



A Descriptive Study On The Evolutionary Phases Of Storytelling

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ABSTRACT

The origin and evolution of storytelling interlinked with origin of human civilization. Songs and tales are integral part of the culture. Each form has its own particular way of expression, narration and their own language. This study establishes the enduring strength, richness and vitality of the storytelling tradition and evolutionary phases of storytelling. Stories are remarkable cultural artefact of oral traditions from many languages and cultures. The study of oral tradition of storytelling may contribute to our understanding of culture and its functioning in human societies. As the boom in technology in contemporary era influenced the field of storytelling also. It may help in understanding human life and the role of digital storytelling in a culturally constituted society. Now-a-days in the digital context it has been accepted by scholars of language and literature and culture studies identifies the great relevance in studying, knowing and preserving this treasure of the digital storytelling also. This study entitled "A Descriptive Study on the Evolutionary Phases of Storytelling" is mainly focuses on the evolutionary phases of storytelling from ancient to modern and even contemporary era.

Keywords: Storytelling, epic, oral storytelling tradition, digital storytelling

Introduction

Storytelling traditions are the universality and man's quality of sharing the ideas, information, beliefs, knowledge and the history of their culture. Additionally, literature and popular culture all around the world have been impacted by oral tradition of storytelling. Ancient storytelling skills are an important source of inspiration for many modern writers and filmmakers, who frequently use oral storytelling, symbolism, and cultural allusions in their works. With films like Disney's "Moana" referencing Polynesian mythology and folklore, indigenous storytelling has also made its way into mainstream media. It can be said that indigenous storytelling is a potent and enduring practise that helps to preserve history, culture, and morals. It is a revered custom that helps communities stay in touch with their forefathers and offers advice to younger generations. There are many stages in the development of storytelling in different storytelling tradition in the world. Th technological advancements enriched the vitality of storytelling in the contemporary era in its own way.

Objectives:

1. To get the deep understanding on the evolution of storytelling from the ancient era to the contemporary digital storytelling.
2. To know the historical relevance of storytelling.
3. To identify the changes took place in the mode of storytelling after technological advancement.

Review of Literature

1. Storytelling in the Digital Age by W.S. Penn

W.S. Penn's book *Storytelling in the Digital Age* is incredibly important. In a technologically advanced age where texting has obliterated intellect, feeling, and personality, W.S. Penn has authored a compelling, unyielding, and epigrammatic series of assertions for the revelatory and purgatory effects of literature. W. S. Penn is a distinguished professor in the English department of Michigan State University in the United States. The book makes the argument that literature is not an artefact to be studied but an ongoing endeavour through a professional storyteller's occasionally funny commentary on society and literature from *The Odyssey* on. Penn, who frequently turns between literary and intellectual realms, seeks to understand what literature can do for an active reader in the digital era. This book is only focusing on the western perceptions.

2. Storytelling: An Encyclopaedia of Mythology and Folklore by Josepha Sherman

Storytelling: An Encyclopaedia of Mythology and Folklore vividly depicts both historical and contemporary cultures from around the globe. The book emphasises that the characters, tales, techniques, oral traditions, motifs, and tale types cross cultural boundaries; although names and other details may vary, the stories themselves remain strikingly similar, showcasing the ideals and issues of the host society. Examining the myths and oral histories connected to various cultures provides a distinctive perspective on customs and practises. Folklore and mythology, traditional arts, history, literature, and festivals are all combined to give a comprehensive glimpse of the world's civilizations in their most vibrant and intriguing forms. The retellings of stories from diverse nations and traditions in addition to specialised storytelling skills are being represented by this book.

Methodology

In the current study both the descriptive method and textual analysis are followed. Data is collected from different sources through the primary and secondary resources including books, articles and papers.

Result and Discussion

Developing Phases of storytelling around the Globe

1. Greek Mythology: Greek mythology has a long history of telling stories, particularly in the ancient world. Greek mythology was passed down verbally and eventually written down, including tales of Zeus, Hercules, and Aphrodite. These tales described how things happened naturally, how people behaved, and how the gods got their start. One of the best examples of ancient Greek storytelling customs is Greek mythology. The Greeks held a pantheon of deities who oversaw various facets of the cosmos and human existence. Before being written down, these myths were transmitted verbally from one generation to the next. Greek mythology covers a vast range of tales, including those about the beginning of the world, the exploits of gods and heroes, and the causes of various natural occurrences. For instance, there is a well-known tale that Zeus, the king of the gods, and his siblings overthrew their father Cronus and took control of Olympus. Hercules is a character from a well-known Greek tale who is renowned for his superhuman strength and his twelve labours. Hercules was given these labours as retribution for slaying his wife and children in a fit of rage. Hercules demonstrated his courage and eventually attained immortality through his labours. Another important figure in Greek mythology is the goddess of love and beauty, Aphrodite. She was created from the sea foam following Uranus's castration by his son Cronus, and her tale explains the origins of love and desire. In Greek culture, these myths performed a range of functions. Natural occurrences like the cyclical nature of the seasons and the existence of thunder and lightning were explained. Insights on human behaviour and moral teachings were also supplied by them. For instance, the tale of Pandora's box serves as a cautionary tale about curiosity and the repercussions of defying the gods. These historic tales serve as a source of inspiration for several works of literature, art, and entertainment. Greek mythology's persistent popularity is proof of the power of narrative and its capacity to enthrall listeners throughout time and cultures.

2. Norse Sagas: In Norse culture, tales were told through epic narratives called sagas, which detailed the exploits and adventures of gods and heroes. The "Saga of the Volsungs," which chronicles the tale of Sigurd the Dragon Slayer, is the most well-known saga. Another illustration of Scandinavian storytelling customs is seen in the Norse sagas. Norse sagas were first passed through oral tradition before being written down, just like Greek mythology. These sagas are a collection of stories that show the brave acts, misadventures, and battles of gods, heroes, and legendary individuals. Ragnarok, a well-known Norse legend that portrays the final days of the universe and the ultimate conflict between giants and gods, is one such tale. Themes of fate, destiny, and the recurrent cycle of both life and death are all explored in this story. The epic poem *Beowulf*, which chronicles the exploits of a valiant warrior who faces off against different monsters and dragons, is another well-known narrative. The virtues of honour, bravery, and loyalty are personified in *Beowulf*.

The gods that are important figures in Norse mythology, such as Odin, Thor, and Loki, are also discussed in the Norse sagas. These gods have unique personalities and abilities, and their encounters with mankind frequently produce either heroic deeds or terrible outcomes. In ancient Scandinavian society, Norse sagas fulfilled a variety of functions, much like Greek mythology. They offered justifications for occurrences of nature like thunderstorms or seasonal changes. Additionally, they disseminated cultural ideas and moral precepts, highlighting qualities like bravery, honour, and loyalty. Norse sagas have had a big difference between traditional literature and popular culture as well. These tales had an impact on J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings" and Marvel's Thor comics and films, among other works. Norse sagas' topics, characters, and situations are still mesmerising audiences and offering as an inspiration for innovative narratives in contemporary literature.

3. African Oral Tradition: Oral storytelling has a long history in many African societies. Griots, or professional storytellers, transmit historical information, tales, and moral precepts orally. To captivate the audience, these tales frequently use music, dance, and call-and-response methods.

Yet another rich instance of oral storytelling traditions can be found in African culture. The transmission of history, social norms, and ethical precepts from one generation to the next through storytelling is a crucial component of many African societies. In the oral tradition of Africa, griots—respected people from the community noted for their storytelling prowess—often tell tales. These griots fascinate the viewers and bring the tales to life using a variety of methods, including songs, chants, and dances.

There are many different types of stories in African oral tradition, including myths, folklore, folktales, and fables. These tales frequently have animal characters and employ metaphor and symbolism for expressing deeper concepts. They delve into subjects like the value of community, elder respect, the repercussions of avarice, and the resilience of bravery and tenacity. The Anansi stories from West Africa are one prominent instance of African oral culture. These stories centre on Anansi, a deceitful spider who outwits people with his cleverness and cunning. The Anansi tales not only amuse, but they also provide valuable knowledge on ingenuity, intelligent, and the negative effects of selfishness. The Sundiata Epic, an oral tradition from the Mandinka people of West Africa, serves as a further instance. The founder of the Mali Empire, Sundiata Keita, is the subject of this epic. It highlights the virtues of bravery, tenacity, and leadership while commemorating Sundiata's amazing journey and his victory over adversity. Literature and popular culture have both been affected by African oral tradition. Numerous African authors, like Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, have used these storytelling customs as inspiration in their writing. Oral storytelling skills are also employed in African music, dance, and theatre, which are still active forms of expression today. In general, African oral tradition offers proof of the value of storytelling for preserving history, culture, and knowledge.

4. Indigenous storytelling is a tradition that exists in indigenous cultures all over the world. For instance, Native American tribes in North America employ storytelling to pass on their spiritual beliefs, teach morals, and preserve their history. Nature and animals are frequently used as key symbols in these tales. Indigenous storytelling is a multifaceted tradition that has been handed down through centuries in many different cultures all over the world. These tales delight listeners and teach valuable lessons all while helping to preserve history, culture, and morals. Storytelling is frequently regarded as a sacred activity in indigenous cultures, and it is common for stories to be presented during celebrations, rites, and gatherings. Elders or other approved storytellers who are respected members of the community frequently share these tales. They have a thorough awareness of the customs, beliefs, and traditions of their culture, and they employ storytelling to communicate with their forefathers and carry on their knowledge to present and future

Native American civilizations in North America offer one type of indigenous storytelling. There is a strong oral legacy among Native American tribes that includes myths, folklore, creation tales, and historical chronicles. These tales frequently have a connection to the natural world, wherein nature and animals play important roles. The interconnection of all living things, the value of protecting the environment, and the effects of human behaviour are just a few of the topics they cover. For instance, storytelling plays a significant role in the spiritual practises of the Navajo people. The Navajo people employ storytelling as a way to stay connected to their ancestors and preserve their cultural identity because they believe stories have the ability to heal and educate. The "Emergence Story," or origin tale of the Navajo, describes how the tribe came to be and serves as the basis for their values and beliefs.

Similar to them, storytelling is essential to maintaining the history and traditions of the Maori people of New Zealand. The Maori have a rich oral storytelling tradition known as "whakapapa," which includes mythology, history, and family history. The Maori people could be linked their ancestors directly to their legendary beginnings through whakapapa, which also helps them to comprehend where they belong in the world. Ancient songs, dances, and artistic performances are frequently performed with these stories to engage the audience and further emphasise the cultural value of the tales;

Indigenous storytelling is practised all across the world and is not exclusive to any one area or tribe. The Aboriginal people of Australia have a long history of storytelling through oral tradition known as "Dreamtime," that covers creation myths, ancestors, and the connection between people and the land. The beginnings of the universe as a whole are explained in the Dreamtime tales, which also offer advice on how to

coexist peacefully with the environment. Indigenous storytelling is a sign of the tenacity and diversity of indigenous civilizations, and it has influenced a wide range of art and entertainment around the world.

5. The Arabian Nights: Also referred to as One Thousand and One Nights, the Arabian Nights is a collection of Middle Eastern folktales that has been gathered over many years. Aladdin and Ali Baba are two examples of tales that were first told orally before being recorded. Since then, they have gained popularity all around the world and have been used in all types of media.

6. Celtic Mythology: The Celtic civilization, which can be found in places like Scotland and Ireland, has a long history of telling stories through mythology and folklore. Heroes like King Arthur or fanciful beings like fairies and leprechauns are frequent themes in stories. These orally transmitted tales have had an impact on literature and popular culture. A rich and alive tradition that has had a significant impact on storytelling throughout history is Celtic mythology. Celtic mythology offers a plethora of inspiration for storytellers with its legends of gods, heroes, and fantastical creatures. Celtic mythology keeps finding ways to enthrall audiences and stimulate new tales, from old legends transmitted down throughout the generations to contemporary adaptations in movies and literature.

Celtic mythology has a huge variety of people and stories to pick from, which is one of the main ways it aids in storytelling. There are numerous gods and goddesses in Celtic mythology, each with its own distinct characteristics, abilities, and purposes. These gods, like Lugh, the god of light, or the Morrigan, the goddess of battle, can make for interesting heroes or villains in a novel. Their relationships with human beings and other celestial entities weave a complex web of rivalries, allegiances, and missions that can serve as the foundation of an engrossing story.

Celtic mythology offers writers of stories a wealth of imagery and symbolism. The Celtic knot symbolises the interdependence of all things and can be used to portray ideas of harmony, consistency, and the cyclical aspect of life because of its intricate interlacing patterns. The Green Man, a representation of fertility and rebirth, can be used in stories that address concerns of development, change, and the natural rhythms of life. Storytellers can give their narratives more depth and layers of significance by including these symbols and imagery.

The oral storytelling tradition is perfectly suited to Celtic mythology. Celtic stories were verbally transmitted down the generations in antiquity, before writing was invented, guaranteeing their survival and ongoing relevance. Celtic tales are perfect for oral storytelling because of its rhythmic vocabulary, poetic imagery, and repetition, which enthrall listeners and help the stories come to life in their minds. The rich tapestry of characters, stories, subjects, and imagery found in Celtic mythology makes it a key element of storytelling.

Development of storytelling tradition in India

Storytelling has a long and rich history in India, dating back to many years. These tales, which range from folklore to antiquity's epics, have been transmitted down through the years, influencing the nation's cultural foundation. Religion, societal institutions, and regional influences are only a few of the variables that have influenced the evolution of storytelling customs in India. The ancient texts known as the Vedas contain one of the earliest types of storytelling in India. These works, which were written between 1500 and 500 BCE, include philosophical talks, rituals, and hymns. These lines were originally passed down verbally from generation to generation, and their recital was an essential part of religious ceremonies and customs. The Vedas primarily gave the populace a spiritual framework, but they also functioned as a model for later narrative customs. The epics Ramayana and Mahabharata represent a further important advance in Indian storytelling. These two epic poems, which are thought to have been written between 500 BCE and 400 CE, recount the valiant actions and exploits of mythical beings like Rama and Krishna. While the Mahabharata centres on the battle of Kurukshetra between two royal family factions, the Ramayana narrates the tale of Rama's journey to save his wife Sita from the evil ruler Ravana. These epics entertained the audience while also instilling moral and ethical principles.

It is impossible to ignore the impact of Jainism and Buddhism on Indian storytelling customs. Both faiths placed a high value on moral behaviour and compassion for all living things. As a result, Jataka stories in Buddhism and Panchatantra in Jainism were developed. The Jataka tales are narratives about the past lives of Gautama Buddha that use animal characters to convey moral lessons. On the other hand, the Panchatantra is a collection of stories that use both animal and human characters to impart moral principles and useful knowledge. These tales gained popularity among readers of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds, and they are still frequently read and told today.

The development of regional languages was also major factors in the development of storytelling customs. Storytelling acquired distinctive regional flavours as different regions created their own languages and literature. For instance, the Tamil Sangam literature, which was written between the third and fourth centuries CE, is made up of poems and stories that depict the social and cultural life of prehistoric Tamil Nadu. Similar to this, in mediaeval India, the Bhakti movement gave rise to devotional literature in a number of local languages, with tales revolving around the lives of saints and their fervent devotion to God.

A substantial change in storytelling customs resulted after the establishment of British colonial control in India. Traditional oral storytelling began to disappear when English replaced other languages as the official language of school and government. Indian and Western literary traditions have combined as a result of

Indian writers starting to use components of Western storytelling strategies in their writing. Indian culture and society were highlighted in the works of writers like Rabindranath Tagore and R.K. Narayan, who appealed to both Indian and Western readers.

The Mahabharata is one of the most significant epics in Indian mythology and has contributed immensely to the development of storytelling in India. The characters in the Mahabharata are complex and have multiple layers to their personalities. This has influenced the way characters are developed in Indian stories. The Mahabharata is a multi-generational epic with a large cast of characters. This epic scope has inspired how stories are narrated in India, where many of them similarly feature a substantial variety of characters and cover extensive time spans. Battles, treachery, and political intrigue are all part of the struggle and drama that make up the Mahabharata. As a result, many Indian stories now have aspects of conflict and drama. This has had an impact on how stories are presented and developed in India. Long discussions and debates between characters in The Mahabharata that disclose their intentions and feelings are renowned for their effective use of speech. This has influenced how language is employed in Indian storytelling, which frequently feature lengthy character discussions.

The other significant saga in Indian mythology which has influenced the growth of Indian storytelling is the Ramayana. Heroic archetypes like Rama, Sita, and Hanuman, who have grown into well-known figures in Indian culture, are encompassed in the Ramayana. This has affected the representation of heroes in Indian literature, which frequently uses the common heroic tropes. Mythical beings from Indian folklore like "rakshasas" and "vanaras" are depicted in the Ramayana. This has had an impact on how legendary creatures are employed in Indian folklore, with many tales including creatures that are similar. Moral advice and guidance, which can be considered as meaningful aspect of dharma and the repercussions of acts, are abundant in the Ramayana.

The Ramayana describes the intense love that Rama and Sita share as well as loyalty to gods like Hanuman. Owing to this, devotion and affection are portrayed in Indian stories in different ways, yet many of them share common elements. Epic conflicts between Rama and the rakshasa king Ravana are depicted in the Ramayana and are legendary in Indian culture. This has had an impact on how conflicts are depicted in Indian literature, with many tales portraying comparable epic battles. It has affected how heroic archetypes are portrayed, how mythological creatures are used, how moral lessons are taught, how love and devotion are shown, and how epic battles are portrayed.

The greatest pertinent epics in Indian mythology are the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. These epics have made significant contributions to the progress of Indian storytelling. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata were first transmitted verbally from generation to generation. Even today, grandparents still tell their grandchildren stories as part of the storytelling tradition. The ideals and lessons included in both epics instruct us on virtues like loyalty, devotion, and sacrifice. These principles have been incorporated into several Indian tales and are still crucial to Indian storytelling. These epics include well-rounded protagonists with unique traits. They don't simply have flat traits; they also have nuanced motives and feelings. This has impacted how characters are created in Indian literature.

There are many mythological figures in the Mahabharata and Ramayana, including gods, goddesses, devils, and supernatural creatures. Indian storytelling has used these aspects on a regular basis, and many stories do. Both epics are divided into a number of episodes, each one containing its own story and cast of people. The way stories are recounted in India has been affected by this episodic framework, and many Indian stories now have a similar structure. Ultimately, the Mahabharata and Ramayana proved to be a significant influence on the growth of Indian storytelling. They have had an impact on how stories are told, the morals and values they convey, and the employment of mythical themes in narrative.

Storytelling in the Digital Age:

With the advent of digital technology, storytelling has evolved into a more participatory, communicative, and easily available format. The process of creating, sharing, and consuming stories through digital platforms and technologies is known as "digitalization of storytelling." This covers anything from interactive games and virtual reality experiences to e-books and audiobooks. Storytellers can now experiment with new formats and tactics that were not feasible in human history prior to the development of technology and digital media thanks to the digitization of storytelling. Accessibility is among the biggest advantages of storytelling's digitization. People may now access stories at any time and from any location because to the proliferation of smartphones and tablets. Because of this, reading and listening to stories are now handier than ever, which makes it simpler for individuals to integrate reading into their hectic modern lives. The interactive nature of digital storytelling is another benefit. Readers and listeners can now interact with stories in new ways, like through interactive games and augmented reality experiences, thanks to digital platforms. This has enabled readers and listeners to participate in the story itself, making storytelling more dynamic and communicative overall. For publishers and writers, the digitization of storytelling has also created new opportunities. Authors no longer need to use conventional publishing channels to reach a global audience thanks to e-books and self-publishing platforms. In a way, this has democratized the publishing industry by enabling more writers to tell their stories to a global audience.

Findings and Conclusion:

Around the world, various countries have developed unique storytelling traditions, each with their own distinctive traits and inspirations. Here are a few instances of storytelling practises prevalent across the globe. Storytelling has evolved in a variety of forms. Some of the aforementioned genres include an allegory, a ballad, a bard, an epic, a fable, a fairy tale, a folktale, a fiction, and a parable. Since the advent of digital media and globalisation, storytelling has undergone even more changes. A bigger audience is now being reached through adapting traditional narrative techniques for television, film, and internet platforms. The popularity of storytelling competitions and festivals has also increased, giving storytellers a stage on which to display their competence and maintain India's oral storytelling traditions. Storytelling has always been a crucial component of Indian culture, connecting people of all ages and preserving the nation's rich history, from the ancient texts to the present-day digital world.

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