FADING INDIAN HERITAGE: THE GRADUAL EXTINCTION OF CULTURE AMONG YOUNG GENERATION IN INDIA

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Abstract
India, a country which is popularly known for its rich culture and heritage, has a remarkable history that can be traced back thousands of years. It is a land of cultural diversity with different religions, festivals, cultures, arts, and languages. The influence of Indian culture is diverse and unique as are its characteristics, it focuses on inner peace and spirituality. In recent decades, Indian culture has faced so many challenges for its preservation due to Western lifestyles. This research paper, titled Fading Indian Heritage, seeks to explore the factors contributing to the gradual erosion of Indian culture among the youth. It examines the dynamics of changing values, the role of globalization and Westernization, and the impact of media, education, and family in shaping cultural retention. This research explores the extent to which Indian culture is being maintained by the young generation.
The data was collected through a primary data collection instrument. A quantitative research design was employed to analyze the data through a close-ended questionnaire. The respondents were told about the objective of the questionnaire. It was distributed in online mode (via Google Forms). The collected data was subjected to quantitative analysis using statistical tools. This study covers a descriptive survey to analyze the attitudes, perceptions, and habits of the youth. The target population for the research study comprises young individuals. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was implied to select the respondents, to ensure feasibility and relevance to the research objectives.
Keywords: Descriptive survey, modernization, quantitative research, westernization, youth.

Introduction

Indian heritage refers to the smooth mixture of sculptures, language, festivals, traditions, philosophies, spirituality, etc. practiced in India. The Indian culture pops out with a lot of varieties in itself. This heritage reflects India's history, identity, diversity, and roots which have evolved over thousands of years. The heritage of the nation helps in preserving the natural identity of the nation. The retention of Indian culture among the alpha generation plays a significant role in maintaining the dignity of the nation. The modern Western culture is shaping our nation into a new form. India has 22 official languages which makes it a diverse country.

The rich culture, heritage, diversity, and ethics of India are famous worldwide. From dance forms to rituals, festivals, and languages, India has held its true place. However, in the modern era with a change in technology, Urbanization, and globalization, (Pieterse, 2009) the involvement of the younger generation seems to be less in traditional cultural practices. The continuity of this rich cultural heritage is under threat. This whole current scenario raises a critical matter of concern for the Indian heritage. It also highlights the factors influencing the retention of Indian culture among the alpha generation. Western lifestyles often disconnect people from their roots. The preservation of Indian culture (Peter Akosah-Twumasi1*, 2018) among the youth is not just a matter of concern but also for sustaining the unique identity of Indian culture. It raises a question in the mind of the Indians about the sustainability of Indian culture in the future. It is very important to safeguard the soul of Indian identity for the generations to come.

In spite of continuous efforts and the introduction of various cultural programs and functions, there

is an observable gap in the transfer of culture and traditions to the youth (Kang, 2011).

However modernization has provided numerous benefits to us, it has also introduced new challenges for the preservation of Indian culture and heritage (Kolaya, 2015). Many young Indians now prioritize Western lifestyles and modern trends and do not follow the path of their ancestors, which leads to disconnection from their cultural roots.

The introduction of digital entertainment, social media, western lifestyles, and urbanization, has overpowered the Indian culture, which ultimately caused its decline. The fading interest in Indian heritage among the youth poses a challenge not only for the preservation of the culture but also for the identity of the nation.

As a result, traditional practices such as language, festivals, arts, and culture lose their significance in the lives of young Indians.

Literature Review

S.No.	Title	Author (Year)	Variables	Findings
1.	Cultural retention among the Indian migratory communities	Aabid Majeed Sheikh, Saima Rashid (June 2019)	Yoga, Indian migration, Bollywood movies	This occurrence of cultural retention amongst migrant communities in India allows them to maintain a connection with their homeland, though largely in imagination, since both their culture and the homeland itself undergo a transformation in reality.
2.	Impact of western culture on Indian culture	Manoj Prakesh (Feb 2018)	Clothing, lifestyle, language, family	Today, cultures are increasingly blending in India. The country has undergone significant changes due to Westernization; however, the fading of our traditional values is a growing concern. Western culture has influenced Indian culture in both positive as well as negative ways.
3.	Globalization and its impact on Indian culture and technology	Harsha Chawla, Hitesh Mohapatra (2020)	Food, clothing, employment	The findings reveal that Indian culture comprises multiple facets, each of which is practiced to varying degrees by individuals. However, not all members of society adhere to or believe in every aspect of these traditions. It is evident that Indian culture remains deeply rooted in tradition, yet public perceptions towards it vary, encompassing both appreciation and criticism.
4.	Examining the Impact of Young People's Involvement in Cultural Heritage Preservation and Promotion	Ankita Singh, et.al (2024)	Knowledge, perception, engagement in activities	These findings bring into focus the need for the development of interest and knowledge related to sustainability and development in the field of cultural heritage among young people
5.	Prevalence of Indian culture over Western culture in the 21st century	Dr. Pratima Shah, et.al (2023)	Music, Mother tongue	The research indicates that Western culture, propelled by globalization, has had a considerable impact on various regions, including India. Indian culture continues to hold its relevance in contemporary times. Its traditions, values, and practices persist not only within the country but also among the global Indian diaspora, reflecting the

				resilient and adaptive character of Indian culture in the modern world.
6.	Impact of westernization on Indian culture	Seema Shukla, Ms. Surya Nair, et.al (2017-2019)	Civilization, Technology, market transformation	In the present context, the influence of Westernization is growing stronger and appears to be unavoidable. However, Indian culture remains deeply rooted and valued, making it resistant to complete change. While we may adopt and integrate new elements, our core values and identity will continue to endure.
7.	Moral universals, ancient culture, and Indian youth: Part 2- facing the challenge of westernization	Walter Renner, et.al (2014)	Smoking, sexuality, Cultural psychology	We use other living beings for our survival but when it comes to qualities like empathy, cooperation, altruism we keep them in the province of humanity.
8.	Post-modernized culture globalization: Threatening Folk Cultures in India	Maidul Islam (2006)	Folk culture and art	The study reveals that traditional rural artists are currently engaged in a challenging struggle against the dominance of technology rooted in post-modern cultural trends, as they strive to preserve their cultural identity and sustain their artistic existence.
9.	Identity, dominance, and contestation: young people's involvement in Cultural heritage	Shailendra Kharat (2021)	Media, Diversity	The findings suggest that youth possess varied perspectives of heritage and culture. They view the nation as a predefined community, with heritage playing a key role in shaping that sense of belonging. Their understanding of the nation's cultural makeup, particularly in the Indian context is complex. They acknowledge and appreciate India's rich socio-cultural diversity while also voicing concern over the current threats it faces.

Research Problem

Many factors influence the retention of the Indian culture in India. One of those is urbanization and global connectivity with an increase in exposure to global trends people are more inclined towards Western culture. From food to fashion habits, people are adopting different cultural values like shifting from joint family to nuclear family; and more use of digital platforms and media. Language, attire, religious beliefs, and marriage practices also influence the cultural heritage. People are increasingly adopting Western culture and Indian culture is becoming extinct. The research problem highlights the gradual extinction of the young generation towards Western culture.

Objective

- To identify the factors that influence the retention of Indian culture in the young generation.
- To identify the most influencing factor and least influencing factors affecting the retention of Indian culture in the young generation.

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive research design to investigate the phenomenon of fading Indian heritage. The data was collected through the survey method. The research throws light on both primary and secondary data analysis. The sampling method used in this study is convenience sampling as per the ease and proximity of the researcher. There were a total of 100 respondents selected from a university. The students pursuing undergraduate and post-

graduation were provided with a close-ended questionnaire. A scale of five points i.e. Likert scale was used to question the respondents which included strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The data collected was analyzed using the descriptive statistics method. This statistical tool was employed to assess and interpret the responses.

Hypothesis Formulation

H01-There is no significant difference in the perception of students towards cultural retention in India based on gender.

H02-There is no significant difference in the perception of students towards cultural retention in India based on education.

Data Analysis

1. Which type of clothes do you prefer to wear to functions?

Type of Clothes	Frequency	Percentage
Western clothes	22	22%
Indian clothes	64	64%
Indo-western clothes	9	9%
Other	5	5%

According to this data, 64% of the students wear Indian clothes at functions. 22% of the respondents prefer Western clothes whereas 9% of the people wear Indo-Western clothes. As per the data, most people prefer to wear Indian clothes in functions which is a good sign of maintaining cultural traditions and values. It might also depict the connection of people with their roots. The clothing of a person represents his culture and also his comfort. The sense of clothing also reflects his / her personality. Besides this, there are other factors too like moods and norms of a person. It also depends upon the type of profession in which they are engaged.

2. What do you prefer to do in your spare time?

Activity	Frequency	Percentage
Reading holy books	1	1%
Watching movies	18	18%
Using mobile phone	28	28%
Spending time with your family	46	46%
Listening music	1	1%
All of the above	1	1%
Other	5	5%

According to this data, 46% of the students prefer to spend their spare time with their family members. This represents that the young generation is still attached to their family and family bonds and relationships hold the highest priority. 28% of respondents spend most of their time on mobile phones, whereas 18% spend their spare time watching movies. The remaining people spend their time in different activities like listening to music, studying, and spending time on the phone or spending time on fitness that is gym or any sort of exercise, or reading holy books.

3. How do you celebrate your birthday?

Activity	Frequency	Percentage
Going out with friends	45	45%
By spending days in an orphanage or old-age home	7	7%
By worshipping god	29	29%
Other	19	19%

The above data indicates that 45% of respondents like to celebrate their birthday by going out with their friends which is not a good sign for the retention of the Indian culture, it represents the fading Indian heritage. While 29% of the respondents celebrate their birthday by worshipping God which depicts their spirituality and their love towards their culture. Some people also like to spend their time in an orphanage or an old age home on their special day. The rest of the people are of the opinion that they like to spend their birthday doing nothing like normal daily routine which says that they do not like to celebrate their birthday.

4. Where would you like your wedding to happen?

Place	Frequency	Percentage
Foreign country	12	12%
India	88	88%

Based on the available data, a pre-dominant population would like to have their marriage in India only. This may be an indication of love for their country and a strong inclination towards their tradition, attachment towards relatives, and family connections. It also shows that very few

of the respondents prefer international weddings.

5. How do you celebrate festivals?

Activity	Frequency	Percentage
By performing rituals	91	91%
Celebrating outside with friends	7	7%
Other	2	2%

According to the data analysis,100 respondents were asked about the celebration of their festivals. Out of which, 91% of responses were in favor of celebrating their festivals with family by performing the rituals. A very few of them were also interested in celebrating their festivals outside with their friends.

6. Which food variety do you like?

Food variety	Frequency	Respondents
Mexican	1	1%
Chinese	11	11%
Indian	86	86%
Italian	1	1%
Thai	-	-
Other	1	1%

The data shows that 86% of the respondents prefer a specific food variety which is Indian

food. The reason for such a positive response may include Indian food offering a wide variety, its authentic taste, etc. It shows that 11% like Chinese food in comparison to other food varieties which shows that people like spicy food more.

7. Which language do you prefer to speak at your Home?

Language	Frequency	Percentage
Hindi	82	82%
Hindi and English	6	6%
Hindi and Punjabi	4	4%
Hindi, English, and Punjabi	2	2%
Local language	2	2%
Mother tongue	2	2%
Banwali	1	1%
Telegu	1	1%

Based on the table shown, most of the people prefer to speak Hindi at their home which means 82% of the respondents. Hindi is called the mother tongue of India because it is our official language. Some people also use their mother tongue or their local language at their home. While others also use English as a medium of conversation in their day-to-day use.

8. How do you retain Indian culture?
On the basis of Gender

Statement	Agree (%)		Neutral (%)		Disagree (%)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Indian music is unique because it is more expressive	42	28	5	8	5	12
Reading cultural books retains our cultural values	45	28	5	9	2	11
The sense of clothing presents your culture	25	45	11	3	16	---
The foreign education system is better than the Indian education system	28	41	8	4	16	3
The younger generation shows less interest in cultural retention than the older generation	46	27	6	10	----	11
Total	186	169	35	34	39	37

The table shows that 42% of the females agree with this statement. It depicts that women tend to have an emotional connection and inclination towards music. Some of the males disagree in this context. Similarly, the majority of the females agree with the statement that reading

cultural books retains our cultural values. 11% of males disagree with this statement. The reasons can be cultural books that connect us to our roots, traditions, customs, etc.

The data shows that males may believe in preserving traditional attire and might have a

perception of dressing sense as a strong representation of the culture. In contrast, males (41%) are more likely to agree that foreign education systems are superior. 46% of females

On the basis of educational qualification.

and 27% of males agree that the young generation is not interested in cultural retention. The strong agreement of women shows the acceptance of the extinction of Indian heritage.

Statement	Agree (%)		Neutral (%)		Disagree (%)	
	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG
Indian music is unique because it is more expressive	29	41	10	3	14	3
Reading cultural books retains our cultural values	30	43	14	----	9	4
The sense of clothing presents your culture	27	43	14	----	9	4
The Foreign education system is better than the Indian education system	45	24	3	9	5	14
The younger generation shows less interest in cultural retention than the older generation	30	43	12	4	11	----
Total	161	194	43	26	48	25

Based on educational qualifications, the data reveals that 41% of PG respondents agree that Indian music is uniquely expressive, compared to 29% of UG students. The table shows that 43% of the respondents agree that reading cultural books indicates retention of our culture. The data also reveals that 43% of the PG students believe in cultural preservation and consider dressing sense as a presentation of their cultural background. 45% of UG and 24% of PG students agree with this statement that the foreign education system is better than the Indian education system. The younger generation shows less interest in cultural retention than the older generation.

Findings

The findings of the research reveal that there is a significant difference between the perception of students on the basis of gender as well as on the basis of their educational qualification. The present data shows that female students prefer Indian music as it is more expressive and enjoy reading cultural books as it helps to retain cultural values. The majority of females also believe that the younger generation shows less interest in cultural retention than the older generation Majority of males believe the foreign education system is better than the Indian education system and sense of clothing presents their culture The present data shows that PG students are more interested in Indian music, they are in more touch with their culture and ethics and also believe that sense of clothing presents

one's culture. Present data indicates a strong preference and consideration of the foreign education system by the UG students. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, affirming that both gender and educational qualification play a notable role in shaping students' perceptions in the context of this study.

Discussion

The data analysis highlights a complex and evolving relationship between the younger generation and Indian culture. Here are some key takeaways and points regarding the above data as discussed below: -Preservation vs transformation of Indian culture - The data analysis supports that Indian culture is at its crossroads, with preservation and transformation occurring simultaneously. While traditional values are still observed through globalization, lifestyles, and traditional values.

- Clothing choices: A cultural symbol – The preference for Indian attire at functions is a positive sign of cultural retention. However, the rise of Western clothing indicates blending adaptation rather than complete erosion.

- Family bonds and social behavior – The fact that 46% of the respondents prefer spending time with their family suggests that traditional family values Still hold strong. However, the preference for celebrating birthdays with friends rather

than family could indicate a gradual cultural shift towards individualism.

- Weddings and festivals – A significant number of people still prefer getting married in India, showing a strong attachment to tradition. Performing religious rituals during festivals remains a dominant practice, suggesting continued cultural engagement.

- Language preferences – Hindi is the most dominant language spoken at home (80%) reinforcing linguistic cultural retention. However, the presence of other languages like English suggests a growing multilingual trend.

- Music and cultural expression – The agreement that Indian music is more expressive reflects a deep cultural appreciation. However, mixed responses to dancing to Western music suggest a growing preference for modern entertainment.

- The role of education – The perception that the foreign education system is superior aligns with the increasing trend of Indian students studying abroad.

Suggestions

The younger generation needs to adopt some changes to retain their culture. They should prefer to live in a joint family and spend quality time with elders and grandparents. They must try to follow the traditions so that they are carried forward to the next generations. Reading the Vedas, Granth, and cultural books should be part of the curriculum as a step towards the retention of Indian culture. Parents should guide their children regarding culture, language, style, and different rituals to make them indulge in culture from early childhood days. The education system should be evolved to uphold its place. We should not be impressed and attracted to foreign western lifestyles. At last, "Do not forget your culture, if you have forgotten it, it will gradually disappear, who knows our future generations may not know as much as we know."

Conclusion

Indian culture has a strong identity through its traditions and innovations. Western culture has influenced our generation very much, even though people still feel connected with their roots. Nowadays, people are also adopting a mix of Indian and Western culture, creating an indo-western lifestyle. Western influence has brought big changes to India, but the extinction of traditional values is a matter of concern.

As per the student's response, youth now prefer to celebrate their birthdays by going out with friends instead of following traditional ways. Many students also choose to study abroad because the foreign education system offers better opportunities and foreign universities provide a wide range of courses and give more importance to practical knowledge. The fact that few of the respondents would also like their wedding to happen in a foreign country because of their venues, luxury infrastructure, or better wedding facilities is indicative of their shift of interest. Compared to older generations, today's youth show less interest in Indian culture. Indian youth have adopted Western habits and they prefer to live independently rather than with their parents and do not like parental interference in their lives. However, there are still many people in India who respect and follow Indian traditions, culture, and religion. When it comes to food, most Indians still prefer Indian cuisine over Chinese or Thai food. This is because Indian food is flavourful, affordable, and rich in nutrients, making it a healthy choice for the people in India. In conclusion, pure Indian culture is becoming extinct day by day through the adoption of a blend of Western and Indian lifestyles. However Indian traditions remain strong, especially in food preferences and cultural values. The wish for a destination wedding and foreign education reflects their changing mindset. Despite of this, many individuals still continue to uphold the Indian culture by ensuring that it is an essential part of their identity.

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