

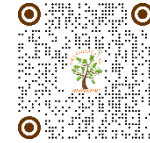
Original Article

TRANSFORMATION OF CULTURAL VALUES AMONG YOUTH IN GWALIOR

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ABSTRACT

Gwalior possesses a distinctive cultural identity shaped by its historical traditions, classical music heritage, festivals, family customs, language practices, and artistic institutions. At the same time, young people in the city are increasingly connected with national and global cultural influences through social media, streaming platforms, education, travel, and changing patterns of employment. This paper examines how these influences are transforming the cultural values of youth in Gwalior. It argues that cultural change should not be understood only as the disappearance of tradition. Instead, youth often retain selected practices connected with family, festivals, religion, and local pride while adopting new forms of dress, language, entertainment, communication, and self-expression. The paper is grounded in the concepts of cultural hybridization and glocalization and develops a domain-based framework for comparing core identity-linked practices with more flexible consumption-oriented practices. A mixed-method research design is proposed for youth aged 16 to 25 residing in Gwalior city. The design combines a structured questionnaire with focus group discussions and recommends the use of descriptive statistics, paired-samples comparison, correlation, and thematic analysis. The paper concludes that the most likely pattern is selective cultural adaptation rather than complete cultural homogenization. Such a perspective can help educational institutions, cultural organizations, and policymakers design programmes that preserve Gwalior's cultural heritage while recognizing the changing preferences and media habits of contemporary youth.

Keywords: Cultural Values, Youth, Gwalior, Cultural Hybridization, Globalization, Festivals, Identity, Digital Media

INTRODUCTION

Culture gives individuals and communities a shared sense of identity, continuity, and belonging. It is expressed through language, food, dress, music, festivals, religious practices, family relations, social customs, and everyday behaviour. Cultural values are not fixed rules that remain unchanged across generations. They are learned, interpreted, negotiated, and sometimes modified according to new social conditions. Young people play a particularly important role in this process because they are influenced by family and community traditions while also being highly exposed to education, technology, mass media, and global consumer culture.

Gwalior offers a meaningful setting for examining this process. The city is associated with a layered historical identity, royal traditions, monuments, local religious practices, public festivals, and a distinguished contribution to Hindustani classical music through the Gwalior Gharana. These cultural features continue to shape local pride and collective memory. However, the daily lives of young people are also shaped by smartphones, social media, online entertainment, migration for education and employment, and contact with cultural trends from other parts of India and the world.

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Received: 22 July 2026; Accepted: 25 August 2026; Published 13 July 2026

DOI: [10.29121/ShodhSamajikv3.i2.2026.130](https://doi.org/10.29121/ShodhSamajikv3.i2.2026.130)

Page Number: 16-22

Journal Title: ShodhSamajik: Journal of Social Studies

Journal Abbreviation: ShodhSamajik J. Soc. Stud.

Online ISSN: 3049-2319, Print ISSN: 3108-2009

Publisher: Granthaalayah Publications and Printers, India

Conflict of Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Authors' Contributions: Each author made an equal contribution to the conception and design of the study. All authors have reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

Transparency: The authors affirm that this manuscript presents an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study. All essential aspects have been included, and any deviations from the original study plan have been clearly explained. The writing process strictly adhered to established ethical standards.

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The coexistence of local tradition and global influence raises an important question: are young people in Gwalior gradually abandoning local cultural values, or are they combining old and new elements in selective ways? A young person may prefer global fashion in daily life but wear traditional clothing during festivals and family ceremonies. The same person may communicate with friends using Hindi-English code-switching while speaking in a more traditional style with elders. Similarly, formal training in classical music may decline, yet symbolic pride in Gwalior's musical heritage may remain strong. These patterns suggest that cultural transformation may vary across domains rather than occurring uniformly.

This paper therefore studies cultural transformation as a multidimensional process. It distinguishes between core identity-linked practices, such as family rituals, festival participation, religious observance, and attachment to local heritage, and more flexible practices, such as entertainment choices, fashion, food preferences, and casual language. This distinction helps avoid overly simple conclusions of either complete cultural loss or complete cultural continuity.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT OF GWALIOR

Gwalior's cultural identity has developed through the interaction of political history, artistic patronage, religious traditions, and local community life. Its fort, palaces, temples, public spaces, and musical institutions represent visible symbols of the city's past. The Scindia period contributed to the patronage of music and the arts, while the Gwalior Gharana became one of the most influential traditions in Hindustani classical music. Cultural events connected with music and festivals continue to attract residents and visitors and contribute to the city's public identity.

At the household and community levels, cultural life is sustained through religious festivals, marriage practices, food customs, respect for elders, family obligations, and participation in local celebrations. These practices are transmitted through observation and participation rather than only through formal instruction. For many young people, cultural values are therefore experienced through family routines, neighbourhood relations, school activities, and community events.

Contemporary Gwalior is also part of a rapidly changing urban environment. Educational expansion, coaching culture, new employment aspirations, digital connectivity, and inter-city mobility have altered how youth spend time and form social relationships. Cultural knowledge is now received not only from parents, teachers, and local institutions but also from influencers, online communities, films, web series, short videos, and music platforms. As a result, youth identity is shaped through several cultural sources that may complement, compete with, or reinterpret one another.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Public discussions about youth and culture often assume that globalization necessarily weakens local traditions. Such claims may overlook the possibility that different cultural practices change at different rates. There is limited focused research on how youth in Gwalior negotiate local traditions, festivals, language, music, and identity in the context of digital and global cultural exposure. The central problem of the present paper is therefore to understand whether the cultural values of Gwalior's youth are moving toward uniform globalized patterns or toward hybrid forms that combine local and global elements.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is significant for education, cultural policy, and youth development. Educational institutions can use its framework to design activities that connect local history, music, festivals, and community traditions with contemporary teaching methods. Cultural organizations can identify whether low participation reflects a loss of interest or a preference for shorter, more accessible, and digitally supported forms of engagement. The study is also useful for sociologists and educationists because it extends debates on cultural globalization to a historically important Tier-2 Indian city. Finally, the findings can help families and community institutions understand that adaptation does not always mean rejection; in many cases, it represents an attempt by youth to maintain belonging while participating in modern social life.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURAL CHANGE

Globalization has increased the movement of ideas, images, technologies, goods, and lifestyles across national and regional boundaries. Appadurai (1996) explained that global cultural flows create complex and uneven interactions rather than a single uniform culture. Tomlinson (1999) similarly emphasized that globalization changes the conditions under which cultural identities are formed. These perspectives suggest that local culture may be reinterpreted through global contact instead of simply disappearing.

The homogenization perspective argues that global media and consumer markets reduce local distinctiveness by promoting similar lifestyles, tastes, and aspirations. In contrast, cultural hybridization theory proposes that people actively combine elements from different traditions. Pieterse (2009) described this process as cultural mixing, while Robertson (1995) concept of glocalization

highlighted the adaptation of global forms to local contexts. These approaches are especially relevant for youth, who often move between family expectations, peer culture, education, and digital environments.

YOUTH, IDENTITY, AND HYBRID CULTURAL FORMS

Youth identity is formed through negotiation rather than passive acceptance. [Nilan and Feixa \(Eds.\). \(2006\)](#) showed that young people in different societies create plural and hybrid identities under global conditions. [Arnett \(2002\)](#) argued that globalization can provide youth with wider identity choices, although these choices are not equally available to all. In India, young people may adopt global fashion, music, and media while continuing to participate in family and religious practices. This produces layered identities that are modern in some contexts and tradition-oriented in others. [Porte et al. \(2025\)](#)

Indian urban culture also demonstrates that consumption, citizenship, class aspiration, and public identity are closely connected. [Fernandes \(2006\)](#) noted that economic change and the growth of the middle class altered aspirations and consumption patterns. [Juluri \(2003\)](#) examined how Indian audiences engage with global media through feelings of both longing and belonging. Such research indicates that media exposure does not automatically erase local identity; it may create new ways of expressing it.

FESTIVALS, FAMILY PRACTICES, AND CULTURAL CONTINUITY

Festivals and family ceremonies often remain strong because they are supported by collective participation and emotional attachment. Unlike individual choices in fashion or entertainment, festivals involve family schedules, neighbourhood interaction, religious meaning, and shared memory. Youth may modify how festivals are celebrated by using digital invitations, social media posts, contemporary music, or new styles of decoration, yet still participate in the central ritual. This combination of continuity and innovation is a clear example of hybridization. [Vishwakarma and Vats \(2025\)](#)

LANGUAGE, FASHION, AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Language and fashion are among the most visible areas of change. Code-switching between Hindi and English is common in education, employment, online communication, and peer interaction. Such switching does not necessarily indicate rejection of the mother tongue; it may reflect the functional use of different languages in different social settings. Fashion also changes according to context. Western or pan-Indian clothing may be preferred in everyday life, while traditional dress remains important during weddings, festivals, and religious occasions.

Digital media has accelerated cultural exposure by allowing youth to access global music, films, food trends, beauty standards, and lifestyle content. At the same time, digital platforms can support local culture by circulating festival videos, classical music clips, local history content, and regional language material. The effect of digital media is therefore not inherently destructive or protective; it depends on how youth use, interpret, and share cultural content.

GWALIOR'S ARTISTIC HERITAGE AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Gwalior's classical music heritage is an important indicator of local cultural identity. Formal guru-shishya training requires sustained time, discipline, and institutional support, which may be difficult for youth facing academic competition and career pressure. However, reduced formal training does not necessarily mean complete detachment. Youth may engage through school programmes, concerts, short digital performances, online lessons, or symbolic pride in the city's musical identity. It is therefore important to distinguish practical participation, cultural knowledge, emotional attachment, and public pride as separate aspects of engagement.

RESEARCH GAP

The literature reveals three major gaps. First, there is limited youth-centred research specifically focused on cultural value transformation in Gwalior. Second, many studies treat cultural change as a single process without distinguishing between core identity-linked practices and flexible consumption-oriented practices. Third, there is a need for a domain-based study that directly compares cultural homogenization with cultural hybridization. The present paper addresses these gaps by proposing a focused objective, hypothesis, and research design for Gwalior's youth population.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To assess whether youth in Gwalior are experiencing cultural homogenization, characterized by the replacement of local traditions with globalized practices, or cultural hybridization, characterized by the selective blending of local and global cultural elements.

HYPOTHESES

H1: Youth in Gwalior predominantly exhibit cultural hybridization rather than complete cultural homogenization, retaining stronger engagement with core traditional practices while adopting global elements in everyday consumption, language, fashion, and entertainment.

H0: There is no significant difference between youth engagement in core identity-linked cultural practices and engagement in flexible consumption-oriented cultural practices.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The main theoretical foundation of the study is cultural hybridization. This theory explains that sustained contact between local and global cultural systems often creates blended forms rather than a complete replacement of one system by another. Hybridization may be observed when a traditional festival is celebrated through contemporary music and digital media, when local language is mixed with English in peer communication, or when youth combine modern clothing with traditional attire according to the occasion.

The concept of glocalization complements this framework by explaining how global products and practices are adapted to local meanings. A global media platform, for example, may become a channel for sharing local songs, religious events, or historical content. The contrasting framework is cultural homogenization, which predicts increasing similarity in cultural preferences and declining local distinctiveness. By comparing engagement across different cultural domains, the proposed study can assess which framework more accurately describes youth culture in Gwalior.

CONCEPTUAL DIMENSIONS OF CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

For analytical clarity, the study divides cultural practices into core and flexible domains. The distinction does not imply that one category is always more valuable than the other; it is used to examine whether different practices show different levels of continuity and change.

Cultural Domain	Illustrative Indicators	Likely Pattern of Change
Core identity-linked practices	Family rituals, religious observance, festival participation, respect for elders, attachment to local heritage	Comparatively strong continuity with selective modification
Language and communication	Hindi use, local expressions, Hindi-English code-switching, online slang	Context-based blending rather than complete language replacement
Music and artistic heritage	Awareness of Gwalior Gharana, concert participation, formal or digital learning, local pride	Possible decline in formal training but continued symbolic attachment
Fashion and self-presentation	Everyday dress, festival attire, wedding clothing, social media presentation	High global influence with occasion-based traditional retention
Entertainment and media	Streaming content, music preferences, short videos, local cultural content	Strong global exposure combined with selective local consumption
Food and lifestyle	Traditional food, fast food, café culture, family eating practices	Mixed pattern shaped by convenience, status, and family context

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

A mixed-method, cross-sectional research design is appropriate for the proposed study. The quantitative component can measure the extent of engagement across cultural domains, while the qualitative component can explain why youth retain, modify, or reject particular practices. The design is domain-comparative because it compares core identity-linked practices with flexible consumption-oriented practices among the same respondents.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population comprises youth aged 16 to 25 residing in Gwalior city. This group includes senior secondary students, college and university students, youth receiving professional training, and recently employed young adults. A sample of approximately 300 respondents can provide adequate representation for a city-level exploratory study. To improve diversity, respondents should be selected from educational institutions and residential areas representing different social and economic backgrounds.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A stratified sampling technique can be used. The sample may be stratified by age group, gender, and educational or employment status. Within each stratum, respondents can be selected through random or systematic procedures as far as practical. A purposive sub-sample may be included for youth engaged in classical music or other local cultural arts so that their experiences can be examined in greater depth.

TOOLS AND INSTRUMENTS

The primary quantitative tool should be a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. Items should measure frequency of participation, level of agreement, emotional attachment, knowledge, and preference across the identified cultural domains. A semi-structured focus group guide can be used to explore how youth describe tradition, modernity, family expectations, digital influence, and local identity in their own words.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Content validity should be established through expert review by specialists in education, sociology, culture, and research methodology. A pilot study should be conducted with a small group of youth from Gwalior to identify unclear or repetitive items. Internal consistency of the questionnaire may be assessed using Cronbach's alpha, and items with weak performance should be revised before final administration.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Permission should be obtained from relevant educational institutions and community organizations. Participants should receive a clear explanation of the study, and participation should remain voluntary. Questionnaires may be administered in person or through a controlled online format. Focus group discussions should be conducted in a comfortable setting and recorded only after obtaining consent. Personal identifiers should not be included in the final dataset.

DATA ANALYSIS PLAN

Quantitative data should first be analysed through frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. A paired-samples t-test can compare respondents' mean engagement scores in core and flexible cultural domains. Correlation analysis can examine the relationship between global media exposure and engagement with local cultural practices. Where appropriate, demographic differences may be examined through independent-samples t-tests or analysis of variance. Qualitative responses should be analysed thematically to identify recurring explanations, contradictions, and examples of cultural negotiation.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study should protect voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw. Participants below 18 years should be included only with appropriate institutional and parental or guardian consent. Questions should avoid judging participants as culturally superior or inferior. The purpose is to understand change, not to label youth as traditional or modern in a rigid manner.

ANALYTICAL DISCUSSION

LANGUAGE USE

Youth in Gwalior are likely to use language according to social context. Hindi and local expressions may remain common within families and neighbourhoods, while English terms and internet-derived slang may be more visible in education, employment, and peer communication. This pattern represents functional code-switching and suggests adaptation rather than complete language displacement.

FESTIVALS AND RITUAL PRACTICES

Festivals are likely to remain among the strongest areas of cultural continuity because they involve family participation, religious meaning, food, dress, and collective celebration. However, the style of participation may change. Youth may prefer shorter ceremonies, digital communication, photography, online sharing, and contemporary music. The ritual may continue even when its presentation becomes modernized.

MUSIC AND LOCAL HERITAGE

Gwalior's musical heritage may show a difference between formal practice and symbolic identity. The number of young people willing to undertake long-term classical training may be limited, but awareness, admiration, and civic pride may remain. Digital media can reduce barriers by providing short performances, online lessons, and accessible explanations of classical forms. Heritage preservation efforts should therefore measure both deep participation and lighter forms of cultural engagement.

FASHION, FOOD, AND ENTERTAINMENT

Flexible cultural domains are expected to show the strongest global influence. Youth may follow national and international fashion trends, consume streaming content, visit cafés, and experiment with new food choices. Yet these preferences can coexist with traditional clothing, local cuisine, and family entertainment during specific occasions. The coexistence of different preferences indicates situational choice rather than a single permanent cultural orientation.

IDENTITY AND SELECTIVE RETENTION

The central argument of this paper is that young people actively select cultural elements according to meaning, convenience, social expectation, and personal aspiration. Practices associated with emotional belonging and collective identity are more likely to remain, while practices connected with individual self-presentation and leisure may change more quickly. This selective retention supports a hybridization model. Complete homogenization would be indicated only if local practices declined uniformly across all domains and lost both practical and symbolic importance.

EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

Educational institutions can strengthen cultural continuity by integrating local history, music, oral traditions, festivals, and heritage sites into classroom projects and co-curricular activities. Such programmes should not present culture as a static set of rules. Students should be encouraged to document family traditions, interview local artists, create digital archives, and examine how cultural practices change over time.

Cultural organizations should use youth-friendly formats such as short workshops, interactive performances, digital storytelling, podcasts, and social media campaigns. Classical music and local heritage can be made more accessible without reducing their seriousness. Intergenerational programmes can also create spaces in which elders share knowledge and youth contribute digital and creative skills.

Policymakers should recognize that cultural preservation is more sustainable when youth participation is voluntary, meaningful, and connected with contemporary life. Programmes that only criticize modern preferences may alienate young people. A more effective approach is to support cultural literacy, critical media awareness, and opportunities for creative reinterpretation.

LIMITATIONS

This paper presents a conceptual and methodological framework rather than primary empirical findings. The proposed cross-sectional design cannot fully explain long-term cultural change. Self-reported responses may be influenced by social desirability, particularly in relation to religion, family duty, and festival participation. The study is also limited to Gwalior city and does not represent rural areas of Gwalior district, where patterns of cultural transmission and digital access may differ. Future longitudinal and comparative studies can address these limitations.

CONCLUSION

The transformation of cultural values among youth in Gwalior should not be described only as cultural decline. Young people live at the intersection of family tradition, local heritage, education, digital media, and global culture. Their choices are therefore likely to differ across cultural domains. Core practices connected with festivals, family identity, religious observance, and local pride may remain comparatively strong, while fashion, entertainment, language, and lifestyle show greater change.

The framework developed in this paper explains this pattern through cultural hybridization and glocalization. It proposes that youth are active cultural negotiators who retain, adapt, and combine cultural elements according to context. A domain-based mixed-method study can provide a more accurate understanding of this process than broad claims about either complete tradition or complete modernization. Such understanding is essential for designing educational and cultural initiatives that preserve Gwalior's heritage while respecting the realities of contemporary youth life.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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