

THE EFFECT OF GLOBALIZATION ON LOCAL CULTURES AND IDENTITIES: PRESERVATION VS. ASSIMILATION IN SOUTH ASIA (INDIA, BANGLADESH, SRI LANKA, AND PAKISTAN)

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Abstract

This paper examines how globalization shapes local cultures and identities of India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan by studying the struggle between cultural conservation and globalization. These research findings assess the contributions of government policies and NGOs and private sector activities for protecting cultural heritage through the adoption of global change adaptation. This research examines how the targeted nations have responded to globalization through analysis of 2024 cultural policy reports and statistical data. Research indicates that despite globalization threats South Asian governments establish diverse mixed systems by integrating international cultural elements with domestic traditions throughout different regions with varying results.

Introduction

The modern world economy together with society and cultural norms experience transformation due to globalization. South Asia showcases abundant cultural heritage which received a boost for cultural preservation activities from globalization (Sen, 2005). This study evaluates how globalization shapes culture along with identity patterns in both India and Pakistan as well as Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The research details the national approaches used by these states to deal with international cultural pressures. Public organizations and private corporations work alongside to protect cultural heritage; (Steger, 2009). The article demonstrates through second order analysis and comparative method research that globalization impacts local culture preservation efforts and the strategies adopted for symbol preservation. Research methods differ for the evaluation of these challenges. The Indian nation maintained its cultural identity through global integration whereas Pakistan and Bangladesh face difficulties in protecting their cultural foundations (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997).

Research Objectives

1. To evaluate the influence of globalization on cultural identities in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan.
2. To compare the effectiveness of cultural preservation efforts by governments, NGOs, and the private sector.
3. To assess the role of digital connectivity and international media in shaping cultural practices.
4. To explore the challenges of cultural hybridization and assimilation in the context of South Asia.

Literature Review

Globalization has been a key driver in the transformation of cultural identities globally, but its effects are uneven across regions. In South Asia, globalization presents a complex interplay between cultural preservation and assimilation (Held & McGrew; 2007). The globalization leads to the creation of new cultural forms by hybridizing traditional local cultures with global influences; (Appadurai;1996) This theory of "glocalization" is relevant in understanding South Asia's experience with globalization, where local cultures are not simply overshadowed by global ones but adapt to them, producing unique cultural hybrids (Robertson, 1995).

In India, the preservation of traditional cultural practices amid global pressures has been a subject of intense debate; (Shaw 2009). India has been relatively successful in integrating global influences, largely due to its well-developed media landscape and government initiatives promoting cultural tourism and heritage conservation (Singh, 2018). Similarly, in Sri Lanka, the role of traditional Buddhist, Tamil, and Sinhalese cultural practices in the face of global influences is emphasized by (Thapar 2000). While the global spread of media and technology has been a challenge, these cultural communities continue to assert their identity through educational reforms and cultural institutions (Baumann, 2004).

Conversely, in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the challenges of balancing global cultural flows with local traditions are more pronounced. Pakistan's national identity has faced internal fractures, with the rapid spread of Western cultural norms creating tensions between modernity and traditionalism; (Jaffrelot,2002). Bangladesh, with its strong Bengali identity, has made strides in cultural preservation through its focus on language and literature, though it too faces the pressures of global media consumption (Kearney, 1995).

As digital connectivity has grown across South Asia, the impact of social media and global media has played a significant role in cultural exchange. In another study the role of digital networks in connecting people across borders, is highlighted which has both facilitated cultural exchange and contributed to the erosion of traditional practices; (Castells, 2009)

Methodology and Data

This study uses a secondary data approach, sourcing information from government reports, academic articles, UNESCO studies, and reports from international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Baum, 2013). These sources provide insights into the influence of globalization on cultural practices and the role of various actors in preserving cultural heritage (Hargittai, 2008). The data is analyzed using a comparative method, focusing on key indicators such as media consumption, educational policies, government initiatives, and the role of the private sector in supporting cultural preservation (Manan, 2016).

The analysis employs tables to compare data across the four countries. Table 1, for example, shows the influence of globalization on consumer habits and cultural shifts in urban centres (Hassan, 2010). Table 2 examines the government and NGO support for cultural preservation (Sahoo, 2013), while Table 3 looks at digital connectivity and social media engagement, drawing on data from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU, 2024). Finally, Table 4 explores private sector contributions to cultural preservation (Khilnani, 1997).

These secondary data sources allow for a detailed comparative analysis of how each country in South Asia is responding to the challenges posed by globalization while attempting to preserve their unique cultural identities.

Comparative Analysis of Globalization's Impact on South Asian Cultures

Table 1: Influence of Globalization on Consumer Habits and Cultural Shifts in Urban Centres (2024)

Country	Urban Centres	% of Population engaging with global brands	% of Population consuming International Fast Food	% of Population engaging with Western media (Movies, T.V etc).	Adoption of Globalized education systems	% of Population using International social media platforms	Investment in cultural heritage by private sector	Level of Digital Connectivity
India	New Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai	79%	70%	85%	High (International schools, English medium)	88%	Moderate (Private funding for heritage projects)	High (Widespread internet use, 5G connectivity)
Pakistan	Karachi, Lahore	72%	63%	77%	Moderate (English-medium schools in urban areas)	72%	Low (Limited private sector investment in heritage)	Moderate (Urban internet penetration is high)
Bangladesh	Dhaka	66%	55%	73%	Moderate (Growth of private English schools)	68%	Moderate (Private investment in cultural)	High (Rapid adoption of mobile internet)

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Sri Lanka	Colom bo, Kandy	58%	50%	65%	Low (Predomi nantly local education system)	60%	Moder ate (Privat e sector suppor ts temple s and local arts)	High (Strong mobile internet connecti vity)

Source: World Bank (2024), International Monetary Fund (2024), UNESCO (2024)

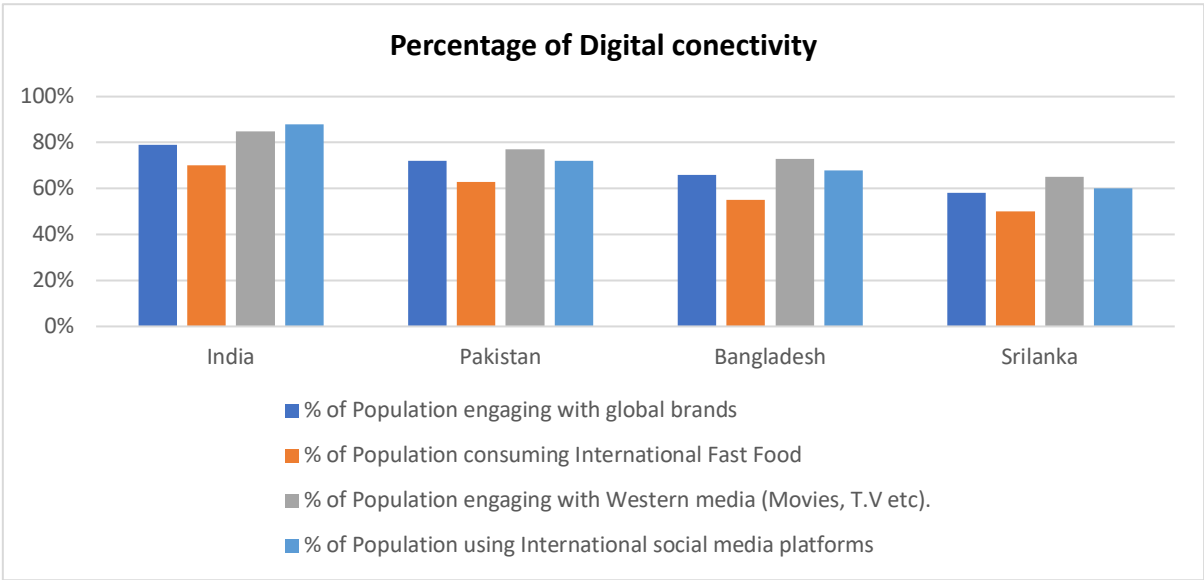


Table 2: Government and NGO Support for Cultural Preservation (2024)

Country	Government Initiatives	% of Government Funding Allocated to Cultural Preservation	Role of NGOs in Preserving Cultural Heritage	Government Support for Traditional Arts & Crafts	Role of Education in Cultural Preservation
India	Incredible India campaign, cultural	82%	High involvement in preserving local	High (Financial support for	Strong (Incorporating local history and arts in

	tourism, heritage conservation		languages, arts, and festivals	traditional crafts, arts)	school curriculums)
Pakistan	National cultural heritage policies, promotion of traditional crafts	62%	Moderate involvement, with a focus on languages, crafts, and music	Moderate (Support for regional crafts, with focus on tourism)	Moderate (Efforts to promote Urdu and regional languages in schools)
Bangladesh	Promotion of Bengali language and traditional arts	75%	High involvement, focusing on language, literature, and festivals	High (Bengali heritage preservation, crafts support)	High (Promotion of Bengali culture in schools and media)
Sri Lanka	Promotion of Buddhist, Tamil, and Sinhalese cultures	68%	Active in preserving temples, traditional music, and languages	High (Cultural grants for traditional crafts and temple maintenance)	Strong (Teaching traditional arts and cultural values in schools)

Source: UNESCO (2024), Government Reports from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

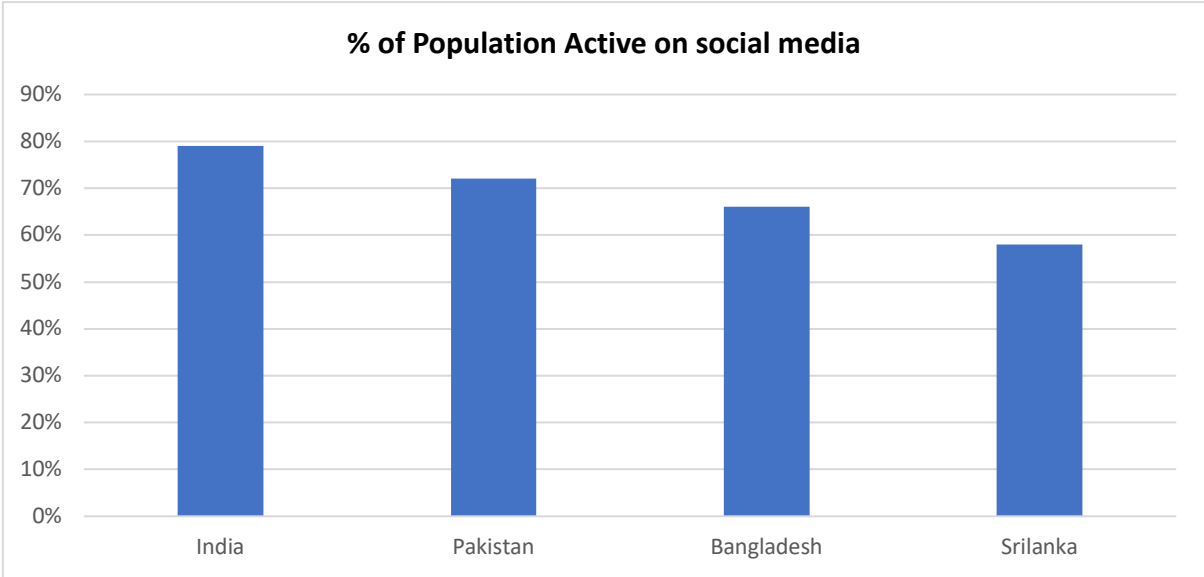


Table 3: Digital Connectivity and Social Media Engagement (2024)

Country	% of Population with Internet Access	% of Population Active on social media	Impact of Global Media on Local	Use of Online Platforms for
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			Cultural Consumption	Cultural Learning
India	81%	88%	High (Large-scale adoption of Netflix, YouTube, etc.)	High (Online platforms for language learning, art, history)
Pakistan	73%	74%	Moderate (Growing consumption of international media)	Moderate (Limited but growing online education initiatives)
Bangladesh	85%	69%	High (Strong presence of international content)	High (Online platforms supporting Bengali culture)
Sri Lanka	82%	61%	Moderate (Increased viewership of global media)	Moderate (Cultural content available online but less popular)

Source: International Telecommunication Union (ITU, 2024), Digital Asia Reports (2024)

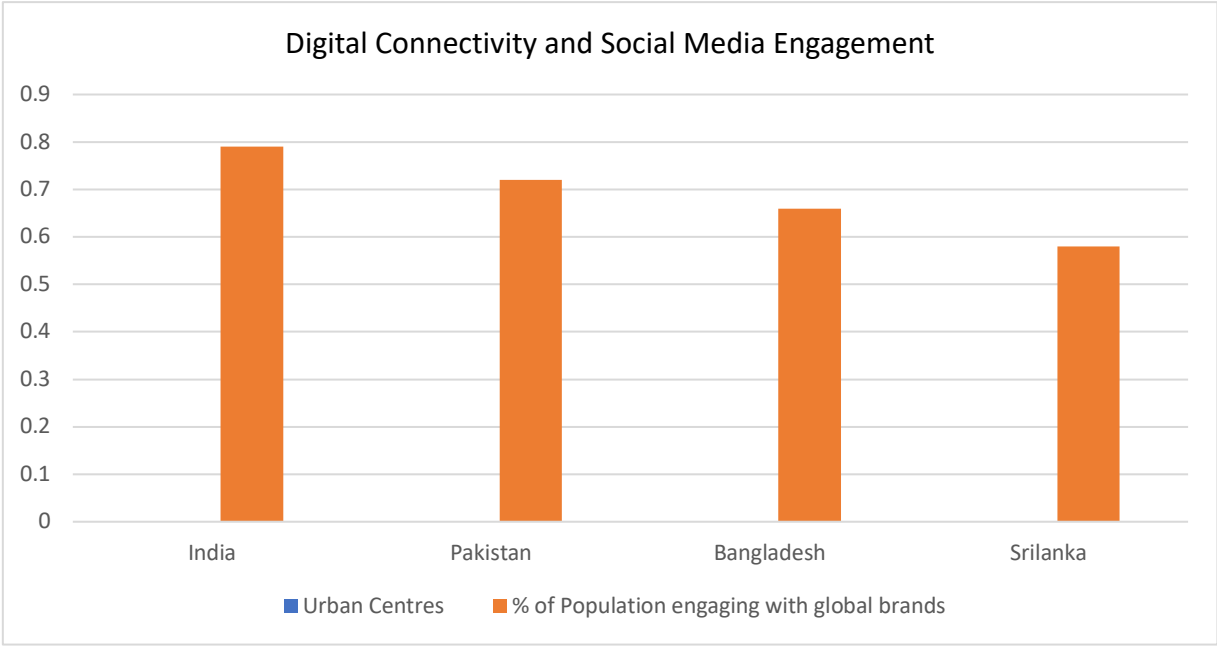
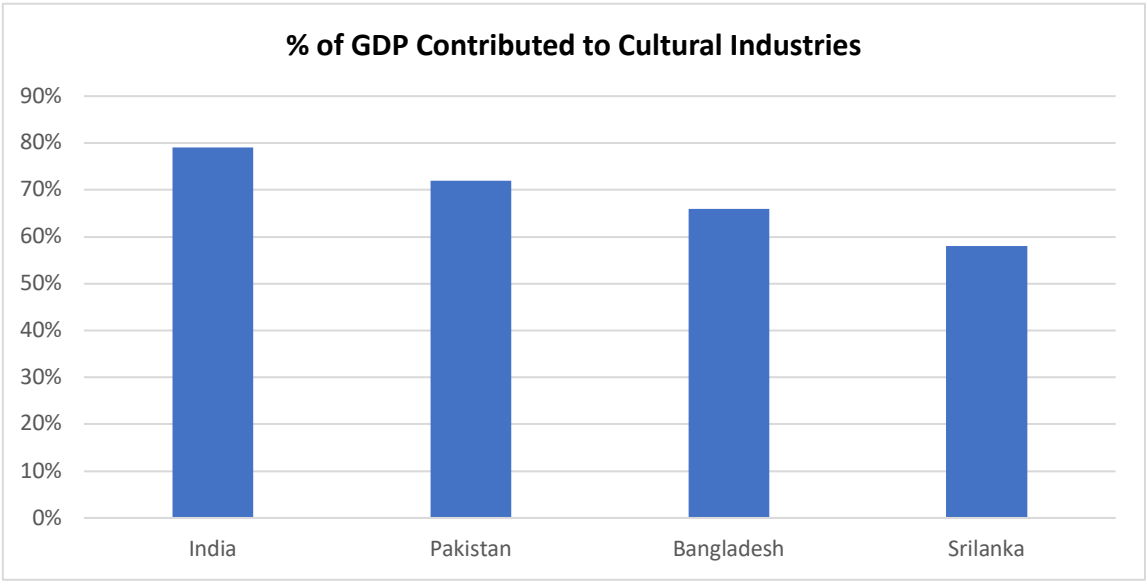


Table 4: Private Sector Contributions to Cultural Preservation (2024)

Country	Cultural Heritage	% of GDP Contributed to	Private Sector Support for	Corporate Support for
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	Projects Funded by Private Sector	Cultural Industries	Heritage Tourism	Local Arts (Sponsorships, Events, Grants)
India	Significant investments in heritage sites, museums, and digital preservation	2.8%	High (Large-scale support for tourism and heritage sites)	High (Private companies sponsor art exhibitions, festivals)
Pakistan	Limited investments in heritage conservation projects	1.4%	Moderate (Corporate tourism support, less for heritage)	Low (Few sponsorships, mostly in urban areas)
Bangladesh	Focus on the promotion of Bengali culture through private funding for arts	2.0%	Moderate (Support for local festivals, heritage tourism)	Moderate (Private companies sponsor local cultural events)
Sri Lanka	Some private investment in Buddhist sites and traditional arts	1.8%	High (Private sector significantly supports temple tourism)	Moderate (Corporate sponsorship for cultural events, but limited)

Source: World Bank (2024), International Cultural Fund (2024)



Findings and Conclusion

The analysis reveals several key findings regarding the impact of globalization on cultural identities in South Asia. These findings underscore the complex interplay between global

influences and local cultural preservation efforts, reflecting the unique responses of each country in the region.

1. **India:** The successful adaptation of global influences by India has occurred since the nation actively guards its cultural heritage and identity. The Incredible India campaign of the government serves as a key factor in maintaining local cultural traditions by supporting cultural tourism growth and heritage preservation (Singh, 2018). Through private sector investments that target cultural heritage protection as well as digital preservation activities India has further strengthened its cultural resistance (Khilnani, 1997). Local practices integrate with global trends in India because of Appadurai's (1996) glocalization theory which shows local culture adapting to global pressures instead of being completely replaced by them. Indian cultural ideas spread more frequently because of high media consumption primarily through YouTube and Netflix platforms (Shaw, 2009). India's advanced strategy to unite global and native cultural principles has solidified its position as a leading case of cultural preservation throughout globalization.
2. **Pakistan:** The situation in Pakistan reveals both positive and negative aspects. The cultural connection between global norms and traditions within Pakistan exists moderately at urban locations such as Karachi and Lahore yet the country faces difficulties in maintaining its cultural legacy under global pressures. Jaffrelot (2002) argues Pakistan faces cultural fragmentation because regional variations oppose modern global influences to traditional cultural values. Despite their obstacles Pakistan has started to succeed in boosting traditional handcrafted goods as well as attractions for cultural visitors. The level of private sector investment in heritage conservation remains lower in Pakistan when compared to India causing restrictions in broader cultural preservation initiatives (Hassan, 2010). The Pakistani government faces difficulties when integrating modern educational trends with protection of local knowledge systems (Baumann, 2004). The integration of modernity in Pakistan faces obstacles alongside a wider regional difficulty of balancing cultural with modernism as Gupta and Ferguson (1997) point out.
3. **Bangladesh:** Bangladesh focused intensely on protecting Bengali identity through extensive backing provided by governmental agencies and NGOs to protect regional languages and literatures with cultural celebrations. The theories put forward by Steger (2009) show that nations which maintain strong historical roots to their identity succeed better when facing globalization challenges. The Bengali language and heritage earn promotion in both educational textbooks and through government policy (Kearney, 1995). Bangladesh exhibits a balanced relationship with worldwide education structures and digital media expansion which redefines traditional cultural practices. Through the pressures of globalization Bangladesh continues to attract private investments that promote cultural tourism and artistic development (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997). Robertson (1995) describes this phenomenon as "glocalization" which enables Bangladesh to unite worldwide trends with its traditional cultural heritage.
4. **Sri Lanka:** The nation of Sri Lanka concentrates its response to globalization on safeguarding traditions rooted in Buddhism alongside Tamil and Sinhalese cultural elements which have defined the country's identity through many centuries. According to Thapar (2000) the strong religious and ethnic foundations of Sri Lanka create barriers that protect the nation from cultural worldwide convergence. Through cultural grants and education programs the government actively funds the preservation of temples and traditional music and local language

maintenance (Baum, 2013). Private companies serving religious tourism show robust backing of cultural preservation activities yet corporate backing for artistic pursuits remains relatively minimal (Sahoo, 2013). Although Sri Lanka enjoys solid backing from its government and private sector for cultural preservation efforts the nation confronts persistent challenges from worldwide media penetration which particularly affects urban zones (Castells, 2009). According to Shaw (2009) the digital realm with its platforms including YouTube and Netflix significantly defines urban youth cultural preferences since they encounter more western media content.

The hybridization between global and local cultures can be observed even though South Asian countries experience substantial challenges from globalization. India has successfully integrated global influences and maintains local heritage preservation activities while standing ahead of other nations in this balance (Shaw 2009). The progress of Pakistan and Bangladesh together with Sri Lanka continues advancing although each country needs to handle specific difficulties. The country of Pakistan fights internal cultural conflicts while Bangladesh prioritizes its Bengali heritage and Sri Lanka maintains its religious cultural sector. The preservation of local cultural heritage requires strong cooperation among governments together with NGOs and the private sector despite globalization (Held & McGrew, 2007). According to Hargittai (2008) the network connectivity provides two functions: it supports the transfer of contemporary international cultural expressions and strengthens spaces for safeguarding local cultural heritage. Cultural identities in South Asia will persist by maintaining ongoing initiatives toward blending overseas traditions with indigenous elements which lead to a dynamic environment for traditional practices and new approaches to exist together.

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