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Original Research Article

Changing dimensions of folk culture in the era of globalization

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ABSTRACT

Folk culture represents the collective identity, historical memory, and socio-cultural practices of communities developed through generations of lived experiences. It encompasses oral traditions, folklore, folk music, dance, rituals, festivals, handicrafts, indigenous knowledge systems, and traditional occupations that collectively reflect the cultural heritage of a society. In the contemporary era, globalization has emerged as one of the most influential forces transforming cultural landscapes across the world. Rapid advancements in communication technologies, transportation, digital media, migration, tourism, market integration, and cultural exchanges have significantly altered the nature, transmission, and consumption of folk traditions. While globalization has created unprecedented opportunities for documenting, promoting, and commercializing folk culture on national and international platforms, it has simultaneously exposed traditional cultural practices to homogenization, commodification, cultural appropriation, and declining intergenerational transmission. The present study critically examines the changing dimensions of folk culture in the era of globalization by exploring its evolving social, economic, technological, and cultural contexts. Using a qualitative and interdisciplinary approach based on extensive secondary sources, the paper analyses the dynamic relationship between traditional cultural expressions and global cultural processes. The study further investigates the role of digital platforms, cultural industries, tourism, education, governmental initiatives, and community participation in preserving and revitalizing folk traditions. The findings indicate that folk culture is neither disappearing nor remaining static; rather, it is undergoing continuous adaptation through processes of innovation, hybridization, commercialization, and digital transformation. Sustainable preservation requires balancing modernization with cultural authenticity through participatory policies, digital documentation, community empowerment, and inclusive cultural governance. The paper contributes to contemporary debates on cultural sustainability and emphasizes that folk culture remains an indispensable component of national identity, social cohesion, and sustainable cultural development in an increasingly interconnected world.

1. Introduction

Culture constitutes one of the most significant indicators of human civilization, reflecting the beliefs, customs, values, knowledge, artistic expressions, and social institutions that define communities across generations. Among its various forms, folk culture occupies a unique position because it emerges organically from the everyday experiences of ordinary people rather than from formal institutions or elite traditions. Folk culture embodies the collective wisdom of communities through oral narratives, folk songs, dances, festivals, crafts, architecture, rituals, agricultural practices, and indigenous knowledge systems that evolve through continuous interaction between humans and their natural environment [1].

Historically, folk culture has served as the foundation of social cohesion and cultural continuity. It has preserved local histories, moral values, ecological knowledge, occupational skills, and regional identities through informal mechanisms of transmission. The rich diversity of Indian folk traditions—including regional festivals, folk theatre, handloom weaving, pottery, tribal art, oral epics, and traditional music—illustrates

the remarkable resilience of community-based cultural practices despite centuries of political, economic, and technological transformations [2].

The emergence of globalization during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has profoundly transformed the cultural dynamics of societies worldwide. Globalization refers to the increasing interconnectedness of economies, societies, technologies, political systems, and cultural practices across national boundaries. Advances in information technology, satellite communication, digital media, international migration, global tourism, and market liberalization have accelerated cultural interactions at unprecedented levels [3].

These developments have created both opportunities and challenges for folk culture. On one hand, globalization has expanded the visibility of local traditions by providing access to global audiences through digital platforms, cultural festivals, international exhibitions, and online marketplaces. Folk artists now utilize social media, streaming services, and e-commerce platforms to showcase traditional performances and handicrafts beyond regional boundaries [4]. Government initiatives,



UNESCO heritage programs, and cultural tourism have further contributed to preserving and promoting intangible cultural heritage.

On the other hand, globalization has intensified cultural homogenization, commercialization, and the dominance of mass media. Traditional lifestyles are increasingly influenced by global consumer culture, resulting in declining participation in indigenous cultural practices, particularly among younger generations. Many folk traditions face threats from urbanization, migration, industrialization, changing occupations, environmental degradation, and diminishing community participation [5]. Commercial adaptations sometimes prioritize market preferences over cultural authenticity, transforming sacred rituals into entertainment products.

Digital technologies have emerged as both catalysts of preservation and agents of transformation. Online archives, virtual museums, artificial intelligence, digital storytelling, and multimedia documentation facilitate long-term preservation of endangered traditions. Simultaneously, digital platforms encourage the reinterpretation, remixing, and commercialization of folk expressions, creating hybrid cultural forms that blend traditional and modern influences [6].

In India, globalization has reshaped the functioning of rural societies, local economies, and cultural institutions. Folk performances increasingly depend upon tourism, cultural festivals, governmental sponsorship, and digital dissemination rather than traditional patronage systems. The educational system has also begun recognizing indigenous knowledge as an important component of sustainable development, environmental conservation, and cultural diversity [7].

The relationship between globalization and folk culture is therefore multidimensional rather than uniformly positive or negative. Folk traditions continuously adapt to changing social realities while retaining essential elements of community identity. Understanding these changing dimensions is essential for developing effective cultural policies that promote both modernization and cultural sustainability.

The present paper critically examines the evolving nature of folk culture under globalization by analysing its social,

economic, technological, educational, and policy dimensions. It also explores strategies for preserving cultural diversity while embracing innovation in an increasingly interconnected global society.

2. Objectives of the Study

The present study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the conceptual understanding of folk culture and globalization.
2. To analyse the changing dimensions of folk culture in contemporary society.
3. To investigate the impact of globalization on traditional cultural practices.
4. To evaluate the role of digital technologies in preserving folk traditions.
5. To assess the economic significance of folk culture through tourism and creative industries.
6. To identify the major challenges confronting folk cultural heritage.
7. To propose sustainable strategies for preserving folk culture in the era of globalization.

3. Research methodology

The study is descriptive, analytical, and qualitative in nature. It primarily relies on secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, books, reports published by UNESCO and governmental agencies, conference proceedings, policy documents, and authentic online academic databases [8]. Comparative analysis has been employed to understand the interaction between globalization and folk culture across different socio-cultural contexts.

The study adopts an interdisciplinary framework by integrating perspectives from cultural studies, anthropology, sociology, economics, communication studies, heritage management, and sustainable development. The collected information has been critically analysed to identify emerging patterns, opportunities, challenges, and future directions concerning the transformation of folk culture.

Table 1: Objectives and analytical dimensions of the study.

Objective	Analytical focus	Expected outcome
Conceptual analysis	Folk culture and globalization	Theoretical understanding
Cultural transformation	Changing traditions	Evolution of folk practices
Technology	Digital preservation	Modern documentation
Economy	Tourism and creative industries	Livelihood enhancement
Challenges	Commercialization, migration	Risk assessment
Preservation	Sustainable policies	Cultural continuity

4. Conceptual understanding of folk culture

Folk culture refers to the traditional cultural expressions developed collectively by communities through generations of shared experiences. Unlike elite or popular culture, folk culture is deeply rooted in local customs, oral traditions, indigenous knowledge, and everyday social practices. It encompasses diverse forms such as folklore, folk songs, folk dances, storytelling, festivals, handicrafts, cuisine, architecture, agricultural practices, traditional medicine, and religious rituals [9].

Anthropologists regard folk culture as a living repository of collective memory and community identity. It reflects people's interaction with their geographical environment,

occupational practices, social organization, and spiritual beliefs. Because folk traditions are transmitted primarily through observation, participation, and oral communication, they remain dynamic rather than static. Each generation modifies inherited traditions according to changing socio-economic conditions while preserving core cultural values [10].

Folk culture also performs several important social functions. It strengthens social solidarity, promotes moral education, preserves ecological knowledge, supports local economies, and reinforces cultural identity during periods of rapid social change. Traditional festivals and communal celebrations continue to provide opportunities for

intergenerational interaction, collective participation, and cultural continuity even in increasingly urbanized societies.

5. Review of literature

The relationship between folk culture and globalization has attracted increasing scholarly attention over the past three decades. Researchers from anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, economics, communication, and heritage management have examined how globalization simultaneously transforms, revitalizes, and challenges traditional cultural practices.

Early anthropological studies emphasized folk culture as a repository of collective memory and indigenous knowledge transmitted through oral traditions and community participation [11]. Classical scholars viewed folk traditions as living expressions of local identity that evolved naturally through interactions between people and their environment. These studies highlighted the importance of folklore, folk songs, rituals, myths, handicrafts, and festivals in maintaining social cohesion and preserving historical continuity.

With the emergence of globalization, scholars shifted their focus toward understanding cultural change. Researchers observed that increasing mobility, urbanization, industrialization, and technological advancements accelerated interactions among diverse cultures, leading to new forms of cultural exchange [12]. Rather than viewing globalization solely as a threat, many scholars argued that it creates opportunities for cultural innovation, intercultural dialogue, and global recognition of local traditions.

Studies on cultural globalization have demonstrated that digital media have become powerful instruments for preserving and disseminating folk traditions. Online archives, digital storytelling, virtual museums, and social media platforms enable communities to document endangered languages, traditional performances, and indigenous knowledge systems for wider audiences [13]. Digital documentation has become particularly significant for preserving oral traditions that were previously vulnerable to disappearance.

Several researchers have investigated the commercialization of folk culture through tourism and creative industries. Cultural tourism generates employment opportunities for artisans, performers, musicians, and craft workers while increasing public appreciation of local heritage [14]. However, scholars caution that excessive commercialization may transform authentic cultural practices into market-oriented performances designed primarily for tourists rather than community members.

Another significant body of literature focuses on cultural hybridity. Contemporary researchers argue that globalization does not simply replace traditional culture with global culture. Instead, communities selectively adopt external influences while preserving core cultural values, resulting in hybrid cultural forms [15]. Modern folk music, contemporary craft designs, digital folk art, and fusion performances illustrate this process of cultural adaptation.

Research on India has highlighted remarkable regional diversity in folk traditions. Studies reveal that despite modernization, rural festivals, traditional theatre, local crafts, tribal knowledge systems, and folk music continue to play important roles in maintaining cultural identity. Government initiatives, educational institutions, cultural organizations, and UNESCO heritage programmes have further contributed to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage [16].

Although extensive literature exists on individual aspects of folk culture and globalization, relatively fewer studies integrate technological, economic, educational, social, and policy perspectives into a comprehensive analytical framework. The present study attempts to bridge this gap by providing an interdisciplinary understanding of the changing dimensions of folk culture in the contemporary globalized world.

6. Globalization and cultural transformation

Globalization refers to the increasing integration of societies through economic exchanges, technological advancements, migration, communication networks, political cooperation, and cultural interactions [17]. It has fundamentally altered how cultures are produced, transmitted, consumed, and preserved.

Unlike earlier historical periods when cultural exchange occurred gradually through trade routes and migration, contemporary globalization operates almost instantaneously through the Internet, satellite television, mobile communication, and social media. Local traditions now interact continuously with global cultural influences, producing complex processes of adaptation and transformation.

The impact of globalization on folk culture may be understood through several interconnected dimensions.

Technological transformation: Digital technology has revolutionized cultural preservation. Traditional performances can now be recorded in high-definition formats, archived digitally, and shared worldwide through online platforms. Folk artists increasingly utilize YouTube channels, Facebook, Instagram, podcasts, and digital streaming services to reach audiences beyond geographical boundaries [18].

Artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and augmented reality have also begun assisting museums and cultural institutions in reconstructing endangered cultural practices for educational purposes.

Economic transformation: The global cultural economy has created new opportunities for artisans and performers. International handicraft exhibitions, cultural festivals, online marketplaces, and tourism have expanded market access for traditional products.

However, commercialization often encourages producers to modify traditional designs according to consumer preferences, reducing cultural authenticity in favour of market competitiveness [19].

Social transformation: Urbanization and migration have altered traditional community structures. Younger generations increasingly migrate to metropolitan cities for education and employment, reducing participation in village festivals, traditional occupations, and local cultural institutions.

Simultaneously, migrant communities often revive folk traditions in urban environments as symbols of cultural identity and belonging.

Cultural transformation: Globalization encourages intercultural dialogue and cultural hybridity. Folk music incorporates modern instruments, traditional textiles inspire contemporary fashion, and folk stories are adapted into films, animation, and digital literature.

Rather than disappearing completely, folk culture frequently evolves into innovative cultural forms that combine tradition with modern creativity [20].

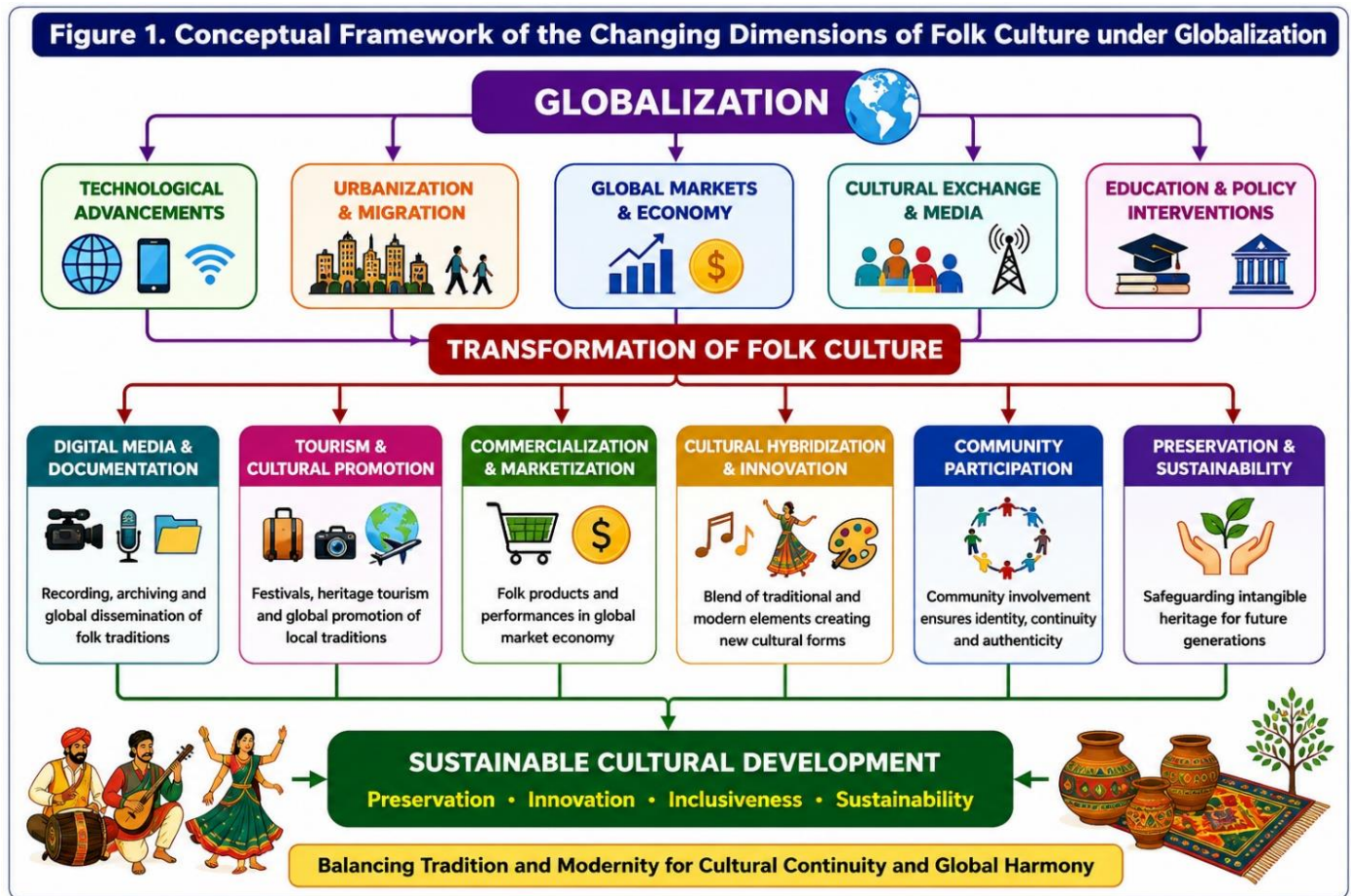


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the changing dimensions of folk culture under globalization.

7. Changing dimensions of folk culture

The transformation of folk culture under globalization is multidimensional. Several important changes can be observed.

From oral tradition to digital documentation: Historically, folk traditions depended upon oral transmission. Elders narrated stories, taught songs, explained rituals, and demonstrated crafts through direct participation.

Today, digital recording technologies preserve these traditions permanently. Universities, museums, cultural academies, and independent researchers document folk traditions using audiovisual media, reducing the risk of cultural extinction [21].

From community practice to global performance: Earlier, folk dances and festivals primarily served community functions such as agricultural celebrations, religious ceremonies, and social integration.

Today, many performances are organized for tourism, international cultural festivals, television programmes, and online audiences. Although global exposure increases recognition, the original social context sometimes becomes secondary.

From traditional economy to creative industries: Traditional handicrafts once depended upon local demand. Globalization has transformed handicrafts into components of creative industries. Handloom products, tribal paintings, pottery, bamboo crafts, wooden sculptures, and traditional textiles now contribute significantly to exports, entrepreneurship, and rural employment [22].

From local identity to cultural branding: Governments increasingly use folk traditions for regional branding and destination marketing. Festivals, cuisine, music, and crafts become symbols representing regional identity in national and international tourism campaigns. This transformation strengthens local economies while simultaneously requiring careful preservation of authenticity.

From static tradition to cultural innovation: Modern folk artists increasingly experiment with contemporary instruments, digital animation, graphic design, cinema, and multimedia storytelling. Innovation enables younger generations to engage with traditional heritage in new forms without completely abandoning historical roots.

8. Positive impacts of globalization on folk culture

Globalization has generated several positive developments that contribute to the survival and revitalization of folk culture.

International recognition: Traditional cultural expressions now receive global visibility through UNESCO programmes, international festivals, academic collaborations, and digital media [23].

Digital preservation: Thousands of endangered folk songs, oral histories, dialects, manuscripts, and rituals have been documented digitally, ensuring long-term preservation.

Employment generation: Creative industries based on handicrafts, folk music, textiles, tourism, and cultural entrepreneurship provide sustainable livelihoods for rural communities.

Educational opportunities: Universities increasingly introduce courses on folklore, heritage management, museum studies, anthropology, and indigenous knowledge systems.

Cultural exchange: International collaborations encourage appreciation of cultural diversity while promoting mutual understanding among societies.

Table 2: Traditional and contemporary characteristics of folk culture.

Traditional folk culture	Contemporary folk culture
Oral transmission	Digital documentation
Local participation	Global audiences
Community festivals	Cultural tourism
Handmade products	Creative industries
Indigenous knowledge	Digital knowledge archives
Ritual-based performances	Commercial performances
Regional identity	Global cultural branding
Family-based learning	Institutional training
Limited communication	Social media promotion
Local economy	International cultural economy

9. Negative impacts and challenges of globalization on folk culture

Despite providing new opportunities for cultural promotion and economic development, globalization has also created numerous challenges for the preservation of folk culture. The rapid expansion of market-oriented economies, mass communication, urbanization, and consumerism has altered the traditional social environment in which folk culture flourished [24]. These challenges are discussed below.

Cultural homogenization: One of the most widely debated consequences of globalization is cultural homogenization. Global entertainment industries, international fashion, digital streaming services, and social media often promote standardized lifestyles and popular culture, reducing the visibility of local traditions. Young people increasingly adopt global cultural practices at the expense of regional customs, dialects, and folk traditions [25].

Declining intergenerational transmission: Traditionally, folk knowledge was transmitted orally within families and communities. However, migration, nuclear family structures, changing occupations, and modern educational systems have weakened this process. Many traditional skills, songs, rituals, and crafts are no longer being passed to younger generations, placing several cultural traditions at risk of disappearance [26].

Commercialization of folk traditions: The growing demand for cultural tourism and commercial entertainment has encouraged the adaptation of folk traditions for market purposes. In many cases, performances are shortened, modified, or dramatized to satisfy tourist expectations. While commercialization provides income to artists, it may also reduce the authenticity and symbolic significance of traditional cultural expressions [27].

Loss of indigenous knowledge: Indigenous ecological knowledge, traditional agricultural practices, herbal medicine, water conservation techniques, and local craftsmanship have long supported sustainable livelihoods. Modern industrial technologies and changing economic priorities have contributed to the gradual erosion of these knowledge systems, many of which remain undocumented [28].

Urbanization and migration: Large-scale migration from rural areas to urban centres has weakened community-based cultural institutions. Village festivals, collective rituals, folk theatre, and traditional occupations often decline when younger populations migrate for education and employment.

Consequently, many folk traditions lose their social context and community participation [29].

Digital misrepresentation: Although digital platforms facilitate cultural dissemination, they also enable unauthorized reproduction, cultural appropriation, and inaccurate representation of folk traditions. Viral content may simplify or distort complex cultural practices for entertainment, thereby compromising cultural authenticity [30].

10. Role of digital media in revitalizing folk culture

Digital technology has emerged as one of the most influential factors in reshaping contemporary folk culture. Rather than replacing traditional practices entirely, digital media often serve as powerful tools for preservation, promotion, education, and cultural innovation.

Digital documentation: High-resolution photography, audio recording, documentary filmmaking, and three-dimensional scanning enable systematic preservation of endangered cultural heritage. Universities, museums, archives, and cultural organizations increasingly maintain digital repositories of folk songs, oral histories, manuscripts, traditional dances, and indigenous knowledge [31].

Social media promotion: Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and short-video applications have significantly increased the visibility of folk artists. Independent performers can now reach global audiences without relying exclusively on traditional cultural institutions. Many forgotten musical traditions have experienced renewed popularity through digital dissemination.

Online learning: Digital education has expanded opportunities for learning traditional music, dance, painting, weaving, storytelling, and handicrafts through online courses, webinars, and virtual workshops. Such initiatives promote cultural participation among younger generations and diaspora communities.

Virtual museums and cultural archives: Virtual museums provide interactive experiences that enable users worldwide to explore traditional artefacts, costumes, musical instruments, and ritual practices. Artificial intelligence and immersive technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) further enhance cultural education by recreating historical cultural environments.

11. Folk culture, tourism and sustainable development

Cultural tourism has become an important instrument for promoting folk culture while generating economic opportunities for local communities. Heritage villages, craft fairs, folk festivals, eco-tourism, and traditional cuisine attract both domestic and international visitors [32].

Properly managed cultural tourism contributes to sustainable development by:

- Creating employment opportunities for artisans and performers.
- Encouraging preservation of traditional architecture and crafts.

- Promoting regional identity and cultural pride.
- Supporting women's self-help groups engaged in handicrafts.
- Enhancing rural entrepreneurship through cultural enterprises.

However, sustainable tourism requires careful planning to ensure that economic benefits do not compromise cultural authenticity. Community participation should remain central to tourism planning so that local traditions continue to serve their social and cultural functions rather than becoming merely commercial products.

Table 3: Positive and negative impacts of globalization on folk culture.

Positive impacts	Negative impacts
International recognition	Cultural homogenization
Digital preservation	Declining traditional knowledge
Expansion of cultural tourism	Commercialization of rituals
Employment generation	Loss of authenticity
Global cultural exchange	Cultural appropriation
Online learning opportunities	Weakening of community participation
Growth of creative industries	Market-driven cultural modification
Improved documentation	Declining indigenous languages
Governmental support	Urban migration
Academic research	Reduced intergenerational transmission

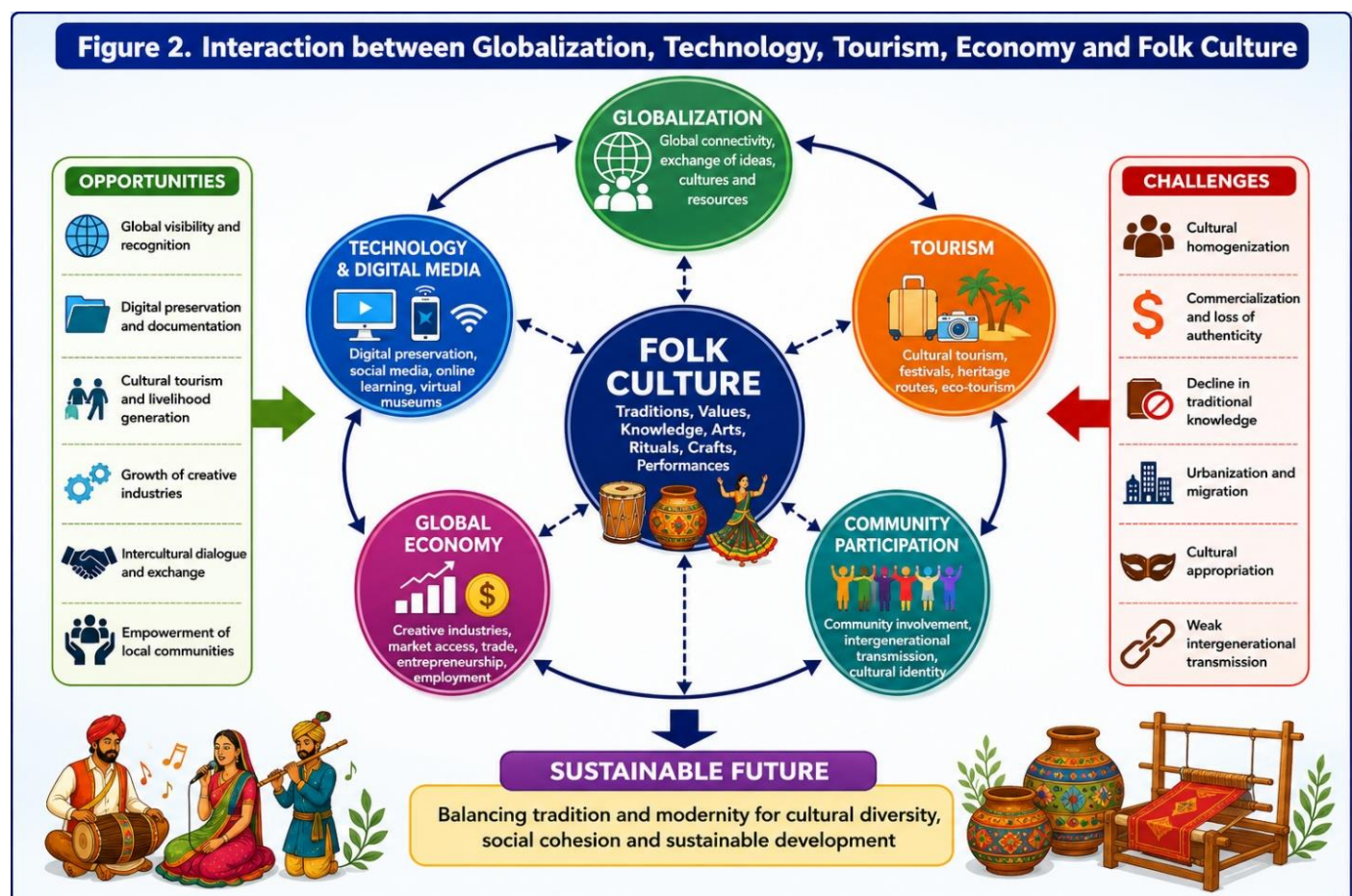


Figure 2: Interaction between globalization, technology, tourism and folk culture.

12. Discussion

The findings of the present study indicate that globalization has transformed folk culture through complex and interconnected social, economic, technological, and

political processes. Contrary to the perception that globalization inevitably destroys traditional culture, evidence suggests that folk traditions exhibit remarkable resilience through adaptation and innovation.

Digital technologies have significantly enhanced the documentation, preservation, and dissemination of folk heritage. Simultaneously, commercialization has generated new economic opportunities while raising concerns regarding authenticity. The emergence of hybrid cultural forms demonstrates that communities actively negotiate between tradition and modernity rather than passively accepting global influences.

Government policies, educational institutions, museums, local communities, and international organizations play complementary roles in preserving intangible cultural heritage. Sustainable preservation requires community participation, equitable economic benefits, intellectual property protection, and responsible use of digital technologies.

The study therefore supports the perspective that globalization should be viewed as a transformative rather than purely destructive force. Appropriate cultural policies can harness globalization for strengthening rather than weakening folk traditions.

13. Policy recommendations

To ensure the sustainable preservation and revitalization of folk culture in the era of globalization, the following measures are recommended:

1. Establish comprehensive national digital archives of folk traditions.
2. Introduce folk culture and indigenous knowledge into school and university curricula.
3. Strengthen financial support for traditional artists, artisans, and performers.
4. Promote community-based cultural tourism with local participation.
5. Protect indigenous intellectual property rights and geographical indications.
6. Encourage interdisciplinary research on intangible cultural heritage.
7. Utilize artificial intelligence and digital technologies for documentation and conservation.
8. Support young artists through scholarships, fellowships, and cultural entrepreneurship programmes.
9. Expand collaborations between universities, museums, and local communities.
10. Increase international cooperation for safeguarding endangered cultural traditions.

14. Conclusion

Folk culture remains one of the most significant expressions of human creativity, collective memory, and cultural identity. Although globalization has introduced profound social, economic, and technological transformations, it has not rendered folk traditions obsolete. Instead, folk culture has evolved through processes of adaptation, innovation, commercialization, and digital transformation.

The study demonstrates that globalization presents both opportunities and challenges. Digital technologies, cultural tourism, creative industries, and international collaborations have considerably enhanced the visibility and economic viability of folk traditions. At the same time, cultural homogenization, commercialization, declining intergenerational transmission, and urbanization continue to threaten the authenticity and sustainability of many indigenous cultural practices.

The future of folk culture depends upon maintaining an appropriate balance between modernization and cultural preservation. Sustainable development requires community-centred approaches that recognize local knowledge, encourage cultural participation, strengthen institutional support, and integrate technological innovation with traditional wisdom. In an increasingly interconnected world, preserving folk culture is not merely an act of safeguarding the past but an investment in cultural diversity, social cohesion, and sustainable human development.

Author contributions

The author solely conceived the study, reviewed the literature, analyzed the available evidence, interpreted the findings, and prepared the manuscript.

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The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Data availability statement

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