as relative, fluid, and influenced by context. This concept stems from the postmodern critique of science and objectivity, suggesting that societal truths are more often constructed than absolute. Postmodern society is also frequently referred to as the global information society, reflecting its reliance on rapid information exchange, interconnectedness, and the role of media in shaping public consciousness. This era, heavily driven by technology, continues to shape our understanding of reality, pushing individuals to navigate a complex landscape where virtual experiences have real-world consequences. (Korotkevich, E.R. et al., 2019)

The book explains that the public sphere serves as the interface of society, facilitating interactions between various spheres. When citizens participate in politics through movements, non-governmental organisations, and other civic activities, they engage in public discussions on relevant issues and participate in the public sphere. According to Habermas, the public sphere is "open to all." He defines public events and occasions as accessible to everyone, emphasising that the public realm requires a communication infrastructure. Jürgen Habermas argued that the public sphere is not merely a space for political debate; it also operates free from official censorship and private ownership. During the Lok Sabha proceedings, Shri M.K. Raghavan raised the question in the house under unstarred question number 893 about the Wi-Fi facility in panchayat and municipal areas. Minister Manoj Sinha replied that under

the BharatNet project, all Gram Panchayats will connect with high-speed internet broadband and WI-FI. The Internet is a fundamental need for digital government. The Internet is also a tool for transparent government and to remove or minimise the role of a mediator in democracy. (Pradesh, 1991)The National Capital Region Planning Board stated that the National Capital Region (NCR) is a term that defines Delhi and its nearby areas. As notified, the National Capital Region (NCR) includes NCT Delhi and certain districts from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Rajasthan—a 55,083 sq. km area covered by the NCR. Fourteen districts of Haryana are in the National Capital Region and a 25,327 sq km area, eight districts of Uttar Pradesh and a 14,826 sq km area, two districts of Rajasthan and a 13,447 sq km area, and the Whole of the National Capital Territory of Delhi and its area is 1483 sq km. It is all in combined formation, making the National Capital Region. (Christian F., 2018)

It is noted that postmodernism encompasses concepts that are applied across a diverse range of disciplines. This movement has found relevance and adaptation in fields as varied as psychology, theology, anthropology, architecture, economics, history, law, literature, education, geography, political science, sociology, women's studies, and civil engineering. While postmodernism touches many disciplines, there is a consensus that it is a cultural phenomenon. In each field, postmodernism challenges traditional ideas and encourages new ways of thinking. For instance, in architecture, postmodernism breaks away from strict, utilitarian designs to incorporate more eclectic, stylistic elements that prioritise diversity in structure and form. In literature, postmodernism questions narrative authority and linear storytelling, instead favouring fragmented structures, non-linear plots, and diverse perspectives. Similarly, psychology and sociology use postmodern concepts to emphasise the subjectivity of experiences and the multiplicity of human identities, challenging conventional definitions of the self and social roles. In law and politics, postmodernism introduces an approach that questions established power structures, emphasising the role of language, social norms, and political frameworks in shaping what is perceived as "truth" or "justice." For history and anthropology, postmodernism challenges the idea of objective historical narratives, encouraging scholars to consider the diverse perspectives and experiences that traditional accounts

may overlook. At its core, postmodernism encourages a sceptical, questioning attitude towards universal truths, suggesting that knowledge and reality are often constructed rather than inherent. While postmodernism is often associated with cultural and artistic expressions, it influences how we understand identity, knowledge, and truth across all these disciplines. It has become a lens through which society examines power, representation, and the subjective nature of reality, fundamentally shaping contemporary thought across a broad spectrum of human inquiry. (Abdulazim, 2019)

The study on the challenges of implementing E-Chaupal in Odisha highlights that the term "Chaupal" traditionally refers to the village square or meeting place where elders and other villagers gather to discuss important issues affecting the community. In this context, "E-Chaupal" represents a modernised version of this concept, integrating computer and internet technology (indicated by the "E" for "electronic") to support villagers, particularly farmers, with valuable information and resources. Unlike traditional Chaupals, which are physical spaces for face-to-face interaction, E-Chaupals serve as virtual platforms that provide access to various agricultural and market information, enabling villagers to make informed decisions on crop production, sales, and purchasing of essential supplies. Farmers using E-Chaupals can check real-time market prices, access weather forecasts, learn about advanced farming techniques, and even buy or sell products without leaving their villages. This technological extension of the Chaupal allows for a more efficient connection with resources and expertise that would otherwise be difficult to access in rural areas. E-Chaupals are particularly significant in regions like Odisha, where rural infrastructure is limited and farmers often lack easy access to the market and agricultural information. By bridging this gap, E-Chaupals empower rural communities and foster economic development, offering farmers new levels of convenience, transparency, and control over their agricultural practices and market interactions. However, implementing E-Chaupals faces specific challenges, such as accessibility, digital literacy, and infrastructure limitations in some areas. Despite these challenges, E-Chaupals remain a progressive step toward enhancing the lives of

rural farmers by using technology to extend the traditional role of the Chaupal in ways that adapt to modern needs. (Chandra et al., 2020)

This study highlights how the concept of a WhatsApp Chaupal is being used to deliver lectures in a traditional yet innovative way, with specific success in Pakistan. By leveraging WhatsApp, educators and students create a virtual Chaupal—a space for discussion, learning, and community, similar to the physical village Chaupals but adapted to a digital environment. The traditional approach to teaching is practical in Pakistan, where WhatsApp provides a convenient and accessible platform to share lectures, resources, and other academic materials, allowing students to engage and participate flexibly. Around the world, many universities now offer online study options for students worldwide, and WhatsApp has proven helpful for academic and administrative communication. In Pakistan, dedicated WhatsApp groups for classes have been established to coordinate class schedules, syllabi, assignments, and other essential information. These groups act as modern Chaupals, where students can easily exchange ideas, ask questions, and collaborate. Through WhatsApp, students experience a sense of community similar to a traditional Chaupal, bridging the gap between formal classroom settings and interactive, accessible communication. This adaptation of WhatsApp as a Chaupal helps students and educators overcome physical barriers, fostering an inclusive environment where learners can discuss ideas, clarify doubts, and share insights in real time. By using WhatsApp as a digital extension of the Chaupal, students benefit from instant connectivity and informal support networks, reinforcing the communal spirit of traditional Chaupals while embracing the convenience of technology. This innovative use of WhatsApp underscores the app's potential to facilitate educational engagement, knowledge sharing, and collaboration in a way that respects and modernises the age-old concept of the Chaupal. (Bhati et al., 2020)

This official letter to the Executive Engineer, Delhi District Urban Development Agency. The letter concerns the funding issue for constructing an additional room on the terrace of the Badhi Chaupal in Zamrudpur Village. An amount of ₹ 13, 52,000 was requested, but government officials have only released ₹

6, 76,000, which is fifty per cent of the total amount. The remaining funds will be disbursed once the first instalment has been fully utilised for the construction of the Chaupal. The Chaupal is an important gathering place in urban areas, where people can come together to share experiences, listen to one another, and foster a sense of community.

The Haryana Tourism press note, issued on February 6, 2020, celebrates the importance of the Chaupal as a vibrant symbol of tradition, art, and music. This press release highlights the Surajkund International Handicrafts Mela, a renowned fair that promotes traditional handicrafts and offers a valuable platform for artisans from diverse fields. Held at Haryana's historic Surajkund, the mela is dedicated to preserving and showcasing Haryanvi culture while representing global cultural diversity, as it features partner states and foreign nations who share their unique traditions at the event. In the Delhi NCR region, the rich folklore and traditional culture of the area would feel incomplete without the presence of the Chaupal or an amphitheatre. The Chaupal often serves this purpose at the mela, as a gathering spot where cultures blend. Surajkund mela features two prominent Chaupals: Chhoti Chaupal and Badi Chaupal, where village life is brought to life. Here, the Chaupal acts as a central platform where the "colours of the world" merge through various performing arts, including song, dance, and storytelling, representing a living tapestry of Indian and international culture. (*Press Note Haryana Tourism 6*, 2020)

The report references the criteria established by the Census of India for defining rural areas; the regulations specify that these areas should have a population density of under 400 people per square kilometre, with no less than 75% of the population involved in agricultural work. Additionally, these areas must lie outside the administrative purview of municipal corporations. India is home to approximately 640,000 villages, with only around 20,000 populations exceeding 5,000 residents. Definitions of what constitutes a "village" vary across different sectors. For example, in the context of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies, any area with a population over 20,000 may be classified as a village, allowing businesses to address these areas as part of rural outreach. Meanwhile,

companies specialising in durable goods and agricultural inputs tend to classify areas with populations below 50,000 as rural towns. This variability in defining rural zones influences how businesses strategise their operations and engagement within these regions. The study also highlights the cultural importance of spaces like the Chaupal, often central to rural community life, where people gather for social, economic, and cultural exchanges, underscoring the Chaupal's role in bridging social interactions within rural India's diverse landscape. (Suri & et al., 2018)

This study reports that the Indian market is experiencing rapid expansion, attracting attention from major global producers increasingly focusing on rural areas. These companies are developing management strategies tailored to the Indian context, aiming to engage effectively with the local population. However, they encounter various obstacles navigating this diverse and complex market landscape. These companies leverage rural communication methods to connect with rural communities and reach their target audiences. Over the past two decades, India's market has shown consistent growth, improving many citizens' living standards. Urban areas received the majority of market focus in the past, but there has been a noticeable shift toward rural regions in recent years. The study highlights that television remains the most potent medium for rural communication, effectively reaching a broad audience. For older individuals in rural areas, radio is identified as the most suitable medium due to its accessibility and ease of use. Meanwhile, newspapers continue to be a significant source of information for the educated population, transcending age barriers. However, traditional shopping habits are changing with the rise of online and new media. People increasingly opt for digital platforms over visiting fairs or physical markets, indicating a shift in consumer behaviour that reflects the evolving dynamics of rural commerce in India. As a result, these technological advancements also affect the importance of spaces like the Chaupal, which is traditionally central to community interactions and commerce. (Jain, 2022)

The present study highlights that newspapers serve as a highly effective medium for rural communication, playing a more significant role in rural areas than

urban ones. The impact of newspapers is particularly pronounced in rural regions, where they provide essential information and serve as a primary news source. At the same time, their influence in urban areas tends to be less impactful. The study also reveals notable differences in internet usage patterns between urban and rural areas. In urban settings, the Internet is utilised for various purposes, including entertainment, streaming films, listening to music, online payments, and educational activities. Conversely, in rural areas, internet usage is predominantly centred on entertainment and music, with a decline in online payment transactions. These disparities in media usage extend to shopping habits as well, where differences between online and offline shopping become evident. It is crucial to keep communication tools and methods updated in rural communication. For example, once used for local communication, wall paintings fade. While people may take the time to appreciate these artistic expressions, their effectiveness diminishes if the paintings are not maintained. Moreover, the costs of creating and maintaining wall paintings can be substantial. In many rural communities, traditional advertising methods still prevail, such as using loudspeakers mounted on vehicles to broadcast messages. However, this approach can sometimes lead to noise pollution, which detracts from the quality of the communication experience. Rural communication encompasses various forms of media, including television advertisements, oral communication, and discussions among friends and family. However, the study identifies several barriers that hinder effective rural communication, noting that available communication channels are often limited. This underscores the need for ongoing efforts to enhance communication infrastructure and strategies in rural areas, ensuring they can effectively access and utilise diverse forms of information. These insights emphasise the importance of adapting communication practices to meet rural communities' unique needs and contexts. (Yang, 2021)

The present study reveals that India is the second most populous country in the world, with a significant portion of its population residing in rural areas. Agriculture plays a crucial role in the Indian economy, contributing to the livelihoods of millions. Traditionally, agricultural produce has been sold in local markets, but with the advent of industrialisation, there has been a notable shift. As cities expanded

and populations grew, many farmers began to send their products to urban markets in pursuit of higher profits. However, this transition has made the process increasingly challenging for farmers, as numerous intermediaries have entered the supply chain, complicating transactions and reducing the farmers' profit margins. In response to these challenges, ITC has launched the e-Chaupal initiative. "Chaupal" refers to a traditional village meeting where community members gather to discuss various issues and share experiences. E-Chaupal, on the other hand, represents a virtual platform designed to empower farmers by facilitating better prices for their agricultural produce. This innovative platform allows farmers to connect directly with buyers, eliminating many intermediaries that typically inflate prices. E-Chaupal is a significant marketplace where multiple products and competitors converge, creating a more competitive environment that benefits farmers. Notably, geographical barriers are minimised within the e-Chaupal framework, enabling farmers to access broader markets without distance constraints.Additionally, various companies are appointed to handle buying and selling goods, further streamlining the process. Farmers are charged a nominal fee at each transaction level, ensuring they can participate in this digital marketplace without incurring substantial costs. This model enhances the farmers' access to markets and supports their ability to receive fair compensation for their hard work. E-Chaupal represents a transformative approach to rural commerce, bridging the gap between traditional agriculture and modern market demands while fostering economic growth in rural communities. (The Journal, 2022)

This study found that Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) are assuming a new role by implementing information, education, and community activities. The government's primary objective is to achieve Millennium Development Goal 4, which aims for a two-thirds reduction in child mortality. However, many countries struggle to meet this target due to inadequate infrastructure. To facilitate awareness programs for vaccination, the health department has developed educational materials that incorporate simple messages and visuals in the local language. These materials include pamphlets, audio announcements, and stickers. A significant emphasis is placed on high-visibility

public areas, such as government buildings, marketplaces, and Chaupals. Chaupals serve as important gathering places within rural communities where individuals discuss various topics. Using Chaupals as a platform for disseminating information, health officials can effectively engage with the community and promote vaccination awareness. These gatherings provide a unique opportunity for ASHA workers to connect with residents, answer questions, and foster dialogue around child health initiatives. As a result, the strategic use of Chaupals enhances the outreach efforts of health programs, ultimately contributing to the reduction of child mortality rates in line with the government's objectives. (Taneja et al., 2018)

Even though much of the discussion surrounding mediated political communication tends to treat the subject indirectly, often dismissively, or even advocates for its elimination, its enduring impact is undeniable. This impact can be observed through the "post-public sphere," which characterises the current, unsettled state of affairs in political discourse. This term denotes a transition to an uncertain destination, reflecting the complexities of contemporary communication. The evolution of consumption and distribution patterns within a platform economy has significantly altered the landscape of mediated political communication. The rapid reshaping of the 'legacy' public sphere—once dominated by traditional media such as newspapers, radio, and television—now faces challenges from the political uses of social media. These changes are not merely superficial but fundamentally reshape our understanding of communicative space. In capitalist democracies, these developments interact with existing socio-political divisions, radically reframing how we perceive public discourse. The traditional boundaries of the public sphere are being redefined as various forms of media converge and compete for attention. As platforms proliferate, the dynamics of information dissemination change, often prioritising engagement over depth, leading to fragmented narratives and polarised opinions. This complex interplay between mediated communication and political engagement highlights the necessity of critically examining how these evolving modes of communication influence democratic participation and civic discourse. As the role of Chaupals—traditional gathering places for community discussion—intersects with these modern dynamics, they continue to serve as essential venues for

public deliberation, reflecting the challenges and opportunities present in today's communicative landscape. By integrating traditional and contemporary forms of communication, we can better understand the nuances of political engagement in a rapidly changing world. (Kantomaa et al., 2008)

Their study, "Physical Inactivity in Adolescents: The Man-Made Epidemic," emphasises the importance of outdoor play for children and adolescents. The author reflects on his childhood in a village in South Delhi during the late sixties and seventies, when agricultural fields surrounded the community. Children often played in lush guava orchards, engaging in physical games, encouraging movement and social interaction. Meanwhile, elderly residents gathered at the Chaupal, where they enjoyed smoking hookah and discussing everything from local matters to national politics throughout the day. Chaupals are familiar gathering places in the villages of Delhi NCR, serving as hubs for community dialogue and connection. The author vividly recalls when television first arrived in his village. In those early days, owning a television symbolised social status, and children would gather to watch programs just twice a week. In stark contrast, the current media landscape has led to an exponential increase in screen time; with the advent of 24-hour television channels and the proliferation of social media, people now spend more time engaged with media than ever before. This shift in media consumption patterns has contributed significantly to an increase in inactivity among all age groups. Development has also had a profound impact on the community. Essential infrastructures, such as hospitals, roads, and hotels, have replaced expansive green agricultural areas, altering the village's landscape. The author reminisces about walking half a kilometre to catch the bus, whereas today, convenient bus stops and metro stations are just outside people's homes. In the past, the youth spent quality time with elders and grandparents at the Chaupal, fostering intergenerational connections. However, this dynamic has changed, as young people increasingly devote their attention to smartphones and other electronic devices, resulting in a decline in traditional social interactions. This shift highlights the broader implications of modernisation and urbanisation, as communities grapple with balancing development and preserving cultural practices that promote active lifestyles and social cohesion. (Schlesinger, 2020)

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Research problem

This chapter comprehensively describes the research methodology used in the study. It discusses selecting appropriate research approaches, outlining the criteria for determining which methods best align with the study's objectives. The chapter explains the techniques used for data collection, including methods for gathering both quantitative data and qualitative insights through interviews. Additionally, it describes the systematic process for collecting and analysing these data. This section also explains how the research addresses the questions and objectives, focusing on drawing well-founded conclusions based on the collected evidence. By establishing a rigorous methodological framework, this chapter lays the groundwork for effectively navigating and resolving the study's research aims.

After reviewing the available literature on the public sphere, the researcher identified significant scope for a Chaupal-centric investigation through the lens of public sphere theory. This study examines the relevance of Chaupals in the postmodern period. Although numerous studies have explored the public sector, most have focused on modern society as their central concern. In contrast, research specifically addressing Chaupals remains limited. Even fewer studies examine the relevance of Chaupals in metropolitan contexts such as Delhi. The Chaupal system, rooted in India's ancient traditions, continues to function in contemporary times. This research attempts to establish why scholarly engagement with Chaupals remains necessary today. While several studies have addressed Chaupals, very few have examined their operational patterns and the mechanisms through which they implement development and welfare programmes. Existing literature primarily explores the historical contributions of Chaupals during specific periods. However, no study has yet investigated how Chaupals have evolved or assumed new roles to meet present-day socio-cultural and administrative needs. Furthermore, earlier research has not addressed the contemporary relevance of Chaupals, especially in a

context where rural youth increasingly gravitate towards digital platforms and modern technologies over traditional communal spaces.

3.2 Research objectives

The objectives of the study are: -

1. To examine the role of various communication methods in Chaupals which include traditional, mediated and new media communication.
2. To explore and analyse the role and issues of folk communication in Chaupals.
3. To assess the impact of oral communication significance and function within Chaupals.
4. To investigate the participation and influence of specific demographics and the levels of awareness of women and the contributions of youth on Chaupals.
5. To analyze and focus on how the rural communication systems function and their impact within Chaupals.

3.3 Research questions (RQs)

This study seeks to answer these research questions: -

1. Whether and to what extent traditional mass media affect communication in Chaupals?

2. Whether and to what extent folk medium affects communication in Chaupals?

3. Whether and to what extent oral communication in Chaupals?

4. Whether and to what extent women are aware of issues in Chaupals?

5. Whether and to what extent youth play a significant role in Chaupals?

6. Whether and to what extent social media affects communication in Chaupals?

7. Which form of mediated communication are you using in Chaupals?

3.4 Research Design and Sampling Method

Quality research aims to solve unresolved questions, with its results dependent on human effort. It is a systematic process of obtaining valid answers to problems through the organised collection, analysis, and interpretation of evidence. Research is the primary means for advancing knowledge, driving progress, and improving human relationships.. Research is done on those topics whose answers are not directly available in the literature; then, the available sources are consulted. Based on the scientific method, an attempt is made to find answers to the questions. (Singh, 2006)

In mixed methods research, researchers use quantitative and qualitative research procedures, data gathering and analysis tools, etc. This is a thorough approach. In simple terms, viewing things from multiple perspectives is an Endeavour. The use of a mixed-methods research design also aids in the completion of the research by utilising methodologies from various fields. If the researcher possesses the necessary skills, a hybrid method approach is viable. In mixed-method research, the researcher must use a variety of approaches. This approach is employed in this study for data fusion and analysis at the very least. For in-depth studies, mixed methods research employs more than one method. Many people believe in mixed methods research. (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

This topic aimed to examine the **relevance of Chaupals in rural communication in the post-modern era**, focusing specifically on villages in the **Delhi-NCR (National Capital Region)**. Specifically, only those villages where Chaupals are still active were selected, and people used to gather and engage in discussions at these Chaupals.

To overcome this challenge, a multistage sampling method and snowball sampling were adopted for quantitative research. Through snowball sampling, we identified which districts and villages still had active Chaupals, which is why the researcher chose to use this method, ensuring the sample was representative and manageable.

For the **qualitative research**, **purposive sampling** was employed to gather in-depth insights from key stakeholders involved in the functioning of Chaupals.

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, gathering both quantitative and qualitative data. Given that most individuals in the communities lacked formal education, an organised timetable was implemented to facilitate quantitative data collection. Therefore, the researcher personally visited the participants and completed the structured schedule.

An unstructured discussion guide was used for qualitative data collection to conduct in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. This approach enabled the researchers to capture a broad range of perspectives while also exploring detailed, context-specific insights related to the historical and contemporary relevance of Chaupals in rural communication.

3.4.1 Area of Study

The study area was the Delhi-NCR region, which includes 31 districts from four states: Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan. Each state has its own socio-cultural and economic background, which plays an important role in how Chaupal functions as a communication system. The selection of villages from these four states allowed for the representation of regional diversity in the research, ensuring that the findings were applicable across different rural contexts within the NCR.

Haryana is known for its strong tradition of rural governance and the use of Chaupals for community discussions and decision-making. Including villages from Haryana ensured that the research reflected the traditional role of Chaupals in village life.

Uttar Pradesh: Villages in Uttar Pradesh were included because of their long-standing reliance on Chaupals as centres for social, political, and economic interaction, especially in rural governance and dispute resolution.

Delhi: Despite being an urbanised state, some villages in Delhi still retain traditional communication structures, including Chaupals. Studying these villages allowed researchers to explore how these traditional systems adapt to urban pressures.

Rajasthan: Known for its deep-rooted rural traditions, Rajasthan was included to capture the cultural continuity of Chaupals in rural communication. Chaupals in this state often play a key role in resolving disputes and making decisions that affect the entire village.

3.4.2 Research Approach

The research followed mixed methods to address the research questions comprehensively. This method combined quantitative and qualitative methods, allowing for a broader understanding of the role of Chaupals while also exploring detailed insights from key individuals.

Quantitative Method: A structured schedule was used to collect data from a large sample of villagers. The aim was to identify patterns in using Chaupals, the frequency of communication activities, and the type of information exchanged in these spaces.

Qualitative Method: The qualitative method involved conducting In-Depth interviews (IDIS) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with key community leaders and stakeholders such as village heads (Gram Pradhans), Chaupal leaders, and other influential figures in the village. These interviews aimed to gain deeper insights into the historical significance of Chaupals, how they have evolved over time, and their future role in rural communication.

3.4.3 Sampling Strategy

Given the large population of villages in the Delhi-NCR region, a multistage sampling and snowball sampling were adopted for quantitative research. This method allowed the researcher to systematically narrow down from a larger population to a smaller, more manageable sample of villages most relevant to the study. Snowball sampling is used to select districts and villages for quantitative research, while purposive sampling is used to select respondents for qualitative research.

3.4.3.1 Defining the Population

The target population for the study consisted of **villages in the Delhi-NCR region** that still had an **active Chaupal**. Chaupals are central to the research because they serve as communal spaces where villagers gather to discuss important issues, resolve disputes, and make decisions. Villages without Chaupals would not have been suitable for this study, as the research focused on how these spaces facilitate rural communication.

3.4.3.2 Multistage Sampling for Quantitative Data Collection

Multistage sampling was employed to select a sample of villages representing the region's diversity. The sampling process consisted of the following steps:

1. **Stratification by State**: In the first stage, the research stratified the Delhi-NCR region into its four constituent states: Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan. Stratification was used to ensure that villages from each state were represented in the sample, as rural communication practices and the use of Chaupals could vary between states due to socio-cultural and economic differences.

2. **Snowball Sampling of Districts and Villages:** Snowball sampling was used to select districts and villages after stratifying the region by state. A literature review provided limited information about the districts where Chaupals were still active. Therefore, the researcher visited several locations and interviewed residents to identify villages where Chaupals were operational.

3. **Selection of Villages:** In the third stage, based on these visits and discussions, villages with active Chaupals were selected. Only those villages with operational and active Chaupals were included in the final sample, as their presence was essential to the research objectives.

3.4.3.3 Rationale for Selecting Villages:

- The villages were chosen based on their geographical distribution, ensuring they represented different parts of the NCR.

- The presence of active Chaupals was the key criterion for inclusion. Villages without Chaupals were excluded from the study because the research focused on the role of these communal spaces in rural communication.

3.4.3.4 Quantitative Sampling

Sample Size Determination (Krejcie and Morgan Table 1970)

The study determined the sample size for the quantitative phase using the Krejcie and Morgan Table, which is widely employed in social science research to calculate the required sample size for a given population. The following parameters were considered while estimating the sample size:

Sampling at: Village level
Confidence Level: 95%
Confidence interval: 5%

Using the Krejcie and Morgan formula, the total population across all the villages was estimated to be around 1 lakh. Based on this formula, as shown in the table below, the calculated sample size was 373. However, the final data collection resulted in 495 respondents from 13 villages.

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	26	140	103	340	181	1000	276	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384

Note: "N" is Population Size
"S" is Sample Size.

Using the Krejcie and Morgan formula, the total population across all the villages was estimated to be around 1 lakh. Based on this formula, as shown in the table below, the calculated sample size was 373. However, the final data collection resulted in 495 respondents from 13 villages.

3.4.3.5 Distribution of Respondents

The 495 respondents were distributed across 13 villages in the four selected states. The villages and their corresponding sample sizes are shown in the table below:

S. No	State	District	Village	Sample Size
1	Haryana	Faridabad	Anangpur	40
			MewlaMaharajpur	35
		Gurugram	Ghata	35
			Fazalpur	40
2	Uttar Pradesh	Gautam Budh Nagar	Brandy	40
			Barola	40
			Harola	35
		Ghaziabad	Sihani	40

3	New Delhi	Southeast Delhi	Tughalakabad	40
			Kalka Garhi	35
			Tehkhand	40
4	Rajasthan	Bharatpur	Chiksana	40
			Shahpur	35
Total				**495**

The **target group** for the quantitative survey included individuals who were directly engaged with the Chaupal system. The criteria for selecting respondents were as follows:

- **Age Group**: Respondents aged **18 years and above** were included to ensure that the sample reflected the adult population involved in rural communication.

- **Occupations**: The sample included individuals from various occupational backgrounds, such as students, working professionals, non-working individuals, farmers, and homemakers. This ensured that the data collected represented different socio-economic groups within the villages.

- **Attributes**: Respondents were selected based on their **knowledge of the Chaupal system** and **participation in Chaupal meetings**. This helped ensure that the data collected reflected the experiences of individuals actively involved in village-level communication through Chaupals.

3.4.3.6 Qualitative Sampling (In-Depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions):

The researcher employed a purposive sampling method for the qualitative phase of the research. This approach enabled the selection of key informants who held specific roles and possessed in-depth knowledge about the functioning of Chaupals.

3.4.3.7 Sample Size for IDIs

To gather detailed insights, 15 mixed in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with key stakeholders from the selected villages were conducted. These stakeholders included village leaders, such as **Chaupal Heads**, **Gram Pradhans**, and other respected community members who were directly involved in the functioning of Chaupals. The distribution of interview respondents across villages is shown below:

In- Depth Interviews				
S. No	**State**	**District**	**Village**	**Sample Size**
1	Haryana	Faridabad	Anangpur	1
		Gurugram	Ghata	1
2	Uttar Pradesh	Gautam Budh Nagar	Barola	1
			Harola	1
		Ghaziabad	Sihani	1
3	New Delhi	Southeast Delhi	Tughalakabad	1
			Kalka Garhi	1
4	Rajasthan	Bharatpur	Shahpur	1
Total				**8**

Focus Group Discussions				
S. No	**State**	**District**	**Village**	**Sample Size**
1	Haryana	Faridabad	Mewla Maharajpur	1
		Gurugram	Fazalpur	1
2	Uttar Pradesh	Gautam Budh Nagar	Brandy	1
			Harola	1
3	New Delhi	Southeast Delhi	Tughalakabad	1
			Tehkhand	1
4	Rajasthan	Bharatpur	Chiksana	1
Total				**7**

3.4.3.7 Target Group for Qualitative Research

The target group for the qualitative interviews included individuals who had a leadership role or a long-standing association with the Chaupal system. The selection criteria were as follows:

- **Age Group:** Respondents aged 30 years and above were selected for their experience with Chaupals and their ability to reflect on changes over time.

- **Occupation:** Working and non-working individuals were included, emphasising those in leadership positions, such as Gaon Pradhans or Chaupal Heads. These individuals were chosen because of their direct involvement in village decision-making and communication processes through Chaupals.

3.4.3.8 Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection phase involved both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews:

- **Quantitative Data Collection:** Structured schedule were administered to the 495 respondents across the 13 selected villages. The survey collected data on how often people used Chaupals, the types of discussions that took place, and who participated in these discussions. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify patterns and trends in Chaupal usage across the sample.

- **Qualitative Data Collection:** In-depth interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) provided rich, narrative data about the role of Chaupals in village life, both historically and currently. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. This allowed for the identification of key themes, such as the evolution of Chaupals, their current relevance in rural communication, and their potential future role.
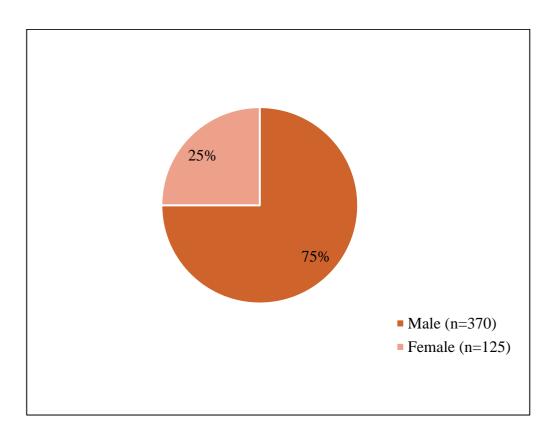
3.4.3.9 Data analysis

For quantitative data, SPSS and Excel are used to analyse and compare the outcomes of the different variables used in the questionnaire. The researcher will use Excel and SPSS to analyse the data for this study. Counts, percentages and means have been calculated through SPSS and Excel, and will also be used to make the graphs for graphical representation. For the qualitative method, the researcher will use an audio recorder to record the entire interview session after obtaining the respondents' permission. After this, the researcher will transcribe each interview, and through these transcriptions, the qualitative data will be analysed and provide detailed answers to research questions.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.1. Gender wise participation in Chaupal.

3.1 Gender wise participation

The survey included 75% male participants and 25% female participants. This graph highlights the disparity in participation, indicating that a significantly larger proportion of males were involved in the study than females.

4.2. Age wise participation
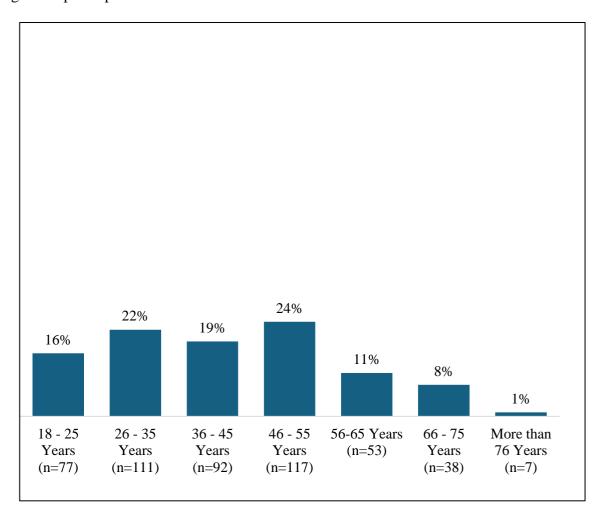
Figure 3.2 Age-wise participation

The age distribution was well-represented across the various age categories, with the most significant proportion found in the 46-55 years range (24%) and the lowest in the 76 or more age group (1%). This suggested that middle-aged individuals were the most active participants in Chaupals, likely because discussions were relevant to their interests or responsibilities.

4.3 Education background of respondents
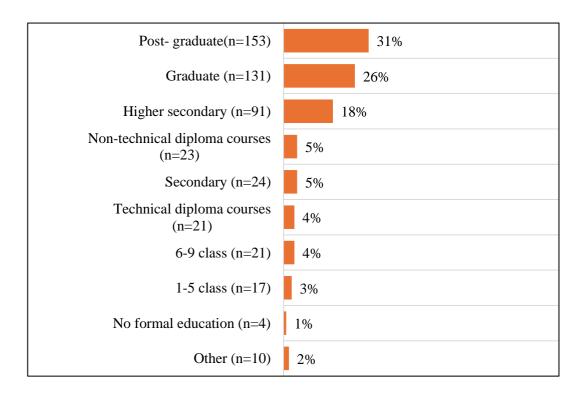
Figure 3.3 Educational Background

Most respondents have a graduate (26%) or post-graduate (31%) education. This high level of educational attainment among participants suggests that Chaupals are attracting a well-educated audience, influencing the nature and depth of discussions held.

4.4 Occupation

Working full time (n=128) 26%

Unemployed (n=90) 18%

Farmer (n=77) 16%

Housewife (n=71) 14%

Working part time (n=60) 12%

Student (n=46) 9%

Retired (n=12) 2%

Others (n=11) 2%
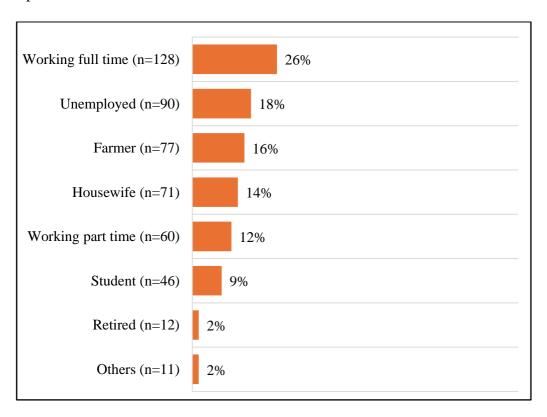
Figure 3.4 Occupation

The majority of respondents were either working full-time (26%) or were unemployed (18%), with farmers also forming a significant group (16%). This diverse occupational representation suggests that Chaupals served as a platform for a broad cross-section of the community, with varying concerns and interests.

4.5 Religion
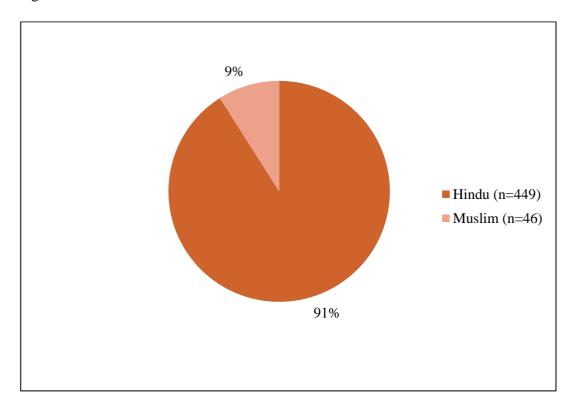
Figure 3.5 Religion

Most respondents identified as Hindu (91%), while only 9% identified as Muslim. This distribution likely reflects the broader demographic composition of the village, suggesting a degree of religious homogeneity among participants. Such homogeneity may have influenced both the thematic focus and the dynamics of the discussions.

4.6 Caste category

16%

3%

19%

62%

- SC (n=79)
- ST (n=15)
- OBC (n=94)
- General (n=307)
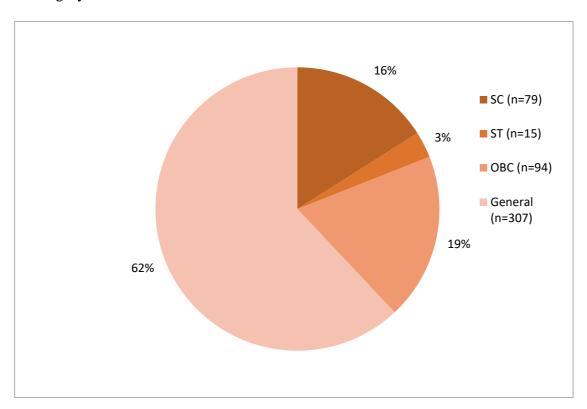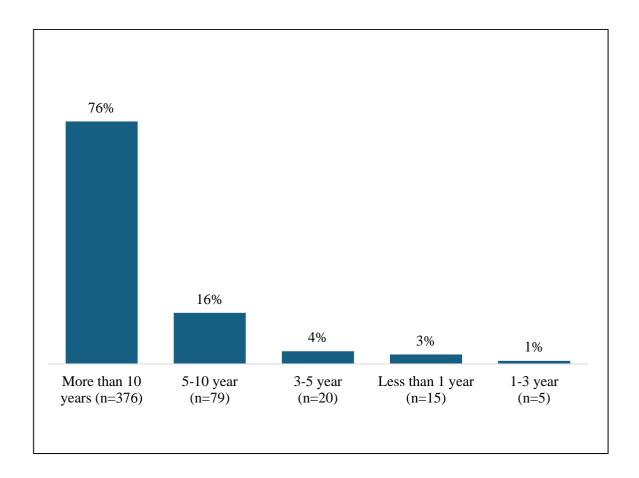
Figure 3.6 Caste Category

A significant portion of respondents were from the General category (62%), followed by OBC (19%), SC (16%), and ST (3%).

4.7 Since when has the Chaupal been in your village? (SC)

Chart data:
- More than 10 years (n=376): 76%
- 5-10 year (n=79): 16%
- 3-5 year (n=20): 4%
- Less than 1 year (n=15): 3%
- 1-3 year (n=5): 1%
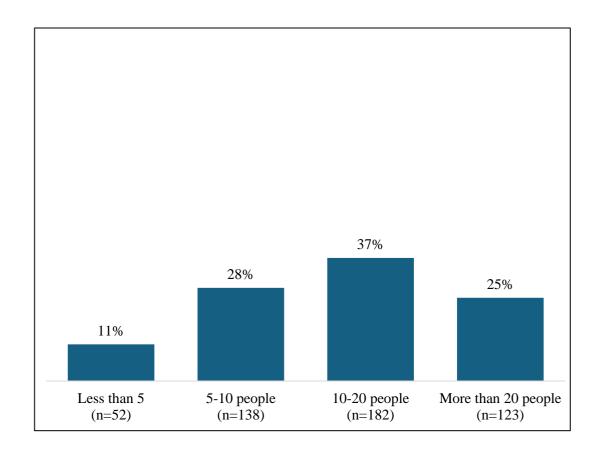
3.7 How long has Chaupal been in your area?

Most Chaupals have existed for more than 10 years (76%), indicating that they are well-established institutions within the community. This longevity may contribute to their significance as a traditional communication platform.

4.8 Approximately how many people gather at the Chaupal? (SC)

Less than 5	5-10 people	10-20 people	More than 20 people
11%	28%	37%	25%
(n=52)	(n=138)	(n=182)	(n=123)

3.8 How many people gather at the Chaupal?

The gatherings were typically moderate in size, with most Chaupals having 10-20 people (37%) attending. This suggested that Chaupals were intimate settings that may have fostered more personalized and focused discussions.

4.9 Generally, what time are the meetings held at the Chaupal? (SC)
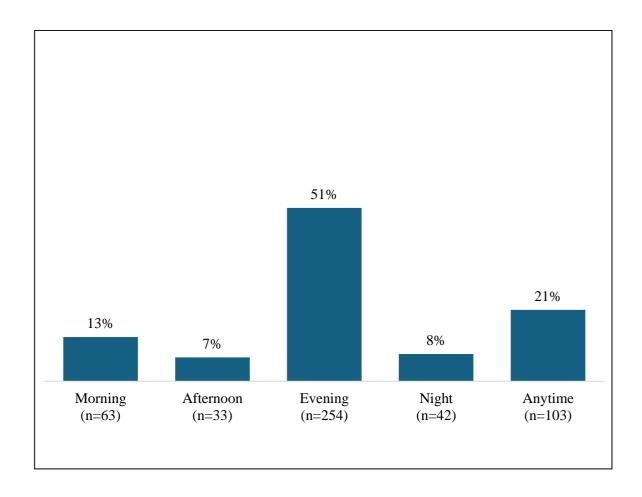
Figure 3.9 what time are the meetings held at the Chaupal?

Evenings were the most common time for meetings (51%), reflecting participants' convenience after their daily work. This timing influenced the types of discussions held, as people may have been more relaxed and willing to engage in deeper conversations.

4.10 How often do you go to the Chaupal? (SC)
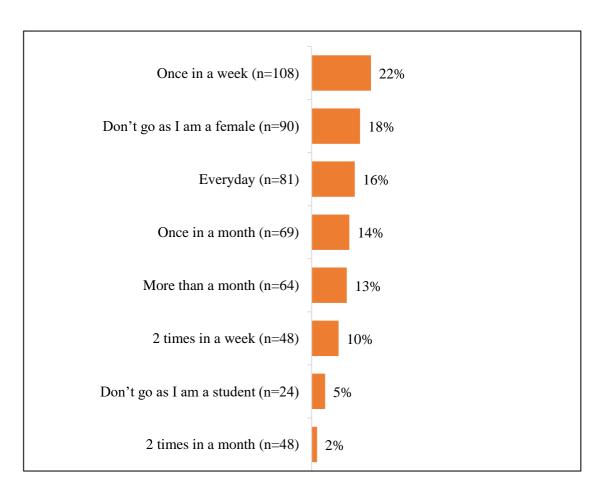
Figure 3.10 how often do you go to the Chaupal?

Attendance varied, with a significant number attending once a week (22%) or every day (16%). However, 18% did not go because they were female, highlighting a potential gender-based barrier to participation.

4.11 How frequently do you participate in Chaupal's communication? (SC)
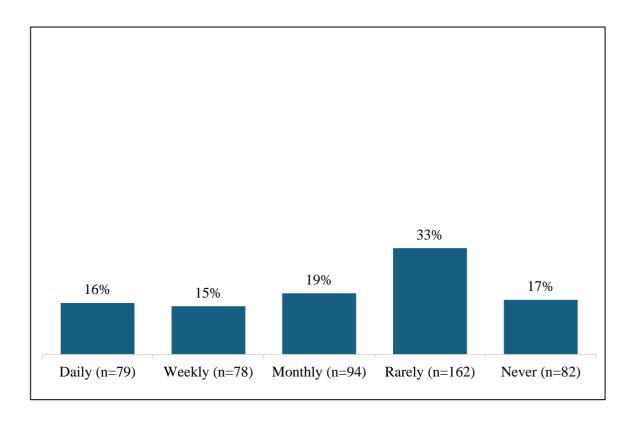
Figure 3.11 How frequently do you participate in Chaupal's communication?

Participation was most often "rarely" (33%), indicating that while people attended Chaupals, active engagement in communication may have been limited, possibly due to social or cultural factors.

4.12 How do you get information such as the day, time, and topic of the Chaupal meetings? (SC)
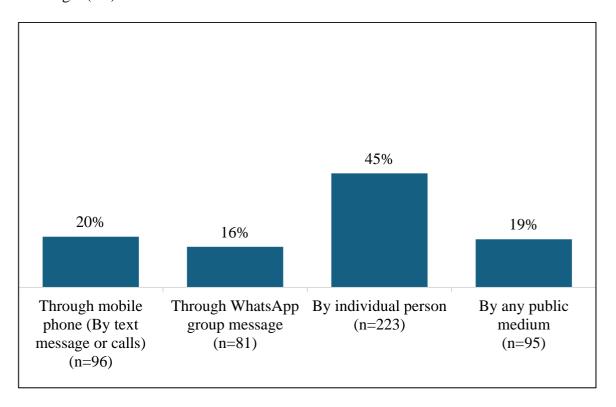
Figure 3.12 how do you get the information such as the day, time, topic of the Chaupal meetings?

Information was most commonly received through an individual person (45%), highlighting the continued importance of personal networks and face-to-face communication in disseminating information about Chaupal activities.

4.13 Which forms of communication are generally used in Chaupals? (SC)
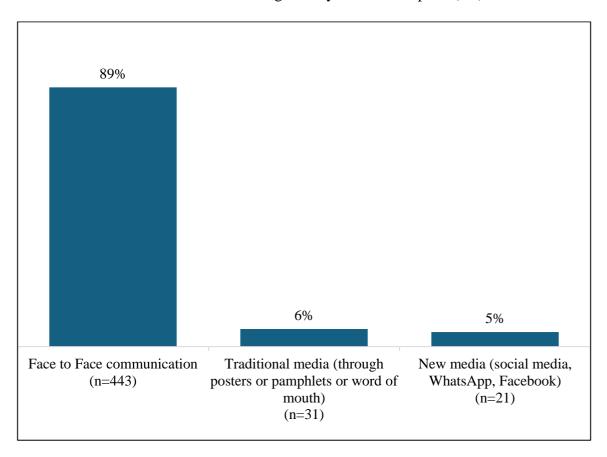
Figure 3.13 which forms of communication are generally used in Chaupals?

Face-to-face communication dominated (89%) with traditional and new media being used much less. This preference for direct interaction underscored the cultural and social importance of in-person discussions in the context of Chaupals.

4.14 How would you assess the effectiveness of the following communication strategies rate this from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least effective and 5 being the most effective?
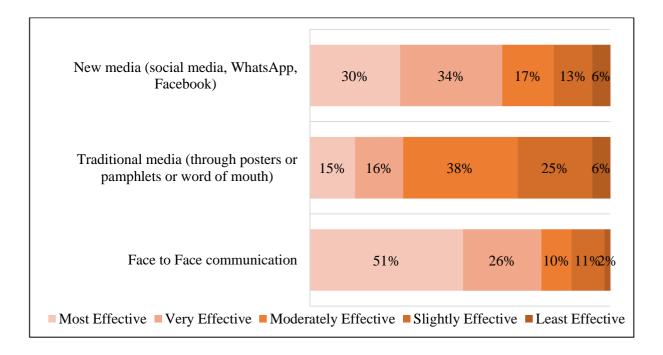
Figure 3.14 Please rate the effectiveness of the following communication strategies rate this from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least effective and 5 being the most effective.

In-person interaction Communication or face to fcae was rated as the most effective (51%), followed by new media like WhatsApp (34%). This indicated that while face-to-face communication remained dominant, new media was recognized for its effectiveness in certain contexts.

4.15 What type of media is commonly used in Chaupals? (SC)
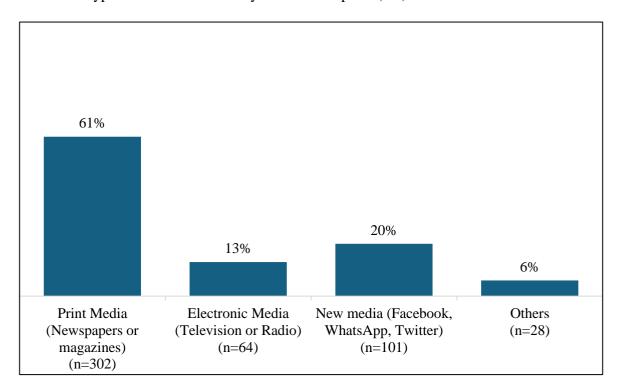
Figure 3.15 What type of media is commonly used in Chaupals?

Print media, such as newspapers or magazines, was the most commonly used (61%), followed by new media (20%). This suggested that traditional forms of media still played a crucial role in communication within Chaupals, though new media was also making inroads.

4.16 What folk communication mediums are generally used in Chaupals? (MC)
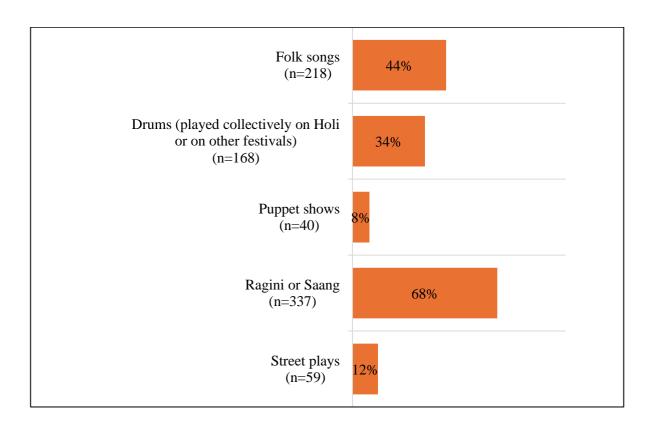
Figure 3.16 what folk communication mediums are generally used in Chaupals?

Interpretation: Ragini or Saang were the most common folk communication mediums (68%), followed by folk songs (44%). This indicated a rich tradition of folk communication in Chaupals, central to their cultural significance and appeal.

4.17 In Chaupals, how much of a role does folk communication play in message delivery?
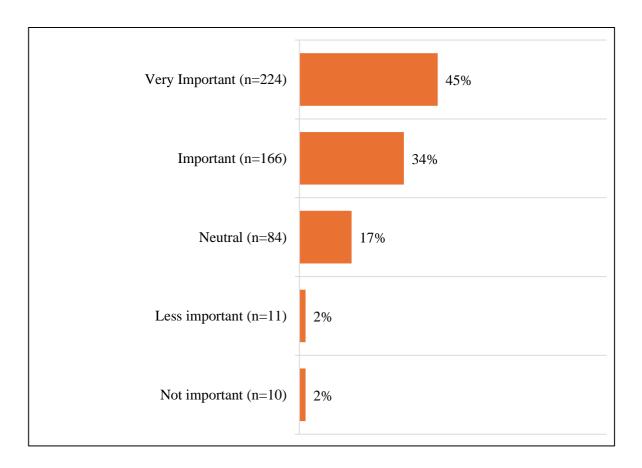
Figure 3.17 In Chaupals, how much of a role does folk communication play in messagedelivery?

Interpretation: Folk communication was considered very important (45%) and important (34%), reflecting its continued relevance and effectiveness in the Chaupal setting.

4.18 What are the primary challenges you encounter in Chaupals about folk communication? (MC)
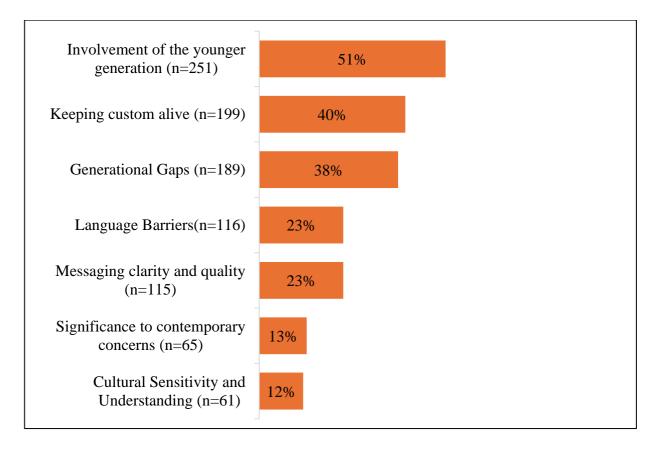
Figure 3.18 what are the primary challenges you encounter in Chaupals about folk communication?

The involvement of the younger generation (51%) and keeping customs alive (40%) were the main challenges. This contributed to a generational divide and concerns about the preservation of traditional practices.

4.19 How important is oral communication in Chaupals as compared to written or electronic communication?
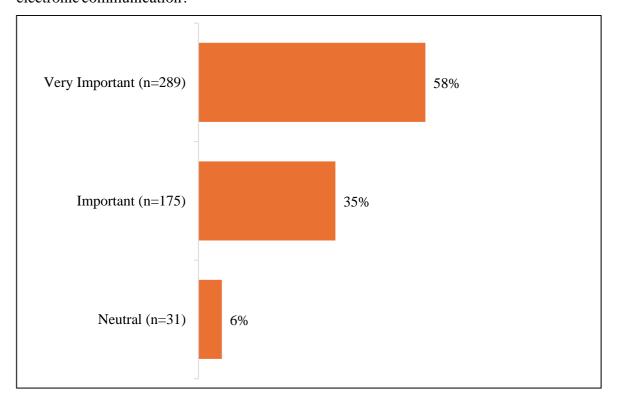
Figure 3.19 How important is oral communication in Chaupals as compared to written orelectronic communication?

Oral communication was deemed very important by the majority (58%), highlighting its critical role in the effective functioning of Chaupals.

4.20 Which purposes does oral communication fulfill in Chaupals? (MC)
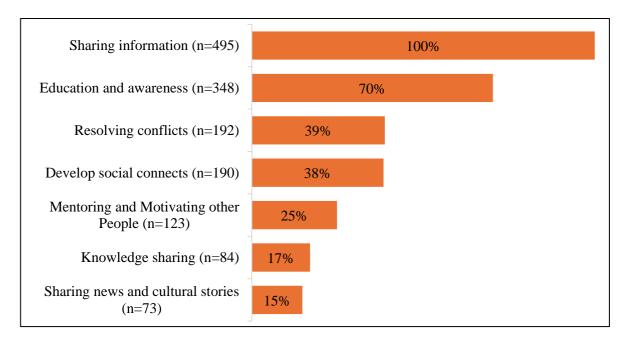
Figure 3.20 which purposes does oral communication fulfill in Chaupals?

Sharing information (100%): Every respondent (100%) indicated that they used communication primarily to share information. This suggested that the most basic and essential function of communication among these people was to pass on relevant or necessary details to others.

Education and awareness (70%): A significant majority (70%) also engaged in communication for the purpose of education and raising awareness. This could mean that people often share information to inform or educate others about important topics, whether for personal, social, or community benefit.

Resolving conflicts (39%): Nearly 40% of respondents communicated to resolve conflicts. This highlighted the role of communication in problem-solving and conflict resolution, where discussions help settle differences or misunderstandings.

Developing social connections (38%): Around 38% of the people used communication to build and maintain social connections. This indicated that one of the key functions of sharing information is to enhance relationships, whether personal or within a community.

Mentoring and motivating others (25%): About a quarter of the respondents (25%) focused on mentoring or motivating others, indicating the importance of communication for personal development and guidance, often to support or inspire others.

Knowledge sharing (17%): Only 17% shared knowledge specifically, which could be related to professional or academic settings where specialized information is exchanged.

Sharing news and cultural stories (15%): The lowest percentage, 15%, involved the sharing of news or cultural stories. This could indicate that, while people do engage in cultural exchange, it is not as common as other forms of information sharing like education or resolving conflicts.

4.21 Among the Chaupals, who are the main participants? (SC)
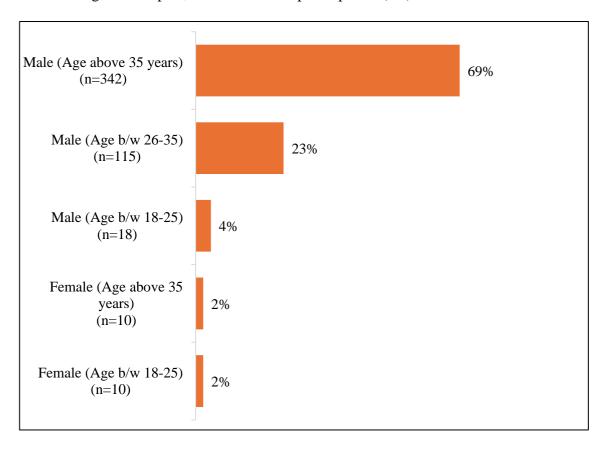
Figure 3.21 Among the Chaupals, who are the main participants?

The main participants were overwhelmingly male and older (69% of males aged above 35), with minimal participation from younger males and females. This suggested that Chaupals may be dominated by older men, potentially limiting the diversity of perspectives in discussions.

4.22 What is the level of female participation in Chaupal meetings?
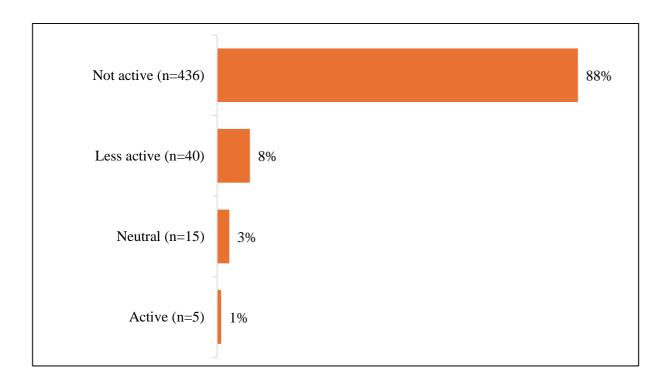
Figure 3.22 what is the level of female participation in Chaupal meetings?

Female participation was very low, with only 1% of the participants being active only. This reflected significant gender disparity and possibly cultural restrictions on women's involvement in public community forums.

4.23 What is the level of youth participation in Chaupal meetings?
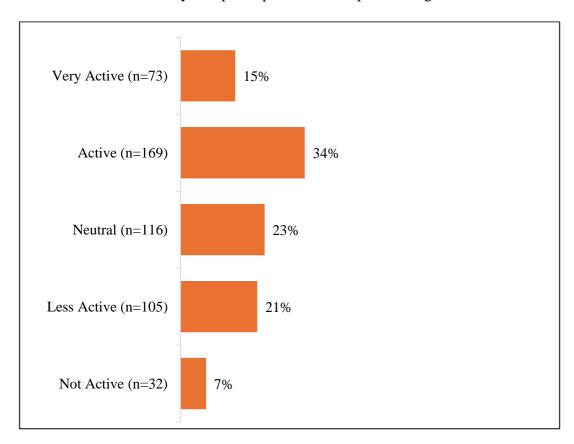
Figure 3.23 what is the level of youth participation in Chaupal meetings?

Youth participation in Chaupal meetings was moderately active, with **34%** being active and **15%** very active, meaning nearly half of the respondents were engaged. **23%** remain neutral, while **21%** were less active, indicating a sizable portion with limited involvement. This suggested that while many youths were involved, there was room for improvement in increasing engagement and active participation.

4.24 How does the young generation contribute to the functioning of the Chaupal?
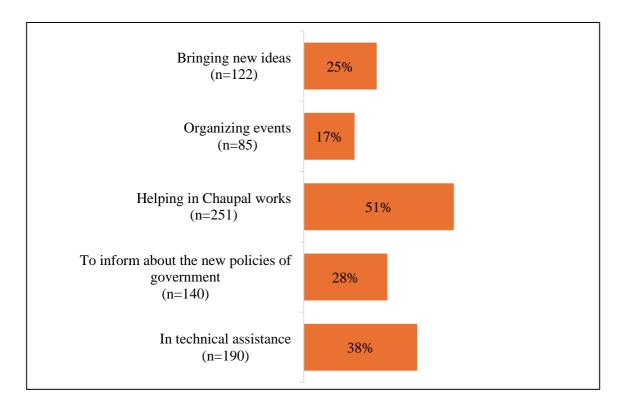
Figure 3.24 how does the young generation contribute to the functioning of the Chaupal?

Helping in Chaupal works (51%): The largest contribution came from direct involvement in the day-to-day functioning of the Chaupal, with over half of the youth participating in these efforts.

Technical assistance (38%): A significant portion of the youth offered technical support, highlighted their role in integrating technology into Chaupal activities or addressing technical needs.

Informing about new government policies (28%): Nearly a third contribute by sharing information on government policies, helping to bridge the gap between authorities and the community.

Bringing new ideas (25%): A quarter of the youth contributed by suggesting new ideas, reflecting their innovation and involvement in improving Chaupal practices.

Organizing events (17%): A smaller group were involved in event organization, showing that some youth take on leadership roles in managing community gatherings and activities.

4.25 In what ways are rural communication systems (like word-of-mouth and local messengers) more dependable and effective than mediated and new media?
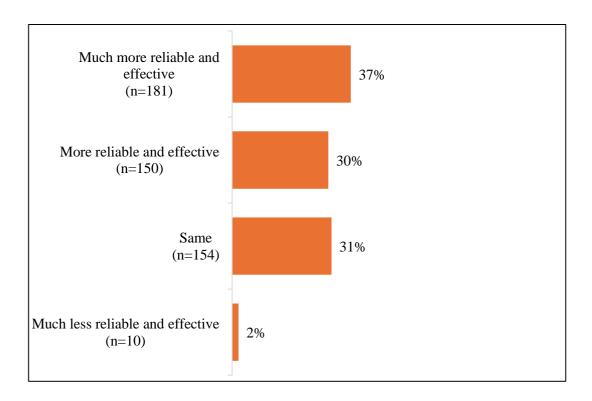
Figure 3.25 In what ways are rural communication systems (like word-of-mouth and local messengers) more dependable and effective than mediated and new media?

The respondents largely found rural communication systems to be more reliable and effective (37% said much more reliable and effective), suggesting a strong trust in traditional methods of communication over newer, mediated forms.

4.26 To what extent do Chaupals contribute to the dissemination of knowledge about the following topics?
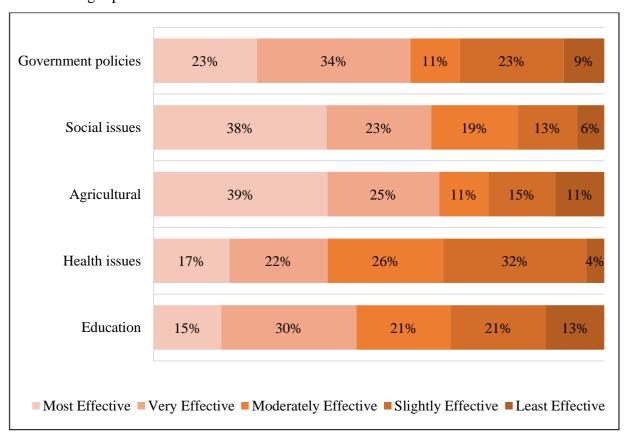
Figure 3.26 To what extent do Chaupals contribute to the dissemination of knowledge about the following topics?

Agriculture: Chaupals were highly effective in spreading knowledge about agricultural practices, with the majority of respondents rated it as either "most effective" (39%) or "very effective" (25%).

Social Issues: Social issues also received significant attention in Chaupals, with a combined 61% of respondents finding them either "most effective" or "very effective."

Government Policies: The dissemination of knowledge about government policies was rated "very effective" by 34% of respondents, indicating that Chaupals were a trusted source for information on this topic.

Education: While not as highly rated as agriculture or social issues, education still saw a good level of effectiveness, with a substantial portion of respondents considering it either "very effective" (30%) or "moderately effective" (21%).

Health Issues: Health issues had a mixed rating, with 32% finding it "slightly effective," which may indicate room for improvement in how health-related information is communicated.

4.27 In the current time, generally what are the challenges faced by Chaupal? (MC)
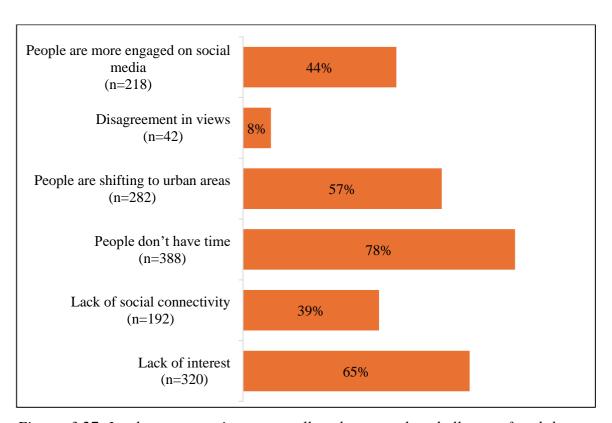
Figure 3.27 In the current time, generally what are the challenges faced by Chaupal?

People don't have time (78%): The most significant challenge was that the majority of people feel they lack the time to engage in Chaupal activities, likely due to busy work schedules or other commitments.

Lack of interest (65%): A large portion of respondents also reported a **lack of interest**, suggesting a declining motivation to participate in traditional communal practices.

People shifting to urban areas (57%): Urban migration was another major challenge, as more people are moving to cities, leading to reduced rural participation in Chaupal gatherings.

People more engaged on social media (44%): The increasing engagement with social media platforms was diverting attention from traditional community meetings like Chaupal.

Lack of social connectivity (39%): Social disconnection was also a problem, with some respondents feeling that there is not enough cohesion or connectivity within their communities to sustain regular Chaupal meetings.

Disagreement in views (8%): Although a minor issue, some respondents mentioned disagreements in views as a challenge, which could lead to tensions and reduce participation.

4.28 In your community, how do Chaupals affect the development of the community?
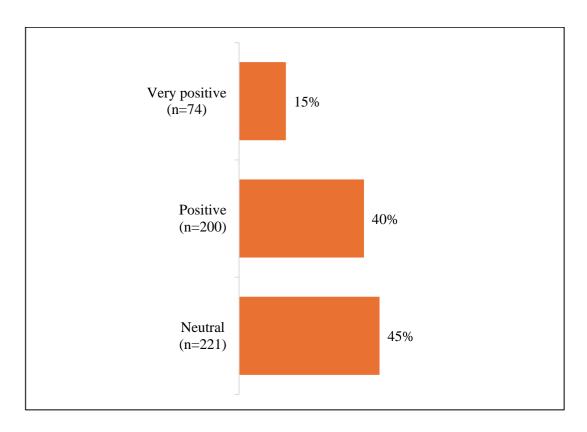
Figure 3.28 In your community, how do Chaupals affect the development of the community?

Chaupals were perceived as having a positive impact on community development, particularly in fostering education, social connections, and conflict resolution. This highlighted the central role of Chaupals in promoting social cohesion and progress.

4.29 To what extent do you find the Chaupal's decision-making process and general talks satisfactory?
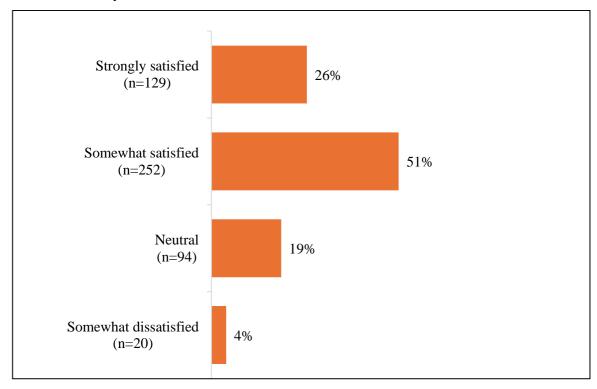
Figure 3.29 To what extent do you find the Chaupal's decision-making process and general talks satisfactory?

A majority of respondents were somewhat satisfied (51%) or strongly satisfied (26%) with the Chaupal's processes, indicating overall contentment with how discussions and decisions are handled in these forums.

4.30 What is the building, maintenance, and management status of your Chaupal at this time?
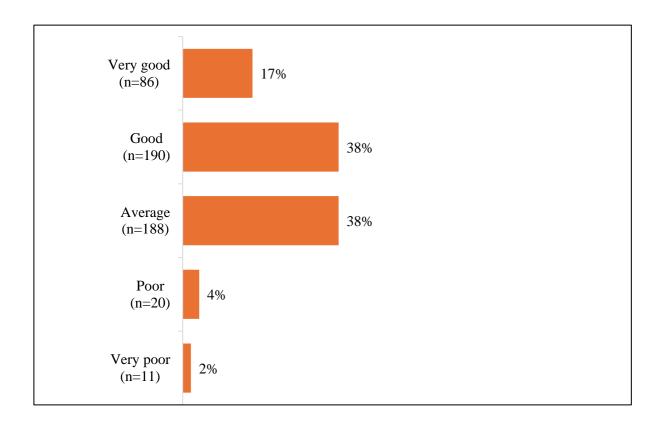
Figure 3.30 What is the building, maintenance, and management status of your Chaupal at this time?

The maintenance and management of Chaupals were generally rated as average to good (38% each), with a minority rating them as very poor (2%) or poor (4%). This suggested that while there was room for improvement, the physical upkeep of Chaupals was generally adequate.

4.31 Evaluate Chaupal on the following points?
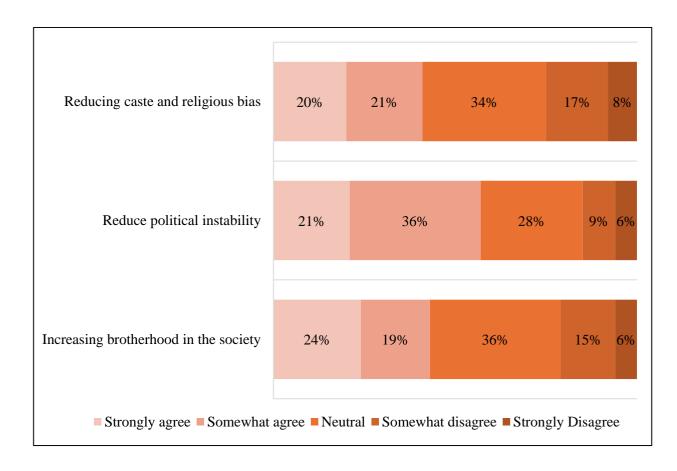
Figure 3.31 Evaluate Chaupal on the following points?

Reducing caste and religious bias:

- **41%** (20% strongly agree, 21% somewhat agree) believed Chaupal was effective in reducing caste and religious bias.
- **34%** were neutral, showing mixed opinions on this aspect.
- **25%** (17% somewhat disagree, 8% strongly disagree) believed Chaupal was not effective in addressing this issue.

Reducing political instability:

- **57%** (21% strongly agree, 36% somewhat agree) thought that Chaupal helped reduce political instability, showing broad confidence in its potential to mediate conflicts.
- **28%** remained neutral, suggesting they were unsure about its role in addressing political issues.

- **15%** (9% somewhat disagree, 6% strongly disagree) believed that Chaupal had not significantly contribute to reducing political instability.

Increasing brotherhood in society:

- **43%** (24% strongly agree, 19% somewhat agree) believed Chaupal played a role in increasing brotherhood and social harmony.
- **36%** were neutral, suggesting mixed or unclear opinions.
- **21%** (15% somewhat disagree, 6% strongly disagree) disagreed with the notion that Chaupal significantly fosters brotherhood.

4.32 Does the Chaupal receive any kind of help from the government?
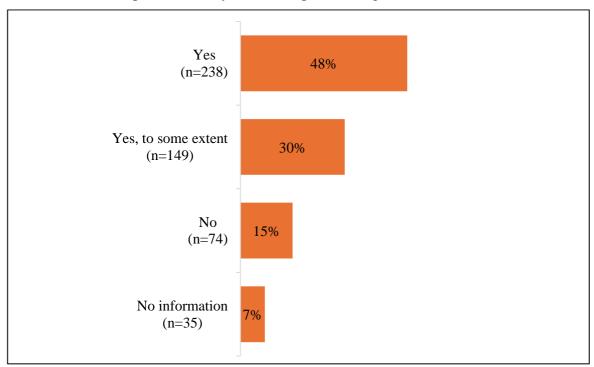
Figure 3.32 Does the Chaupal receive any kind of help from the government?

The data showed that **48%** of respondents believe the **Chaupal** received government support, while **30%** thought it would be partial or limited help. A smaller group, **15%**, felt there was no government assistance, and **7%** had no information on the matter.

4.33 Which of the following Chaupal-related terms are you familiar with?
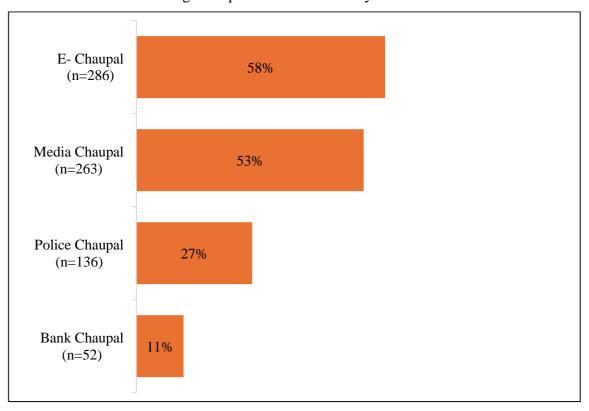
Figure 3.33 Which of the following Chaupal-related terms are you familiar with?

The respondents showed a higher familiarity with terms related to modernized Chaupals, such as E-Chaupal (57%) and Media Chaupal (53%), compared to more traditional or specific types like Police Chaupal (27%) and Bank Chaupal (11%). This suggested a growing awareness and integration of modern communication and technological concepts within the traditional Chaupal framework, potentially signaling a shift towards more structured and diversified roles for Chaupals in the community.

On Different Cuts Analysis like Gender, Age, Occupation, Education and Social Status

4.34 Which forms of communication are generally used in Chaupals? (SC)
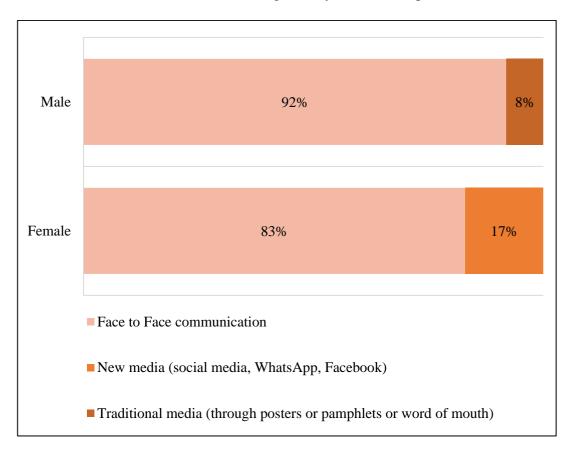
Figure 3.34 Which forms of communication are generally used in Chaupals?

Communication: Historically, 92% of males and 83% of females predominantly relied on face-to-face communication during Chaupals. This form of direct, personal interaction was the most common means of exchanging information, reflecting the traditional nature of these community gatherings where in-person dialogue was prioritized for decision-making and social interaction.

New Media (social media, WhatsApp, Facebook): In the past, a smaller portion of the population, with 8% of males and 17% of females, began using new media platforms such as social media, WhatsApp, and Facebook to communicate about Chaupals. This gradual shift, particularly among females, indicated the early stages

of digital adoption in rural community settings, as individuals started leveraging modern technology to connect beyond face-to-face interactions.

4.35 What type of media is commonly used in Chaupals?

Age Group	Face to Face communication	New media	Traditional media
18-25 Years Old	90%		10%
26-35 Years Old	94%		6%
36-45 Years Old	84%	12%	4%
46-55 Years Old	85%	9%	7%
56-65 Years Old	100%		
66-75 Years Old	89%		11%
More than 76 yrs	100%		

■ Face to Face communication

■ New media (social media, WhatsApp, Facebook)

■ Traditional media (through posters or pamphlets or word of mouth)
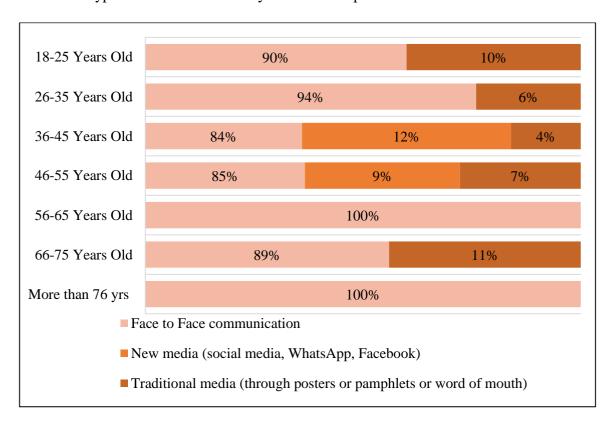
Figure 3.35 age and type of communication

Age Group: Younger individuals (18-25 years) use 90% face-to-face communication, and 10% Traditional Media. Older age groups (56+) almost exclusively rely on face-to-face communication, showing minimal usage of new media. This shows that in rural areas for Chaupal people uses face to face communication mostly.

4.36 Occupation and forms of communication
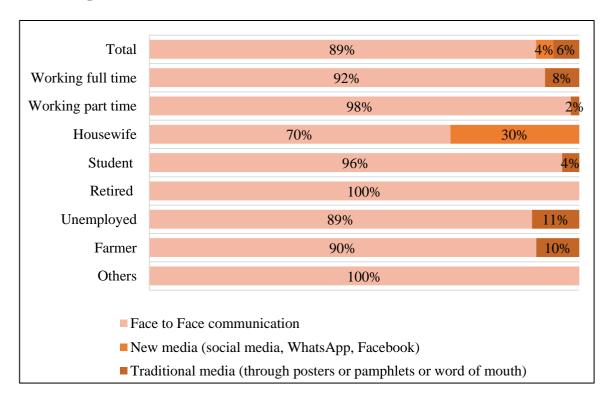
Figure 3.36 Occupation and forms of communication

Occupation: Full-time workers rely heavily on face-to-face communication (92%). Housewives have a slightly lower reliance on face-to-face communication, reflecting their use of new media, though it's still marginal.

4.37 What type of media is commonly used in Chaupals?
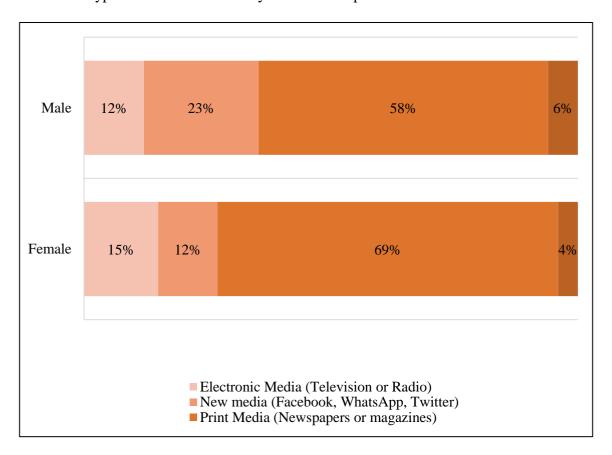
Figure 3.37 what type of media is commonly used in Chaupals?

Gender: Females tend to rely more on print media like newspapers and magazines (69%), while males were more engaged with new media platforms (23%) such as WhatsApp and Facebook, indicating a slight gender divide in media preferences.

4.39 age and communication

Age group	Electronic Media	New media	Print Media	
18-25 years	26%	38%	36%	
26-35 years	8%	25%	67%	
36-45 years	7%	35%	59%	
46-55 years	19%	7%	60%	15%
56-65 years			100%	
66-75 years	16%	11%	50%	24%
76 or more	14%		57%	29%

- Electronic Media (Television or Radio)
- New media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter)
- Print Media (Newspapers or magazines)
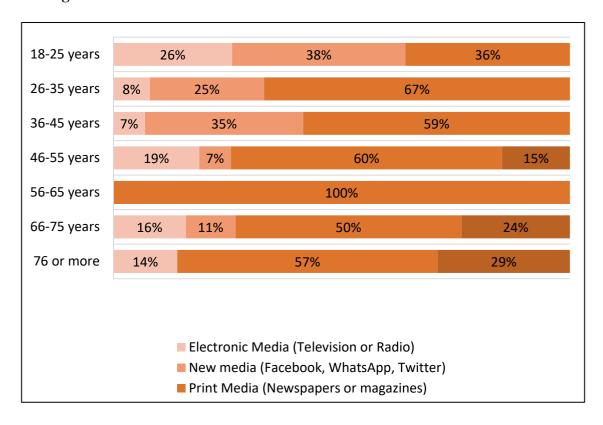
Figure 3.39 age and communication

Age: Younger individuals (18-25) showed a preference for new media (38%), while older participants continued to rely on print and traditional media, such as newspapers and magazines.

4.40 Education and preference of communication medium
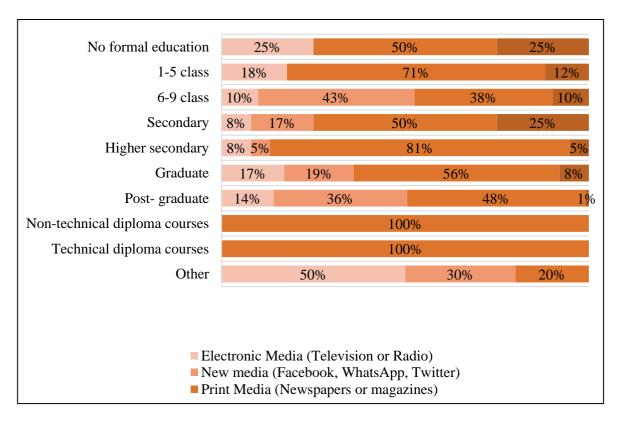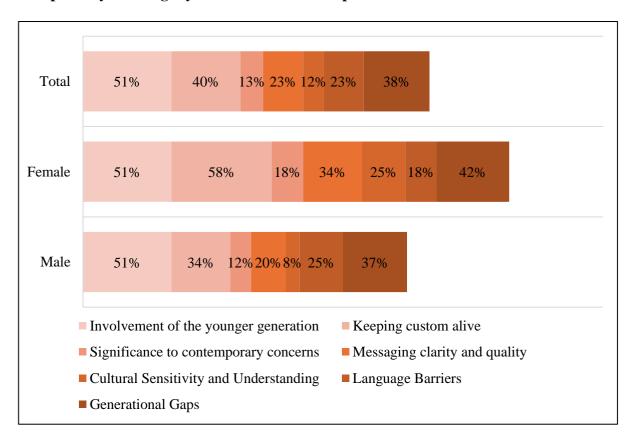
Figure 3.40 Education and preference of communication medium

Education: Higher-educated individuals, particularly graduates, were more likely to use print media.

4.35 What are the primary challenges you encounter in Chaupals about folk communication? (Gender)
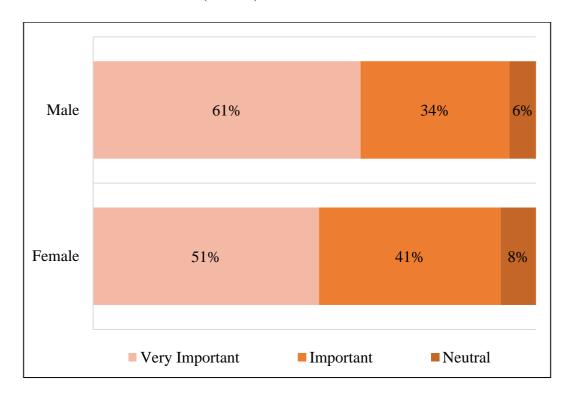
4.41 primary challenges you encounter in Chaupals about folk communication?

3.41 primary challenges you encounter in Chaupals about folk communication? (Gender)

Females tend to face challenges related to "keeping custom alive" and "involvement of younger generation", while males report difficulties with "involvement of younger generation" and "message clarity". This suggests that women may be more concerned about the custom and cultural norms, while men focus on younger generation involvement.
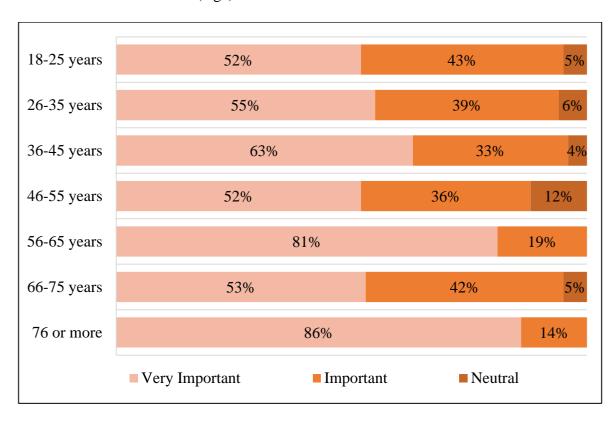
4.42 How important is oral communication in Chaupals as compared to written or electronic communication? (Gender)

3.42 How important is oral communication in Chaupals as compared to written or electronic communication? (Gender)

Males (61%) value oral communication more than females (51%), reflecting a stronger male attachment to traditional oral communication methods. However, females are also inclined toward electronic or written communication as modern options become available.
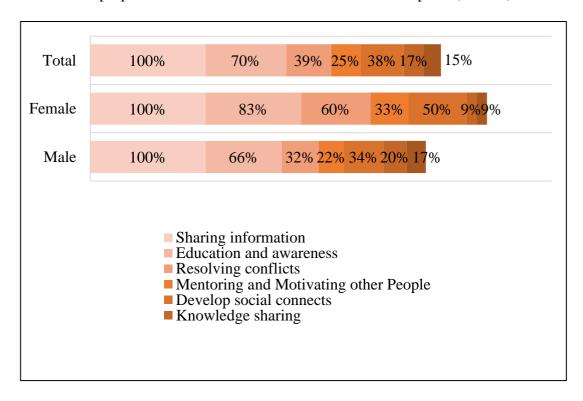
4.43 How important is oral communication in Chaupals as compared to written or electronic communication? (Age)

Age	Very Important	Important	Neutral
18-25 years	52%	43%	5%
26-35 years	55%	39%	6%
36-45 years	63%	33%	4%
46-55 years	52%	36%	12%
56-65 years	81%	19%	
66-75 years	53%	42%	5%
76 or more	86%	14%	

3.43 How important is oral communication in Chaupals as compared to written or electronic communication? (Age)

Older individuals (56+) place higher importance on oral communication (81%-86%), while younger participants (18-25 years) still consider it important but are more open to written and electronic communication as alternatives.

4.44 Which purposes does oral communication fulfill in Chaupals? (Gender)

Total
- 100%
- 70%
- 39%
- 25%
- 38%
- 17%
- 15%

Female
- 100%
- 83%
- 60%
- 33%
- 50%
- 9%
- 9%

Male
- 100%
- 66%
- 32%
- 22%
- 34%
- 20%
- 17%

Legend:
- Sharing information
- Education and awareness
- Resolving conflicts
- Mentoring and Motivating other People
- Develop social connects
- Knowledge sharing

3.44 Which purposes does oral communication fulfill in Chaupals? (Gender)

Both genders use oral communication for sharing information, but females focus more on education and awareness (83%) and conflict resolution (60%), while males emphasize on sharing news and cultural stories (17%) as compared to females. This suggests different priorities in how each gender engages with oral communication.

4.45 What is the level of female participation in Chaupal meetings? (Age)
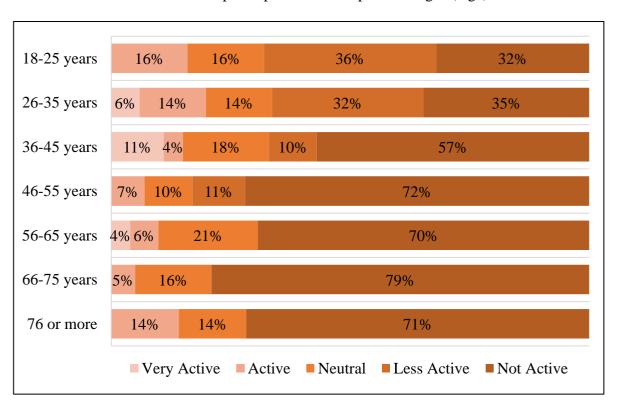
Figure No 3.45 What is the level of female participation in Chaupal meetings? (Age)

Younger women (18-35) are more active participants, while older women tend to be less involved due to traditional expectations that limit their roles in public discussions.

4.46 What is the level of youth participation in Chaupal meetings? (Age)
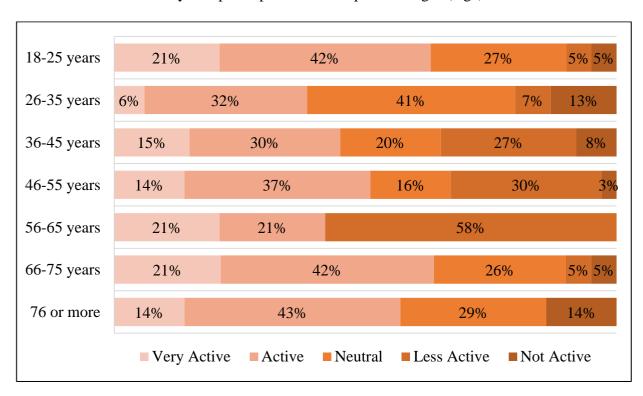
Figure No. 3.46 What is the level of youth participation in Chaupal meetings? (Age)

Younger individuals (18-25) are more active participants in Chaupals (42%), with a noticeable decline in participation as people enter middle age (26-45), likely due to other life responsibilities.

4.47 How does the young generation contribute to the functioning of the Chaupal? (Age)
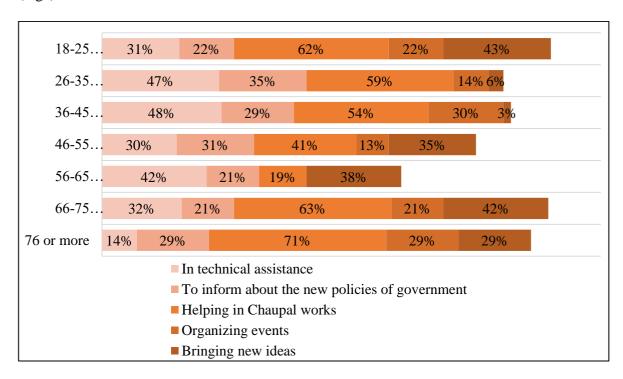
Figure No. 3.47 How does the young generation contribute to the functioning of the Chaupal? (Age)

Younger individuals (18-25) are more likely to contribute to helping chaupal works (62%), bringing new ideas (43%) and providing technical assistance (31%), while older youth (26-35) are also more involved in providing technical assistance, to inform about the new government policies and helping in social media usage.

4.48 How does the young generation contribute to the functioning of the Chaupal? (Occupation)
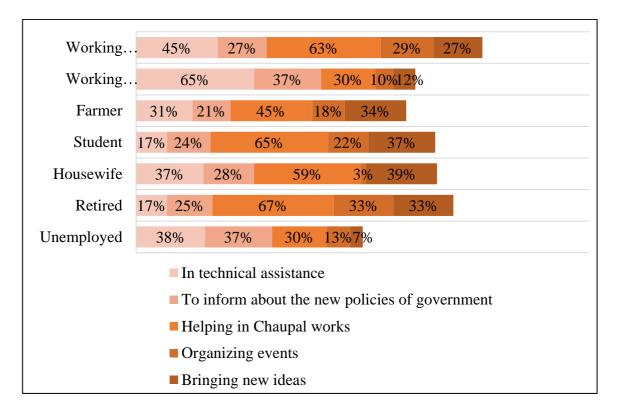
Figure No. 3.48 How does the young generation contribute to the functioning of the Chaupal? (Occupation)

People who are working full time help mainly with Chaupal work and technical assistance.

4.2 Chaupal and Communication

Freedom of speech forms the cornerstone of democracy (Youvan, D. C., 2023). Through communication, individuals express themselves, comprehend ideas, or convey their perspectives effectively. When communication becomes one-sided, it poses a challenge to democracy or even becomes a tool to undermine it. Conversely, two-way communication serves as a mechanism to safeguard democratic values (Yadav, P., 2024). The public sphere is where individuals can freely express their opinions without restrictions. A vibrant public sphere is essential for impartial dialogue to thrive.

There are numerous means of communication available on the Chaupal.

Modes of Communication at the Village Chaupal

4.2.1. Communication Tools Used at the Chaupal

4.2.1.1 Interpersonal Communication

At the chaupal, people engage in face-to-face conversations, discussions, and consultations. These exchanges often involve listening to different opinions on various topics, which may lead to changes in the listeners' perspectives. Discussions at the Chaupal do not always need to be about serious issues. Humour and light-hearted banter are also a significant part of Chaupal gatherings. This informal exchange often helps lighten the mood and foster a sense of community. Some individuals in the village are renowned for their humour and wit, and their jokes are usually taken in good spirit without offending.

4.2.1.2 Radio as a Traditional Communication Medium

Before the advent of modern technologies like mobile phones, television, and the internet, the chaupal served as a hub where villagers gathered to listen to the radio. The news broadcast on the radio became the focal point of discussions, where

people analysed and interpreted the information in their ways. These discussions often revolved around current events, making the radio a central element of the chaupal culture in earlier times.

4.2.1.3 Mobile Content

With changing times, mobile phones have become a popular communication medium at the chaupal. Villagers now share and discuss information obtained from mobile devices. The convenience of accessing content tailored to their needs and preferences has made mobile phones a dominant tool for communication. Furthermore, the availability of regional language content on mobile platforms has further increased its accessibility and relevance in rural areas.

4.2.1.4 Newspapers and Discussions

Newspapers continue to play a significant role at the chaupal. Villagers frequently read and discuss news items from newspapers. Young people often focus on national, international, and sports news, while older community members pay more attention to regional and local news. These discussions are informative and contribute to knowledge-sharing and community engagement.

4.2.2 The Social Dimension of Communication at the Chaupal (Bulawa)

4.2.2.2.1 Informal Gatherings

Daily life requires no formal invitation for people to gather at the chaupal. Villagers assemble independently, influenced by the village's work culture and communal spirit. Many people visit the chaupal to stay informed about local affairs and engage in social interactions.

4.2.2.2.2 Formal Meetings

In cases where formal meetings are required, such as for dispute resolution or government-related discussions, invitations are extended in various ways. If the meeting pertains to a conflict, representatives from both sides invite their

acquaintances. For government programs or schemes, a few key individuals in the village are informed, who then disseminate the information further.

4.2.2.2.3 Communication via Phones

In recent times, the use of phones has become prevalent for notifying people about chaupal meetings or events. This method is quicker and ensures that the message reaches a broader audience.

4.3. Jajmani System of Communication

4.3.1 Invitations

The traditional *Jajmani* system plays a significant role in village communication. For events like weddings, funerals, or other ceremonies, specific individuals, such as barbers (*nai*), are responsible for disseminating information about dates, times, and the number of guests to be invited. In North India, barbers and priests play crucial roles during weddings and post-death rituals. Similarly, in *chaupal* meetings, inviting people often falls on a family or individual designated by tradition. In many villages, each family has a specific household responsible for inviting them to events. Traditionally, these individuals received grains, money, or other compensation for their efforts. However, with the advent of technology, such traditional practices have declined, and the role of the *Jajmani* system in communication has diminished.

4.3.2 The Jajmani System: Backbone of Rural Indian Economy and Social Order

The Hindu Jajmani System is considered the backbone of the Indian rural economy and serves as a structured method of social hierarchy. It facilitated the division of labour among people. Historically, the system was deeply intertwined with the caste structure, establishing an extensive interdependent network where higher castes relied on the services of lower castes. These services were provided by occupational groups such as carpenters, potters, blacksmiths, washermen, and

sweepers. The service-providing castes were referred to as Praja, while those who received these services were called Jajmans (patrons). In exchange for their services, the service providers were compensated in cash and through various non-monetary payments, including grains, fodder, clothing, and animal products such as milk and butter. In different regions, the system was known by various names—for instance, it was called the Jajmani System in Uttar Pradesh and Balutdar in Maharashtra. Landowners or individuals with agricultural holdings were typically at the centre of this system. Across India, service providers under the Jajmani System were also called Parjan, Pardhan, or Balutedar in various localities. Participation in the Jajmani System was not universal, as it was predominantly caste-based. Occupations were assigned according to caste, creating a rigid structure of labour division within rural society.

4.3.3 Impact of Industrialization and Urbanization

With the advent of industrialisation and globalisation, significant changes have been observed in the Jajmani System. Many individuals who were traditionally provided services under this system migrated to urban areas for better opportunities. As a result, traditional ways of life and occupational roles have evolved. Modern necessities such as phones, mobile devices, and beverages like tea and coffee have become integral to daily life, transcending caste boundaries. The increasing inclination toward modern lifestyles has diminished the prevalence of the Jajmani System, especially in urbanised regions. However, certain occupations, such as barbers (Nai), washermen (Dhobi), and priests (Pandit or Purohit), continue to function within this framework to some extent. Moreover, demographic changes, such as the rapid reduction in land holdings due to population growth, have weakened the economic foundation of the system. Large landowners, who traditionally supported the system, are no longer as prevalent. Consequently, the Jajmani System has been significantly reduced, although traces of it remain in some rural areas (Mishra, H.,2024). The Jajmani communication system is still utilised to gather people at the *Chaupal* in the Delhi and NCR regions.

4.4 Women and Chaupal

Gender discrimination continues to pose a significant challenge across societies. It remains a universally acknowledged reality that discussions around gender inequality persist in all cultures. Regardless of ideology, region, or era, society has often restricted women's rights. Their participation beyond the domestic sphere has remained limited, their authority in leadership roles has been curtailed, and society has narrowly defined their roles. While public discourse frequently portrays women as equal to men—suggesting they walk shoulder to shoulder—the ground reality reveals otherwise. In practice, women continue to lack equal rights, especially in the political domain. Establishing a truly democratic society requires ensuring equal rights for women, particularly in political participation and representation. A core tenet of democracy involves providing women the same opportunities as men, particularly in decision-making roles. When we analyse political participation through a gendered lens, we observe that women's involvement remains considerably lower. Multiple factors contribute to this disparity. Both political representatives and the general public often express doubts about women's ability to engage in politics or lead the nation—an attitude that reflects deeply entrenched patriarchal values. This perspective arises from a male-dominated sociopolitical structure where men have historically wielded authority. As women remain confined largely to domestic roles, society tends to undervalue their viewpoints, perceiving them as lacking in public experience. This divide between the public sphere (associated with men) and the private sphere (assigned to women) reinforces gender inequality. Men, who primarily operate in the public sphere, tend to dominate women within the private domain, thereby sustaining unequal power dynamics. To ensure genuine democracy and gender equality, society must dismantle these barriers and enable women not only to secure representation but also to participate actively in political and decision-making processes. Breaking traditional gender roles is essential to achieving this transformation (Artaç, N. H et al., 2023). The Chaupal serves as a traditional public sphere in rural India—a space where community members gather to discuss everyday matters and critical issues. Historically, men have dominated this space, while women have faced exclusion.

Women could express their concerns only indirectly, often relying on male relatives to voice their opinions. As a deeply rooted institution, the Chaupal operates through tradition rather than formal elections. Leadership roles typically pass down hereditarily. However, in some villages, these hereditary structures have faded due to the extinction of family lineages or the migration of families to urban settings, such as apartment complexes. The introduction of women's reservations in panchayats has led to significant shifts. Women now occupy formal roles as members, leaders, and sarpanches (village heads). In urban governance as well, many women serve as municipal councillors, particularly in cities like Delhi. Despite these advancements, male relatives—fathers, brothers, or sons—often represent and make decisions on behalf of these women in public and political engagements. Courts have raised concerns over this proxy representation, noting that it hinders genuine female political participation and empowerment.

4.4.1 Women's Chaupals

Women's Chaupals have emerged in society, mainly due to efforts by the government and non-governmental organisations. However, these women-centric spaces have not attained the same social recognition or authority as the traditional Chaupals. Women's Chaupals primarily focus on skill-building activities such as sewing and weaving, which are designed exclusively for women. Unlike traditional Chaupals, these spaces seldom discuss critical social or political issues.

Chapter 5

Major findings, discussion, conclusion, implications and scope for further research

This chapter discusses the primary findings of the research, addressing the research questions and objectives in detail. It provides an in-depth discussion of the responses gathered, analysing them to derive meaningful insights related to the study's aims. The analysis section interprets the data comprehensively, critically assessing how these findings answer the core research inquiries. Additionally, this chapter outlines considerations for future research in this area, emphasising aspects that should be addressed in subsequent studies. The academic challenges encountered during this research are also documented, offering guidance for future researchers who may build upon this work. This reflective analysis aims to support and inform continued exploration within the field.

5.1 Quantitative Analysis:

5.2 Demographic Representation

- **Gender:** The data revealed that **75% of participants were male** and only **25% were female**, indicating a significant gender disparity. This suggested that Chaupals were male-dominated spaces, likely reflecting cultural norms where women's participation in public forums was restricted. This might have highlighted the need for efforts to increase female participation by addressing issues that were more relevant to women or by creating a more inclusive environment.

- **Age:** The highest representation came from the **46-55 age group (24%)**, followed by the **26-35 age group (22%)**, while younger and older age groups had less representation, with only **1%** of participants being over 76 years old. This showed that middle-aged individuals were more likely to attend Chaupals, possibly due to their greater involvement in community and

household responsibilities. **Youth participation (16% in the 18-25 age group)** was lower, which indicated that younger individuals did not find Chaupals to address their contemporary concerns.

- **Education:** A significant percentage of respondents were **graduates (26%) or post-graduates (31%)**, indicating that Chaupals attracted a well-educated audience. This reflected that those with higher educational qualifications valued civic participation or intellectual discussions more.

- **Occupation:** Chaupals served a diverse cross-section of the community, with **26% working full-time**, **18% unemployed**, and **16% being farmers**. However, the lower representation of **students (9%) and part-time workers (12%)** suggested that these groups faced barriers to attendance or contribution in Chaupals.

Inference: Chaupals were male-dominated spaces, with minimal female participation. The dominance of the 46-55 age group indicated that middle-aged individuals were more engaged in community decision-making, while younger people and the elderly had limited participation. The higher representation of graduates and postgraduates suggested that educated individuals were more inclined towards civic participation. The low representation of students and part-time workers indicated potential barriers related to time constraints or disinterest.

5.3 Communication preferences

Face-to-face communication: Across both genders, participants overwhelmingly preferred face-to-face communication within Chaupals. A majority—92% of males and 83% of females—relied primarily on direct verbal exchanges during discussions. This trend reflects the traditional nature of Chaupals, which have historically functioned as communal spaces for in-person gatherings, collective deliberation, and decision-making. Participants appeared to place strong trust in personal interactions, viewing them as more authentic and effective for fostering community relationships. In rural settings, people typically value the immediacy and emotional connection that face-to-face communication offers. This preference likely stems from the perceived reliability of physical presence, as

well as the ability to interpret non-verbal cues such as body language, tone of voice, and immediate feedback—all of which enhance mutual understanding during discussions in public forums like Chaupals.

Gender and media usage: While both male and female participants showed a strong preference for face-to-face communication, a gender-based variation emerged in the use of media platforms. Among female participants, 17% reported using new media platforms such as WhatsApp and social media, compared to only 8% of male participants. This variation indicates that women, often constrained by cultural and societal norms restricting physical presence in public gatherings, have increasingly turned to digital platforms to remain connected. For many women in conservative or rural contexts, physical participation in Chaupals remains limited or discouraged. In such situations, new media platforms offer a viable alternative by enabling them to engage with discussions, share opinions, and access information remotely. This growing reliance on digital media suggests that such platforms are becoming crucial tools for enhancing women's participation in community discourse.

Traditional Media Use: Despite the rising influence of digital platforms, 61% of participants continued to rely on traditional media sources such as newspapers and magazines. This trend was particularly prominent among women and older respondents, who often found comfort and familiarity in conventional media formats they had used for years. Traditional media continued to play a vital role in disseminating information on local events, government schemes, and social issues, especially in rural or semi-urban areas where access to digital technologies remained limited. Many older individuals preferred print media due to its perceived credibility and reliability, and often viewed digital sources with scepticism, citing concerns over misinformation and information overload. Thus, while new media is gaining ground, traditional media still serves as the primary source of information for a significant portion of the population.

Inference: Face-to-face communication emerged as the dominant mode of interaction within Chaupals, underscoring the continued reliance on traditional methods in rural communication. The growing use of digital platforms by women revealed a shift driven by the need to overcome socio-cultural restrictions on physical

155

mobility. Although new media usage is gradually increasing, traditional media continues to play a crucial role in informing and engaging rural populations—particularly women and older individuals—thereby maintaining its relevance alongside emerging digital alternatives.

5.4 Folk Communication Media in Chaupals

- **Ragini or Saang as a Dominant Folk Communication Medium:** Ragini or Saang, as the most widely used folk communication medium, maintained strong popularity across both genders, with a slightly higher preference among males (70%) compared to females (63%). This preference reflected the traditional role of men in public spaces, where they had more freedom to attend and engage with such performances. Ragini or Saang performances entertained and conveyed social and political messages, making them practical tools for raising awareness within the community. The consistent use of Ragini or Saang suggested that these traditional methods were still deeply valued, serving as a means of cultural preservation and communication.

- **Folk Songs and Drumming as Cultural Expressions:** Folk songs, chosen by 44% of respondents, were particularly significant during festivals and communal gatherings. They were more popular among men (48%) than women (34%), likely because cultural norms restricted women's public performances. Despite this, women still engaged with folk songs in more private or gender-specific spaces. Drumming, used during festivals like Holi, had a notable presence, with 34% of participants highlighting its importance. Interestingly, women played more active drumming during festivals, showing their contribution to cultural expressions tied to celebration, despite societal restrictions on other public performances.

- **Decline of Street Plays and Puppet Shows:** Street plays (12%) and puppet shows (8%) saw a noticeable decline in usage, indicating that these forms of folk communication were becoming less relevant within the community. The reduced significance of these traditional art forms might have been due to the

growing availability of modern entertainment options and a shift in cultural dynamics, particularly among younger generations who are more inclined towards digital media.

Inference: Ragini or Saang remained the dominant folk communication medium, reflecting the community's attachment to traditional forms of cultural expression. While men were more active in folk songs and public performances, women participated significantly in drumming during festivals, highlighting their role in cultural celebrations despite social restrictions. The decline in street plays and puppet shows indicates that modern entertainment is replacing some traditional art forms. Overall, the continued relevance of Ragini or Saang shows the community's effort to preserve its heritage, even as cultural dynamics evolve.

5.5 Challenges Facing Chaupals

- **Lack of Time (78%) and Lack of Interest (65%) as Primary Challenges:** The findings reveal that time constraints and disinterest were the most significant barriers to participation in Chaupals. These challenges were reflective of broader socio-economic changes that have been impacting rural and semi-rural communities. As more people, particularly younger individuals, became involved in time-consuming work commitments, education, and other personal responsibilities, their ability to engage in traditional forums like Chaupals diminished. The increasing pace of life, particularly with the rise of modern employment opportunities and academic pressures, left little time for community gatherings that were once central to village life. This shift could also be attributed to a growing disconnect from rural life's slower, more communal rhythm, as urbanisation introduced faster and more individualistic lifestyles.

- **Impact of Urban Migration (56%):** Urban migration was another significant factor contributing to the reduced engagement in Chaupals. As younger generations left rural areas for better education or job opportunities in cities, their absence weakened the traditional community structure that Chaupals depended upon. Migration created a gap in physical presence and

transmitting cultural values and practices historically passed down through such gatherings. The departure of young people meant fewer voices contributing to discussions and decisions in Chaupals, further eroding their role as a vibrant platform for community interaction. Over time, this trend might lead to a diminished sense of belonging and attachment to traditional spaces, with long-term consequences for the community's cultural fabric.

- **Influence of Social Media (44%):** The rise of social media was another notable factor that posed challenges to Chaupals, particularly for younger generations, with the proliferation of platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram, younger individuals increasingly gravitated towards these faster, more dynamic modes of communication. Social media provided real-time interactions and broader networks, which seemed more relevant and appealing to the younger demographic. The instant accessibility and global reach of these platforms allowed people to connect beyond their immediate community, diminishing the perceived relevance of traditional, slower-paced forums like Chaupals. Additionally, the entertainment and convenience provided by social media made it a more attractive option for engagement, as opposed to the more formal and structured nature of Chaupal gatherings.

- **Social Disconnect (39%) and Generational Gaps (38%):** The findings also highlighted a growing social disconnect and widening generational gaps within the community. Younger people, driven by different priorities and interests, seemed less inclined to engage with older generations in Chaupals. This generational divide could be linked to the evolving nature of social concerns, where older community members remained focused on traditional issues. At the same time, younger generations were more interested in modern, global matters that may not be addressed in traditional Chaupals. This lack of shared priorities and concerns likely contributed to fewer intergenerational interactions, weakening the role of Chaupals as a space for communal bonding and decision-making. As the younger population increasingly distanced itself from traditional forums, it became evident that the cultural role of Chaupals was gradually diminishing, particularly in fostering strong community relationships.

Inference: The significant challenges facing Chaupals, such as lack of time, interest, urban migration, and the rise of social media, reflect significant socio-economic and cultural shifts in rural communities. The younger generation's increasing preference for digital platforms and their detachment from traditional forums has weakened the role of Chaupals in community life. Additionally, social disconnect and generational gaps further point to the declining relevance of these spaces in fostering intergenerational engagement and cultural continuity. Chaupals may continue to see declining participation and influence without significant adaptation to these modern realities.

5.6 Role of Youth and Gender in Chaupals

- **Youth Participation:** Youth involvement in Chaupals, though present, remained somewhat moderate. 34% of youth were considered active participants, with only 15% being very active, while a sizable portion, 23%, maintained a neutral stance, and 21% were less active in their engagement. This shows that although there was some participation, there was room for improvement in the overall involvement of the younger generation. Notably, the youth made meaningful contributions through their technical expertise, with 38% assisting in this area and introducing fresh, innovative ideas (25%). Their familiarity with modern tools and platforms enabled them to bring a contemporary edge to the discussions and activities within Chaupals. Despite this, the fact that nearly half the youth were either neutral or less active suggested that more efforts could be made to create spaces or topics that resonate better with their interests, encouraging deeper participation.
- The moderate participation of youth might reflect their divided attention between traditional forums and modern digital platforms, where many younger individuals find it easier to connect and express their views. Chaupals could integrate more modern communication methods to increase engagement or address issues more relevant to youth, such as employment opportunities, education, or technological advancements.

- **Female Participation:** Female participation in Chaupals was markedly low, with only 1% of women being classified as actively engaged. This lack of involvement can be attributed mainly to deep-rooted cultural norms that often restrict women's presence and voice in public decision-making spaces. The limited participation of women in Chaupals also underscores the traditional gender roles that persist in many rural and semi-rural communities, where women are expected to focus more on domestic responsibilities rather than engage in broader community affairs. When women did participate, their contributions were typically focused on family-related or social issues, reflecting the gendered division of roles within the community. This restriction meant women's voices were often absent in economic, political, or infrastructural discussions, further reinforcing their marginalisation in public spaces.

- Addressing the barriers to female participation would require a cultural shift and the creation of more inclusive spaces where women feel encouraged to contribute to a broader range of topics. Introducing women-focused discussions or holding separate Chaupals for women could be a step toward increasing their involvement.

Inference: While youth showed promise by contributing technical assistance and fresh ideas, their overall participation in Chaupals was only moderate. This suggests that efforts to make Chaupals more relevant to younger generations could increase their engagement. On the other hand, women's participation remained critically low, with cultural barriers preventing them from taking an active role in public decision-making forums. The issues they addressed mainly were related to family and social matters, highlighting a clear gender divide in the types of discussions in Chaupals. To foster a more inclusive environment, addressing these cultural constraints and encouraging more widespread participation from youth and women will be essential for the future relevance and success of Chaupals as community forums.

5.7 Effectiveness of Chaupals in the Community

- **Dissemination of Information:** Chaupals have played a significant role in disseminating essential information within rural communities, particularly in the domain of agriculture. Around 39% of respondents acknowledged the value of Chaupals in spreading agricultural knowledge. Farmers actively engaged in discussions on farming practices, crop management, and related subjects, which enabled them to make more informed decisions regarding their livelihoods. Respondents also recognised the contribution of Chaupals in addressing social concerns. About 61% of participants affirmed that these forums facilitated collective deliberation on issues such as education, family matters, and local governance, thereby reinforcing the central role of Chaupals in rural life. However, discussions related to health appeared less prevalent. Only 32% of respondents believed that Chaupals effectively addressed health-related topics. This points to a potential area for development, especially considering the critical need for health awareness in rural areas with limited access to medical infrastructure. By broadening the thematic scope of Chaupals to include more frequent conversations on healthcare, covering aspects such as disease prevention, maternal health, and sanitation, and nutrition, communities could benefit from improved awareness and proactive health practices.

- **Promoting Brotherhood and Reducing Bias:** A majority of respondents (57%) felt that Chaupals contributed to reducing political instability in the community by providing a space for open discussions and collective decision-making. However, the role of Chaupals in addressing caste and religious biases remained less clear. Only 41% of respondents believed that these gatherings helped reduce such divisions, indicating that entrenched social hierarchies and prejudices still persist. While the forums may have initiated conversations around caste and religion, they appeared less successful in effecting attitudinal or behavioural change. Additionally, 43% of respondents stated that Chaupals promoted brotherhood, although a

significant portion of participants remained neutral. This suggests that perceptions of social cohesion through Chaupals remain mixed. While the gatherings encouraged dialogue and interaction, their ability to overcome deep-rooted social divisions may have been constrained by traditional power structures and social norms that resist transformation despite open conversations.

Inference: Chaupals have proven to be highly effective in disseminating agricultural and social information, both of which are central to rural life. However, their limited focus on health-related discussions highlights a gap that requires attention. While Chaupals contributed positively to reducing political instability, their impact on caste and religious bias remains ambiguous, and their influence on fostering brotherhood appears partial. Although these platforms offer valuable spaces for dialogue and community engagement, addressing deeper social inequalities will require sustained efforts beyond dialogue, including targeted initiatives and inclusive participation.

5.7 Government Support for Chaupals

- **Government Support for Chaupals:** According to the data, 48% of respondents believed that Chaupals received support from the government, while 30% felt that the assistance provided was only partial. This observation indicates that the government did engage with the Chaupals, but its involvement was neither consistent nor uniformly acknowledged across all of them. A smaller group, 15%, perceived no government involvement at all, further emphasising the inconsistency in how support was distributed or perceived. This variance could reflect differences in regional policies, the specific needs of various villages, or the effectiveness of local governance in connecting Chaupals with available resources.
- The presence of government aid, where it was recognised, likely contributed to the ability of Chaupals to address specific community issues, such as social matters or agriculture. However, the fact that a notable portion of the population felt the support was either insufficient or non-existent points to a

larger issue of uneven access to resources, which may limit the potential of Chaupals to serve their communities effectively.

- **Community Demand for Broader Initiatives:** Beyond the current level of support, respondents expressed clear expectations for expanded government involvement in specific areas. Over half (51%) indicated a desire for health workshops, recognising the need for greater access to healthcare information and services. This demand highlights a significant gap in health-related discussions within Chaupals and suggests that the community views these forums as a potential platform for delivering essential health education. With proper support, Chaupals could play a key role in promoting public health, particularly in rural areas where access to healthcare is often limited.

- Additionally, 47% of respondents expressed interest in receiving financial support for village-based startups, indicating a desire for Chaupals to facilitate economic development. By providing financial assistance or guidance for entrepreneurship, Chaupals could become more than just discussion platforms; they could help foster economic growth within villages, offering local solutions to employment challenges and economic sustainability. This points to an evolving role for Chaupals, where they could become hubs for both social and economic development with appropriate government backing.

Inference: Although nearly half of the respondents acknowledged some form of government support for Chaupals, a significant portion's perception of partial or inconsistent assistance highlights a need for more structured and reliable government involvement. The community's demand for health workshops and financial backing for village startups reflects their expectation that Chaupals should evolve into platforms for broader development initiatives. The perception of insufficient support underscores the potential for Chaupals to play a more central role in addressing critical issues like health and economic development, provided that government authorities implement more sustained and comprehensive strategies to engage with and support these traditional forums.

5.8.1 Qualitative Analysis

5.8.2 Evolution of Chaupals in NCR

• Chaupals have undergone significant transformation, particularly in urbanising areas like the NCR. Historically, they were central to village life, serving as spaces where people gathered to discuss matters of common interest, settle disputes, and participate in cultural activities. However, modernisation, technological advancement, and urban migration have gradually eroded their significance.

• Interviewees from older generations consistently noted the diminishing role of Chaupals, attributing this decline to factors such as reduced face-to-face interaction, the rise of social media, and lifestyle changes. Respondents from Ghaziabad, for example, remarked that the advent of mobile technology has led to a loss of community bonding, as people no longer feel the need to gather physically. Instead, communication happens over mobile phones or through digital platforms like WhatsApp.

• The interviews also revealed a shift in the physical structure of Chaupals. Many villages have built modernised Chaupals with improved infrastructure, yet their usage is often limited. In some cases, Chaupals have become symbolic, representing a connection to traditional village life, though their functional relevance has diminished.

Key Findings:
- The role of Chaupals shifted from functional to symbolic in many areas.
- Urbanisation and technology were key factors in the declining importance of Chaupals.
- Modernised Chaupals exist but were underutilised due to lifestyle changes and technological alternatives.

5.8.3 Impact of Modern Technology on Chaupal Participation

• One of the most striking findings from the interviews was the pervasive impact of modern technology, particularly mobile phones and social media, on Chaupal

participation. Younger respondents, in particular, expressed little interest in attending Chaupals, noting that digital platforms provide a more convenient and efficient way to communicate.

• The traditional function of Chaupals as a gathering space for information sharing has been largely replaced by mobile phones and social media platforms like WhatsApp. Youth respondents mentioned that social media allows them to stay connected with a broader network, not just their immediate village community. They also pointed out that social media has given them access to global information and trends, reducing their reliance on Chaupals for local updates.

• However, some respondents felt nostalgia for the community fostered at Chaupals. Older generations, in particular, lamented the loss of "real" human connections that were once fostered at these gatherings. They argued that while digital communication may be more efficient, it lacks the' depth and emotional connection of face-to-face interactions.

Key Findings:

• Younger generations are disengaged from Chaupals due to their attachment to mobile technology.

- Social media created new digital spaces for communication, further reducing the need for Chaupals.
- Older generations valued the emotional and social depth of face-to-face interactions at Chaupals.

5.8.4 Role of Chaupals in Decision-Making and Dispute Resolution

• Historically, Chaupals functioned as informal courts where disputes and community decisions were resolved. This function, while diminished, still holds relevance in some villages. Older respondents, particularly those from more rural areas, stated that decisions made at Chaupals were still respected within the community. However, many acknowledged that these decisions are now often contested or taken to formal legal systems if the parties involved are dissatisfied.

• In areas closer to urban centres, the importance of Chaupals as decision-making bodies has declined significantly. Respondents from villages in Greater

Noida and Ghaziabad noted that while Chaupals are still used for some minor disputes, major conflicts are now resolved through the legal system or at the Panchayat level. Despite this shift, there remains a deep respect for the institution of the Chaupal, particularly among older generations, who view it as an essential part of the village's social fabric.

Key Findings:

•   Chaupals still functioned as informal courts in rural areas but were increasingly sidelined by formal legal systems.

•   Older generations respected Chaupal decisions, while younger generations often challenged them.

•   The role of Chaupals in decision-making diminished in urbanising areas like Greater Noida and Ghaziabad.

5.8.5 Decline in Youth Participation in Chaupals

•   Across all interviews, a consistent theme was the decline in youth participation in Chaupals. Younger generations expressed a lack of interest in traditional gatherings, with many stating that they prefer to spend their free time on mobile phones or engaging with social media. This disengagement from Chaupals was attributed to various factors, including urbanisation, changing lifestyles, and the rise of digital communication.

•   Several respondents noted that young people no longer see the relevance of Chaupals in their lives. In many villages, respondents said that the younger generation views Chaupals as outdated and irrelevant. However, some interviewees suggested that modernising Chaupals by incorporating amenities like gyms or using the space for youth-centric events could help re-engage younger generations.

Key Findings:

•   Youth participation in Chaupals significantly declined, with younger generations viewing them as outdated.

•   Modern technology and changing lifestyles were key reasons for this decline.

- Efforts to modernise Chaupals could help increase youth engagement.

5.8.6 Gender and Caste Dynamics in Chaupals

- The issue of gender exclusion in Chaupals was a recurring theme in the interviews. Traditionally, Chaupals have been male-dominated spaces where women were either excluded or allowed only limited participation. The data reveals that this exclusion persists in many villages, although there have been some efforts to create Mahila Chaupals (women's Chaupals) where women can gather and voice their opinions.
- Several female respondents noted that even in these modern Mahila Chaupals, their voices are often mediated through men, such as fathers, husbands, or brothers. Although these spaces provide a platform for women, they do not hold the same social power as traditional Chaupals, which men dominate.
- Caste also plays a role in Chaupal participation, although this dynamic changes. Historically, Chaupals were often divided along caste lines, with separate spaces for different caste groups. While this division has lessened recently, caste still influences participation in some areas, particularly in more conservative villages.

Key Findings:

- Women were still largely excluded from traditional Chaupals, although Mahila Chaupals emerged in some areas.
- Even in Mahila Chaupals, male relatives often mediated women's voices.
- Caste dynamics in Chaupals were slowly changing, but caste-based divisions persist in some areas.

5.8.7 Chaupals as Cultural Preservation Hubs

- Chaupals have historically been important spaces for preserving and transmitting local culture, particularly in rural areas. Respondents from villages like Arangpur and Tughlakabad noted that Chaupals have long been used as venues for folk music, traditional arts, and cultural festivals like Holi and Diwali. Elders often

use Chaupals to pass down oral histories, stories, and local traditions to younger generations.

• However, as modern entertainment and digital media become more prevalent, the role of Chaupals in cultural preservation is declining. Many respondents mentioned that younger generations are more interested in Bollywood movies, social media, and global pop culture than local traditions. Despite this, some villages still use Chaupals to host cultural events, although the frequency and influence of these gatherings have decreased.

Key Findings:

• Chaupals traditionally played a significant role in preserving local culture, particularly through festivals and oral traditions.

• Younger generations were less interested in these traditions, leading to a decline in the cultural role of Chaupals.

• Some villages continued to use Chaupals for cultural events, but their influence is waning.

5.8.9 Informal Justice System and the Legitimacy of Chaupal Decisions

• The data suggested that Chaupals continue to function as informal justice systems in some areas, particularly in more rural or conservative villages. Respondents from villages like Salempur and Aya Nagar noted that community-level disputes, such as land conflicts or issues related to marriage, are often resolved at Chaupals, with elders or community leaders serving as mediators.

• Younger generations are more likely to challenge these decisions through formal legal systems, but many respondents emphasised the respect that Chaupal decisions still command. In some cases, even the formal legal system recognises the legitimacy of Chaupal decisions, although this is becoming less common as villages modernise.

Key Findings:

•   Chaupals still functioned as informal justice systems in some rural areas.

•   Younger generations were more likely to challenge Chaupal decisions through formal legal channels.

•   Chaupal decisions were still respected in some communities, but their influence waned as legal systems modernised.

5.8.10 Communication Methods and Information Sharing at Chaupals

•   In the past, traditional methods such as the Jajmani system, public announcements, and drumming were used to inform villagers about upcoming Chaupal meetings. Today, these methods have largely been replaced by mobile phones and social media platforms like WhatsApp.

•   Several respondents noted that while traditional methods are still used in some villages, particularly for large or formal gatherings, digital communication is now preferred for most people. This shift has made physical gatherings less frequent, as people now rely on mobile phones to communicate important information.

Key Findings:

•   Traditional communication methods like the Jajmani system and public announcements have mainly been replaced by mobile phones and social media.

•   Physical gatherings at Chaupals have become less frequent due to the rise of digital communication.

•   In some villages, traditional methods were still used for large or formal gatherings.

5.8.11 Preservation Efforts and Future of Chaupals

•   Despite the decline in traditional roles, many respondents emphasised preserving Chaupals as symbols of rural unity and culture. In some areas, efforts have been made to modernise Chaupals by improving infrastructure or linking them with government schemes. For example, some respondents mentioned that the government provides financial support for Chaupal maintenance, highlighting their symbolic importance even as their functional relevance declines.

•   Several interviewees suggested that Chaupals could be more relevant by incorporating youth-centric activities, such as sports events or cultural programs. Others emphasised the need for Chaupals to adapt to modern realities by integrating them into the digital economy or using them for political and administrative discussions.

Key Findings:

•   There were ongoing efforts to preserve Chaupals as symbols of rural unity, including government support for maintenance.

•   Chaupals could be revitalised by incorporating youth-centric activities and adapting to modern realities.

•   While the functional relevance of Chaupals was declining, their symbolic importance remains strong.

5.9 Discussion

        Analysis of the data reveals that the Chaupal remains highly relevant even today. People gain significant knowledge from Chaupals, which serve as gathering spots for community discussions. In certain villages, the Chaupal has been an integral part of traditional social arrangements for generations, and in areas such as Delhi and the National Capital Region, it continues to function actively. However, in many villages, Chaupals have fallen into disrepair, and social pressures have led some community members, particularly the younger generation, to distance themselves from these structures. Qualitative data indicates that older individuals are

more inclined to participate in Chaupal gatherings, while younger individuals exhibit a mixed response. In some areas, youth are interested in attending Chaupals; in others, they have grown disinterested. Many young people who have reduced or ceased participation in Chaupals tend to spend more time on mobile devices and watching television.

The existence of Chaupals in a developed city like Delhi and its surrounding areas, which are equipped with modern amenities, raises curiosity. In these regions, Chaupals also serve as a public sphere where individuals can present their perspectives. The Chaupal functions as a public sphere, akin to Jürgen Habermas's concept, where individuals can freely express their opinions. Discussions at Chaupals are conducted according to the subject matter of each gathering. This analysis highlights how Chaupals remain an important cultural and communicative element in certain regions, even as other parts of society have evolved and adapted to modern technology and social structures.

The research further reveals that traditional Chaupals in villages are predominantly male-dominated, with women not being directly permitted to participate in these gatherings. Instead, women often share their views through male members of their families or communities. It was also found that the government has taken steps to establish separate Women's Chaupals. Topics at these Women's Chaupals often centre on livelihood activities such as papad-making or discussions on forming and managing Women's Self-Help Groups. However, Women's Chaupals do not hold the same prominence as traditional Chaupals. The government is making efforts to promote equality in this regard.

Despite the development of communication channels and rapid technological advancements, the world is often referred to as a "global village." Communication tools have impacted nearly every field. However, even today, oral communication remains the primary mode of interaction at Chaupals. From initiation to conclusion, Chaupal proceedings are conducted verbally. Decisions made at the Chaupal are not documented in written form. Only in justice-related cases do both parties sometimes retain a written record of the decision. There is no formal record or attendance register for decisions and rules established at the Chaupal. Folk arts performances at Chaupals also rely heavily on oral communication. This emphasises how traditional

forms of verbal interaction still hold strong cultural relevance at Chaupals, even in an era of advanced communication technologies.

Messages are conveyed to society through folk communication at the Chaupal, where discussions often revolve around folk songs that address social issues and critique societal flaws. Among the spaces supporting folk culture, the Chaupal plays a significant role in preserving local traditions. Through the Chaupal, regional dialects such as Bangru and Kauravi in Delhi and the NCR area have been preserved and supported. This underscores the Chaupal's role as a vital cultural space for safeguarding folk heritage and regional dialects amidst broader social changes. The study also reveals that in many villages, Chaupals have been active for more than ten years, while in some, the Chaupal is a newer establishment or has been revived by the younger generation. This highlights how Chaupals—whether longstanding or recently reintroduced—continue to serve as significant gathering spaces within different communities. At the Chaupal, print media is regarded as the most trustworthy source of information. In rural areas, newspapers are considered highly reliable, and a single newspaper is often read multiple times. Regional news is given particular importance in these discussions. This illustrates the continued reliance on print media in Chaupals, especially for staying informed on local and regional issues. The study also reveals that although fewer people may be directly familiar with traditional Chaupals, the terminology of "Chaupal" is now widely used in various contexts, such as E-Chaupal, Media Chaupal, Police Chaupal, Cyber Chaupal, Bank Chaupal, and Rahat Chaupal. This reflects the expansion of the Chaupal concept into diverse modern domains, symbolising community gathering and dialogue in new, specialised formats.

Another key finding of this study is that Chaupals are not limited to casual communication or serious discussions; they also serve as a medium for passing knowledge from one generation to the next through stories and proverbs. Younger individuals learn from elders how to become effective speakers. Many folk traditions lack a formal written structure; instead, they are passed on orally and memorised. Over time, new elements are often added, preserving and evolving these traditions through each generation. This highlights the Chaupal's role as a dynamic, oral repository of cultural knowledge and communication skills.

Another key finding of this study is that the Chaupal functions as an essential element of democracy. It serves as a public sphere where people express their views and shape public opinion. Since the Chaupal is part of an old tradition, some customs that were once relevant may now be outdated. Positions within the Chaupal are often hereditary, though skilled speakers are sometimes given a voice as well. To strengthen trust in democratic practices, even informal or formal elections could be considered for positions within the Chaupal. This approach could help maintain the Chaupal's relevance in the future.

Another key finding of this study is that in some villages, although women have won elections for positions such as Gram Pradhan or Ward Councillor, the male members of their households often handle decision-making meetings and interactions with community members. Many media reports and courts have expressed concern over the role of "Sarpanch Pati" (husbands acting on behalf of elected female leaders). The government should take stricter measures to address this issue. Despite reservations for women in leadership roles, some women are still deprived of true leadership opportunities even after being elected. This finding underscores the need for structural reforms to ensure genuine female participation and leadership in community governance.

5.10 Conclusion

The study provided critical insights into the evolving role and challenges of Chaupals in rural communication systems. It highlighted both the enduring significance of traditional practices and the growing influence of modernisation, particularly in communication, participation, and cultural preservation. The conclusions drawn from the study can be categorised as follows:

Role of Various Communication Methods in Chaupals (Traditional, Mediated, and New Media Communication)

Traditional Communication as the Backbone: Historically, Chaupals relied on **face-to-face** and **oral communication**, the preferred interaction methods in rural settings. The personal nature of these interactions facilitated trust-building, real-

time feedback, and a sense of community, all crucial to the functioning of Chaupals. These traditional forms of communication were central in fostering collective decision-making and maintaining social cohesion.

Emergence of New Media and Mediated Communication: The study revealed a gradual shift towards **new media platforms**, particularly **WhatsApp**, especially among women and younger generations. This shift reflects an adaptation to changing societal dynamics, where those unable to attend Chaupals physically, whether due to gender constraints or time limitations, found an alternative space in digital platforms. **Mediated communication** through traditional print media remained significant, particularly for older generations who trusted it for its long-standing role in rural life.

While traditional communication continues to be the backbone of Chaupals, the integration of new media signals a shift towards more inclusive and flexible modes of communication. This dual approach—combining face-to-face interaction with digital platforms—helps bridge the gap between tradition and modernisation.

Role and Issues of Folk Communication in Chaupals

Folk Communication as a Cultural Preserver: Folk communication**, particularly through** Ragini **and** Saang performances**, remained a vita**l cultural practice in Chaupals. These performances served as vehicles for disseminating social, political, and cultural messages, contributing to preserving local traditions. They also played an important role in community entertainment, reinforcing the Chaupal's cultural significance.

Decline in Certain Folk Media: Despite the continued relevance of some folk traditions, there was a noticeable decline in the use of **street plays** and **puppet shows**. This decline is primarily attributed to the availability of modern entertainment and the reduced interest of younger generations in traditional forms of communication. As rural communities increasingly embrace digital platforms, the

role of folk communication is being challenged, leading to a diminishing presence of these art forms in daily life.

Folk communication remains a key cultural preserver within Chaupals, but its influence is threatened by modern entertainment and changing generational preferences. Efforts to rejuvenate traditional folk media could help ensure its continued relevance in rural communities.

Impact of Oral Communication in Chaupals

Oral Communication as the Core Mechanism: Oral Communication has historically been the most significant method for conducting discussions, resolving disputes, and making decisions within Chaupals. Its immediacy and personal nature contributed to a strong sense of community, with verbal exchanges forming the foundation of interpersonal relationships. This method allowed for direct engagement and communal participation in decision-making processes.

Challenges of Oral Communication: While oral communication effectively built trust and fostered engagement, it faced several limitations**.** Lack of written records often led to disputes, as decisions were retained verbally, making it difficult to ensure accountability or maintain consistent interpretations. The rise of new media further complicated the role of oral communication, as younger generations increasingly favoured digital platforms that offered faster and more formalised interactions.

Oral communication remains central to the functioning of Chaupals, particularly for maintaining personal relationships and community cohesion. However, its limitations regarding record-keeping and adaptability to digital communication indicate the need for integrating modern methods to complement traditional practices.

Participation and Influence of Specific Demographics (Women and Youth)

Limited Female Participation in Traditional Chaupals: Women's direct participation in traditional Chaupals remained critically low, reflecting cultural norms restricting women's involvement in public decision-making. Women often voiced their concerns through male intermediaries, reinforcing their marginal role in traditional spaces. However, Mahila Chaupals offered women alternative forums to discuss issues relevant to them, such as health, family, and social concerns. Although Mahila Chaupals have empowered women to some extent, these platforms still lack the influence of traditional male-dominated Chaupals.

Moderate Youth Engagement: Youth participation in Chaupals was moderate, with younger individuals contributing technical expertise and innovative ideas. However, a significant portion of the younger generation viewed Chaupals as outdated, preferring digital platforms for engagement. This disconnect between traditional Chaupal discussions and contemporary concerns of the youth led to a decline in their overall involvement.

Gender and youth participation in Chaupals remained limited due to cultural restrictions and generational interest shifts. New platforms, such as Mahila Chaupals and digital communication tools, provided alternative spaces for engagement. However, efforts are needed to ensure these groups have a more prominent role in traditional Chaupal structures.

Functioning and Impact of Rural Communication Systems in Chaupals

Effective but Traditional Communication Systems: The **rural communication system** within Chaupals, rooted in oral and face-to-face methods, has historically been effective in maintaining community unity and facilitating governance. Community leaders and elders were pivotal in managing these communication processes, ensuring discussions and decisions reached all population segments. However, these systems faced challenges adapting to modern realities, especially with the increasing urban migration and the rise of **digital communication**.

Impact of Modernisation on Rural Communication Systems: As younger generations embraced digital tools, the traditional communication systems of Chaupals began to lose their central role in community life. The findings revealed that while Chaupals still functioned effectively for older generations, younger individuals found new media platforms more relevant and efficient. This generational divide, if unaddressed, could lead to a gradual erosion of the traditional rural communication systems that once held communities together.

The rural communication systems in Chaupals have functioned effectively for generations, but are now challenged by modernisation and the rise of digital platforms. To remain relevant, these systems must integrate modern communication tools while preserving their cultural and social significance.

The study concluded that while Chaupals continue to serve as vital spaces for rural communication, cultural preservation, and social cohesion, they face significant challenges in adapting to modern societal changes. **Traditional communication methods**, particularly oral and face-to-face exchanges, remain dominant but are increasingly complemented by **new media platforms** that cater to marginalised groups such as women and youth.

Folk communication, once central to the cultural fabric of Chaupals, still holds importance, though it is under threat from modern entertainment options and generational disinterest. Similarly, **oral communication** remains effective in fostering community engagement but suffers from limitations related to record-keeping and transparency.

Participation from **women** and **youth** remained restricted, though alternative spaces such as Mahila Chaupals and digital platforms offered new opportunities for engagement. However, these alternative spaces lacked the influence of traditional Chaupals, indicating the need for more inclusive and modernised Chaupal structures to encourage broader participation.

The **rural communication systems** within Chaupals, while effective in maintaining local governance and cultural transmission, are gradually losing relevance due to the rise of digital communication and urban migration. Chaupals must evolve by integrating **modern communication tools** while retaining their cultural essence to sustain their impact.

5.11 Practical Implications of the study

The quantitative data analysis indicates that Chaupal represents the public sphere as defined by Jürgen Habermas. The public realm is devoid of any form of coercion. A democracy is untenable without the rule of law. Traditional chaupals, including e-chaupals and media chaupals, occur in the Delhi NCR region. We must afford equal rights to men and women inside the chaupal to maintain its relevance and alignment with contemporary values. Chaupal serves as a venue for discourse and decision-making, facilitating the formation of public opinion. People of nearly all age demographics appreciate Chaupal. The qualitative data analysis reveals the existence of numerous initiatives titled Chaupal within the country, encompassing both online and offline platforms. ITC offers a variety of programs, such as e-Chaupal, that eliminate intermediaries' involvement. During the interview, Pati encountered people at the chaupal who often avoided answering the questions. The youth have decorated several chaupals and positioned them amidst contemporary apartments. This study reveals that Chaupal regards traditional communication methods as trustworthy. Women, too, have a role to fulfil.

5.12 Limitations of the study

5.12.1 Limited Applicability across Varied Rural Areas

This study focused on Chaupals in the Delhi-NCR area, which has experienced extensive urbanisation. Consequently, the findings may not represent the dynamics of other rural areas across India, which vary significantly in social and cultural structures, economic conditions, and modernisation. For instance, southern

or eastern India rural areas may utilise distinct public forums and face unique community issues.

The study's findings cannot be broadly generalised to all of India's rural landscapes by concentrating on one region. If data had been collected from multiple regions, this research could have captured the cultural and social diversity characterising Indian rural life. Future studies could extend their scope across multiple regions, possibly through a year-long ethnographic study, to gain a more comprehensive perspective.

5.12.2 Limited Female and Youth Representation

Despite efforts to explore women's and youth's participation, traditional Chaupals exhibited critically low female involvement and only moderate youth engagement. Thus, this study may not fully reflect these demographics' perspectives, as the limited data from Mahila Chaupals and youth engagement restricts deeper insights into their roles and experiences.

Due to lower female and youth participation, this study could not explore the perspectives and challenges these groups face in depth. A more targeted focus on these groups in future studies could enrich understanding of their experiences within the Chaupal setting.

5.12.3 Reliance on Oral Communication with Limited Documentation

The Chaupal's tradition of verbal exchanges without formal written records posed challenges for consistent data collection. Decisions and discussions were often retained in participants' memories, which may have led to inconsistencies, especially in capturing details about decision-making and transparency.

The reliance on memory and lack of written documentation may reduce the accuracy and reliability of some findings. Future studies could consider using audio or video recordings to capture discussions in real-time, improving data accuracy.

5.12.4 Limited Analysis of Digital Media Impact

While the study noted the emerging use of digital platforms, such as WhatsApp, in facilitating Chaupal engagement, it did not comprehensively explore how these technologies may be shifting traditional communication within rural settings. Social media usage could alter or fragment traditional Chaupal gatherings, impacting their cultural and social roles.

The partial focus on digital media leaves gaps in understanding how digital technologies may change the structure and significance of Chaupals. Future research could examine this trend more closely to understand digital platforms' broader implications on rural social forums.

5.12.5 Difficulty in Capturing Gradual Cultural Changes

Although the study observed a decrease in the use of folk media and shifts in the cultural role of Chaupals, tracking these gradual changes in real-time proved challenging. Long-term observation may be necessary to fully understand how these shifts affect community cohesion and Chaupal relevance.

The study's timeframe was too short to capture long-term cultural shifts comprehensively. Longer-term research could help monitor these changes, especially in areas where Chaupals are no longer as prevalent.

5.12.6 Limited Quantitative Data on Media Usage

The study incorporated qualitative and quantitative approaches, but more detailed data on media usage trends, such as social media frequency or time spent on

digital versus traditional media, would enhance understanding of how digital tools affect traditional Chaupal forums.

The limited quantitative data on media consumption trends restricts the study's ability to fully assess digital communication's impact on Chaupals. Future studies could use a detailed survey to gather more robust quantitative insights.

5.12.7 Lack of Data on Inactive or Closed Chaupals

This study did not examine Chaupals that have closed or are neglected, often due to changing social structures. Such cases could provide insight into the impact of losing these communal spaces and whether new forms of gathering or communication have taken their place.

Without data from closed Chaupals, this study cannot fully account for the consequences of their absence on rural social life. Consulting community elders in these areas could reveal important insights into the social effects of losing these traditional forums.

5.13 Scope for further research

Expand Research Across Diverse Rural Contexts: Future studies should explore **Chaupals and similar public forums** in various rural contexts across India, particularly in regions less affected by urbanisation, such as **southern, eastern, and northeastern India**. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how rural communication systems function across different cultural, linguistic, and economic landscapes. Conduct comparative studies across diverse regions of India to examine how Chaupals and other rural forums adapt to local conditions, offering a broader perspective on rural communication.

Increase Focus on Gender and Youth Participation: Future research should employ **in-depth qualitative methods** such as **focus group discussions** and **individual interviews** with these groups to gain a more comprehensive understanding of women's and youth participation. Understanding the **specific**

barriers women and youth face and exploring how Chaupals could be modified to enhance their participation will be crucial for more inclusive rural public forums.

Implement targeted studies focusing on women and youth participation in Chaupals, identifying tailored strategies to address their specific barriers and preferences.

Incorporate Digital and New Media More Effectively: Given the growing role of **digital platforms** in rural communication, Chaupals should actively integrate **new media** into their operations. For example, **e-Chaupals** can be developed, where discussions are hosted online, allowing both men and women, as well as younger demographics, to participate more easily. Additionally, digital platforms can enhance **transparency and documentation**, such as recording decisions and archiving Chaupal proceedings.
Integrate new media into the Chaupal system by developing e-Chaupals and using digital tools for decision-making, documentation, and broader participation.

Promote Inclusivity in Chaupals: To address the gender imbalance and limited youth engagement, Chaupals should consider creating gender-inclusive and youth-friendly spaces. This may include organising thematic sessions focused on issues relevant to women (e.g., health, education) and youth (e.g., employment, technology). Mahila Chaupals could be more formally integrated into the decision-making processes of traditional Chaupals, thereby ensuring representation of women's voices. Introduce inclusive sessions within Chaupals that focus on gender and youth-specific issues, and ensure that women's and youth participation is encouraged through policy and structural reforms.

Introduce formal record-keeping and transparency mechanisms: Chaupals could benefit from implementing basic documentation systems to address the challenge of informal oral communication. A formalised process for recording decisions, attendee participation, and meeting outcomes would enhance transparency and ensure that verbal agreements are documented, thereby reducing the risk of disputes or misinterpretations.

Establish simple record-keeping systems for Chaupals, ensuring that all important decisions are documented and accessible to community members for future reference.

Revitalise Folk Communication and Traditional Media: To preserve the cultural role of folk communication, efforts should be made to modernise traditional media and folk performances by integrating contemporary themes. For example, Ragini performances could incorporate modern social issues such as environmental awareness or education, making these communication forms more relevant to younger generations while preserving their cultural heritage. Revitalising folk media by embedding contemporary issues and themes into performances can ensure these cultural expressions remain meaningful to modern audiences while sustaining traditional values.

Enhance Rural Digital Literacy and Infrastructure: The rise of digital platforms presents an opportunity for Chaupals to reach broader audiences. However, many rural communities still lack access to reliable **digital infrastructure** and **digital literacy**. By investing in **rural digital education** and expanding access to **internet services**, Chaupals can leverage digital platforms to increase participation, particularly among youth and women facing mobility or time constraints.

Invest in rural digital infrastructure and literacy programs, ensuring that rural communities have the tools and knowledge to engage effectively with new media platforms alongside traditional Chaupals.

Long-Term Studies on Cultural Shifts in Communication: To better understand the evolving cultural role of Chaupals, long-term studies should be conducted to observe how cultural practices, such as folk media and traditional communication, change over time in response to modernisation. These studies would offer deeper insights into how cultural dynamics shift and whether modernisation results in the permanent decline of traditional forms or their adaptation to contemporary contexts.It is recommended to conduct long-term observational studies

to track cultural shifts in Chaupals and folk media. This approach would provide a clearer picture of how traditional communication methods are either evolving or being replaced.

Appendix 1

Questionnaire

Research Questionnaire

Section A: Demographic
Information

Q1. What is your name?

Q2. Gender (SC)

Gender	Code
Male	1
Female	2
Other	3

Q3. Please tell me your age.

Age Group

Age	Code
18 – 25 Years Old	1
26 – 35 Years Old	2
36 – 45 Years Old	3
46 – 55 Years Old	4
56 – 65 Years Old	5
66 – 75 Years Old	6

More than 76 Years Old	7

Q4. Please tell me your education level. (SC)

Education	Code
No formal education	1
1-5 class	2
6-9 class	3
Secondary	4
12th or Higher Secondary	5
Non-Technical Education	6
Technical education	7
Graduate	8
Post-graduate	9
Other	10
Refused	99

Q5. Please tell me your occupation. (SC)

Occupation	Code
Working full time	1
Part-time working	2
Housewife	3
Student	4
Retirement	5
Unemployed	6
Farmer	7
Others	8
Don't know	98
Refused/ Denied	99

Q6. Please tell me your religious background. (SC)

Religion	Code
Hindu	1
Muslim	2
Christian	3
Buddhism	4
Jainism	5
Sikhism	6
Parsi	7
Others	8
Don't know	98
Refused	99

Q7. What is your social category? (SC)

Caste	Code
SC	1
ST	2
OBC	3
General	4
Don't want to reveal	5
Don't know	98
Refused	99

Section B: General Information

Q8. Since when has the Chaupal been in your village? (SC)

Options	Code

Under One Year	1
A period of 1 to 3 years	2
3-5 year	3
5-10 Year	4
More than 10 years	5

Q9. Approximately how many people gather at the Chaupal? (SC)

Options	Code
Less than 5	1
5-10 people	2
10-20 people	3
More than 20 people	4

Q10. Generally what time are the meetings held at the Chaupal? (SC)

Options	Code
Morning	1
Afternoon	2
Evening	3
Night	4
Anytime	5

Q11. How often do you go to the Chaupal? (SC)

Options	Code
Every day/ Regularly	1
Twice a week	2
Once a week	3
Two times in a month	4
Once a Month	5

Over a Month	6
Don't go as I am a female	7
Don't go as I am a student	8

Q12. How frequently do you participate in Chaupal's communication? (SC)

Options	Code
Daily	1
Weekly	2
Monthly	3
Rarely	4
Never	5

Section C: Communication methods in Chaupals

Q13. How do you get the information such as the day, time, topic of the Chaupal meetings? (SC)

Options	Code
Through mobile phone (By text message or calls)	1
Through WhatsApp group message	2
By individual person	3
By any public medium, please specify	4

Q14. Which forms of communication are generally used in Chaupals? (SC)

Options	Code
Face to Face communication	1
Traditional media (through posters or pamphlets or word of mouth)	2

New media (social media, WhatsApp, Facebook)	3

Q15. How effective do you find the following communication methods on a scale of 1 to5, where 1 means least effective and 5 means most effective?

Options	Most Effective	Very effective	Moderately effective	Slightly effective	Least effective
Face to Face communication	5	4	3	2	1
Traditional media (through posters or pamphlets or word of mouth)	5	4	3	2	1
New media (social media, WhatsApp, Facebook)	5	4	3	2	1

Q16. What type of media is commonly used in Chaupals? (SC)

Options	Code
Print Media (Newspapers or magazines)	1
Electronic Media (Television or Radio)	2
New media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter)	3
Others	4

Section D: Role and Issues of Folk Communication

Q17. What folk communication mediums are generally used in Chaupals? (MC)

Options	Code
Street plays	1

Ragini	2
Puppet shows	3
Drums (played collectively on Holi or on other festivals)	4
Folk songs	5

Q18. In Chaupals, how much of a role does folk communication play in message delivery?

Options	Code
Very Important	5
Important	4
Neutral	3
Less important	2
Not important	1

Q19. What are the primary challenges you encounter in Chaupals about folk communication? (MC)

Options	Code
Involvement of the younger generation	1
Keeping custom alive	2
Significance to contemporary concerns	3
Messaging clarity and quality	4
Cultural Sensitivity and Understanding	5
Language Barriers	6
Generational Gaps	7

Section E: Oral Communication in Chaupals

Q20. How important is oral communication in Chaupals as compared to written or electronic communication?

Options	Code
Very Important	5
Important	4
Neutral	3
Less important	2
Not important	1

Q21. Which purposes does oral communication fulfill in Chaupals? (MC)

Options	Code
Sharing information	1
Education and awareness	2
Resolving conflicts	3
Mentoring and Motivating other People	4
Develop social connects	5
Knowledge sharing	6
Sharing news and cultural stories	7

Section F: Participation and Influence of specific demographics

Q22. Among the Chaupals, who are the main participants? (SC)

Options	Code
Male (Age b/w 18-25)	1
Male (Age b/w 26-35)	2
Male (Age above 35 years)	3
Female (Age b/w 18-25)	4
Female (Age b/w 26-35)	5
Female (Age above 35 years)	6

Q23. What is the level of female participation in Chaupal meetings?

Options	Code
Very active	5
Active	4
Neutral	3
Less active	2
Not active	1

Q24. At Chaupals, generally what topics do women discuss? (MC)

Options	Code
Social issues	1
Family matters	2
Household management	3
About their hobbies	4
Religious talks like bhajan or kirtan	5
About health	6

Q25. What is the level of youth participation in Chaupal meetings?

Options	Code
Very active	5
Active	4
Neutral	3
Less active	2
Not active	1

Q26. How do the young generation contribute to the functioning of the Chaupal? (MC)

Options	Code
In technical assistance	1
To inform about the new policies of government	2
Helping in social media usage	3
Organizing events	4
Bringing new ideas	5
Others	6

Section G: Functioning and Impact of rural communication systems

Q27. In what ways are rural communication systems (like word-of-mouth and local messengers) more dependable and effective than mediated and new media?

Options	Code
Much more reliable and effective	5
More reliable and effective	4
Same	3
Less reliable and effective	2
Much less reliable and effective	1

Q28. To what extent do Chaupals contribute to the dissemination of knowledge about the following topics?

Options	Most Effective	Very effective	Moderately effective	Slightly effective	Least Effective
Education,	5	4	3	2	1
Health issue	5	4	3	2	1
Agricultural	5	4	3	2	1

Social issue	5	4	3	2	1
Government policies	5	4	3	2	1

Q29. In the current time, generally what are the challenges faced by Chaupal? (MC)

Options	Code
Lack of interest	1
Lack of social connectivity	2
People don't have time	3
People are shifting to urban areas	4
Technological issues	5
People are more engaged on social media	6
Others	7

Q30. In your community, how do Chaupals affect the development of the community?

Options	Code
Very positive	5
Positive	4
Neutral	3
Negative	2
Very negative	1

Section H: General Satisfaction

Q31. To what extent do you find the Chaupal's decision-making process and general talks satisfactory?

Options	Code
Strongly satisfied	5

Somewhat satisfied	4
Neutral	3
Somewhat dissatisfied	2
Strongly dissatisfied	1

Q32. What is the building, maintenance, and management status of your Chaupal at this time?

Options	Code
Very good	5
Good	4
Average	3
Poor	2
Very poor	1

Q33. Evaluate Chaupal on the following points?

Options	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Strongly Disagree
Increasing brotherhood in the society	5	4	3	2	1
Reduce political instability	5	4	3	2	1
Reducing caste and religious bias	5	4	3	2	1

Q34. What kind of assistance should the Chaupal get from government initiatives?
(MC)

Options	Code
Organize health related seminars or workshops	1
Financial support	2
Support from the government for new business or startup in village	3
Workshops related to education	4
Summer camps	5
Free health checks up	6
Support from the government for infrastructure development of village	7
Others	8

Q35. Which of the following Chaupal-related terms are you familiar with? (MC)

Options	Code
E- Chaupal	1
Media Chaupal	2
Police Chaupal	3
Bank Chaupal	4
Others	5

Appendix 2

Discussion Guide

Discussion Guide

Evolution of Chaupals

Key Questions:

- How have *Chaupals* changed over the years in your village/area?

- What do you think was the primary role of *Chaupals* in the past?

- In your opinion, what is the current role of *Chaupals* in your community?

Probing Questions:

- What changes in infrastructure have occurred with *Chaupals*?

- How do you feel these changes have affected the way people use *Chaupals*?

Impact of Technology on Chaupals

Key Questions:

- How has the use of mobile phones and social media impacted people's participation in *Chaupals*?

- Do you think people still gather at *Chaupals* to share information, or has this shifted to digital platforms?

Probing Questions:

- Do younger generations still engage with *Chaupals*, or are they more interested in online communication?

- How do digital platforms (e.g., WhatsApp) compare to the traditional role of *Chaupals* in connecting the community?

Role in Decision-Making and Dispute Resolution

Key Questions:

- In the past, how were disputes or community decisions handled at *Chaupals*?

- How are such issues resolved today? Do *Chaupals* still play a role?

Probing Questions:

- Are *Chaupal* decisions still respected by the community? How have legal systems impacted this?

- How do you think the relevance of *Chaupals* in decision-making differs between older and younger generations?

Decline in Youth Participation

Key Questions:

- Why do you think young people are less interested in *Chaupals*?

- What do you think could make *Chaupals* more attractive to younger generations?

Probing Questions:

- Do you think modernization (e.g., adding gyms, sports activities) could bring young people back to *Chaupals*?

- How does the rise of social media and other technologies affect youth engagement with *Chaupals*?

Gender and Caste Dynamics

Key Questions:

- Traditionally, who participated in *Chaupals*? Were there any exclusions based on gender or caste?

- Have you seen any changes in terms of who is allowed or encouraged to participate in *Chaupals*?

Probing Questions:

- What role do Mahila *Chaupals* (women's *Chaupals*) play in the community? How powerful are these spaces compared to traditional *Chaupals*?

- Have caste-based divisions in *Chaupals* participation changed over the years?

Cultural Role of Chaupals

Key Questions:

- In what ways did *Chaupals* contribute to preserving local culture in the past (e.g., festivals, oral traditions)?

- Do you think *Chaupals* still play a role in cultural preservation today?

Probing Questions:

- How has modern entertainment (e.g., Bollywood, global culture) affected the cultural significance of *Chaupals*?

- Are there any efforts in your village to use *Chaupals* for cultural or traditional events?

Future of Chaupals

Key Questions:

- What do you think is the future of *Chaupals* in your village or region?

- Do you support efforts to preserve or modernize *Chaupals*? If yes, how?

Probing Questions:

- Do you think government initiatives to modernize *Chaupals* are helpful? How could they be improved?

- How can *Chaupals* adapt to modern realities while still maintaining their cultural heritage?

Appendix 3

Bibliography

Andrew, Graan. (2022). Publics and the Public Sphere. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Anthropology, doi: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190854584.013.568

Chaupal_Newsletter_v2.0. (n.d.).

Dagher, N. (n.d.). *The Digital Public Sphere and the Opportunity for Global Democratic Transformation*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/377895335

Dagmar, Fenner. (2024). Digitalisierung – Revitalisierung oder Bedrohung der Demokratie? Reflexionen zur demokratischen Qualität digitaler Öffentlichkeit. Zeitschrift Fur Philosophische Forschung, 78(3):385-407. doi: 10.3196/004433024839033013

Edition, F. (2023). *INDIA POST e-PATRIKA*.

evening-chaupal-khandel-village-may-15-2019.pdf (cuts-cart.org)

https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in:8443/jspui/handle/10603/17643

https://www.soundnlight.in/slsv-purpose-women-shun-veils-take-centre-stage-in-village/

Kellner, D. (n.d.). *Habermas, the Public Sphere, and Democracy: A Critical Intervention*. http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/

Kumar Kapoor, A., Tandon, C., Biswas, S., & Modernism, P. (n.d.). *Anthropology Theories and methods in social and cultural Anthropology Development Team Principal Investigator Paper Coordinator Content Writer Content Reviewer Anthropology Theories and methods in social and cultural Anthropology*.

Madhu Giri. (2020). storytelling for promoting social cohesion in the marginalised communities: a study of chautari nataks. *Molung Educational Frontier*, *10*((Special Issue)), 67–80.

Matthew, S., & Dolly. (2020). *CONCEPT AND ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY* [Review of *CONCEPT AND ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY*]. Egyankosh; IGNOU. https://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/68791/1/Block-5.pdf

Mohammad Alzubi, A. (2022). Impact of New Digital Media on Conventional Media and Visual Communication in Jordan. *Journal of Engineering, Technology, and Applied Science*, *4*(3), 105–113. https://doi.org/10.36079/lamintang.jetas-0403.383

Naveen, K. C. (2022). Alternative agricultural extension functionaries in India: Substantive role of (ICTs) - study of e-Chaupal. *Journal of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development*, *14*(3), 132–139. https://doi.org/10.5897/jaerd2021.1277

pages.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/essays/habermaspublicspheredemocracy.pdf

Rodolph, S. H. (2020). *The public sphere in India: Civic engagement and social transformation*. Oxford University Press.

Rr, Dinar, Soelistyowati., Arief, Subhan., Ridzki, Rinanto, Sigit. (2024). 3. Virtual Public Sphere On Social Media (Habermas' Critical Study Of The Digital Hoax Phenomenon Whatsaap Group Alumni Iluni Menwa UI). International Journal of Educational Research and Social Sciences, doi: 10.51601/ijersc.v5i2.737

Saigal, O. (1999). NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION: Growth & Development. *HAR-ANAND Publication Pvt. Ltd.*, 1–156.

Singh Kachhawa, R., & Tiwari, U. M. (2021). TRADITIONAL FOLK MEDIA: EFFECTIVE MEDIA FOR COMMUNICATION IN RURAL AREAS. In *National Peer-Reviewed Journal* (Vol. 08, Issue 02). http://hillquest.pratibha-spandan.org

Wu, Y., & Chang, W. S. (2022). The Expression of Postmodern Pop Art Style in Contemporary American Animation. *The Journal of the Korea Contents Association*, *22*(4), 727-741.

Wynn, E., & Hult, H. V. (n.d.). *Platforms and the Public Sphere Completed Research*.

Zort, Ç., Karabacak, E., Öznur, Ş., & Dağlı, G. (2023). Sharing of cultural values and heritage through storytelling in the digital age. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *14*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1104121

ABDERRAZAG, S. H., & Kazi-Tani, L. (2018). The Negative Influence of Turkish Series' Dubbing on Algerian Adolescents. *Journal of English Language and Literature*, *10*(3), 1039. https://doi.org/10.17722/jell.v10i3.410

Abdulazim, E. (2016). Postmdernism Theory. *ResearchGate*, *June*. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.4515.0327

Almuqren, A. (2023). The Contemporary Public Sphere-Habermas' Perspective. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, *10*(6), 183–192. https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.106.14848

Artaç, N. H., & Oğurlu, E. (2023). A qualitative study on the attitudes of women politicians toward their roles in politics: a case of Northern Cyprus. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *14*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1304905

Asia Institute, S., Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, by, & Rudolph, L. I. (2003). *Heidelberg Papers in South Asian and Comparative Politics The Coffee House and the Ashram: Gandhi, Civil Society and Public Spheres*.

Athma, A., & Bhat, R. (2023). *Importance of Urban Public Space in Nanjangud*. *12*(11).

Attri, S. (2023). The Saangs as Cultural Heritage of Haryana. Contemporary Literary Review India, 10(2), 141-149.

Bairagi, V., & Munot, M. V. (2019). Research methodology: A practical and scientific approach. CRC Press.

Banamali, P. (2018). *Decentralised Planning and Participatory Development : The Indian Scenario*. *5*(3), 1127–1130.

Bansal, R., & Sharma, A. K. (2012). E-Chaupal: Gateway to develop agriculture market. *4D International Journal of IT & Commerce*, *1*(1), 87.

Barnett, C. (2019). Culture and democracy: Media, space and representation. Edinburgh University Press.

Batul, Z. (n.d.). *SA LVI 16 ZohraBatul 17042021 ason3rdMay Related papers T he Myst icism and Glory of Sufism and Kashmiriyat : Origins, Hist ory and t he Polit ics behind it European Foundat ion for Sout h Asian St udies (EFSAS)*.

Ben-Amos, D. (2020). Folklore concepts: Histories and critiques. Indiana University Press.

Bernholz, L., Landemore, H., & Reich, R. (2020). Digital Technology and Democratic Theory. In *Digital Technology and Democratic Theory*. https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226748603.001.0001

Bharne, V. (2019). From tree to temple town. Sacred Space, Sacred Thread: Perspectives across Time and Traditions, 66.

Bhashanjali, S.; North Cap University, Gurugram UNIT 7 QUESTIONNAIRE, SCHEDULE AND INTERVIEW. In Methods of Data Collection.

Bhattacharya, C. D. S., & Sachdev, B. (2021). Can India Be Successful in Achieving a Digital Economy and Its Vision of Digital India: A Case Study. International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology, 10(11), 14516.

Bhattacharya, P. (2024). "Honor" killings and customary laws: A case study of Khap Panchayats in Haryana, India. Violence: An International Journal, 5(1), 3-29.

Bhatti, M. R., Nawz, A., Khan, A. W., & Safdar, G. (2020). Power of "WhatsApp Chaupal" on the Academic Enactment of Graduate Students of Lahore-s A Review Paper. *International Journal of Media, Journalism and Mass Communications*, 6(2), 21–29. https://doi.org/10.20431/2454-9479.0602003

Bobbitt, R. (2020). An Overview of Communication Ethics. *Exploring Communication Ethics*, 1–24. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429324475-1

Bose, T. (2019). Gandhiji's Idea and the Grassroots Reality of the Panchayats: A Study of Two Districts of West Bengal, India. Rajagiri Journal of Social Development, 11(2), 37-54.

Bowonder, B., Gupta, V., & Singh, A. (2018). Developing a rural market e-hub: the case study of e-Chaupal experience of ITC. *Planning Commission of India*, 1–20.

Chakraborty, M. W., & Chakraborty, B. (2018). Jaat Architecture, Mirror of the Past and Shadow of Future. In Putting Tradition into Practice: Heritage, Place and Design: Proceedings of 5th INTBAU International Annual Event 5 (pp. 1068-1077). Springer International Publishing.

Chandra, B., Patnaik, M., Goyal, S., & Satpathy, I. (2019). *Challenges of implementing E-Chaupal in Odisha INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT RESEARCH AND REVIEW CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING E-CHAUPAL IN ODISHA: A STUDY*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259640199

Chapter, B., & Habermas, J. (2018). *Rapid #: -10268325*.

Chaupal_Newsletter_v2.0. (n.d.).

Chigbu, U. E., Atiku, S. O., & du Plessis, C. C. (2023). The Science of Literature Reviews: Searching, Identifying, Selecting, and Synthesising. *Publications*, *11*(1). https://doi.org/10.3390/publications11010002

Choudhury, J., & Gupta, P. (2016). *Decentralisation of Local Self-Government in India and Bangladesh: A Comparative Analysis*. 1–8. https://doi.org/10.17758/erpub.ea1216008

Cohen, J., & Fung, A. (2023). Democratic responsibility in the digital public sphere. *Constellations*, *30*(1), 92–97. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12670

Cohen, J., Fung, A., Bernholz, L., Landemore, H., & Reich, R. (2021). Democracy and the digital public sphere. Digital technology and democratic theory, 23-61.

Copeman, J. (2009). Gathering points: Blood donation and the scenography of "national integration" in India. *Body and Society*, *15*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X09103438

Creswell, J. . W., & Clark, V. Plano. L. (2018). Designing and Conducting Mix Method Research. In *Methodological Research* (Vol. 1st).

Dagher, N. (n.d.). *The Digital Public Sphere and the Opportunity for Global Democratic Transformation*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/377895335

Das, A., Mishra, A., Kashyap, A., Naika, M. B., & Barah, P. (2022). "KRiShI": a manually curated knowledgebase on rice sheath blight disease. Functional & Integrative Genomics, 22(6), 1403-1410.

Dash, B. B. (2020). Grassroots Democracy via Community Radio: A case study in rural India. In Community Radio in South Asia (pp. 253-267). Routledge India.

Datta, P. K. (2019a). Rural Decentralization in India At the Cross- Roads: the Context, Challenges and Consequences. *Journal of Asian Rural Studies*, *3*(1), 17. https://doi.org/10.20956/jars.v3i1.1716

Datta, P. K. (2019b). RURAL DECENTRALIZATION IN INDIA AT THE CROSS-ROADS: THE CONTEXT, CHALLENGES AND CONSEQUENCES. *Journal of Asian Rural Studies*, *3*(1). https://doi.org/10.20956/jars.v3i1.1716

Davis, M. (2021). The online anti-public sphere. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *24*(1), 143–159. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549420902799

de Seta, G. (2019a). Digital Folklore. *Second International Handbook of Internet Research*, 167–183. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-024-1555-1_36

de Seta, G. (2019b). Digital Folklore. In *Second International Handbook of Internet Research*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-024-1555-1_36

del Valle, M. E., Sijtsma, R., Stegeman, H., & Borge, R. (2020). Online Deliberation and the Public Sphere: Developing a Coding Manual to Assess Deliberation in Twitter Political Networks. *Javnost*, *27*(3). https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2020.1794408

Dey, S. (2020). Let There Be Clamor: Exploring the Emergence of a New Public Sphere in India and Use of Social Media as an Instrument of Activism. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, *44*(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/0196859919827319

Dutta, S. (2024). Exploring the Musical Connection Between Raga Bhairavi and Indian Folk Songs. Sangeet Galaxy, 13(1).

Edition, F. (2023). *INDIA POST e-PATRIKA*.

Editor, B., & Caton, S. C. (2021). *Chapter Title : " ENGLISH IS SO PRECISE , AND HINDI CAN BE SO HEAVY !" Language Ideologies and Audience Imaginaries in a Dubbing Studio in Mumbai Chapter Author (s): TEJASWINI GANTI Book Title : Anthropology , Film Industries , Modularity Published by :*

Eisenegger, M., & Schäfer, M. S. (2023). Editorial: Reconceptualizing public sphere(s) in the digital age? On the role and future of public sphere theory. *Communication Theory*, *33*(2–3), 61–69. https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qtad011

Electoral Campaigns, Media, and the New World of Digital Politics. (n.d.-a).

Electoral Campaigns, Media, and the New World of Digital Politics. (n.d.-b).

Eley, G. (1992). Jürgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1989). *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *34*(01).

Fao, & Gtz. (2006). *Framework on effective rural communication for development*. 74.

Fenton, N., & Downey, J. (2018). Counter public spheres and global modernity. *Javnost*, *10*(1), 15–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2003.11008819

Fischer, R., & Jarren, O. (2024). The platformization of the public sphere and its challenge to democracy. *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, *50*(1), 200–215. https://doi.org/10.1177/01914537231203535

Fuchs, C. (2021). The digital commons and the digital public sphere: How to advance digital democracy today. Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture, 16(1), 9–26. https://doi.org/10.16997/WPCC.917

gLlt ; dLIff. (n.d.).

Habermas, J. (1991). Civil Society and Political LifeThe Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society. In *Contemporary Sociology* (Vol. 19, Issue 2).

HARTLAND, E. S. (1901). Celtic Folk-lore, Welsh and Manx. *Nature*, *63*(1638). https://doi.org/10.1038/063485a0

Hiswara, A., Mohammad Aziz, A., Pujowati, Y., Ade, N. :, & Sari, R. (2023a). Cultural Preservation in a Globalized World: Strategies for Sustaining Heritage. In *West Science Social and Humanities Studies* (Vol. 01, Issue 03).

Hiswara, A., Mohammad Aziz, A., Pujowati, Y., Ade, N. :, & Sari, R. (2023b). Cultural Preservation in a Globalized World: Strategies for Sustaining Heritage. In *West Science Social and Humanities Studies* (Vol. 01, Issue 03).

Hong, P., NL, B., & N, V. (2022). Sustainable Agricultural Business Model: Case Studies of Innovative Indian Farmers. Sustainability, 14(16), 10242.

Hong, Y. (2021). The power of Bollywood: A study on opportunities, challenges, and audiences' perceptions of Indian cinema in China. *Global Media and China*, *6*(3), 345–363. https://doi.org/10.1177/20594364211022605

Hrčková, A. (2018). Usability and sociability of direct democracy projects based on online groups. *EJournal of EDemocracy and Open Government*, *10*(1). https://doi.org/10.29379/jedem.v10i1.492

Huber, B., Wetzstein, I., & Aichberger, I. (2019). Societal problem solver or deficient discipline? The debate about social science in the online public sphere. *Journal of Science Communication*, *18*(2). https://doi.org/10.22323/2.18020204

Imo-Ter Nyam, I., & Mary Yvonne Atime, S. (2018). THE CONVENTIONAL MEDIA IN NIGERIA AND DEMOCRATIC TENETS. International Journal on Transformations of Media, 3. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357434446

India Post India Post E-Patrika, Fourth Edition, 2023. India Post E-Patrika 2023.

Indira Gandhi National Open University; Ananthamurthy, U.R.; Das, M.; Choudhury, I.; Satchidanandan, K.; Satyanath, T.S.; Sahu, N.; Pandey, C.N.; Satyakam, Prof. FOLK

LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE: RESEARCH AND PEDAGOGY; Sahu, N., Sharma, V., Bhattacharya, D., Eds.; Indira Gandhi National Open University, 2018;

Indira Gandhi National Open University; Sanjay, B.P.; Yadav, J.S.; Kuthiala, B.K.; Ravindran, G.; Thakur, K.; Raman, U.; Ramachandran, S.; Ahmed, I.; Jethwaney, J.; et al. Understanding Digital Media; Indira Gandhi National Open University, 2022;

Interrogating Chaupals & Kebangs as Alternative Sites of Power : A Comparative Study. (2023). *1296*(18), 93–101.

Jain, M. (2022). *A study on effective media for rural communication. February*, 0–5.

Jain, S. (2018). Research methodology in arts, science and humanities.

Joseph and Lynda L Kaid Technological Determinism; 2018;

Joshi, J., & Shaikh Mohammad, B. N. (2020, April). Factors Influencing the Farmers Approach Towards the Digital World. In Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Advances in Science & Technology (ICAST).

Kailash Rai. (2021). *Women's Participation in the Public Sphere* (P. K. Deborah Healy, Akhilesh Upadhyay, Jaya Jung Mahat, Nayan Pokhrel, Ed.; 2nd ed.). https://www.agora-parl.org/sites/default/files/agora-documents/NDI Nepal Policy Review No.2.pdf#page=10

Kakati, B. K. (2021). Gram Swaraj: The Sustainable Model for Rural Industrialisation and Employment. In *International Journal of Community and Social Development* (Vol. 3, Issue 3, pp. 274–289). https://doi.org/10.1177/25166026211039063

Kantomaa, M. T., Tammelin, T. H., Ebeling, H. E., & Taanila, A. M. (2008). Emotional and behavioral problems in relation to physical activity in youth. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, *40*(10), 1749–1756. https://doi.org/10.1249/MSS.0b013e31817b8e82

Kargatia, J., & Kumari, C. (2024). 42 Storytelling Aids for Foundation Years Using Traditional Arts of India KATHA WITH KALA. www.vidhyayanaejournal.org

Karthik, M., & Post, R. (2018). *POSTMODERN ISSUES REFLECTED IN CHETAN BHAGAT ' S FIVE POINT SOMEONE. 22*(03), 843–848.

Kawathekar, V. (2020). Vernacular Architecture In India: Architecture of the masses. In The National Conference on Traditional Knowledge Systems in India held at Department of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Keane, J. (2018). Structural transformations of the public sphere. In The Media, Journalism and Democracy (pp. 53-74). Routledge.

Kellner, D. (n.d.). *Habermas, the Public Sphere, and Democracy: A Critical Intervention*. http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/

Kothari, C. R. (2004). Research methodology: Methods and techniques. New Age International.

Koyu, J., & Singh, P. (2020). *The KEBANG: A Self-Governing Indigenous Institution of the Adi Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh*. *11*(2), 267–285. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/arunachal-pradesh-

Krishan Kumar; Ranjit Kumar; O' Leary; Neuman; Adams UNIT 12 INTERVIEW METHOD; 201AD;

Kumar Kapoor, A., Tandon, C., Biswas, S., & Modernism, P. (n.d.). *Anthropology Theories and methods in social and cultural Anthropology Development Team Principal Investigator Paper Coordinator Content Writer Content Reviewer Anthropology Theories and methods in social and cultural Anthropology*.

Kumar, A., & Alam, B. (n.d.). Understanding the Function of Folk Media as Popular Culture During the Indian Liberation Fight. In *IJFMR23057594* (Vol. 5, Issue 5). www.ijfmr.com

kumar, P. (2022). Analysis of Communication through Traditional Folk Media for Rural Development in Rajasthan. International Journal of Social Sciences, 11(3). https://doi.org/10.46852/2249-6637.02.2022.6

Kumar, R. (2018). Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners. SAGE.

Kumar, S., & Kumar Mohapatra, A. (2020). An Analytical Study of Content and Language of Indian Webs Series. *Journal of Xi'an University of Architecture & Technology*, *12*(5), 919–930.

Kumari, M. (2023). "36th International SurajKund Craft Fair: A Fair to Remember": A Key Initiative by Haryana Tourism Corporation. In Management and Practices of Pilgrimage Tourism and Hospitality (pp. 171-180). IGI Global.

Kyryliuk, V., & Ryabokon, I. (2021). Role of social sphere in ensuring quality of working life. *VUZF Review*, *6*(3), 66–77. https://doi.org/10.38188/2534-9228.21.3.08

Li, F., Larimo, J., & Leonidou, L. C. (2021). Social media marketing strategy: definition, conceptualization, taxonomy, validation, and future agenda. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *49*(1), 51–70. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-020-00733-3

Locharoenrat, K. (2017). Research methodologies for beginners. CRC Press.

Madgulkar, V., Sharma, M., Ketkar, S., & Ghaisas, C. (2023). Presidential Address at the 57th Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan, Ambejogai on 4 February 1983. In Vyankatesh Madgulkar (pp. 95-109). Routledge India.

Madhu Giri. (2020). storytelling for promoting social cohesion in the marginalised communities: a study of chautari nataks. *Molung Educational Frontier*, *10*((Special Issue)), 67–80.

Mangla, A., & Kapoor, V. (2020). Policing and public health: State capacity on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. India in Transition, University of Pennsylvania, Center for the Advanced Study of India.

Mathisen, B. R., & Morlandstø, L. (2022). Audience participation in the mediated Arctic public sphere. *Journalism*, *23*(8), 1700–1716. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884920973102

MEF_Volume_10_Special_Issue_June_2020-. (n.d.).

Mishra, H. (2024). Antrocom Journal of Anthropology Socio-Cultural Dynamics of the Caste System. In *Antrocom Online Journal of Anthropology* (Vol. 20, Issue 1). http://www.antrocom.net

Mohammad Alzubi, A. (2022). Impact of New Digital Media on Conventional Media and Visual Communication in Jordan. *Journal of Engineering, Technology, and Applied Science*, *4*(3), 105–113. https://doi.org/10.36079/lamintang.jetas-0403.383

Mohanty, A., & Sahay, R. R. (2018). Rasabodha: Understanding Indian classical dance by recognizing emotions using deep learning. Pattern Recognition, 79, 97-113.

Mukherjee, D. (2020). DEVELOPMENT OF THE HINDUSTANI CLASSICAL MUSIC WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BHARAT MUNI'S NATYASHASHTRA.

Narain, I. (1976). Cultural Pluralism, National Integration and Democracy in India. *Asian Survey*, *16*(10). https://doi.org/10.2307/2643532

Narayan, B. (2021). Republic of Hindutva: How the Sangh is reshaping Indian democracy. Penguin Random House India Private Limited.

Naveen, K. C. (2022). Alternative agricultural extension functionaries in India: Substantive role of (ICTs) - study of e-Chaupal. *Journal of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development*, *14*(3), 132–139. https://doi.org/10.5897/jaerd2021.1277

Nayak, S. (2018). *Original Research Paper Political Science REVISITING WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN RURAL LOCAL GOVERNING INSTITUTIONS : INDIA ' S TRYST WITH GENDER JUST LOCAL GOVERNANCE Ms . Arati Behera Ph . D research scholar , Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship . 7*, 21–25.

Naz, S., Rasheed, M., & Rasheed, T. (2018). Effects of Hindi Dubbed Cartoons on Students' Linguistic Patterns and Culture. *Global Language Review*, *III*(I), 126–135. https://doi.org/10.31703/glr.2018(iii-i).08

Nesi, J. (2020). The Impact of Social Media on Youth Mental Health. *North Carolina Medical Journal*, *81*(2). https://doi.org/10.18043/ncm.81.2.116

Newman, S. (2023). Post-Truth, Postmodernism and the Public Sphere. In *Europe in the Age of Post-Truth Politics*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13694-8_2

No Tit.צכן le. (n.d.). https://www.ptonline.com/articles/how-to-get-better-mfi-results

No Title. (2019). *18*(02), 1–21.

Ojha, J., Sain, M., & Mishra, D. (2019). Importance of Women Folklore in Education. *Proceedings of the 2019 5th International Conference on Education and Training Technologies*, 13–16. https://doi.org/10.1145/3337682.3339889

Patel. (2019). *Examining Generational Differences in The Workplace: Employee Engagement Practices and their Impact on Retention of Different Generations of Human Resources Employees*. 9–25.

Pew Research Center. (2015). *The Whys and Hows of Generations Research | Pew Research Center*. https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2015/09/03/the-whys-and-hows-of-generations-research/

Pinori, J. J. (2020a). Legal Study on Village Government Authority in Village Assets Management. *International Journal of Applied Business and International Management*, *5*(2), 36–43. https://doi.org/10.32535/ijabim.v5i2.856

Pinori, J. J. (2020b). Legal Study on Village Government Authority in Village Assets Management. *International Journal of Applied Business and International Management*, *5*(2). https://doi.org/10.32535/ijabim.v5i2.856

Pradesh, U. (1991). *History : Evolution of Concept of National Capital Region NCR Constituent Areas.*

Press note Haryana Tourism 6. (2020). *February*, 5–7.

Press, I. T. (n.d.). *No Title.*

Pretoria, U. of. (2010). *CHAPTER 2 Postmodernism 38 2. CHAPTER 2 Postmodernism 2.1 INTRODUCTION These days anything goes?* 38–76.

Priyanca, R. and A. (2023). The social science perspective. *Jain University*, 12–14. https://www.jainuniversity.ac.in/pdf/OCT 23- Newsletter- V3-I4 -Cersse.pdf

Punj, S., & For, J. (n.d.). *Rural Communication : A New Way to Rural India. 9*(5), 135–144.

Ram, A. (2021). *Anjali Ram. 13*(1), 5901.

Ramanujan, A.K.; Verrier Elwin; Mamang Dai; Manoj Das FOLKTALES OF INDIA: MOTIFS, MODES AND MORES; Indira Gandhi National Open University, 2018;

Rao, K. V. G. (2023). ITC's e-Chaupal 4.0: Harnessing Digital Technologies to Empower Indian Farmers. In Doing Business in South Asia (pp. 101-111). Routledge.

Rao, K. V. G. (2023). ITC's e-Chaupal 4.0: Harnessing Digital Technologies to Empower Indian Farmers. In Doing Business in South Asia (pp. 101-111). Routledge.

Rifah-e Aam Club, Lucknow: Public sphere and public space in urban India | Mendeley. (n.d.). Retrieved October 24, 2022, from https://www.mendeley.com/search/?page=1&query=Rifah-e%20Aam%20Club%2C%20Lucknow%3A%20Public%20sphere%20and%20public%20space%20in%20urban%20India&sortBy=relevance

Ritual, Romance, and Royalty: Bollywood Remakes of Hindu Femininity - ProQuest. (n.d.). Retrieved September 19, 2022, from https://www.proquest.com/openview/dbc4e374f72df34c200e4f03fc376b78/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=646376

Sanction+Of+Chairman+of+DUDA+(Construction+of+additional+room+at+Terrace+in+Badhi+Chaupal+in+Zamrudpur+Village.pdf. (n.d.).

Sarangi, S. K. (2018). Digital farming: the beacon of new age agriculture for feeding billons in India. IOSR J Bus Manage, 20, 54-63.

Sareer, M., & Mandot, D. (2012). *INDRAPRASTHA: THE FIRST CITY OF DELHI. 8*, 73–76. www.impactjournals.us

Satpute, H., Raut, S., Sapke, P., & Dixit, M. (2022). *Deepfake Creation Using Generative Adversarial Network*. *8*(6), 360–372.

Schlesinger, P. (2020). After the post-public sphere. *Media, Culture and Society*, *42*(7–8), 1545–1563. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443720948003

Selvalakshmi, M., Verma, H., & Jain, N. (2020). Emergence of Indian film industry in the international markets: Facilitators and impeders. *International Journal of Asian Business and Information Management*, *11*(3), 32–44. https://doi.org/10.4018/IJABIM.2020070103

Shahid, S., & Shaikh, M. A. (2019). Impact of" WhatsApp Chaupal" on the Academic Performance of Graduate Students of Karachi–A Case Study. FWU Journal of Social Sciences, 13(2), 94-107.

Shandil, M. (2023). Karyala: Folk Theatre for Rural Communication in Himachal Pradesh Kindle Edition. Wkrishind Publishers.

Sharma, D. (2020). Community, Artistry, and Storytelling in the Cultural Confluence of Nautanki and Ramlila. Asian Theatre Journal, 37(1), 107-132.

Singh Kachhawa, R., & Tiwari, U. M. (2021). TRADITIONAL FOLK MEDIA: EFFECTIVE MEDIA FOR COMMUNICATION IN RURAL AREAS. In National Peer-Reviewed Journal (Vol. 08, Issue 02). http://hillquest.pratibha-spandan.org

Singh, I. J. . (1997). Role of chaupal of Lucknow doordarshan programmes on the adoption of modern agricultural technology in Allahabad district UP. *University*. http://hdl.handle.net/10603/259402

Singh, Y. K. (2006). Fundamental of research methodology and statistics. New Age International.

Singh, Y. K. (2006). Fundamental of Research Methodology and Statistics. In *Methodology Research* (Vol. 53, Issue 9). https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004

Sinha, A., & Sohane, R. K. (2020). Institutional Outreach Through Innovative Approaches. In Sustainable Agriculture (pp. 481-499). Apple Academic Press.

Sunya, S. (n.d.). *Chapter Title: Problems of Translation: World Cinema as Distribution History Book Title: Sirens of Modernity Book Subtitle: World Cinema via Bombay*.

Suri, P., & Chopra, S. (2018). Genesis of Effective Rural Communication for Development: A Pragmatic Study on India. *International Review of Business and Economics*, *1*.

Susen, S. (2023). A New Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere? With, against, and beyond Habermas. *Society*, *60*(6), 842–867. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-023-00908-y

Susewind, R. (2020a). Rifah-e Aam Club, Lucknow: Public sphere and public space in urban India. *Geoforum*, *109*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2020.01.012

Susewind, R. (2020b). Rifah-e Aam Club, Lucknow: Public sphere and public space in urban India. *Geoforum*, *109*, 67–77. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.GEOFORUM.2020.01.012

Suthar, S. K. (2022). Changing Public Spaces and Community in Rural India. In Dilapidation of the Rural: Development, Politics, and Farmer Suicides in India (pp. 55-84). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.

Swasthya, A., & Pehel, A. (n.d.). *How to Conduct Mahila Sabhas ?*

Taneja, S., Dalpath, S., Bhandari, N., Kaur, J., Mazumder, S., Chowdhury, R., Mundra, S., & Bhan, M. K. (2018). Operationalising integrated community case management of childhood illnesses by community health workers in rural Haryana. *Acta Paediatrica, International Journal of Paediatrics*, *107*, 80–88. https://doi.org/10.1111/apa.14428

The Expression of Postmodern Pop Art Style in Contemporary American Animation. (n.d.).

The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere - Google Books. (n.d.). Retrieved October 30, 2022, from https://www.google.co.in/books/edition/The_Structural_Transformation_of_the_Pub/e799caakIWoC?hl=en

The, D., & Journal, I. (2022). *Darshan The International Journal of Commerce and Management*. *1682*, 31–36.

Uday, S., Joshi, H., & Jani, A. (2018). *Economic Contribution of the Film and Television Industry in India, 2017*. *March*, 1–62. https://www.mpa-apac.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/India-ECR-2017_Final-Report.pdf

UNIT INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND AGRICULTURE;

View of Literature Paving the Way for Law_ ADR as an Idea in Munshi Premchand's Panch Parmeshwar. (n.d.).

Vishek, Y., & Sengupta, K. (2021). Imageability Analysis of Contemporary Indian Cities-The Case of Gurugram.

Wang, Q. (2020). The Chinese internet: The online public sphere, power relations and political communication. In *The Chinese Internet: The Online Public Sphere, Power Relations and Political Communication*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429327827

What years are Gen X, baby boomers, millennials, Gen Z_ What to know. (n.d.).

Wynn, E., & Hult, H. V. (n.d.). *Platforms and the Public Sphere Completed Research*. Yadav, P. (2024). *Exploring The Impact Of English Language Proficiency On Cross-Cultural Communication Success* (Vol. 12). www.ijcrt.org

Yang, X. (2021). *Rural communication strategy of media advertisement in new era based on communication psychology*. *33*, 201–203.

Yau, A., Marder, B., & O'Donohoe, S. (2020). The role of social media in negotiating identity during the process of acculturation. *Information Technology & People*, *33*(2), 554–575. https://doi.org/10.1108/ITP-09-2017-0305 Youvan, D. C. (2023). *Freedom of Speech in the Digital Age: A Critical Examination of Private Power and Public Rights*. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.20652.44166

Zort, Ç., Karabacak, E., Öznur, Ş., & Dağlı, G. (2023). Sharing of cultural values and heritage through storytelling in the digital age. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *14*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1104121

BRIEF BIO-DATA OF THE CANDIATE

Name	**:**	**Anuj**
Father's Name	:	Love Kush Singh
Date of Birth	:	10th February, 1991
Marital Status	:	Single
Nationality	:	Indian
Religion	:	Hindu
Contact No.	:	9540306038
Email Id	:	thanujpratap@gmail.com
Address	:	892/1 Anangpur, Ghati Tala, Faridabad Haryana – 121009
Address for Correspondence :		Department of Mass Communication, Mizoram University, Aizawl, Mizoram

Publication and Presentation

A. Publication

* Research paper titled *"The Role of Chaupal in the Preservation of Folk Culture: A Study"* published in *Himprastha Research Journal*, Volume 9, Year 69. The journal is issued by the Department of Information & Public Relations, Government of Himachal Pradesh. ISSN: 2454-972X. UGC Care list Serial No. 20, September 2024.

* Research paper titled *"Interrogating Chaupals and Kebangs as Alternative Sites of Power: A Comparative Study"*, published in *The Asian Thinker: A Quarterly Bilingual Peer-Reviewed Journal for Social Sciences and Humanities*, Year 5, Issue 18, Volume 2, ISSN 2582-1296 (Online).

* Research paper titled "*To study the Chaupal as medium of rural communication*" ASHA PARAS INTERNATIONAL MULTI DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH JOURNAL" Volume I, Issue I, January – June, 2024

* Research paper titled "Relevance of Chaupal among millennial" published in *The Asian thinker: A Quarterly Bilingual Peer-Reviewed Journal for Social Sciences and Humanities, Volume IV Issue 16, October – December 2022.*

B. Presentation

* Presented a research paper titled *"To Study the Role of Chaupal as a Center of Communication Transmission"* at the International Conference on Information Age: Culture, Identity & Communication, organized by the School of Media, Film, and Entertainment, Sharda University, on December 9–10, 2021.

* Presented a research paper titled "Interrogating Chaupal and Kebang as alternative site of power: A Comparative Analysis" at the two day national seminar on nature, culture and literature in northeast India organized by Rajiv Gandhi Central University, Arunachal Pradesh funded by Indian Council of Social Science Research on 20th and 21st March 2023.

* Presented a research paper titled "To study the role of chaupal in the preservation offolk culture" at the International Seminar on '*Role of folk in Indian Freedom Movement*' *organized by Indraprstha Women College, University of Delhi funded by Indian Councilof Historical Research on 1st-2nd August, 2024.*

शोध लेख

लोक संस्कृति के संरक्षण में
चौपाल की भूमिका : एक अध्ययन

॒ अनुज
॒ डॉ. धीरज कुमार

शोध सारांश : व्यक्ति पुरातन काल से लेकर अब तक के विकास क्रम में समाज का हिस्सा रहा है। मानव को इसलिए ही सामाजिक प्राणी कहा गया है। मानव को समाज की आवश्यकता होती है। समाज में व्यक्ति बहुत कुछ सीखता व समझता है। हम सही व गलत के बीच की रूपरेखा को सामाजिक ताने-बाने द्वारा ही तय करते हैं, अपने आंतरिक व बाह्य अनुभव के आधार पर सही व गलत की यह रेखा आगे बढ़ती तथा सिमटती है। समाज में ज्यादातर टकराव का कारण यह विचार ही होता है कि कौन सही तथा कौन गलत है। किसी भी मुद्दे पर हमारी सही व गलत की क्षमता का निर्माण भी यह समाज ही करता है। व्यक्ति को सामाजिक बनाने की प्रक्रिया में समाज में तमाम तरह की संस्थाएं सहयोग करती हैं। यह संस्थाएं औपचारिक तथा अनौपचारिक होती है, परन्तु इन दोनों संस्थाओं का ज्ञान व्यक्ति के लिए आवश्यक होती है। इस शोध पत्र में यह जानने का प्रयास किया गया है कि चौपाल का महत्त्व क्या है? इस बदलते दौर में चौपाले क्यों आवश्य है? चौपाल लोक संस्कृति के संरक्षण में कैसे सहायक है? बदलाव के इस दौर में क्या चौपाले बदल पाई? इस शोध पत्र के माध्यम से इन सभी प्रश्नों के उत्तर को जानने का प्रयास किया गया है।

प्रस्तावना : चौपाल का विकास मानव समाज के साथ ही हुआ है। चौपाल का शुरुआती इतिहास जानने के लिए कुछ सौ वर्षों तक ही पीछे जा सकते है। चौपाल को पुरातन इतिहास में भी देखा जा सकता है। चौपाल का अर्थ होता है, जहां लोग एकत्र हो तथा किसी बात पर चर्चा कर सके। चौपाल पर लोग सामान्य बैठकों से लेकर गम्भीर बैठकें तक करते हैं। चौपाल पर बैठना मानव का सामान्य स्वभाव है। चौपाल पर लोग साझा बैठक करते है तथा निर्णय लेते है।

चौपाल पर हंसी मजाक भी किया जाता है। चौपाल पर निर्णय करने वाले लोग समाज के बहुत ही प्रभावशाली व ज्ञानी लोग होते है। चौपाल के पदाधिकारी फिर उनका पद चाहे वंशानुगत अथवा त्वरित सर्वसम्मति से चुने गए बैठक के नेता हो, ये लोग अन्य की तुलना में समझदार होते है। चौपाल संचार के आदान प्रदान के लिए एक मंच है। संचार भले ही बहुत सामान्य शब्द लग रहा हो, परन्तु मानव जीवन में संचार बहुत ही आवश्यक है। केवल जे कुमार के अनुरूप जब व्यक्ति बचपन में किसी से नाराज होता है तो वह बात करना कम कर देता है, दूसरे शब्दों में कहें तो कुट्टा अथवा कुट्टी कर लेता है, दो देशों के मध्य जब संबंध बिगड़ते है तो देश भी आपस में आधिकारिक व प्रत्यक्ष रूप से बात करना तक बंद कर देते है, जेल में कैद व्यक्ति के अधिकारों के रक्षण के लिए तमाम तरह की संस्थाएं काम करती है। जेल काटना कठिन है, क्योंकि जेल में व्यक्ति को संचार से अलग कर दिया जाता है। जीवन में संचार के महत्त्व को नकारा नहीं जा सकता है। संचार व्यक्ति के ज्ञान को समृद्ध करता है तथा संचार से ज्ञान व सूचनाओं का आदान-प्रदान भी होता है।

चौपाल लोगों के मत निर्माण में महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका का निर्वहन करती है। चौपाल पर उन व्यक्तियों को समाज का नेतृत्व करने का अवसर दिया जाता है जो समाज में अपनी आदर्श छवि बनाए रखते है। चौपाल पर गंभीर चर्चा अथवा पंचायत के समय कोई भी निर्णय नहीं दे सकता है। चौपाल पर निर्णय देने के लिए व्यक्ति को एक आदर्श जीवन का निर्वहन करना होता है। आज भी चौपालों से किया गया आह्वान लोगों को प्रभावित करता है। लोग इनको दिल से मानते है। चौपाल के पदाधिकारी की छवि सिर्फ स्वयं से नहीं

22

UGC Listed Research Journal

222

11. Interrogating Chaupals & Kebangs as Alternative Sites of Power: A Comparative Study

Anuj
Research Scholar
Department of Mass Communication
Mizoram University
9540306038
thanujpratap@gmail.com

Dr. Dheeraj Kumar
Assistant Professor
Department of Mass Communication
Mizoram University

Abstract

Chaupals and Kebangs have historically served as community forums for socio-cultural discourses over the years. These traditional spaces have exercised immense power at different points in time serving very often as sites where multiple discursive narratives jostle for power. In kebangs and chaupals, individuals come together to discuss and make decisions on issues that affect their communities. Both these institutions welcome social, political, and economic debate. While these institutions predate modern day establishments by thousands of years, their significance in spite of the judico-constitutional framework that guides our socio-cultural life have not diminished. It is interesting to note how Chaupals and Kebangs despite being separated in terms of geographic spaces function in symmetrical modes of working in public sphere. This paper is an attempt to theorize on how Chaupals and Kebangs work as what Jurgen Habermas calls public sphere to deliver on and shape public discourses on a host of issues in socio-cultural domain. In doing so it will take into account such theoretical framework as power, ideology, discourse as it manifests in the works of Foucault and Althusser amongst others. Chaupals and Kebangs have consistently redefined it in the face of the changing times and have emerged as dynamic centres of power albeit with varying degrees of controversy. As alternative sites of power that communicates strongly on conflict and compromises, these traditional institutions have become an important subject of study.

Keywords: Chaupal, Kebang, North-east India, Mising or Mishing community, communication.

11. Interrogating Chaupals & Kebangs as Alternative Sites of Power: A Comparative Study

Anuj
Research Scholar
Department of Mass Communication
Mizoram University
9540306038
thanujpratap@gmail.com

Dr. Dheeraj Kumar
Assistant Professor
Department of Mass Communication
Mizoram University

Abstract

Chaupals and Kebangs have historically served as community forums for socio-cultural discourses over the years. These traditional spaces have exercised immense power at different points in time serving very often as sites where multiple discursive narratives jostle for power. In kebangs and chaupals, individuals come together to discuss and make decisions on issues that affect their communities. Both these institutions welcome social, political, and economic debate. While these institutions predate modern day establishments by thousands of years, their significance in spite of the judico-constitutional framework that guides our socio-cultural life have not diminished. It is interesting to note how Chaupals and Kebangs despite being separated in terms of geographic spaces function in symmetrical modes of working in public sphere. This paper is an attempt to theorize on how Chaupals and Kebangs work as what Jurgen Habermas calls public sphere to deliver on and shape public discourses on a host of issues in socio-cultural domain. In doing so it will take into account such theoretical framework as power, ideology, discourse as it manifests in the works of Foucault and Althusser amongst others. Chaupals and Kebangs have consistently redefined it in the face of the changing times and have emerged as dynamic centres of power albeit with varying degrees of controversy. As alternative sites of power that communicates strongly on conflict and compromises, these traditional institutions have become an important subject of study.

Keywords: Chaupal, Kebang, North-east India, Mising or Mishing community, communication.

Research Paper Presented

Research Paper Presented

Research Paper Presented

PARTICULARS OF THE CANDIDATE

Name of the Candidate : Anuj

Degree : Ph.D.

Department : Department of Mass communication

Title of Thesis : Relevance of Chaupals in rural communication in postmodern era: with special reference to national capital region

Date of Admission : 30th August 2021

Approval of research Proposal

- Date of admission : 30th August 2021
- Date of DRC : 17th March 2022
- Date of BoS : 27th May 2022
- Date of School Board : 6th June 2022

Mizoram University Registration number : 2200203

Ph.D Registration Number : MZU/Ph/D./1872 of 30.08.2021

Head

Department of Mass communication

ABSTRACT

RELEVANCE OF CHAUPALS IN RURAL COMMUNICATION IN POST MODERN ERA: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ANUJ

MZU REGISTRATION NO.:2200203

Ph.D. REGISTRATION NO.: MZU/Ph.D./1872 of 30.08.2021

DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION

SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, MANAGEMENT

AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

DECEMBER 2024

RELEVANCE OF CHAUPALS IN RURAL COMMUNICATION IN POST MODERN ERA: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

BY

ANUJ

DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION

SUPERVISOR

DR. DHEERAJ KUMAR

Submitted

In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Mass Communication of Mizoram University, Aizawl.

Abstract

1. Introduction
1.1 Public Sphere

The public sphere can be understood as a concept deeply rooted in liberal ideals, traditionally viewed as an intermediary space between the private and public domains. Today, as our world rapidly evolves, the notion of a global Public Sphere has become increasingly relevant (Giri, 2020). Generally, people see the Public Sphere as a social realm distinct from the family, market, and state, where individuals can gather to deliberate, engage, and share ideas on matters of public concern. However, no universally accepted definition exists for the Public Sphere. According to Sussane Hober Rodolph, the Public Sphere is an autonomous, non-state domain dedicated to empowering citizens, fostering social trust, and facilitating meaningful communication with the state. India has a long-standing and profound relationship with the concept of the Public Sphere. For centuries, various movements and discussions have advocated for a space where citizens can freely engage in social discourse and drive collective action. (Rodolph at al., 2020)

The public sphere is often described as a space where individuals come together to discuss, debate, and exchange ideas on issues of public interest. This deliberative process is fundamental in shaping public opinion, which is a cornerstone of a healthy democracy. Public discourse and exchange of ideas are not only reflective of individual thinking but also collectively influence social, economic, and political perspectives, contributing to societal evaluation and development. In a democratic society, it is expected that citizens participate in constructive discussions that foster the growth of a progressive and informed community. This engagement in political discourse assumes critical importance in any democracy, as it enables citizens to engage with issues that affect the governance and future direction of their society. In the framework of social mediation, the public sphere functions as a dynamic medium for discussion, where individuals engage directly or through representation. Media, both traditional and new, plays an instrumental role in facilitating this exchange. Traditional media—including print, radio, and television—

has historically provided the public with access to information, thus contributing significantly to the development of an informed public sphere. As society transitions to digital platforms, new media now offers more interactive spaces for public engagement. (fischer et al., 2024)

1.1.1 Digital Public Sphere

As society has evolved, the public sphere has expanded beyond traditional, physical spaces to include a dynamic digital realm, transforming the way people communicate, exchange ideas, and participate in public discourse. The emergence of the digital public sphere, driven by the rapid rise of the Internet and advancements in digital technology, has opened up new possibilities for civic engagement and collective dialogue. This shift enables individuals to access a variety of platforms through which they can express views, share information, and organize around issues of mutual concern. Today, digital media serves as an inclusive, widely accessible space that complements the traditional public sphere by reaching broader, more diverse audiences. (Fuchs, C., 2020)

1.2 folklore

1.2.1 Folklore communication

A specific group or individual expresses and preserves their cultural identity through the dynamic medium of folklore. Folklore encompasses a rich tradition of oral communication, including stories, proverbs, and jokes. It also includes various elements of material culture, such as traditional architectural styles and crafts like handmade toys. Additionally, folklore incorporates traditional knowledge, practices, and rituals associated with celebrations such as Holi, Diwali, and weddings. Folk dances and initiation rites, whether performed individually or collectively, are considered important artifacts of folklore. (Ben-Amos, D., 2020)

1.2.2 Communication in Rural Areas

Rural communication refers to an interactive process that facilitates the exchange of knowledge, skills, and information relevant to development between farmers and extension or advisory services. The role of communication has been very significant in rural and urban development. The folk theatre is a crucial instrument for communication. In addition to other forms of communication, this one also incorporates many other significant elements including dance, music, pantomime, versification, and regional art. The name of Himachal Pradesh is Dev Bhoomi, which is evident in all of the celebrations, fairs, cultural events, etc. that take place there. Folk theatre is a highly useful communication medium utilized in rural areas, where an effort is made to get the proper message over to the local populace. (Shandil, M., 2023).

1.2.3 Rural Media

Rural media is that type of media that target primary audience outside a metropolitan area. Types of rural media

- Conventional media
- Non-conventional media

1.2.3.1 Conventional media or Mass media

This medium can reach millions of people simultaneously, making it a highly effective form of communication. The audience for this type of media is diverse. Strategies for rural communication differ from those aimed at the general public. Examples of conventional media include radio, television, print materials, and cinema.

1.2.3.2 Non-conventional or Traditional media

Traditional, non-electronic media in India plays a vital role in cultural transmission, bridging generations and reinforcing values within communities. This type of media includes haats (local markets), melas (fairs), puppet shows, wall paintings, and regional theater, all of which are deeply woven into the social fabric of rural India. Life in these rural areas can be demanding, given infrastructure

challenges and extreme weather, yet it remains culturally vibrant, with music, art, and folk traditions integral to daily expression. In rural India, mass media has started to gain ground, but it often requires a foundational level of literacy and access, which are sometimes limited in these areas. Traditional folk media, therefore, occupies a unique space, overcoming these barriers through storytelling, songs, dances, and visual art that resonate with rural audiences on a personal level. Folk media encompasses a wide range of expressions—oral, musical, and visual—that transmit knowledge, values, and communal identity from one generation to the next. (Imo-Ter Nyam, I., et al 2018).

1.2.3.2.1 Nagada for Communication

The text delves into the significance of folk arts and traditional tools as central elements in indigenous communication methods, particularly through the use of instruments like the Nagada. This historic percussion instrument has served as a staple in rural Indian culture for centuries, deeply embedded in communal practices and messaging. Despite technological advancements, the Nagada's relevance endures in modern celebrations, where its resonant, echoing sound acts as both a cultural emblem and a call to gather. Historically, the Nagada was not only a musical instrument but also a means of communication. In rural settings, it was used to transmit messages across distances, functioning as an early, auditory form of mass communication. For example, during the Holi festival, villagers continue the tradition of bringing a large, wheeled Nagada to the central Chaupal, a common space where community discussions and celebrations take place. The drum's rhythmic beat invites community members from their homes to the Chaupal, where they gather for collective celebration, storytelling, and social bonding. This ritual underscores the Nagada's role as more than just an instrument; it is a unifying force that reinforces community ties, supports cultural continuity, and brings people together in shared experiences. (Singh Kachhawa, R., et al 2021).

1.2.3.2.2 Puppetry

Puppetry has long been a prominent form of communication in rural areas, with roots tracing back approximately 3,000 years. Among the many styles of puppetry, shadow and string puppetry are particularly well-regarded in India, yet numerous other forms contribute to this rich tradition. This storytelling method employs puppets to communicate messages effectively across a wide audience, allowing both educational and social themes to be conveyed in an accessible manner that resonates with diverse community members. Puppetry's versatility makes it an invaluable tool for rural education and social messaging. Through engaging narratives and characters, puppetry can effectively simplify complex topics like child psychology, hygiene, civic responsibilities, history, geography, and even poetry. (kumar, P.,2022).

1.2.3.2.3 Patachitra Katha

Pattachitra Katha, also known as Pattachitra, is a distinctive form of storytelling through visual art, deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of Odisha (formerly Orissa) in India. Derived from the Sanskrit words "Patta" (cloth) and "Chitra" (picture), Pattachitra involves intricate paintings on cloth, which are traditionally used to narrate mythological tales, historical events, and spiritual stories. This art form originated as early as the 12th century, strongly linked to the worship of Lord Jagannath and the temple rituals surrounding him in Puri, Odisha. In a typical Pattachitra, artists use natural colors and hand-made brushes to depict vivid scenes that are characterized by bold lines, vibrant colors, and detailed ornamentation. Stories often center on episodes from Hindu epics like the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and various legends surrounding deities, with a particular emphasis on the stories of Lord Jagannath. (Kargatia, J., et al 2024)

1.2.3.2.4 The act of narrating a narrative

The practice of storytelling is one of the oldest forms of human expression and serves as a vital medium of folk art, particularly for communication in rural communities. Storytelling predates written language and has been instrumental in preserving history, culture, and moral lessons across generations. Many tales, often

rich with cultural significance, remain undocumented or unrecorded, passed down orally from one generation to the next. These narratives frequently recount the adventures and trials of various heroes, heroines, and notable figures, serving not only to entertain but also to educate and reinforce societal values. In India, storytelling manifests in numerous forms, each with its unique style and cultural significance. Prominent among these are Harikatha and Lokgan. Harikatha combines storytelling with music and dance, typically narrating the life stories of deities, especially Lord Krishna, while emphasizing moral teachings and spiritual lessons. (Madgulkar, V., et al 2023)

1.2.3.2.5 Nautanki

South Asia, particularly North India, recognizes Nautanki as one of the oldest forms of folk operatic theatre. Prior to the rise of cinema, Nautanki enjoyed widespread popularity across India, captivating audiences with its dynamic performances. Villagers express a strong desire to engage with stories that reflect their current circumstances and societal issues. Nautanki serves as a vital medium for raising social awareness by addressing important topics such as the dowry system and the dangers associated with the use of toxic substances in agriculture. Additionally, it tackles pressing concerns like unemployment and illiteracy, making it relevant to the lives of its audience. Through its engaging narratives, Nautanki not only entertains but also educates, fostering dialogue and reflection on these significant issues within the community. (Sharma, D., 2020).

1.2.3.2.6 In Nautanki, comedy conceals the underlying message.

Fairs and festivals play a significant role in communication within rural India, serving as vibrant forums where individuals gather to exchange ideas, celebrate traditions, and foster community bonds. These events are imbued with messages of vitality, color, tranquility, and human connection. In West Bengal, the grand celebration of Durga Puja draws people together to honor the goddess and partake in cultural festivities. Similarly, Baisakhi is celebrated in Bengal, marking the harvest season with joyous festivities. In Maharashtra, the exuberance of Ganesh Chaturthi brings communities together to worship Lord Ganesha and partake in various cultural

activities. Tamil Nadu's Pongal celebrates the harvest, emphasizing gratitude and community spirit, while Kerala's Onam reflects a rich tradition of hospitality and cultural pride. During these fairs and festivals, attendees often exchange sweets and messages of goodwill, reinforcing social ties and enhancing community cohesion. Furthermore, these gatherings frequently serve as platforms for arranging marriages, allowing families to connect and solidify relationships between young men and women. (Sharma, D., 2020).

1.2.3.2.7 Traditional dances

Regional variations play a significant role in distinguishing folk dances across India, with each area showcasing its unique styles that reflect local customs and traditions. Folk dancing serves as a powerful medium for expressing a wide range of emotions, capturing the essence of community life and cultural identity. In rural India, traditional folk dances are vital communication tools that convey messages relevant to the community. They often address social issues, celebrations, and shared experiences, allowing individuals to connect with one another through performance (Mohanty, A., et al 2018).

1.2.3.2.8 Ragini Folk Song style of Delhi NCR

Ragini is a genre of music that holds a vital place in the realm of Indian folk music. With a rich and storied history, both music and dance have flourished in India, and Ragini is particularly gaining traction in Northern India, especially in the state of Haryana. Performances of Ragini are characterized by a vibrant display of colors, diverse musical styles, varied tones, rhythms, and expressive movements. Sung in a local dialect of Hindi, Ragini reflects the cultural nuances of the region. Efforts are currently underway to preserve recordings of Ragini, a genre that was traditionally transmitted orally from one generation to the next, without the benefit of written documentation. This oral tradition played a crucial role in maintaining its legacy. The themes explored in Ragini are diverse, encompassing mythology, sociopolitical issues, education, women's empowerment, social awareness, and nationalism. (Dutta, S.2024).

1.2.3.2.9 Sang

Art as a medium is intrinsically connected to the people who create it. Understanding folk arts does not require any special equipment. When a listener is part of the same community and comprehends the language of the folk art, they can engage more deeply with the work and grasp its intended message. In Haryana, both Ragini and Saang exemplify local folk art. While Ragini can be performed independently, Lokin Saang cannot exist without Ragini. In this region, folk theater is referred to as Saang, whereas folk songs are known as Ragini. (Attri, S. 2023).

1.3 Chaupals and its types

Chaupals serve as community hubs in rural India, primarily frequented by men who gather to discuss various issues. These spaces facilitate conversations on important matters, but they also foster laughter, joy, and the sharing of both happiness and sorrow. In smaller villages, Chaupals are often located under large trees, such as the Peepal or Banyan tree. In larger villages, Chaupals may be housed in buildings known as Mehman Khana, or community guesthouses. Chaupals are vital gathering places where people come together in both formal and informal settings. During informal gatherings, announcements about government policies and other community news are made. Entertainment is also a part of these meetings, with performances such as 'Ragini' and local plays (Bharne, V. 2019)

In villages where Chaupals exist, the leaders establish ethical guidelines for the community, and residents typically adhere to these rules since they are widely accepted. For instance, in certain villages in Faridabad, the elders of the Chaupals have determined that they will not permit a Baarat (wedding procession) to enter the village if it is accompanied by loud music and a DJ (disc jockey). In other villages, when a Baarat arrives with a DJ, only the guests are allowed to enter, while the DJ must remain outside the village. India, being the second-most populous country in the world, often experiences delays in the justice system, making the legal process lengthy and complicated. In many cases, resolution can take an extended period. Consequently, various disputes are resolved by the leaders of Chaupals. for example, they may be denied the offer of Hukka (a traditional smoking pipe) and excluded

from social events. This exclusion is viewed as a social stigma, referred to as "Hukka Pani Band." Chaupals also act as a center of communication, where elderly individuals congregate to connect with their peers, as well as communicate with their children or grandchildren. (Bhattacharya, P. 2024).

Every society has its own set of patterns, rules, and norms that together constitute intangible culture. These cultural elements are typically passed down from one generation to the next through oral traditions. Older individuals play a crucial role in this transmission, sharing their life experiences and wisdom with the younger generation. This cultural transfer primarily occurs through language, which acts as a bridge between generations. In recent times, Chaupals have significantly contributed to the knowledge and awareness of youth regarding living standards and societal issues. Historically, Chaupals were vital social hubs for community interaction and engagement. However, in today's postmodern era, many young people are increasingly absorbed in their mobile devices and laptops, spending more time in virtual environments rather than participating in traditional communal gatherings.(Suthar, S. K., 2022)

This initiative has yielded positive results; for instance, Tamil Nadu recorded the highest number of female panchayat chiefs according to national data from 2012. In addition to gender, caste also plays a role in determining reservations within Gram Sabhas, further enhancing the spirit of democracy. Gram Swarajya represents the ideal of a perfect democracy, with the concept of decentralized governance having deep roots in various segments of Indian society. Both village councils and the modern public sphere coexist, illustrating the enduring significance of grassroots participation in democracy. (Dash, B. B, 2020).

People in earlier societies were often deeply focused on their work. The social structure was not particularly uniform, and individuals had little time for leisure, rest, or even socializing. Completing tasks was the primary concern. Throughout history, civilizations have developed complex organizational systems that dictated daily life. During those times, distractions were minimal due to smaller populations, allowing people to dedicate their attention to work. However, in the

evenings or at night, they typically gathered in communal spaces to share opinions, stories, and thoughts. These gatherings served as a platform for resolving disputes and discussing shared joys, sorrows, and collaborative efforts. (Hong, P., et al 202)

1.3.1 Chaupal and the public sphere

Public sphere is considered to be the foundation of modern democracy. Without a Public sphere, democracy will also disappear. A democracy must protect the individual's space in order to be considered genuinely liberal. By limiting the power of the state and shielding the populace from its overwhelming might, Public sphere defends the rights of the people. Modernization and industrialization are to blame for the rise of Public sphere in western nations. People regard America as a nation that values free speech and expression, similar to the Westphalia Declaration, Magna Carta 1215, and the French Revolution. India made reference to Public sphere even earlier. "Janasya gopah," which means "protector of people and wealth from cattle," provided support to an elderly community in the village. This Rajanya committee used to have participation from the general public as well. It's interesting that women served on these committees, with the committee's primary goal being the king's election. Prajapati regards the committee and the legislature as his two daughters. "Narista" is the name of the location where the learned man once had discussions. In the past, people used the term "goshthi" to refer to Chaupal; however, in modern times, Chaupal encompasses a wide range of meanings. (Narayan, B., 2021).

1.3.1 Chaupals by Organised Sectors

1.3.1.1 Dak Chaupal

In addition to traditional and online Chaupals, various government and non-government organizations arrange Chaupals across the country, following the model of historic village Chaupals. These modern Chaupals enable open discussions in rural communities, giving residents a space to freely express their thoughts among their peers. Government departments organize Chaupals as platforms for direct community interaction, much like traditional Chaupals. The Department of Posts, for instance, organizes Dak Chaupals, also known as the Dak Community Development

Program. Much like a village Chaupal, Dak Chaupals provide services directly to the public, expediting the resolution of community issues. (Inida Post, 2023)

1.3.1.2 Traffic Chaupal

Chaupals continue to serve as platforms for informing rural populations about critical social issues. They provide a space where elders and other knowledgeable community members communicate directly with younger generations, often in their native language, to ensure mutual understanding. In rural communities, the opinions of influential figures are particularly valued, and these individuals frequently lead discussions at the Chaupal. Government officials, police, and traffic officers often participate in these gatherings, offering their insights alongside community leaders. Road safety is a frequent topic of concern in Chaupals, as traffic accidents claim a substantial number of lives each year in India. The emotional and financial losses experienced by families when a primary breadwinner is lost to an accident are profound. This impact extends beyond individual families to the broader community, and with highway accidents reducing India's GDP by an estimated 3–4%, it represents a national economic burden as well. (Mangla, A., et al 2020)

1.3.1.3 Mahila Chaupal

Chaupal functions as a communal space where people come together to engage in discussions and voice opinions, supporting open communication and democratic expression. Traditionally, the Chaupal is accessible to all members of the community; however, it has generally been male-dominated, with women historically sharing their views indirectly through male family members. Today, the concept of women's Chaupals is gaining attention. Though still developing, these gatherings offer an essential platform for women to express their perspectives. In Sohna tehsil, Haryana, a government initiative recently opened the Chaupal to women, marking a significant step in addressing gender disparity in public spaces. For the first time in this village, the inclusion of women in the Chaupal reflects the state's efforts to promote gender equality. The village of seventy residents, including seventeen women, has actively worked to enhance female representation on the Chaupal,

promoting an inclusive decision-making environment. This initiative has inspired other villages, such as Bibipur in Jind, Haryana, where a dedicated women's Chaupal has become a central meeting space for women to discuss issues and pursue knowledge. The library, "Lado Pustkalaya," associated with the women's Chaupal, has encouraged more women to read and become involved in community matters. In Haryana's cultural context, the Chaupal holds symbolic significance, often viewed as sacred, akin to a village temple. The changes also reflect shifts in customs—where once women were required to wear veils even in female-only spaces, there is now greater freedom, marking progress toward gender equality in community engagement. (Sinha, A., et al 2020).

1.3.1.4 Police Chaupal

The police use Chaupals as community forums to help reduce crime and increase awareness in rural areas. These gatherings serve as platforms to educate villagers on safety measures, particularly for women, to prevent harassment and cybercrime. Police officers inform attendees about resources like Women Power Line 1090 and emergency Dial 112, as well as provide guidelines on internet safety, such as avoiding video calls from unknown numbers, never sharing one-time passwords, and only downloading applications from trusted sources. (Bhattacharya, C. D. S., et al 2021).

1.3.1.5 Cyber Chaupal

Through Cyber Chaupal, the government educates individuals about the dangers of engaging in cybercrime. The government utilizes Chaupals in the village or any other gathering place for this purpose. In addition, senior officials from the district administration and the police department are present at the location. These folks also avoid engaging in criminal activity online and do not end up being victims of cybercrime.

1.3.1.6 Rahat Chaupal

According to The Hindu, the Uttar Pradesh government is conducting 'Rahat Chaupal' meetings in flood-affected areas to coordinate flood relief and educate

communities on safety measures. During floods, individuals should prioritize personal safety by following official evacuation orders, moving to higher ground, and keeping emergency supplies like clean drinking water, non-perishable food, first-aid kits, and essential documents within reach. Effective flood preparedness involves knowledge of local emergency contacts, staying informed on weather updates, and avoiding floodwaters, as they can be dangerous and often contaminated. (The Hindu 2023)

1.4 Traditional Chaupals

Traditional Chaupals are community spaces where people gather to discuss a range of topics, from critical issues to everyday matters. Typically located at the village center, Chaupals offer a forum for sharing ideas and expressing opinions. They host both formal and informal gatherings: formal meetings often involve decision-making, Panchayat sessions, and discussions about government programs, while informal gatherings focus more on socializing, entertainment, and general conversation. Cultural activities such as folk songs, dances, and performances are also common at Chaupals, with Ragini performances, particularly in western Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, conveying social messages or critiquing societal issues. Chaupals are integral to life-cycle events like marriage processions, where the community gathers to celebrate. (Chakraborty, M. W., et al 2018).

In ancient times, the Chaupal held great significance as the primary communal space in villages. It was commonly regarded as a platform where individuals could freely express their thoughts and share truth. Traditionally, Chaupals were not enclosed structures but open spaces, often situated under large banyan trees, providing shade and a central location for villagers to gather. (Sinha, A., et al 2020).

1.5.1 Social Media Chaupals

Social Media Chaupals are only conducted as Virtual Platform Chaupals where people connect to each other virtually through any group. Information and communication technology has had a significant impact on various parts of the world. Technology influences a vast range of sectors that are impossible to measure.

Agriculture utilizes Information and Communication Technology (ICT). (Shahid, S., et al 2019).

1.5.2 Digital Mandi

An electronic trading platform is referred to as a digital market. This platform facilitates interactions between farmers and dealers, enabling in-depth discussions about grains and other commodities. Numerous dealers participate in the online market and communicate directly with farmers. Additionally, many companies in the digital market are interested in online payment solutions.(Joshi, J., et al 2020, April)

1.5.3 Easykrishi

Easykrishi is a recently established firm. He aims to accelerate the pace of agricultural development in India. The partnership is made up of 12 farmer producer organizations (FPOs) and 150 ground organizations. Using the Easykrishi app, farmers can collectively monitor the cultivation process in real time. This application is accessible to both agricultural leaders and anyone with a basic understanding of society. (Das, A et al. 2022)

1.6 Post-modernity

Postmodernism is a broad concept that originated in the 20th century, describing a shift in various fields, including literature, science, and technology. Following modernism, the postmodern movement evolved as a response to the Enlightenment period of the 17th and 18th centuries, when individuals increasingly valued rational thought over inherited beliefs. Modernity prompted a "renaissance" that fostered progress, leading religion to become more of a personal matter. Modernity, deeply inspired by art and philosophy, began in the late 19th century, coinciding with industrialization. It signified a move away from traditional constraints such as superstition and religious orthodoxy, emphasizing rationality and self-consciousness. (Keane, J., 2018)

1.7 Theoretical Framework

Public sphere terminology in a democracy at the heart of the participatory approach is the essential approach to democracy. The public sphere is the area where people come together. Share views and build public opinion on issues related to the public. It is a special area where people gather, it is the infrastructure of communication by which citizens exchange information and public opinion is formed. Good governance is the main aspect of the public sphere. Without a democratic public sphere, government employees cannot be accountable for their work. The public sphere is a prescriptive idea. This is ideal for a good and responsible government. It is necessary for free dissemination of information, freedom of expression, right to debate. Habermas first mentions the public sphere in his 1962 book 'The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere'. Small groups of people, including relatives, acquaintances, or subordinates, met in a single hall during the feudal era to share information about current events. In the past, people gathered elsewhere to issue orders. People of the bourgeois class addressed political topics and democratic ideas in public settings such as coffee shops and salons. A gathering spot where individuals can engage in discourse further reinforces people's faith in democracy. We often live in democracies that guarantee free speech.

The characteristics of the public sphere

Inclusiveness: All kinds of people have access to the public sphere; this access is beyond any social strata, gender, or postposition.

Debate: A logical and open debate takes place in the public sphere. The public sphere is a place where ideas are discussed and logical discussions occur.

The public sphere, where logical debates occur, shapes public opinion and influences the capacity to make political decisions.

Autonomy from the state and the market: The public sphere must always be autonomous, independent of government and economic influence. The smooth running of the public sphere is very important.

1.8 Statement of Problem

Chaupals are commonplace in the village and a center of people where they come and share their opinions and views on various topics. People can discuss every subject there; the topic can be Regional, National, and International. Chaupals helps people by educating them about the language, culture, values, and rules of society. But in this digital world, gadgets and other technologies are influencing today's youth. They are spending more time on mobile phones, the internet, and other devices. After this pandemic situation, especially the young generation has gone to be formally and informally dependent on smart gadgets. Therefore, the young generation is showing their interest in the virtual world by making new friends on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and many others, as they are not much interested to know about the actual society. Aristotle, the esteemed Greek philosopher, famously stated, "Man is by nature a social animal; an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human." Every society serves as an educator, instilling knowledge, culture, traditions, and values in its members. In this research, the researcher will focus its work on how youth is connected to Chaupals and how more youth can be connected to Chaupals and importance of folklore in Chaupals. In National Capital Region Ragini a style of folk singing is sung by the performer where they give a message with the help of songs. Women are helping men in all fields. This study also reveal status of women in Chaupals.

1.9 Significance of the Study:

The main purpose of the study is to find out communication pattern of Chaupals. Governments are spending lots of budgets on Chaupals. This research will also find out the status of women in Chaupals. This study will try to also find out how Chaupals are relevant in the postmodern era. The researcher will also try to find out how Chaupals are important center of cultural and communication centers. This research will find role of folklore in Chaupal. This study will also find out the reason why Chaupals are only limited to rural areas why Chaupals are not exists in advance cities.

1.10 Research objectives

The objectives of the study are: -

1. To examine the role of various communication methods in Chaupals which include traditional, mediated and new media communication.
2. To explore and analyses the role and issues of folk communication in Chaupals.
3. To assess the impact of oral communication significance and function within Chaupals.
4. To investigate the participation and influence of specific demographics and the levels of awareness of women and the contributions of youth on Chaupals.
5. To analyze and focus on how the rural communication systems function and their impact within Chaupals.

1.11 Research questions (RQs)

This study seeks to answer these research questions: -

1. Whether and to what extent traditional mass medium effects communication in Chaupals?

2. Whether and to what extent folk medium effects communication in Chaupals?

3. Whether and to what extent oral communication in Chaupals?

4. Whether and to what extent women aware about issues in Chaupals?

5. Whether and to what extent youth play significant role in Chaupals?

6. Whether and to what extent social media effects communication in Chaupals?

7. Which form of mediated communication are using in Chaupals?

1.12 Research design and Sampling Method

In mixed methods research, researchers do study using both quantitative and qualitative research procedures, data gathering and analysis tools, and so on. This is a

pretty thorough approach. In simple terms, it is an Endeavour to view things from multiple perspectives. The use of a mixed method research design also aids in the completion of the research by utilizing methodologies from various fields. If the researcher possesses the necessary skills, a hybrid method approach is a viable option. In mixed-method research, the researcher must use a variety of approaches. This approach is employed in this study for data fusion and analysis at the very least. For in-depth studies, mixed methods research employs more than one method. Many people believe in mixed methods research. (Creswell & Clark,2018).

The purpose of this topic was to examine the **relevance of Chaupals in rural communication in the post-modern era**, focusing specifically on villages in the **Delhi-NCR (National Capital Region)**. Specifically selected only those villages where Chaupals are still active, and people used to gather and engage in discussions at these Chaupals.

For the **qualitative research**, **purposive sampling** was employed to gather in-depth insights from key stakeholders involved in the functioning of Chaupals.

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, gathering both quantitative and qualitative data. Given that most individuals in the communities lacked formal education, an organized timetable was implemented to facilitate the collection of quantitative data. Therefore, the researcher personally visited the participants and filled out the structured schedule.

For qualitative data collection, an unstructured discussion guide was used to conduct in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. This approach enabled the researchers to capture a broad range of perspectives while also exploring detailed, context-specific insights related to the historical and contemporary relevance of Chaupals in rural communication.

1.13 Area of Study

The area of study was the **Delhi-NCR region**, which includes 31 districts from four major states: **Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan**. Each of these states has its own socio-cultural and economic background, which plays an important

role in how Chaupal's function as a communication system. The selection of villages from these four states allowed for the representation of regional diversity in the research, ensuring that the findings were applicable across different rural contexts within the NCR.

- **Haryana**: Known for its strong tradition of rural governance and the use of Chaupals for community discussions and decision-making. Including villages from Haryana ensured that the research reflected the traditional role of Chaupals in village life.

- **Uttar Pradesh**: Villages in Uttar Pradesh were included because of their long-standing reliance on Chaupals as centers for social, political, and economic interaction, especially in rural governance and dispute resolution.

- **Delhi**: Despite being an urbanized state, some villages in Delhi still retain traditional communication structures, including Chaupals. Studying these villages allowed research to explore how these traditional systems adapt to urban pressures.

- **Rajasthan**: Known for its deep-rooted rural traditions, Rajasthan was included to capture the cultural continuity of Chaupals in rural communication. Chaupals in this state often play a key role in resolving disputes and making decisions that affect the entire village.

1.13.1 Research Approach

The research followed mixed **methods** to comprehensively address the research questions. This method combined both **quantitative and qualitative methods**, allowing for a broader understanding of the role of Chaupals while also exploring detailed insights from key individuals.

- **Quantitative Method**: In this method, a structured schedule was used to collect data from a large sample of villagers. The aim was to identify patterns in the use of Chaupals, the frequency of communication activities, and the type of information exchanged in these spaces.

- **Qualitative Method**: The qualitative method involved conducting **In-Depth interviews (IDIs)** and **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** with key community leaders and stakeholders such as village heads (Gram Pradhans), Chaupal leaders, and other influential figures in the village. The purpose of these interviews was to gain deeper insights into the historical significance of Chaupals, how they have evolved over time, and their future role in rural communication.

1.13.2 Sampling Strategy

Given the large population of villages in the Delhi-NCR region, a multistage sampling along with snowball sampling was adopted for quantitative research. This method allowed the researcher to systematically narrow down from a larger population to a smaller, more manageable sample of villages that were most relevant to the study. Snowball sampling was used for selecting districts and villages for quantitative research, while purposive sampling was used for selecting respondents for the qualitative research.

1.13.3 Defining the Population

The target population for the study consisted of **villages in the Delhi-NCR region** that still had an **active Chaupal**. Chaupals are central to the research because they serve as communal spaces where villagers gather to discuss important issues, resolve disputes, and make decisions. Villages without Chaupals would not have been suitable for this study, as the research focused on how these spaces facilitate rural communication.

1.13.4 Multistage Sampling for Quantitative Data Collection

Multistage sampling was employed to select a sample of villages that would represent the diversity of the region. The sampling process consisted of the following steps:

1. **Stratification by State**: In the first stage, the research stratified the Delhi-NCR region into its four constituent states: **Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan**. Stratification was used to ensure that villages from each state

were represented in the sample, as rural communication practices and the use of Chaupals could vary between states due to socio-cultural and economic differences.

2. **Snowball Sampling of Districts and Villages**: After stratifying the region by state, snowball sampling was used to select districts and villages. A literature review provided limited information about the specific districts where Chaupals were still active. Therefore, the researcher visited several locations and interviewed residents to identify villages where Chaupals were operational.

3. **Selection of Villages**: In the third stage, based on these visits and discussions, villages with active Chaupals were selected. Only those villages with operational and active Chaupals were included in the final sample, as their presence was essential to the research objectives.

1.13.5 Rationale for Selecting Villages:

- The selected villages were chosen based on their **geographical distribution**, ensuring that they represented different parts of the NCR.

- The presence of **active Chaupals** was the key criterion for inclusion. Villages without Chaupals were excluded from the study because the research focused on the role of these communal spaces in rural communication.

1.13.6 Quantitative Sampling

Sample Size Determination (Krejcie and Morgan Table 1970)

The sample size for the quantitative phase was determined using Krejcie and Morgan Table, which is commonly used in social science research to calculate the required sample size for a given population. The following parameters were considered while calculating the sampling estimates:

Sampling at: Village level

Confidence Level: 95%

Confidence interval: 5%

1.13.2 Organization of Chapters

This research study examines the relevance of Chaupal in the modern era. The work is divided primarily into five main chapters, along with additional sub-sections. A brief explanation of each chapter is as follows:

1.13.2.1 Chapter: 1 Introduction

Chapter 1 provides an in-depth exploration of foundational concepts such as the public sphere and the digital public sphere. It also examines folklore and the dynamics of rural communication, focusing specifically on the traditional institution of the Chaupal. This chapter discusses various types of Chaupal gatherings, detailing their functions and forms within the context of rural social structures. Through a thorough analysis, this section sets the stage for understanding how these traditional modes of community interaction evolve within, and contribute to, contemporary public discourse in the digital age.

1.13.2.2 Chapter: 2 Review of Literature

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of the literature relevant to this research. It thoroughly examines the foundational scholarship on the topic, incorporating key theories and perspectives essential for understanding the concept of the public sphere. This chapter places particular emphasis on the foundational "Public Sphere Theory," analyzing how it has been utilized and modified to better understand democratic participation and dialogue. Additionally, it investigates the traditional structure of the Chaupal, with a focus on its function in rural communication and community engagement. The chapter also highlights the necessity of a strong public sphere within democratic systems, underscoring its impact on promoting civic participation and collective discussion. This literature review establishes a crucial framework for the study, positioning it within the wider academic conversation on the relationship between traditional rural structures and modern democratic thought.

1.13.2.3 Chapter: 3 Research Methodology

This chapter provides a detailed overview of the research methodology employed in the study. It discusses the selection of appropriate research approaches, outlining the criteria for determining which methods best align with the study's objectives. The chapter explains the techniques used for data collection, including methods for gathering both quantitative data and qualitative insights through interviews. Additionally, it describes the systematic process for collecting and analyzing these data. This section also examines how the research questions and objectives are addressed, with a focus on reaching well-founded conclusions based on the evidence collected. By establishing a rigorous methodological framework, this chapter lays the groundwork for effectively navigating and resolving the study's research aims.

1.13.2.4 Chapter: 4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the data collected for the study. The data were gathered through structured questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions, ensuring a diverse and representative range of responses. Specifically, the data were collected from villages in the Delhi region, providing a localized perspective on the research topic. To facilitate clear and effective presentation, the data analysis includes tables and pie charts, which visually depict key findings and trends. This structured approach to data analysis allows for in-depth interpretation and insight into the study's core questions.

1.13.2.5 Chapter: 5 Findings, Discussion, Implication and Scope for Further Research

This chapter discusses the primary findings of the research, addressing the research questions and objectives in detail. It provides an in-depth discussion of the responses gathered, analyzing them to derive meaningful insights related to the study's aims. The analysis section interprets the data comprehensively, offering a critical assessment of how these findings answer the core research inquiries. Additionally, this chapter outlines considerations for future research in this area,

emphasizing aspects that should be addressed in subsequent studies. The academic challenges encountered during this research are also documented, offering guidance for future researchers who may build upon this work. This reflective analysis aims to support and inform continued exploration within the field.

1.14 Major findings, discussion, conclusion, implications and scope for further research

This chapter discusses the primary findings of the research, addressing the research questions and objectives in detail. It provides an in-depth discussion of the responses gathered, analyzing them to derive meaningful insights related to the study's aims. The analysis section interprets the data comprehensively, offering a critical assessment of how these findings answer the core research inquiries. Additionally, this chapter outlines considerations for future research in this area, emphasizing aspects that should be addressed in subsequent studies. The academic challenges encountered during this research are also documented, offering guidance for future researchers who may build upon this work. This reflective analysis aims to support and inform continued exploration within the field.

1.14.1 Quantitative Analysis:

1.14.1.1 Demographic Representation

- **Gender:** The data revealed that **75% of participants were male** and only **25% were female**, indicating a significant gender disparity. This suggested that Chaupals were male-dominated spaces, likely reflecting cultural norms where women's participation in public forums was restricted. This might have highlighted the need for efforts to increase female participation by addressing issues that were more relevant to women or by creating a more inclusive environment.

- **Age:** The highest representation came from the **46-55 age group (24%)**, followed by the **26-35 age group (22%)**, while younger and older age groups had less representation, with only **1%** of participants being over 76 years old. This showed that middle-aged individuals were more likely to attend

Chaupals, possibly due to their greater involvement in community and household responsibilities. **Youth participation (16% in the 18-25 age group)** was lower, which might have indicated that younger individuals did not find Chaupals to address their contemporary concerns.

- **Education:** A significant percentage of respondents were **graduates (26%) or post-graduates (31%)**, indicating that Chaupals attracted a well-educated audience. This reflected that those with higher educational qualifications valued civic participation or intellectual discussions more.

- **Occupation:** Chaupals served a diverse cross-section of the community, with **26% working full-time**, **18% unemployed**, and **16% being farmers**. However, the lower representation of **students (9%) and part-time workers (12%)** suggested that these groups faced barriers to attendance or contribution in Chaupals.

Inference: Chaupals were male-dominated spaces, with minimal female participation. The dominance of the 46-55 age group indicated that middle-aged individuals were more engaged in community decision-making, while younger people and the elderly had limited participation. The higher representation of graduates and postgraduates suggested that educated individuals were more inclined towards civic participation. The low representation of students and part-time workers indicated potential barriers, possibly related to time constraints or disinterest.

1.14.1.2 Communication Preferences

- **Face-to-Face Communication Dominance:** Across both genders, face-to-face communication dominated interactions within Chaupals. A significant majority of participants preferred this method, with 92% of males and 83% of females relying primarily on direct verbal communication during discussions. This reflects the traditional nature of Chaupals, which have historically served as a space for people to gather in person, exchange ideas, and make decisions. The strong preference for face-to-face communication could be attributed to the deep-rooted belief in personal, in-person exchanges being more trustworthy and effective in building community relationships.

- **Gender and Media Usage:** While both males and females preferred face-to-face communication, there was a notable difference in how each gender used media platforms. Among the female participants, 17% reported using new media platforms, such as social media and WhatsApp, compared to only 8% of males. This difference suggested that women, who might have had more limitations on attending public gatherings due to cultural and societal restrictions, were increasingly turning to digital platforms as an alternative way to stay connected. For many women, especially in conservative or rural settings, attending public forums like Chaupals may be discouraged, making it harder for them to participate in person. In such cases, new media platforms provide a way for women to engage with discussions, share their opinions, and stay informed, without physically attending the gatherings.

- **Traditional Media Use:** Despite the increasing influence of new media platforms, a significant proportion of participants, 61%, still relied on traditional media such as print newspapers and magazines for information. This was especially true for women and older participants, who might have been more comfortable with traditional forms of media that they had used for years. Newspapers and magazines continue to play a crucial role in delivering information about local events, policies, and social issues, particularly in rural or semi-urban areas where access to technology may be limited.

- **Inference:** Face-to-face communication was the predominant form in Chaupals, highlighting the reliance on traditional methods of interaction in rural settings. The slight shift towards new media by women suggested a growing trend of using digital platforms, likely due to the limited freedom women had in physically attending Chaupals. Despite the gradual uptake of new media, traditional media (newspapers and magazines) still played a significant role, particularly for older and more traditional members of the community.

1.14.1.3 Folk Communication Mediums in Chaupals

- **Ragini or Saang as a Dominant Folk Communication Medium:** Ragini or Saang, as the most widely used folk communication medium, maintained

strong popularity across both genders, with a slightly higher preference among males (70%) compared to females (63%). This preference reflected the traditional role of men in public spaces, where they had more freedom to attend and engage with such performances. Ragini or Saang performances not only entertained but also conveyed social and political messages, which made them effective tools for raising awareness within the community.

- **Folk Songs and Drumming as Cultural Expressions:** Folk songs, chosen by 44% of respondents, were particularly significant during festivals and communal gatherings. They were more popular among men (48%) than women (34%), likely because cultural norms restricted women's public performances. Despite this, women still engaged with folk songs in more private or gender-specific spaces. Drumming, used during festivals like Holi, had a notable presence, with 34% of participants highlighting its importance. Interestingly, women took a more active role in drumming during festivals, showing their contribution to cultural expressions tied to celebration, despite societal restrictions on other public performances.

- **Decline of Street Plays and Puppet Shows:** Street plays (12%) and puppet shows (8%) saw a noticeable decline in usage, indicating that these forms of folk communication were becoming less relevant within the community. The reduced significance of these traditional art forms might have been due to the growing availability of modern entertainment options and a shift in cultural dynamics, particularly among younger generations who are more inclined towards digital media.

Inference: Ragini or Saang remained the dominant folk communication medium, reflecting the community's attachment to traditional forms of cultural expression. While men were more active in folk songs and public performances, women participated significantly in drumming during festivals, highlighting their role in cultural celebrations despite social restrictions. The decline in street plays and puppet shows indicates that modern entertainment is replacing some traditional art forms.

1.14.1.4 Challenges Facing Chaupals

- **Lack of Time (78%) and Lack of Interest (65%) as Primary Challenges:**
  The findings reveal that time constraints and disinterest were the most
  significant barriers to participation in Chaupals. These challenges were
  reflective of broader socio-economic changes that have been impacting rural
  and semi-rural communities. As more people, particularly younger
  individuals, became involved in time-consuming work commitments,
  education, and other personal responsibilities, their ability to engage in
  traditional forums like Chaupals diminished. The increasing pace of life,
  particularly with the rise of modern employment opportunities and academic
  pressures, left little time for community gatherings that were once central to
  village life.

- **Impact of Urban Migration (56%):** Urban migration was another
  significant factor contributing to the reduced engagement in Chaupals. As
  younger generations left rural areas in search of better education or job
  opportunities in cities, their absence weakened the traditional community
  structure that Chaupals depended upon. Migration created a gap not only in
  physical presence but also in the transmission of cultural values and practices
  that were historically passed down through such gatherings. The departure of
  young people meant fewer voices contributing to discussions and decisions in
  Chaupals, further eroding their role as a vibrant platform for community
  interaction.

- **Influence of Social Media (44%):** The rise of social media was another
  notable factor that posed challenges to Chaupals, particularly for younger
  generations. With the proliferation of platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook,
  and Instagram, younger individuals increasingly gravitated towards these
  faster, more dynamic modes of communication. Social media provided real-
  time interactions and broader networks, which seemed more relevant and
  appealing to the younger demographic. The instant accessibility and global
  reach of these platforms allowed people to connect beyond their immediate

community, diminishing the perceived relevance of traditional, slower-paced forums like Chaupals.

- **Social Disconnect (39%) and Generational Gaps (38%):** The findings also highlighted a growing social disconnect and widening generational gaps within the community. Younger people, driven by different priorities and interests, seemed less inclined to engage with older generations in Chaupals. This generational divide could be linked to the evolving nature of social concerns, where older members of the community remained focused on traditional issues, while younger generations were more interested in modern, global matters that may not be addressed in traditional Chaupals.

Inference: The major challenges facing Chaupals, such as lack of time, interest, urban migration, and the rise of social media, reflect significant socio-economic and cultural shifts in rural communities. The younger generation's increasing preference for digital platforms and their detachment from traditional forums has weakened the role of Chaupals in community life. Additionally, social disconnect and generational gaps further point to the declining relevance of these spaces in fostering intergenerational engagement and cultural continuity.

1.14.1.5 Role of Youth and Gender in Chaupals

- **Youth Participation:** Youth involvement in Chaupals, though present, remained somewhat moderate. A total of 34% of youth were considered active participants, with only 15% being very active, while a sizable portion 23% maintained a neutral stance, and 21% were less active in their engagement. This shows that although there was some participation, there was room for improvement in terms of the overall involvement of the younger generation. Notably, the youth made meaningful contributions through their technical expertise, with 38% assisting in this area, and by introducing fresh, innovative ideas (25%). Their familiarity with modern tools and platforms enabled them to bring a contemporary edge to the discussions and activities within Chaupals.

- **Female Participation:** Female participation in Chaupals was markedly low, with only 1% of women being classified as actively engaged. This lack of involvement can be largely attributed to deep-rooted cultural norms that often restrict women's presence and voice in public decision-making spaces. The limited participation of women in Chaupals also underscores the traditional gender roles that persist in many rural and semi-rural communities, where women are expected to focus more on domestic responsibilities rather than engage in broader community affairs. When women did participate, their contributions were typically focused on family-related or social issues, reflecting the gendered division of roles within the community. Addressing the barriers to female participation would require not only a cultural shift but also the creation of more inclusive spaces where women feel encouraged to contribute to a wider range of topics. Introducing women-focused discussions or holding separate Chaupals for women could be a step toward increasing their involvement.

Inference: While youth showed promise by contributing technical assistance and fresh ideas, their overall participation in Chaupals was only moderate, suggesting that efforts to make Chaupals more relevant to younger generations could further increase their engagement. On the other hand, women's participation remained critically low, with cultural barriers preventing them from taking an active role in public decision-making forums. The issues they did address were mostly related to family and social matters, highlighting a clear gender divide in the types of discussions that took place in Chaupals. To foster a more inclusive environment, addressing these cultural constraints and encouraging more widespread participation from both youth and women will be essential for the future relevance and success of Chaupals as community forums.

1.15 Effectiveness of Chaupals in the Community

- **Dissemination of Information:** Chaupals proved to be quite effective in spreading essential information within rural communities, particularly in the area of agricultural knowledge, with 39% of respondents recognizing their

value in this regard. Agriculture, being a primary livelihood, benefited from discussions on farming practices, crop management, and other related topics, helping farmers make better-informed decisions. Moreover, Chaupals played a key role in addressing social issues, with 61% of respondents affirming their importance in tackling community concerns such as education, family matters, and local governance. These forums allowed for collective discussion and problem-solving, reinforcing their centrality in rural life. However, the discussions around health-related issues appeared less robust, with only 32% of respondents feeling that Chaupals effectively covered health topics.

- **Promoting Brotherhood and Reducing Bias:** A majority of respondents (57%) believed that Chaupals helped reduce political instability within the community, suggesting that these gatherings provided a platform for open discussions and consensus-building. However, when it came to reducing caste and religious biases, the effectiveness of Chaupals was less certain. Only 41% of respondents felt that they were successful in addressing these social divides, highlighting the persistence of entrenched biases within rural societies. While Chaupals fostered conversations that might have raised awareness about these issues, they did not seem to lead to significant changes in attitudes or behavior regarding caste or religious prejudice. Furthermore, 43% of respondents believed that Chaupals promoted brotherhood, but a considerable portion of participants remained neutral on the subject.

Inference: Chaupals were highly effective in spreading agricultural and social information, both crucial to rural community life. However, their limited role in health-related discussions pointed to a gap that could be addressed by expanding the scope of topics. Although Chaupals contributed positively to reducing political instability, their impact on reducing caste and religious biases was less clear, and their role in fostering brotherhood appeared mixed. While they provided a valuable space for dialogue, deeper efforts are needed to tackle social inequalities and promote more meaningful cohesion within the community.

1.15.1 Government Support for Chaupals

- **Government Support for Chaupals:** According to the data, 48% of respondents believed that Chaupals received support from the government, while 30% felt that the assistance provided was only partial. This suggests that while government involvement existed, it was not uniformly distributed or recognized across all Chaupals. A smaller group, 15%, perceived no government involvement at all, which further emphasizes the inconsistency in how support was either distributed or perceived.

- The presence of government aid, where it was recognized, likely contributed to the ability of Chaupals to address certain community issues, such as social matters or agriculture. However, the fact that a notable portion of the population felt the support was either insufficient or non-existent points to a larger issue of uneven access to resources, which may limit the potential of Chaupals to serve their communities effectively.

- **Community Demand for Broader Initiatives:** Beyond the current level of support, respondents expressed clear expectations for expanded government involvement in specific areas. Over half (51%) indicated a desire for health workshops, recognizing the need for greater access to healthcare information and services. This demand highlights a significant gap in health-related discussions within Chaupals and suggests that the community views these forums as a potential platform for delivering essential health education.

- Additionally, 47% of respondents expressed interest in receiving financial support for village-based startups, indicating a desire for Chaupals to facilitate economic development. By providing financial assistance or guidance for entrepreneurship, Chaupals could become more than just discussion platforms; they could help foster economic growth within villages, offering local solutions to employment challenges and economic sustainability. This points to an evolving role for Chaupals, where they could become hubs for both social and economic development with appropriate government backing.

Inference: Although nearly half of the respondents acknowledged some form of government support for Chaupals, the perception of partial or inconsistent assistance by a significant portion highlights a need for more structured and reliable government involvement. The community's demand for health workshops and financial backing for village startups reflects their expectation that Chaupals should evolve into platforms for broader development initiatives. The perception of insufficient support underscores the potential for Chaupals to play a more central role in addressing critical issues like health and economic development, provided that government authorities implement more sustained and comprehensive strategies to engage with and support these traditional forums.

1.15.2 Qualitative Analysis

1.15.2.1 Evolution of Chaupals in NCR

- Chaupals have undergone significant transformation over the years, particularly in urbanizing areas like NCR. Historically, they were central to village life, serving as spaces where people gathered to discuss matters of common interest, settle disputes, and participate in cultural activities. However, modernization, technological advancement, and urban migration have gradually eroded their significance.

- Interviewees from older generations consistently noted the diminishing role of Chaupals, attributing this decline to factors such as reduced face-to-face interaction, the rise of social media, and changes in lifestyle. Respondents from Ghaziabad, for example, remarked that the advent of mobile technology has led to a loss of community bonding, as people no longer feel the need to physically gather. Instead, communication happens over mobile phones or through digital platforms like WhatsApp.

- The interviews also revealed a shift in the physical structure of Chaupals. Many villages have built modernized Chaupals with improved infrastructure, yet their usage is often limited. In some cases, Chaupals have become symbolic, representing a connection to traditional village life, though their functional relevance has diminished.

Key Findings:

- The role of Chaupals shifted from functional to symbolic in many areas.

- Urbanization and technology were key factors in the declining importance of Chaupals.

- Modernized Chaupals exist but were underutilized due to lifestyle changes and technological alternatives.

1.15.2.2 Impact of Modern Technology on Chaupal Participation

- One of the most striking findings from the interviews was the pervasive impact of modern technology, particularly mobile phones and social media, on Chaupal participation. Younger respondents, in particular, expressed little interest in attending Chaupals, noting that digital platforms provide a more convenient and efficient way to communicate.

- The traditional function of Chaupals as a gathering space for information sharing has been largely replaced by mobile phones and social media platforms like WhatsApp. Youth respondents mentioned that social media allows them to stay connected with a broader network, not just their immediate village community.

- However, some respondents expressed nostalgia for the sense of community fostered at Chaupals. Older generations, in particular, lamented the loss of "real" human connections that were once fostered at these gatherings. They argued that while digital communication may be more efficient, it lacks the depth and emotional connection of face-to-face interactions.

Key Findings:

- Younger generations disengaged from Chaupals due to their attachment to mobile technology.

- Social media created new digital spaces for communication, further reducing the need for Chaupals.

- Older generations valued the emotional and social depth of face-to-face interactions at Chaupals.

1.15.2.3 Role of Chaupals in Decision-Making and Dispute Resolution

- Historically, Chaupals functioned as informal courts where disputes were resolved, and community decisions were made. This function, while diminished, still holds relevance in some villages. Older respondents, particularly those from more rural areas, stated that decisions made at Chaupals were still respected within the community, although many acknowledged that these decisions are now often contested or taken to formal legal systems if the parties involved are dissatisfied.

Key Findings:

- Chaupals still functioned as informal courts in rural areas but were increasingly being sidelined by formal legal systems.

- Older generations respected Chaupal decisions, while younger generations often challenged them.

- The role of Chaupals in decision-making diminished in urbanizing areas like Greater Noida and Ghaziabad.

1.15.2.4 Decline in Youth Participation in Chaupals

- Across all interviews, a consistent theme was the decline in youth participation in Chaupals. Younger generations expressed a lack of interest in traditional gatherings, with many stating that they prefer to spend their free time on mobile phones or engaging with social media. This disengagement from Chaupals was attributed to a variety of factors, including urbanization, changing lifestyles, and the rise of digital communication.

- Several respondents noted that young people no longer see the relevance of Chaupals in their lives. In many villages, respondents said that the younger generation views Chaupals as outdated and irrelevant. However, some interviewees suggested that modernizing Chaupals by incorporating amenities

like gyms or using the space for youth-centric events could help re-engage younger generations.

Key Findings:

- Youth participation in Chaupals significantly declined, with younger generations viewing them as outdated.

- Modern technology and changing lifestyles were key reasons for this decline.

- Efforts to modernize Chaupals could help increase youth engagement.

1.15.2.5 Gender and Caste Dynamics in Chaupals

- The issue of gender exclusion in Chaupals was a recurring theme in the interviews. Traditionally, Chaupals have been male-dominated spaces where women were either excluded or allowed only limited participation. The data reveals that this exclusion persists in many villages, although there have been some efforts to create Mahila Chaupals (women's Chaupals) where women can gather and voice their opinions.

- Several female respondents noted that even in these modern Mahila Chaupals, their voices are often mediated through men, such as fathers, husbands, or brothers. Although these spaces provide a platform for women, they do not hold the same social power as traditional Chaupals, which remain dominated by men.

- Caste also plays a role in Chaupal participation, although this dynamic is changing. In the past, Chaupals were often divided along caste lines, with separate spaces for different caste groups. While this division has lessened in recent years, caste still influences participation in some areas, particularly in more conservative villages.

Key Findings:

- Women were still largely excluded from traditional Chaupals, although Mahila Chaupals emerged in some areas.

- Even in Mahila Chaupals, women's voices were often mediated through male relatives.

- Caste dynamics in Chaupals were slowly changing, but caste-based divisions still persist in some areas.

1.15.2.6 Chaupals as Cultural Preservation Hubs

- Chaupals have historically been important spaces for preserving and transmitting local culture, particularly in rural areas. Respondents from villages like Arangpur and Tughlakabad noted that Chaupals have long been used as venues for folk music, traditional arts, and cultural festivals like Holi and Diwali. Elders often use Chaupals to pass down oral histories, stories, and local traditions to younger generations.

- However, as modern entertainment and digital media become more prevalent, the role of Chaupals in cultural preservation is declining. Many respondents mentioned that younger generations are more interested in Bollywood movies, social media, and global pop culture than in local traditions. Despite this, some villages still use Chaupals to host cultural events, although the frequency and influence of these gatherings have decreased.

Key Findings:

- Chaupals traditionally played a significant role in preserving local culture, particularly through festivals and oral traditions.

- Younger generations were less interested in these traditions, leading to a decline in the cultural role of Chaupals.

- Some villages continued to use Chaupals for cultural events, but their influence is waning.

1.15.2.7 Informal Justice System and the Legitimacy of Chaupal Decisions

- The data suggested that Chaupals continue to function as informal justice systems in some areas, particularly in more rural or conservative villages. Respondents from villages like Salempur and Aya Nagar noted that community-level disputes, such as land conflicts or issues related to marriage, are often resolved at Chaupals, with elders or community leaders serving as mediators.

- While younger generations are more likely to challenge these decisions through formal legal systems, many respondents emphasized the respect that Chaupal decisions still command. In some cases, even the formal legal system recognizes the legitimacy of Chaupal decisions, although this is becoming less common as villages modernize.

Key Findings:

- Chaupals still functioned as informal justice systems in some rural areas.

- Younger generations were more likely to challenge Chaupal decisions through formal legal channels.

- Chaupal decisions were still respected in some communities, but their influence was waning as legal systems modernize.

1.15.2.8 Communication Methods and Information Sharing at Chaupals

- In the past, traditional methods such as the Jajmani system, public announcements, and drumming were used to inform villagers about upcoming Chaupal meetings. Today, these methods have largely been replaced by mobile phones and social media platforms like WhatsApp.

Key Findings:

- Traditional communication methods like the Jajmani system and public announcements had been largely replaced by mobile phones and social media.

- Physical gatherings at Chaupals have become less frequent due to the rise of digital communication.

- In some villages, traditional methods were still used for large or formal gatherings.

5.8.11 Preservation Efforts and Future of Chaupals

- Despite the decline in their traditional roles, many respondents emphasized the importance of preserving Chaupals as symbols of rural unity and culture. In some areas, efforts have been made to modernize Chaupals by improving infrastructure or linking them with government schemes. For example, some respondents mentioned that the government provides financial support for Chaupal maintenance, highlighting their symbolic importance even as their functional relevance declines.

Key Findings:

- There were ongoing efforts to preserve Chaupals as symbols of rural unity, including government support for maintenance.

- Chaupals could be revitalized by incorporating youth-centric activities and adapting to modern realities.

- While the functional relevance of Chaupals was declining, their symbolic importance remains strong.

1.16 Discussion

Analysis of the data reveals that Chaupal remains highly relevant even today. People learn a great deal from Chaupals, which serve as gathering spots for community discussions. In certain villages, the Chaupal has been a part of traditional social arrangements for generations, and in areas such as Delhi and the National Capital Region, it continues to function. However, in many villages, Chaupals have fallen into disrepair, and social pressures have led some community members, particularly the younger generation, to distance themselves from these structures. Qualitative data indicates that older individuals show a greater inclination towards

participating in Chaupal gatherings, while younger individuals have a mixed response.

The existence of Chaupals in a developed city like Delhi and its surrounding areas, which are equipped with modern amenities, raises curiosity. In these regions, Chaupals also serve as a public sphere where individuals can present their perspectives. The Chaupal functions as a public sphere, akin to Jürgen Habermas's concept, where individuals can freely express their opinions. Discussions at Chaupals are conducted according to the subject matter of each gathering.

The research further reveals that traditional Chaupals in villages are predominantly male-dominated, with women not being directly permitted to participate in these gatherings. Instead, women often share their views through the men in their families or communities. It was also found that the government has taken steps to establish separate Women's Chaupals. Topics at these Women's Chaupals often center on livelihood activities, such as papad-making or discussions on forming and managing Women's Self-Help Groups. However, Women's Chaupals do not hold the same prominence as traditional Chaupals. The government is making efforts to promote equality in this regard.

Messages are conveyed to society through folk communication at the Chaupal, where discussions primarily revolve around folk songs that often address social issues and critique societal flaws. Among the spaces supporting folk culture, the Chaupal plays a significant role in preserving local traditions. Through the Chaupal, regional dialects such as Bangru and Kauravi in Delhi and the NCR area have found preservation and support. This underscores the Chaupal's role as a vital cultural space for safeguarding folk heritage and regional dialects amidst broader social changes.

The study also reveals that in many villages, Chaupals have been active for more than ten years, while in some, the Chaupal is a newer establishment or has been revived by the younger generation. This highlights how Chaupals, whether longstanding or recently reintroduced, continue to serve as significant gathering spaces within different communities. At the Chaupal, print media is regarded as the

most trustworthy source of information. In rural areas, newspapers are considered highly reliable, and a single newspaper is often read multiple times. Regional news is given particular importance in these newspaper discussions. This illustrates the continued reliance on print media in Chaupals, especially for staying informed on local and regional issues. The study also reveals that, although fewer people may be directly familiar with traditional Chaupals, the terminology of "Chaupal" is now widely used in various contexts, such as E-Chaupal, Media Chaupal, Police Chaupal, Cyber Chaupal, Bank Chaupal, and Rahat Chaupal. This reflects the expansion of the Chaupal concept into diverse modern domains, symbolizing community gathering and dialogue in new, specialized formats.

1.17 Conclusion

The study provided critical insights into the evolving role and challenges of Chaupals in rural communication systems. It highlighted both the enduring significance of traditional practices and the growing influence of modernization, particularly in the realms of communication, participation, and cultural preservation. The conclusions drawn from the study can be categorized as follows:

Role of Various Communication Methods in Chaupals (Traditional, Mediated, and New Media Communication)

Traditional Communication as the Backbone: Chaupals historically relied on **face-to-face** and **oral communication**, which continue to be the preferred methods of interaction in rural settings. The personal nature of these interactions facilitated trust-building, real-time feedback, and a sense of community, all crucial to the functioning of Chaupals. These traditional forms of communication played a central role in fostering collective decision-making and maintaining social cohesion.

Emergence of New Media and Mediated Communication: The study revealed a gradual shift towards **new media platforms**, particularly **WhatsApp**, especially among women and younger generations. This shift reflects an adaptation to changing societal dynamics, where those unable to attend Chaupals physically whether due to gender constraints or time limitations found an alternative space in digital platforms.

Mediated communication through traditional print media remained significant, particularly for older generations who trusted it for its long-standing role in rural life.

1.18 Role and Issues of Folk Communication in Chaupals

Folk Communication as a Cultural Preserver: Folk communication, particularly through **Ragini** and **Saang performances**, remained a vital cultural practice in Chaupals. These performances served as vehicles for disseminating social, political, and cultural messages, contributing to the preservation of local traditions. They also played an important role in community entertainment, reinforcing the Chaupal's cultural significance.

Decline in Certain Folk Media: Despite the continued relevance of some folk traditions, there was a noticeable decline in the use of **street plays** and **puppet shows**. This decline is largely attributed to the availability of modern entertainment and the reduced interest of younger generations in traditional forms of communication. As rural communities increasingly embrace digital platforms, the role of folk communication is being challenged, leading to a diminishing presence of these art forms in daily life.

Impact of Oral Communication in Chaupals

Oral Communication as the Core Mechanism: Oral communication has historically been the most significant method for conducting discussions, resolving disputes, and making decisions within Chaupals. Its immediacy and personal nature contributed to a strong sense of community, with verbal exchanges forming the foundation of interpersonal relationships. This method allowed for direct engagement and communal participation in decision-making processes.

Challenges of Oral Communication: While oral communication was effective in building trust and fostering engagement, it faced several limitations. **Lack of written records** often led to disputes, as decisions were retained verbally, making it difficult to ensure accountability or maintain consistent interpretations. The rise of new media further complicated the role of oral communication, as younger

generations increasingly favored digital platforms that offered faster and more formalized interactions.

Participation and Influence of Specific Demographics (Women and Youth)

Limited Female Participation in Traditional Chaupals: Women's direct participation in traditional Chaupals remained critically low, reflecting **cultural norms** that restrict women's involvement in public decision-making. Women often voiced their concerns through male intermediaries, reinforcing their marginal role in traditional spaces. However, **Mahila Chaupals** offered women alternative forums where they could discuss issues relevant to them, such as health, family, and social concerns. Although Mahila Chaupals have empowered women to some extent, these platforms still lacked the influence of traditional male-dominated Chaupals.

Moderate Youth Engagement: The participation of youth in Chaupals was moderate, with younger individuals contributing technical expertise and innovative ideas. However, a significant portion of the younger generation viewed Chaupals as outdated, preferring **digital platforms** for engagement. This disconnect between traditional Chaupal discussions and contemporary concerns of the youth led to a decline in their overall involvement.

Gender and youth participation in Chaupals remained limited due to cultural restrictions and generational shifts in interests. New platforms, such as Mahila Chaupals and digital communication tools, provided alternative spaces for engagement, though efforts are needed to ensure that these groups have a more prominent role in traditional Chaupal structures.

Functioning and Impact of Rural Communication Systems in Chaupals

Effective but Traditional Communication Systems: The **rural communication system** within Chaupals, rooted in oral and face-to-face methods, has historically been effective in maintaining community unity and facilitating governance. However, these systems faced challenges in adapting to modern realities, especially with the increasing urban migration and rise of **digital communication**.

Impact of Modernization on Rural Communication Systems: As younger generations embraced digital tools, the traditional communication systems of Chaupals began to lose their central role in community life. The findings revealed that while Chaupals still functioned effectively for older generations, younger individuals found new media platforms more relevant and efficient.

The rural communication systems in Chaupals have functioned effectively for generations but are now challenged by modernization and the rise of digital platforms. To remain relevant, these systems must integrate modern communication tools while preserving their cultural and social significance.

The study concluded that while Chaupals continue to serve as vital spaces for rural communication, cultural preservation, and social cohesion, they face significant challenges in adapting to modern societal changes. **Traditional communication methods**, particularly oral and face-to-face exchanges, remain dominant but are increasingly complemented by **new media platforms** that cater to marginalized groups such as women and youth.

Folk communication, once central to the cultural fabric of Chaupals, still holds importance, though it is under threat from modern entertainment options and generational disinterest. Similarly, **oral communication** remains effective in fostering community engagement but suffers from limitations related to record-keeping and transparency.

Participation from **women** and **youth** remained restricted, though alternative spaces such as Mahila Chaupals and digital platforms offered new opportunities for engagement.

The **rural communication systems** within Chaupals, while effective in maintaining local governance and cultural transmission, are gradually losing relevance due to the rise of digital communication and urban migration.

1.19 Limitations of the study

1.19.1 Limited Applicability across Varied Rural Areas

This study focused on Chaupals in the Delhi-NCR area, a region that has experienced extensive urbanization. Consequently, the findings may not represent the dynamics of other rural areas across India, which vary significantly in social and cultural structures, economic conditions, and modernization.

1.19.2 Limited Female and Youth Representation

Despite efforts to explore the participation of women and youth, traditional Chaupals exhibited critically low female involvement and only moderate youth engagement. Due to lower female and youth participation, this study could not explore the perspectives and challenges these groups face in depth.

1.19.3 Reliance on Oral Communication with Limited Documentation

The Chaupal's tradition of verbal exchanges without formal written records posed challenges for consistent data collection. Decisions and discussions were often retained in participants' memories, which may have led to inconsistencies, especially in capturing details about decision-making and transparency.

1.20 Limited Analysis of Digital Media Impact

While the study noted the emerging use of digital platforms, such as WhatsApp, in facilitating Chaupal engagement, it did not comprehensively explore how these technologies may be shifting traditional communication within rural settings. As social media usage grows, it could alter or fragment traditional Chaupal gatherings, impacting their cultural and social roles.

The partial focus on digital media leaves gaps in understanding how digital technologies may change the structure and significance of Chaupals.

1.20.1 Difficulty in Capturing Gradual Cultural Changes

Although the study observed a decrease in the use of folk media and shifts in the cultural role of Chaupals, tracking these gradual changes in real-time proved challenging. Long-term observation may be necessary to fully understand how these shifts affect community cohesion and Chaupal relevance.

1.20.2 Limited Quantitative Data on Media Usage

The limited quantitative data on media consumption trends restricts the study's ability to fully assess the impact of digital communication on Chaupals. Future studies could use a detailed survey to gather more robust quantitative insights.

1.20.3 Lack of Data on Inactive or Closed Chaupals

This study did not examine Chaupals that have closed or are neglected, often due to changing social structures. Such cases could provide insight into the impact of losing these

1.21 Scope for further research

Expand Research Across Diverse Rural Contexts: Future studies should aim to explore **Chaupals and similar public forums** in a variety of rural contexts across India, particularly in regions less affected by urbanization, such as in **southern, eastern, and northeastern India**.

Increase Focus on Gender and Youth Participation: To gain a more comprehensive understanding of women's and youth participation, future research should employ **in-depth qualitative methods** such as **focus group discussions** and **individual interviews** with these groups. Understanding the **specific barriers** women and youth face, as well as exploring how Chaupals could be modified to enhance their participation, will be crucial for more inclusive rural public forums.

Integrate new media into the Chaupal system by developing e-Chaupals and using digital tools for decision-making, documentation, and wider participation.

Promote Inclusivity in Chaupals: To address the gender imbalance and limited youth engagement, Chaupals should explore the creation of **gender-inclusive** and

youth-friendly spaces. This could involve organizing **thematic sessions** specifically focused on issues relevant to women (e.g., health, education) and youth (e.g., employment, technology). Mahila Chaupals could be integrated more formally into the decision-making processes of traditional Chaupals, ensuring that women's voices are represented.

Introduce Formal Record-Keeping and Transparency Mechanisms: To address the challenge of **informal oral communication**, Chaupals could benefit from the implementation of **basic documentation systems**. A formalized process for **recording decisions**, **attendee participation**, and **meeting outcomes** would enhance transparency and ensure that verbal agreements are documented, reducing the risk of disputes or misinterpretations.

Revitalize Folk Communication and Traditional Media: To preserve the cultural role of folk communication, efforts should be made to **modernize traditional media** and **folk performances** by integrating contemporary themes. For example, Ragini performances could incorporate modern social issues such as environmental awareness or education, thereby making these forms of communication more relevant to younger generations while preserving their cultural heritage.

Enhance Rural Digital Literacy and Infrastructure: The rise of digital platforms presents an opportunity for Chaupals to reach broader audiences. However, many rural communities still lack access to reliable **digital infrastructure** and **digital literacy**. By investing in **rural digital education** and expanding access to **internet services**, Chaupals can leverage digital platforms to increase participation, particularly among youth and women who may face mobility or time constraints.

Invest in rural digital infrastructure and literacy programs, ensuring that rural communities have the tools and knowledge to engage effectively with new media platforms alongside traditional Chaupals.

Long-Term Studies on Cultural Shifts in Communication: To better understand the evolving cultural role of Chaupals, long-term studies should be conducted to observe how cultural practices, such as folk media and traditional

communication, change over time in response to modernization. These studies would provide more accurate insights into how **cultural dynamics** are shifting and whether modernization leads to the permanent decline of traditional forms or their adaptation to new contexts.

References

Attri, S. (2023). The Saangs as Cultural Heritage of Haryana. Contemporary Literary Review India, 10(2), 141-149.

Ben-Amos, D. (2020). Folklore concepts: Histories and critiques. Indiana University Press.

Bharne, V. (2019). From tree to temple town. Sacred Space, Sacred Thread: Perspectives across Time and Traditions, 66.

Bhattacharya, C. D. S., & Sachdev, B. (2021). Can India Be Successful in Achieving a Digital Economy and Its Vision of Digital India: A Case Study. International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology, 10(11), 14516.

Bhattacharya, P. (2024). "Honor" killings and customary laws: A case study of Khap Panchayats in Haryana, India. Violence: An International Journal, 5(1), 3-29.

Chakraborty, M. W., & Chakraborty, B. (2018). Jaat Architecture, Mirror of the Past and Shadow of Future. In Putting Tradition into Practice: Heritage, Place and Design: Proceedings of 5th INTBAU International Annual Event 5 (pp. 1068-1077). Springer International Publishing.

Creswell, J. . W., & Clark, V. Plano. L. (2018). Designing and Conducting Mix Method Research. In *Methodological Research* (Vol. 1st).

Das, A., Mishra, A., Kashyap, A., Naika, M. B., & Barah, P. (2022). "KRiShI": a manually curated knowledgebase on rice sheath blight disease. Functional & Integrative Genomics, 22(6), 1403-1410.

Dash, B. B. (2020). Grassroots Democracy via Community Radio: A case study in rural India. In Community Radio in South Asia (pp. 253-267). Routledge India.

Dutta, S. (2024). Exploring the Musical Connection Between Raga Bhairavi and Indian Folk Songs. Sangeet Galaxy, 13(1).

Fischer, R., & Jarren, O. (2024). The platformization of the public sphere and its challenge to democracy. *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, *50*(1), 200–215. https://doi.org/10.1177/01914537231203535

Fuchs, C. (2021). The digital commons and the digital public sphere: How to advance digital democracy today. Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture, 16(1), 9–26. https://doi.org/10.16997/WPCC.917

Hong, P., NL, B., & N, V. (2022). Sustainable Agricultural Business Model: Case Studies of Innovative Indian Farmers. Sustainability, 14(16), 10242.

Imo-Ter Nyam, I., & Mary Yvonne Atime, S. (2018). THE CONVENTIONAL MEDIA IN NIGERIA AND DEMOCRATIC TENETS. International Journal on Transformations of Media, 3. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357434446

Joshi, J., & Shaikh Mohammad, B. N. (2020, April). Factors Influencing the Farmers Approach Towards the Digital World. In Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Advances in Science & Technology (ICAST).

Kargatia, J., & Kumari, C. (2024). 42 Storytelling Aids for Foundation Years Using Traditional Arts of India KATHA WITH KALA. www.vidhyayanaejournal.org

Keane, J. (2018). Structural transformations of the public sphere. In The Media, Journalism and Democracy (pp. 53-74). Routledge.

kumar, P. (2022). Analysis of Communication through Traditional Folk Media for Rural Development in Rajasthan. International Journal of Social Sciences, 11(3). https://doi.org/10.46852/2249-6637.02.2022.6

Madgulkar, V., Sharma, M., Ketkar, S., & Ghaisas, C. (2023). Presidential Address at the 57th Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan, Ambejogai on 4 February 1983. In Vyankatesh Madgulkar (pp. 95-109). Routledge India.

Madhu Giri. (2020). storytelling for promoting social cohesion in the marginalised communities: a study of chautari nataks. *Molung Educational Frontier*, *10*((Special Issue)), 67–80.

Mangla, A., & Kapoor, V. (2020). Policing and public health: State capacity on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. India in Transition, University of Pennsylvania, Center for the Advanced Study of India.

Mohanty, A., & Sahay, R. R. (2018). Rasabodha: Understanding Indian classical dance by recognizing emotions using deep learning. Pattern Recognition, 79, 97-113.

Narayan, B. (2021). Republic of Hindutva: How the Sangh is reshaping Indian democracy. Penguin Random House India Private Limited.

Rodolph, S. H. (2020). *The public sphere in India: Civic engagement and social transformation*. Oxford University Press.

Shahid, S., & Shaikh, M. A. (2019). Impact of" WhatsApp Chaupal" on the Academic Performance of Graduate Students of Karachi–A Case Study. FWU Journal of Social Sciences, 13(2), 94-107.

Shandil, M. (2023). Karyala: Folk Theatre for Rural Communication in Himachal Pradesh Kindle Edition. Wkrishind Publishers.

Sharma, D. (2020). Community, Artistry, and Storytelling in the Cultural Confluence of Nautanki and Ramlila. Asian Theatre Journal, 37(1), 107-132.

Singh Kachhawa, R., & Tiwari, U. M. (2021). TRADITIONAL FOLK MEDIA: EFFECTIVE MEDIA FOR COMMUNICATION IN RURAL AREAS. In *National Peer-Reviewed Journal* (Vol. 08, Issue 02). http://hillquest.pratibha-spandan.org

Sinha, A., & Sohane, R. K. (2020). Institutional Outreach Through Innovative Approaches. In Sustainable Agriculture (pp. 481-499). Apple Academic Press.

Sinha, A., & Sohane, R. K. (2020). Institutional Outreach Through Innovative Approaches. In Sustainable Agriculture (pp. 481-499). Apple Academic Press.

Suthar, S. K. (2022). Changing Public Spaces and Community in Rural India. In Dilapidation of the Rural: Development, Politics, and Farmer Suicides in India (pp. 55-84). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.