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From Vanishing Tribal Culture to Digital Heritage: AI-Driven Image-to-Video Models for Baiga Folk Narratives Preservation

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Abstract

This paper explores how AI-powered image-to-video models can be used to preserve and revitalise Baiga tribal folk narratives, in the context of threatened indigenous knowledge systems in general. Folk tales of the Baiga people of central India are an important source of cultural, cosmological, and environmental knowledge. Baiga society passes all these knowledge through oral, and performative traditions. Increasing challenges of urbanisation, traditional preservation means that are confined to printed work, sound or video recordings, have not been sufficient to convey the essence of these narratives. The research argues that generative AI technologies, in particular, image-to-video models, offered by companies such as Runway, Veo, and Sora, open new possibilities for digital heritage creation and preservation. The survey conducted in this research serves to evaluate the responses of the participants to AI-created video, based on the storytelling of the Baiga folk narrative on a five-point Likert scale. Through the conversion of static visual images to dynamic visual sequences, the use of these tools promotes a closer interaction with the elements of experience of the Baiga storytelling. The study sees this use of technology as more than a form of documentation, but part of cultural revitalisation with the current use of digital media. Combining traditional stories with the newly emerging AI possibilities, the paper demonstrates that digital reconstructions would support

intergenerational transmission, increase accessibility, and guarantee ensuring the tribal cultural memory in an ever more digital world.

Keywords-

Baiga tribe, folk narratives, digital heritage, artificial intelligence, image-to-video models, cultural preservation, indigenous knowledge, oral traditions.

I. Introduction

Folk narratives are the cornerstone of the indigenous people's culture and are considered as the storehouse of traditional wisdom and practices, ethics, religious theology and social proprieties of the ancient ancestors. In the tribal communities, these narratives are not merely forms of entertainment, or oral literature, but serve as a living tradition inspiring the identity, the sense of community, and intergenerational continuity. For the Baiga people of central India, folktale acts in a critical way to maintain and disperse cosmology, ecology, and social behaviour. These tales are well-entrenched in ritualistic, performative, and linguistic performances which are specific to the Baiga imagination, and a need to conserve them is important for the intangible cultural heritage of the tribe. In the age of a globalised world, the tribal stories are confronted with many dangers. Urbanisation, migration, traditional livelihoods at stake, and the hegemony of cultural paradigms have forced indigenous ways of knowing to the margins of society. As younger generations are more and more estranged from the oral tradition, the danger of cultural amnesia looms large. Due to the transient nature of oral telling, combined with inadequate coverage, many tribal traditions are in a precarious situation. The conventional forms of preservation, i.e., transcription, sound or video recordings, do not usually capture the performative, spatial, and symbolic contexts inherent of these narratives. This has forced an urgent need towards finding innovative ways which not only preserve but also revitalise these endangered cultural forms.

In this respect, Artificial Intelligence (AI) acts as a potentially good avenue. The current boom in generative AI technology has enabled the reconstruction of digital representations of culture, permitting to generate the feeling of immersion. Namely, image-to-video models, e.g., designed by Runway, Veo, and Sora, give ample capabilities

to animate static visual representations into dynamic, story-driven sequences. Integrating visual components with inferred motion and context, these models allow the generation of visual artefacts that are more reflective of the quality of oral traditions as a form of experience. Such use of technology has the potential of transformation within the context of the Baiga folk narratives. It enables digitalising of fragmented or threatened stories while maintaining aesthetic, and symbolic features of tribal identity. More to the point, it allows re-contextualising the given narratives into the modern digital environment so they become more accessible, informative, and able to be passed to future generations. Thus, the combination of AI and ensuring the survival of cultures has the potential to become a game-changer. Such models have been very critical in the preservation of indigenous languages and ceremonies particularly in societies where oral traditions are in danger of extinction. What is more, the immersive experience of AI-based videos enables one to have a closer contact with the ancestral knowledge systems, encouraging empathy or interest in the modern viewers. Through the introduction of artificial intelligence into the heritage protection process, therefore, new ideas on cultural transfer scenarios are implemented, which are consistent with the current values of media consumption. Consequently, it is through this digital intervention that we are able to close both the time and generational gap proving more appreciative on how cultural memory is perceived in a fast globalising world.

Conventional means of Folk narrative documentation, including oral transmission, handwritten manuscripts, and ethnographical documentations, have been key in preservation of cultural background. However, these techniques have limitations such as being susceptible to loss and decay for younger generations, the possible predisposition of the documenters and a failure to illuminate the dynamism and developmental nature of Folk narrative. Furthermore, documented Folk narrative is limited by the lack of accessibility and diffusion. These limitations are reasons why innovative ideas are necessary in order to preserve and renew traditional cultures.

II. AI-Driven Image-to-Video Model Technology

Artificial Intelligence technology is based on computer science and requires the synthesis of different software and hardware elements in the development and implementation process. The distinct class of generative models known as image-to-video models technology is powered by AI, uses a category of generative algorithms,

designed to produce smooth, temporally coherent video content given a single image, or a sequence of images. Such systems use the current developments in deep learning, particularly in the generative models and are able to generate motion, and contextually appropriate video frames to maintain semantic continuity as a matter of time. The first objective is to learn complex spatiotemporal dynamics based on large amounts of data and use it to generate novel video frames when given only a small amount of data, e.g., a single image or a text description. The core of these systems, Wang describes, is diffusion models, transformers, and Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) which consider the spatial distribution in the sequence as well as in time. In contrast to the traditional video synthesis which may rely on interpolation or physics-based simulator, the models guided by AI are designed to run by learned data priors, a statistical understanding of how objects, environments, and textures vary as a result of time (Wang 59-66).

Generative models in artificial intelligence are made to learn the probability distribution of data, and they can generate fresh realistic samples. As opposed to discriminative models that are concerned with input classification, Deep Generative Models (DGMs) cover the whole data distribution, which allows them to generate new images or video frames (Cate). Notable techniques are variational inference, like Variational Autoencoder (VAEs) which encode data to a latent space by using a Gaussian, and adversarial training, like Generative Adversarial Network (GANs) where a generator and discriminator oppose and train to improve realism. All in these cases, deep neural networks are employed to learn complicated, highly dimensional mappings amongst latent variables, and the data space. The ability to compute complex visual content is based on this theoretical framework in that it incorporates probabilistic modelling, learning neural representations and optimisation (Vivekananthan).

Veo (Google DeepMind)- In 2024, Google DeepMind released Veo, which represents a significant milestone in the field of text, and image-guided video creation. It uses a video diffusion transformer architecture that enables the generation of high resolution videos with a resolution of 1080p, and the length of the video goes to one minute as well. The system is remarkable in that it allows combining the use of text prompts, camera movement, and image conditioning, making the resulting videos consistent in their narrative, realistic in the spatial sense, and harmonious in terms of stylistic features, which can be defined as consistency, fidelity, and unity in a creative work of video art (“Veo: A New AI Video Generation Model”).

Sora (OpenAI)- Sora is a large-scale model introduced by OpenAI in early 2024 and uses latent diffusion, and transformer-based approaches to generate videos. It supports up to 60-second-long videos at high resolution,

and is touted by OpenAI as a world simulator, with the ability to create videos that exhibit a great comprehension of physical interaction, object permanence, and spatial transformations. Sora works by encoding movies on discrete latent spaces via autoencoders, and diffusing a transformer of the frames to describe the sequence of time. This allows it not just to render photorealistic content but also predictable object motion, weather effects, and complicated interactions. One of the prominent features of Sora is the capacity to produce videos using in-depth natural language descriptions where outputs depict literal and abstract tags of the descriptions. OpenAI points out its opportunities in simulation and training environments, scientific visualisation and digital storytelling ("Sora: Video Generation Models as World Simulators").

Runway (Runway ML, Inc.)- Runway is a commercially available AI video generation system designed to produce short video clips based on an image or text command. It employs diffusion-based image generation to the temporal dimension, making it possible to synthesize videos coherently given only static images. It is available to the general population and has been massively used in art, education, and low scale research studies. Gen-2 is predominantly characterised by the text-to-video, image-to-video and style transfer capabilities. It is possible to feed the model a reference image and extrapolate the motion dynamics using training data to create animated sequences that visually match the input. The focus on user interaction and creative experimentation has led Runway to streamline all its models to be able to produce an interface that supports its wide audience in artists and educators as a place where people are allowed to do AI video synthesis without a deep understanding of the technical side of things (Runway).

III. Summary of the Folktale: *The Magic Pot*

"The Magic Pot" is a folktale collected by Verrier Elwin in his ethnographical work *The Baiga* (1939), a book that covers the cultural life of the Baiga tribe of central India. The tale portrays animistic beliefs of the tribe, moral values, and supernaturalism. Such oral narratives are treasures of indigenous identity, and are preserved through the work of Elwin.

The folktale *The Magic Pot* narrates the story of a Brahmin couple, who are able to sustain themselves through daily begging, and saving small amounts of rice and sesame (til) with the help of two different pots. One

time, when it was raining heavily, his wife requested the Brahmin to prepare food. When he goes near the rice pot he hears a voice pleading to be handled carefully. The same voice is heard at the til pot. He is frightened and awaits the return of his wife. On her close inspection, two young girls emerging from the pots, Chaurmoti, and Tilmoti appear. The couple is so pleased they bring them up and show them a swing in their front yard. When they grow up, their beauty attracts the attention of a Baiga, who informs a local Raja. The Raja becomes infatuated with Tilmoti, and marries her exchanging gold. But the narrative takes a darker twist when jealous of the prosperity of her sister, Chaurmoti deceives and drowns Tilmoti during a visit. Disguised with her sister's ornaments, she takes her place in the palace. The Raja himself unknowingly visited by the bhut (ghost) of Tilmoti, who speaks out the truth, and laments on a mango tree. Uprighted by the nightly visitations, the Raja finally faces the spirit who tells him to bury Chaurmoti and keep a lamp over her corpse. After fulfilling this ritual, Tilmoti is awakened, and restored to her proper position at the side of the Raja to a peaceful resolution (Elwin 502-503).

IV. Scope

The research examines how digital technology can make it possible to contribute cultural preservation of Baiga tribal narrative, and folk cultures through the application of AI-based image-to-video models. It includes the research of the application of Runway, as a generative AI tool to implement it to transform the visual representations of Baiga folklore, e.g. traditional motifs, ritual performances, and symbolic images, into the animated video sequences that do not destroy cultural integrity. The analysis is restricted to the narrative culture of the Baiga community, and particularly its mythological, ecological and rites aspects. It also explores how AI can be used not only to maintain but also as a means of culture revitalization, and dissemination. Moreover, the study focuses on the technical, and ethical aspects of using AI in the contexts of indigenous settings with an intention to strike a balance between technological advancements, and the traditions cultural integrity and collective empowerment. Contextualising this exploration within the wider discourse of digital heritage, the research would help in the development of new practices of preserving intangible cultural resources in participatory, adaptive, and anticipatory ways.

V. Review of Literature

It has been an objective of AI to contribute to digital humanities research in a way that has been recently revolutionised as noted by George Pavlidis on his article "AI Trends in Digital Humanities Research" on AI trends. Use of AI is especially essential in automating and strengthening research methods in archaeology and cultural heritage through the application of machine learning and deep learning. Such innovations enable the deeper analysis, digitisation and conservation of historical objects. Additionally, natural language processing (NLP) and computer vision are AI-based tools that have played an important role in archival research and object recognition. Personalised access to digital heritage material has been made possible through reinforcement learning and recommendation systems. The current review analyses how the AI revolution can and should reshape digital humanities and transform cultural heritage studies.

The article "AI and Cultural Heritage: The Future of Digital Preservation" by Brown (2023) focuses on the use of AI to preserve cultural heritage and highlights the importance of technologies, such as image-to-video transformation, in increasing accessibility and interest in historical objects and places. His work points to the possibility of how AI-driven tools can be used to revive lost traditions and guarantee their survival in the digital age.

Williams (2022) in her article "Animating History: The Role of AI in Cultural Preservation." studies the application of AI in the animation of the historical picture and uses it as evidence of AI involvement in digital narration. Through visual narratives powered by AI, she suggests that AI enhances documentation and sharing of the cultural process, resulting in increased cultural participation on the part of the citizens.

The article "AI and the Future of Cultural Heritage" (2024) deals with new AI applications in archival preservation, paying attention to their potential in the revitalisation of dying languages. One of the ways where such AI can be used is as described on the article as a way of closing the gap between past narratives and the modern audience to secure cultural sustainability.

In the article "Research on the Application of Computer Artificial Intelligence Technology in Graphic Design" written by Ying Yu and Ping Xiao, Research on the Application of Computer Artificial Intelligence

Technology in Graphic Design, the author explores how AI can be used in graphic design regarding the plane interaction, colour rendering, and virtual scene modelling. Big data and AI have made graphic design into a more scientific process with methodologies rather than just an intuitive process. The AI algorithms and intelligent rendering tools contribute to the diversification of knowledge and the new design solutions. Net to the progress in AI, the individuals of graphic creation adopt updated theories of thought, on the one hand, relying on reality, yet, on the other hand, accepting abstract thought. The study reveals the significance of harnessing the power of big data in AI to facilitate innovativeness and productivity. Finally, the article highlights the broad scope of AI penetration into the sphere of graphic design, modern form of art communication and expression.

VII. Methodology

This research is an Interdisciplinary approach, taking insights from Anthropology, Literature (Digital Humanities) and Computer Science. The methodology is Quantitative. In this research, the sampling method used is non-probability sampling method, with the specific type of sampling is judgmental sampling. Participants are deliberately chosen from Shahdol, and Anuppur districts due to their prior knowledge of tribal folklore, knowledge of cultural narratives, or the possession of knowledge on similar fields.

The folktale is collected from the book by Verrier Elwin's *The Baiga*, The Magic Pot. In this study, a shorter folktale has been selected, as working with a concise narrative facilitates more focused analysis and manageable integration within the scope of the research objectives. The imagery is selected manually in terms of how important they are to the story. The free version of Runway Model Gen-2 is being used in this research paper. However, there are other models that also can be used for similar results. Elevenlabs website is used for voice narrations of the folktale *The Magic Spot*. Any simple video editor can be used to compile all the videos generated by AI.

This research employs the Runway AI model, which necessitates a user login for access. The workflow is outlined as follows-

Image Curation: Start by generating, selecting, and uploading high-quality images. Ensure the images are clear and free from clutter.

Text Prompt: One can provide a text prompt to guide the AI in generating the video. This can include details about the style, mood, or specific elements you want to see in the video.

Generate Video: Click the "Generate" button. The AI model will interpret the image and text prompt (if provided) to create a video.

Customisation: One can customise the video by adjusting settings such as duration, resolution, and camera movements. This allows you to tailor the video to your specific needs.

Download and Use: Once the video is generated, you can download it and use it for your projects.

AI-generated Folk narrative animation has some criteria to evaluate the quality and authenticity of the work, like audience satisfaction, perceived quality, or agreement with statements on a Likert Scale. Participants would choose out of the five possible answers to each statement, which will enable the study to quantify their feedback, and analyse the overall reception of the generated video-

1. **Cultural Accuracy**: Assessing how well the animation represents the cultural elements, traditions, and Folk narrative accurately.
2. **Visual Quality**: Evaluating the animation's visual appeal, including character design, background art, and overall aesthetics.
3. **Narrative Coherence**: Ensuring the story is engaging, logical, and faithful to the original Folk narrative.
4. **Technical Execution**: Checking the smoothness of animations, transitions, and the use of special effects.
5. **Audience Rating**: A metric that assesses how effectively an animation engages viewers and sustains their interest, as reflected in their overall judgment and satisfaction.

VIII. Analysis of Evaluation Results

Generating videos by AI out of images is also quick and inexpensive because it requires less manual labour as opposed to traditional approaches to animation. Although the use of traditional animation provides greater artistic control, conse quently it is time consuming and labour-intensive. Instead, AI tools leverage the use of text prompts along with customisation capabilities to generate videos at a high speed. AI-driven videos perfectly suit projects

having small deadlines or a large amount of video material to share as traditional animation has a considerable level of creative expression. Each approach possesses individual benefits in terms of project needs. Folktales are compositions of words, and words can be transformed into text. The number of AI websites that generate text-to-image is in the hundreds.

In this study, a total of nineteen AI-generated images were employed. Each image had a resolution of 1280 × 720 pixels, maintaining a standardised aspect ratio of 16:9, which is consistent with conventional widescreen video formats. These images were processed using the Runway AI Gen-2 model. The average time required to convert a single image into a short video segment was approximately 90 seconds. Each resulting video output was recorded at an average frame rate of 24 frames per second, a rate that ensures cinematic fluidity and visual coherence. The duration of each generated video was about ten seconds, which provided sufficient depth to evaluate the dynamic rendering capabilities of the model. Furthermore, the fidelity score of the generated videos was high, indicating that the outputs exhibited strong visual realism and structural consistency relative to the input images.

After the final video has been made, the video will be validated, and the validation process was carried out by the professors, assistant professors, research scholars, and students of Shahdol, and Anuppur districts. The validation process is carried out online by providing a Google Form containing a statement relating to the content and validity of the story, which will be answered by selecting one radio button out of five. The following are the results of the checklist document related to final video validation.

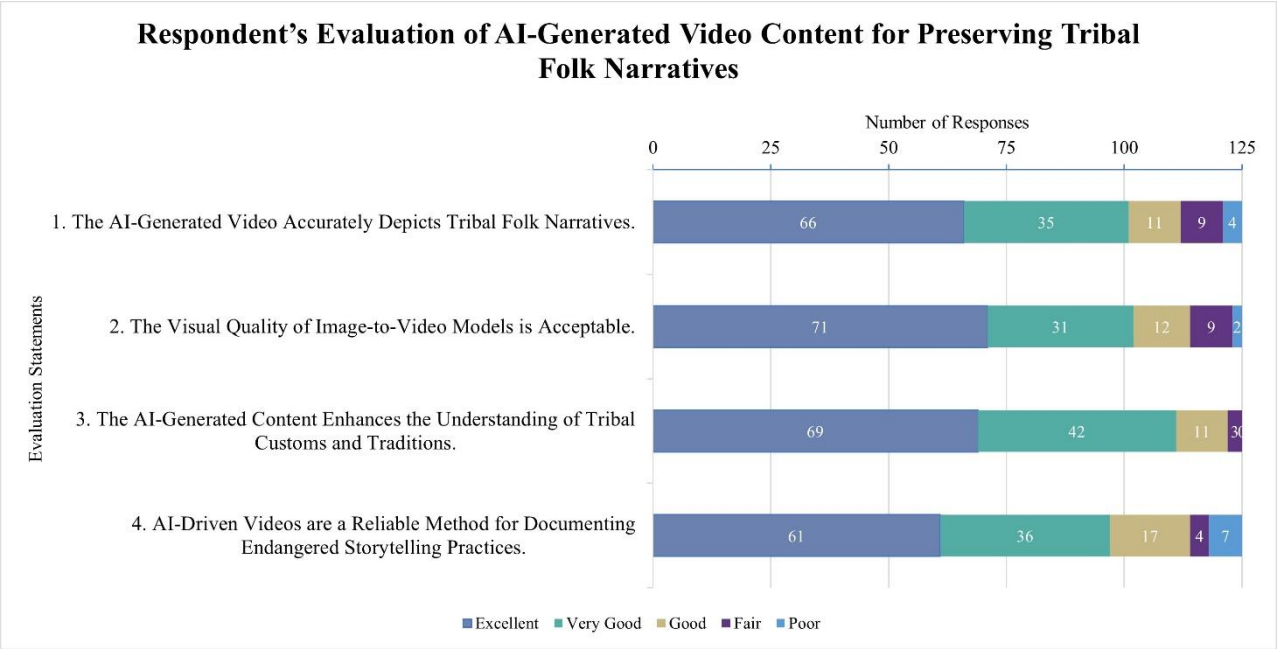

Fig. 1. Respondent's Evaluation of AI-Generated Video Content for Preserving Tribal Folk Narratives.

The data in the updated chart (Fig. 1) reflects a broader respondent base and continues to demonstrate a strong positive reception of AI-generated videos aimed at preserving tribal folk narratives. For the statement "The AI-Generated Video Accurately Depicts Tribal Folk Narratives," a majority of 66 respondents rated the content as *Excellent*, while 35 chose *Very Good*, with only a small number giving lower ratings 11 as *Good*, 9 as *Fair*, and 4 as *Poor*. A similar trend is observed in the responses to "The Visual Quality of Image-to-Video Models is Acceptable," where 71 participants selected *Excellent*, 31 selected *Very Good*, and only a handful rated it as *Good* (12), *Fair* (9), or *Poor* (2). The third statement, "The AI-Generated Content Enhances the Understanding of Tribal Customs and Traditions," also received overwhelmingly positive ratings: 69 *Excellent*, 42 *Very Good*, 11 *Good*, and 3 *Fair*. However, the statement "AI-Driven Videos are a Reliable Method for Documenting Endangered Storytelling Practices" showed comparatively more variability: 61 *Excellent*, 36 *Very Good*, 17 *Good*, 4 *Fair*, and 7 *Poor*—indicating some reservations among respondents regarding the archival dependability of such content. Despite this, the overall trend remains strongly favourable. The high ratings across all four evaluative categories suggest widespread acceptance of AI-generated storytelling as both a visually compelling and culturally resonant mode of digital preservation. This calls for a collaborative approach that combines AI innovation with community validation to ensure both authenticity and sustainability in heritage preservation.

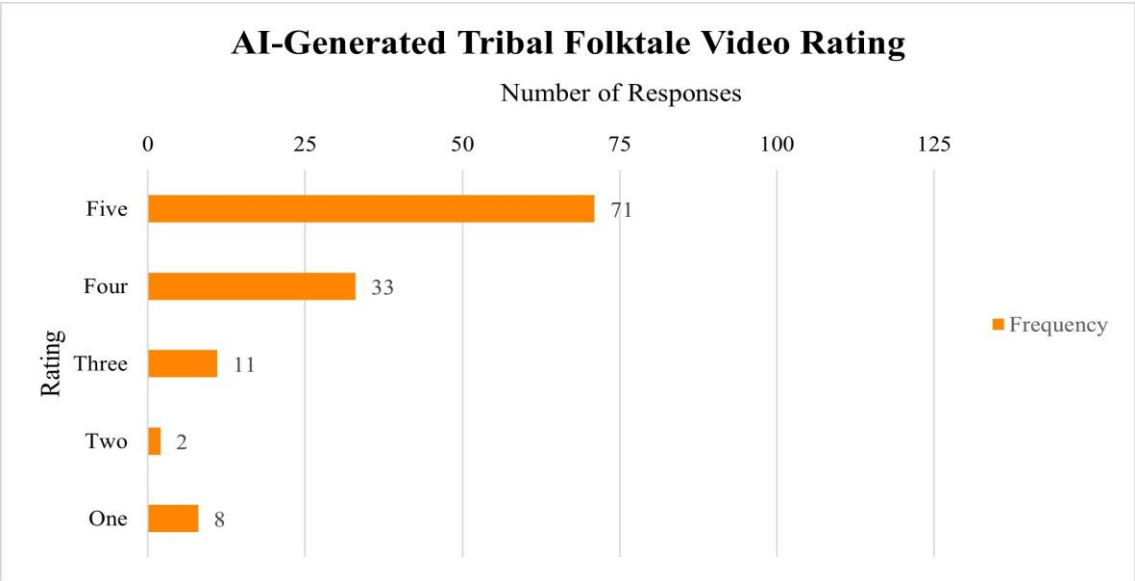

Fig. 2. Distribution of survey responses based on star ratings (5=Excellent, 1=Poor).

The frequency distribution of ratings (1 = Poor; 5 = Excellent) for an AI-created Baiga folktale video (N = 125) is depicted. The chart reveals that 71 out of 125 participants rated the video as 5, while 33 gave it a 4. Only 11 rated it a 3, 2 rated it a 2, and 8 rated it a 1. This significant positive skew (mean ≈ 4.23) suggests that the majority of viewers considered the adaptation to be excellent or very good. Nearly all ratings are concentrated at the higher end of the scale. This overwhelmingly positive feedback indicates that the AI-generated story was generally well-received.

Though the narratives and visuals received high ratings on average, the generative models employed, particularly Gen-2 by Runway, were not trained on specifically on Baiga data. This raises concerns about the epistemological validity of the AI results. Researchers indicate that AI reflects the data input used to train it, which is mostly of non-indigenous origin. Therefore, outputs with the highest scores may include mistakes or cultural overgeneralisations. This tendency coincides with the fact that Dahiya's points out that AI allows transforming oral histories into attention-grabbing visual stories that attract young generations (Dahiya 155).

Nevertheless, one has to be aware of the limitations of such assessments. Without direct feedback from Baiga community members, the cultural authenticity of the videos cannot be fully confirmed. However the participants live in the tribal district, and may label a depiction as being true, without necessarily having cultural validity. In this way, audience satisfaction must be viewed as a condition, which is sufficient to evaluate ethnography accuracy.

These findings show that there is a prevalent belief that AI-generated media can serve as a reliable method for documenting, and preserving tribal folktale. The patterns indicate a great acceptance by the audience. The skew of the responses towards the upper end of the Likert scale indicates that the audience in general considered the videos created by the AI to be not only engaging, but also authentic. As an example, the high ratings on cultural accuracy and the correct perceptions of culture indicate that the respondents were confident that the video used AI reflected the Baiga folklore correctly. Likewise, the high Excellent/Very Good ratings, which means that the generative model achieved sharp and attractive visuals. Only the final statement, concerning long-term reliability, received slightly lower ratings, suggesting that while respondents enjoyed the videos, some were uncertain about trusting such AI methods as definitive archival records. These two factors, great enthusiasm towards contents with a little concern about methodological rigour, can be coined in line with how generative media can be fascinating to audiences. The survey results reflect good perspective, it appears to the respondents as the possibility to accept AI as a method of

storytelling of the Baiga folk narrative, despite a part of the population being sceptical of reassuring AI by using it as an archival resource.

X. Key Findings and Conclusion

The evolving nature of artificial intelligence technology on its use to preserve folk narratives digitally is transforming the process of archiving, and experiencing traditional narratives. The positive scores point to the fact that the respondents identify the AI video as an effective tool for preserving Baiga folk narratives. Overall, the results look optimistic in the scope of possibilities of AI to pass the heritage of the Baiga people on to others. As demonstrated by the survey, despite the limited resources, and free aversions of the Runway Gen-2, and ElevenLabs, AI-generated folktale is capable of achieving culturally satisfactory results. With just a little bit of refinement, and proper direction, such models can be very useful in heritage preservation. These characteristics are especially relevant to those stories of the tribes, which are now facing the danger of getting lost as a result of the generational shift and urban migration. Future development of AI-driven image-to-video generation promises to introduce the cultural heritage in a real life-like form that can lead to immersive experience which can easily attract the interest of global audiences, and saturate the interest of the younger generations. Nevertheless, this is a very challenging and ethical issue to AI-generated folk narrative content due to the dangers of cultural misrepresentation, appropriation, and a loss of subtle meanings that were already a part of the oral tradition. Reconciling AI development, and ethical responsibility is critical to utilising the potential of emerging technology as a full-fledged method of revitalising our multicultural heritage and protecting it.

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