Research Article | Education | ISSN No: 2839-5085 | Volume : 1 | Issue : 5 | September 2026

Globalization and Cultural Identity in Modern India

Anam Fathima, Research Scholar,
Sunrise University, Rajasthan,
India.

Access Online

Abstract

This research paper looks at the different ways that globalization has affected the social and cultural side of India after the 1991 economic changes. We all know that this was a moment for our country. Some people say that the spread of culture is making everything look the same and slowly taking away our local traditions. This study has a different point of view. It says that when global and local things come together they create a complex and important kind of identity. This is called a "Hybrid Identity." The paper uses an descriptive approach. It takes ideas from Arjun Appadurai's "Scapes" and from M.N. Srinivas's ideas about "Sanskritization" and "Westernization." The study looks at changes in language, buying habits, family life and religious practices that are seen in India today. The results show that even though the way people live and their dreams are becoming more global, our basic values and traditions are still strong. We can see this in our lives. The use of "Hinglish," the way big companies change to fit culture and the rise of "Indigenous Modernity," where modern technology helps spread traditional knowledge like Yoga and Ayurveda are all clear signs of this mix. The study says that the "Global Indian" identity is able to mix technology with old traditions, in a good way. In our country this is happening more and more. So globalization is not just breaking down culture. It is also helping it grow and change. The paper ends by saying that we need policies to protect our languages and traditional crafts from the pressure of global mass production.

Keywords; *Globalization, Cultural Hybridity, Glocalization, Consumerism, National Identity, Westernization, Traditional Values*

Introduction

India's economic system changed a lot in 1991 as everyone knows it was a moment for the country. By opening up to the world India moved away from a protected socialist-type economy and into a place where outside money could come in easily. This change did not bring in foreign cash but it also brought in many big companies from other countries and satellite television

into everyday life. Suddenly regular homes started seeing a wave of Western ways from Hollywood movies to the famous fast-food restaurants that are everywhere now. This quick exposure caused a debate about culture. Many people talk about the "McDonaldization" of society, where ideas of being fast and the same start to take over differences. The main fear is that this kind of sameness might slowly make India's wide range of languages, traditional clothes and standing traditions disappear, which are seen a lot among Indian people. In this view globalization looks like a force that might replace real culture with a simple Western-style way of living. But still an important question comes up: is Indian culture really. Is it just changing over time? Even though global media has a lot of power it has not completely copied life in this country. Instead Indian society has shown it can change. People are not just taking ideas quietly but they are using them to share their own culture in bigger ways. With the help of the internet and online tools local music, folk art and regional languages are now reaching people over the world which was not possible before. The current situation in India can be better understood as a kind of Mixed Identity. It is not one side beating the other but about a smart mix. For example a young worker in Bengaluru might speak English at work. Wear Western clothes but at home they still celebrate festivals with full tradition and enjoy local food with family. This mix, often called "Glocalization " shows that global ideas and traditional values can live together in this country. Indians are not leaving their culture behind. They are changing it in new ways. By mixing thoughts, with old beliefs India is making a culture that is both global and truly Indian. In the end globalization is not breaking culture. Helping it grow into something more flexible and full of different parts.

Objectives of the study

- To identify the primary drivers of cultural change in India since the 1990s.
- To analyze the impact of global media and the internet on the aspirations of Indian youth.
- To examine the "Glocalization" of products and services (e.g., McAloo Tikki, Indianized Marvel comics).
- To assess the resurgence of traditionalism as a psychological defense against global anonymity.

Literature Review

To study globalization in India properly we need to look at it from angles. As we all know our country has both a history and fast modern changes. By using known sociological ideas along with present-day market studies we can better understand how Indian society is managing both its traditions and global connections. This combined view helps us see how people in our country adjust and balance values with new influences. One useful idea comes from Arjun Appadurai's theory of five "scapes," which helps explain how global influence works in a way. In the context these scapes show that culture does not move in one straight line but in many mixed and overlapping ways. Ethnoscapes talk about the movement of people like tourists, migrants and workers. Here the Indian diaspora plays an important role by bringing global ideas back home. Mediascapes and technoscapes are about the flow of information and technology. As we see today even rural areas are getting access to global media while Indian creators are also sharing local content worldwide. Ideoscapes and finansscapes deal with ideas and money flow and this shows that India is not just following global trends but also taking part in shaping them.

Before the digital age sociologist M.N. Srinivas explained two important social processes in India, which are still relevant today. Sanskritization is when lower social groups follow the customs and practices of groups to improve their status, which is commonly seen among Indian people in many regions. On the side Westernization refers to the changes that came during British rule and later global contact influencing technology, systems and lifestyle. The balance between these two forces is a feature of Indian society. Some people move towards Western ideas while others try to protect and bring back traditional practices. This clearly shows that development in India does not mean leaving our roots. In today's time many studies are focusing on the rise of the "New Middle Class" in our country. This group has a way of living, where modern lifestyle and traditional thinking go together. Research shows that this class uses spending as a way to show identity. For example they enjoy brands and international food but at the same time they spend more during festivals and family functions, which is very common in our country. This "New Middle Class" is playing a role, in creating a Hybrid Identity. It proves that using gadgets or visiting global brands does not reduce their connection to traditions. Their lifestyle is a mix. We can say "glocalized," where both global image and local values are equally important.

Methodology

The basic structure of this study is built on an academic framework as we all know such structure is important to understand changes properly. It is specially designed to study the details of cultural change in India. By using research methods and different types of data the study tries to give a full understanding of how global forces and local traditions work together in our country. The research follows an descriptive design. This method is useful for studying changes that cannot be measured only with numbers, which is commonly seen in cultural studies. Of just counting data this approach focuses more on understanding the "why" and "how" behind cultural changes. Through a review of existing studies and by looking at real examples—like how global food brands adjust to Indian taste or how regional digital content is growing—the research finds patterns in behaviour and identity among Indian people. To keep the study accurate and trustworthy data is collected from reliable national and international sources. UNESCO reports are used to understand standards of cultural protection and diversity. The Census of India gives information about population changes, language use and urban growth in our country. The World Values Survey helps in studying changes in people's thinking, beliefs and social values over time. Along with this sociological field studies give real-life insights into how people manage their lives in the middle of globalization. The main analysis of the study is based on the idea of "Cultural Convergence vs. Divergence." Convergence means that different cultures slowly become similar often moving towards styles as we can notice in some urban areas. On the hand divergence means cultures become more different, as a reaction with people strongly holding on to their local identity, which is also commonly seen among Indian people. By using both these views the study tries to understand whether Indian society is becoming one global culture or creating its own mixed path. This balanced way of thinking helps in giving an clearer understanding of modern life in our country.

Socio-Cultural Analysis of Modern India

The effect of globalization on society can be clearly seen in areas like communication, spending habits, family life and the way we celebrate our traditions as we all know these are part of our daily life. These changes show that our society is growing fast in a way but at the same time trying to keep its basic values safe. It is like moving but

not forgetting where we come from. Language in India has now become a sign of social progress. English is no longer a leftover from colonial times; it is now a key for career growth and also a symbol of higher status in our country. This has not reduced the use of local languages. Instead a mixed form called "Hinglish" has become very popular which we can commonly see in ads, movies and normal conversations. At the time the digital boom has increased regional content in a big way. Platforms like YouTube and streaming apps are giving space for languages showing that global technology can actually support local voices instead of reducing them. When we look at consumer culture earlier Indian families mostly focused on saving money often investing in gold or fixed deposits which was very common in our country. Now globalization has changed this thinking towards spending and using credit. Easy EMI options and digital loans have made borrowing normal for people. Shopping is no longer for need; it has become a way of enjoyment and even a way to show identity. Global brands are now seen as status symbols. Buying them often shows a wish to be part of a global lifestyle. Family and social structure in India are also changing. The joint family system, which was once very strong is slowly reducing, in cities. Nuclear families are becoming more common due to job needs and movement for work. Along with this the role of women is also changing in a way. With education and job chances more women are working now which is commonly seen among Indian people today. This financial independence is giving women a voice in family decisions and also in society. Traditions and festivals have not disappeared because of globalization. They have changed their form. Events like Karwa Chauth are now celebrated on a larger and more commercial level. Big companies use these occasions to sell products from electronics to gift items. Some people feel this reduces the meaning of festivals but others think it helps in keeping traditions alive for the younger generation. Today celebrations often include elements, like theme parties or travel creating a mix of old and new. In the end all these changes show that Indian culture is not fixed. It keeps adjusting and growing with time in a global world.

Discussion

The connection between forces and Indian society is not just a one-way influence from the West as we all know things in our country work in a more complex way. It is actually a mix of adjustment, cultural pride and economic differences. These interactions show how India keeps its identity while also taking part in the global economy. Global companies have understood that a single method cannot work in a country like India. To grow successfully they follow a method called Glocalization, where they balance both ideas and local needs. For example fast-food chains have changed their menus by removing beef items and adding vegetarian food that suits Indian taste. In the way streaming platforms are focusing more on regional language content instead of only showing international programs. By using culture, language and traditional styles in their promotion these global brands slowly become part of Indian life instead of looking like outsiders. At the time instead of simply accepting Western culture there is a strong trend of what we can call Indigenous Modernity. This means using tools to promote traditional Indian knowledge. A clear example is Yoga and Ayurveda which're now popular worldwide with the help of digital apps and modern branding. Also programs like "Make in India" encourage people to use products like Khadi and handloom clothes by presenting them as stylish and eco-friendly options. This shows that globalization and technology can also help in protecting and promoting our culture, which is commonly seen among people today. The experience of globalization is not the same for everyone in our country. People living in cities enjoy benefits like fast internet, global travel and diverse work environments.. In rural areas the situation is often different. The digital divide is still an issue. Urban

people mostly see globalization as a chance for growth and better lifestyle while rural communities may feel pressure from competition without having equal access to digital tools. Because of this gap India is experiencing globalization in ways. Some areas are fully connected to systems while others are still facing basic challenges like internet access. This shows that globalization does not affect everyone equally. While the urban middle class easily adapts to an hybrid identity rural people often find it harder to adjust as they try to manage traditional life along, with new global demands. In the end the real question is not whether globalization is happening. How its benefits can be shared more fairly across all parts of our country.

Results

The results of this study show an interesting connection between outside influences and our internal traditions as we all know India has always balanced both sides. The data clearly tells that India is not becoming a copy of any country but instead it is creating its own path by choosing what to accept and what to keep. This selective adjustment is shaping an identity in our country. The study also shows proof of what we can call "Hybridity" among people. On one side many people are following lifestyles like wearing Western clothes speaking English in professional spaces and enjoying international food habits, which is commonly seen among Indian people today.. This change is mostly limited to public life. In family matters traditional values are still very strong. Important areas like marriage, religious practices and family roles continue to follow standing customs. This clearly shows that a modern outer life can exist along with an inner life. The findings also make a difference between economic identity and cultural identity. Economic life in India has become more global, where people work, earn and spend in ways to other countries.. When it comes to culture and spirituality things are still deeply rooted. The main belief systems, moral values and sense of duty, which we often connect with Dharma are still strong in our society. This means globalization is changing how we live our life but not the deeper reasons behind it. One important outcome of this period is the rise of what we can call the "Global Indian." This type of person connects both traditional worlds. Such individuals can easily work in global environments like technology sectors and at the same time take part in traditional rituals at home. They do not see any conflict between these two sides. By balancing knowledge, with cultural roots the Global Indian shows that globalization can help culture grow and expand, rather than destroy it.

Conclusion

The study of globalization in India shows a story that's much deeper than just the loss of tradition. As we all know our country has always managed change in its way. Of destroying culture or making everything the same globalization is actually helping in cultural change and growth. It questions practices but at the same time gives new ways to reshape and continue them. The findings clearly show that India is not simply following one culture. In fact our country is carefully selecting what to take from influences and what to keep from its own traditions. This process of acceptance allows people to follow modern lifestyles like digital use and corporate work culture while still holding on to their social and spiritual roots. Globalization has in a way pushed traditions to become modern helping practices like Yoga and regional arts reach people across the world through platforms. Today Indian identity can be better understood as something that is always changing and developing. It is like a "work in progress " where people are constantly adjusting between village life and city life, which is commonly seen among people. This identity is not fully traditional and not fully Western either. It is a mix. People are balancing their values with new dreams

showing that it is possible to grow with technology while still staying connected to one's roots. To keep this balance strong some careful steps are needed. It is important to create policies that protect our cultural heritage in our country. For language protection steps should be taken in education and digital platforms to support languages so they are not lost due to English. For artisans, financial and policy support is needed to protect crafts from being replaced by large-scale global products. Also there is a need to invest in spaces, like museums, digital records and traditional learning centers to keep our heritage alive.

References

Appadurai, A. (1996). Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization. University of Minnesota Press.

Brosius, C. (2010). India's Middle Class: New Forms of Urban Leisure, Consumption and Prosperity. Routledge.

Census of India. Language: India, States and Union Territories (Table C-16). Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, 2011.

Fernandes, L. (2006). India's New Middle Class: Democratic Politics in an Era of Economic Reform. University of Minnesota Press.

Srinivas, M. N. (1966). Social Change in Modern India. University of California Press.

UNESCO. World Report on Cultural Diversity: Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue. UNESCO Publishing, 2009.

World Values Survey Association. World Values Survey: Wave 7 (2017-2022) India Country Report. JD Systems Institute, 2022.