
CATALYTIC ROLE OF SPIRITUAL CENTERS IN PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN DIGITAL SPACE

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary digital world, spiritual centers have also become more tech-savvy. Spiritual centers are also crucial for maintaining cultural history and identity. India is a nation with a wide variety of cultures. Spiritual centers serve as a catalyst for the preservation of cultural identities in the current digital age. BrahmKumaris, ISCON, PatanjaliYogPeeth, Art of Living, Isha Foundation, Bageshwar Dham Siddh Peeth, and many other spiritual groups are well-known examples of how they successfully use technology and organize a variety of events to assist cultural identity preservation.

Millions of people follow these spiritual organizations, according to observations, even on social media. India may have some of the world's most significant spiritual and cultural legacies. In the secular republic of India, religious organizations strive to maintain the distinctive cultural traits of their respective faiths and geographical areas, and all religions are treated with equal respect. However, the researcher is concentrating on Hinduism and Sanatani spiritual sites in this study because the vast majority of Indians are Hindus. The content shared on their social media accounts, sites, and handles will be examined in the study.

KEYWORDS: *Spiritual Centres, Cultural Identity , Digital Era.*

INTRODUCTION

In multicultural society, people from different cultures work together. In this digital age, where diverse cultures are expanding rapidly, it is essential to preserve and safeguard your own cultural identity. It is believed that globalization has substantially exalted diversity. However, spiritual centres are assisting people in understanding and preserving their cultural identities, and most importantly, they are using social media as an essential tool for increasing awareness and conserving cultural identities.

Methodology- Content analysis will be used as the research approach in this study.

Cultural Identity- The sense of affiliation, connection, and belonging that individuals and communities have to a particular culture or group is at the core of cultural identity. Heritage, language, rituals, traditions, values, and beliefs are only a few of the many factors that affect it. It is believed that globalization has substantially exalted diversity. In multicultural society, people from different cultures work together. By examining the unique traits, customs, rituals, and beliefs that define each of us as individuals and as members of a larger community, culture identification helps a person identify and comprehend his identity historically.

Cultural Heritage –Cultural heritage has a significant impact on people's comprehension of their cultural values and identities, as well as the formation of modern identities in this digital age and multicultural society. A society's cultural identity is characterized by intangible norms, practices, and knowledge in addition to tangible objects, buildings, and landscapes. It moves from enormous ruins to more expansive features like natural landscapes that have been impacted by human activity. The goal of preservation efforts is to safeguard both material and intangible forms because they are interrelated. Tangible and intangible cultural heritage are the two main category.

Tangible-Heritage

Buildings, monuments, archaeological sites, literature, papers, artwork, and movable goods like clothing or tools are examples of tangible heritages. Cultural landscapes include rural areas and historic towns.

The Intangible Cultural Heritage: Intangible legacies are those that cannot be seen or felt. These include social behaviours, rituals, festivals, oral traditions, stories, languages, folklore, and other non-physical forms that societies preserve. traditional knowledge, skills, foods, and ideals. The contribution of spiritual centres to the preservation of intangible cultural heritages will be investigated in this study.

Spiritual Centres: In a country like India where cultural diversity is highly prized, preserving cultural identity is essential. In this digital age, social media has become a powerful instrument for spiritual centres to preserve cultural identities and disseminate spirituality. Social media now serves as a conduit between individuals and spiritual centers. Spiritual centres are places that support people's mental health, spiritual growth, self-awareness, and cultural and traditional identity preservation. Social media contributes to the preservation of cultural identities by spreading traditional and cultural content, such as mythological stories like Ram Katha, Hanuamant Katha, and Shri Madbhagwat Katha, and by planning events that support people's cultural, traditional, and spiritual values.

Objectives-

Broad Objective:To investigate Spiritual Centers' function in maintaining cultural identities in the digital age.

Specific Objectives:1. To investigate spiritual centres' role in maintaining cultural legacy.
2. To investigate the role of spiritual centres in disseminating spiritual and cultural teachings in the digital era.

Spiritual Centre Chosen- This research will concentrate on the spiritual centre BageshwarDhamSiddhPeeth Ashram. BageshwarDham appears in a few YouTube videos selected for content analysis. BageshwarDham Sarkar was chosen for this study due to its rapidly increasing popularity. PanditDhirendra Krishna Shastri, the head of the BageshwarDham, is

India's most popular young spiritual leader. His notoriety is not restricted to India. Bageshwar's main YouTube channel, Dham Sarkar, has 11.2 million Facebook subscribers, 14 million followers, and 3.8 million Instagram followers. When selecting YouTube videos for content analysis, these goals, viewership, and the BageshwarDham Group's most popular events—the girls' marriage (SamuhikkanyaVivaah), Sanatan Jodo Padyatra, UrjaSanchaySamagan (Brain detox session), Shri Madbgagwat Katha, Hanumant Katha, and Hanuman ChalisaHawan—are taken into account. The event has been scheduled since 2019. The goal of this study is to examine BageshwarDham Sarkar's YouTube videos to see how they contribute to the preservation of cultural identity.

Theoretical Framework-

This study used cultural identity theory to investigate how rituals and spiritual centers influence cultural identity. This approach relies on the spiritual leader's knowledge of Hindu customs, religious ceremonies, and cultural heritage. This research focuses on the discursive development and maintenance of Hindu cultural identity. Stuart Hall, a pioneer of content analysis, specialized in cultural studies. This study also looks at Social Identity Theory, which helps to understand how people belong to their cultural, religious, and national groups. This method helps to examine how specific videos employ symbols, discourses, and rituals to promote in-group identification, such as that of Sanatan Dharma practitioners. This study also uses George Gerbner's cultivation theory to investigate how viewers' views of their cultural identities are changed by repeated exposure to religious and cultural narratives in films.

Methodology- Because the study's objective is interpretive rather than statistical, this project will employ a qualitative research methodology to evaluate the function of spiritual centers in cultural identity preservation. This method facilitates a thorough examination of how information created by spiritual centres supports norms, rituals, and identity markers such as Hindu spiritual activities. The research use qualitative content analysis to detect themes, narratives, and symbolic components in sermon videos.

Literature Review-

(Kleinhempel R. Ullrich ,2023) explores in his study “Sacred sites , identity, and resilience- on the retrieval of collective and historic identity across religious and cultural difference” the relevance of notable structures and shrines in terms of culture and religion for both individual and societal identities, given the disruptions of tradition in modern civilization. This study is based on the enhanced understanding of this relationship that emerged in public discourse in France following the destruction of notable cathedrals and in Germany following the discussion of historic building reconstruction following reunion. It also considers the significance of "sacred geography" in mystical traditions like yoga and hesychasm, which are becoming more popular in today's industrialized countries as individualized and embodied forms of spirituality. This study explores the contributions of paganism and later Christianity to the formation of national identity must be comprehended and revalued in the modern era. This study focuses on the idea that, like a symbolic landscape, sacred and symbolic sites need to be visited, honored, and welcomed in order to promote a feeling of shared identity rooted in history.

(O’Conner David, 2024) By contrasting Eastern and Western viewpoints, examines in his study “ The Role of Cultural heritage in shaping modern Identity : A comparative study of Eastern and Western perspectives” that how cultural legacy influences the formation of contemporary

identities. It examines how customs, rituals, and beliefs shape identity in Eastern societies, concentrating on an religious devotion and ancestry. Western nations, on the other hand, place a strong emphasis on maintaining tangible cultural legacy through institutions and museums. Additionally, the study has shown that striking a balance between modernity and cultural preservation is a major difficulty for both Eastern and Western societies. The preservation of cultural heritage needs to be reconsidered as globalization continues to have an impact considered in light of the swift advancements in technology and society examined in light of the swift advancements in society and technology. This study concludes that there are opportunities and difficulties in maintaining distinctive cultural identities as a result of globalization and cultural homogenization.

(Amani U. Neema, 2025) explores in his study “ Cultural Identity in Multicultural Societies” the intricate processes of forming and comprehending their cultural identity among young people by examining the effects of globalization, the significance of language and cultural customs in creating and preserving cultural identity, and the ways in which cultural identity is formed, preserved, and contested in multicultural societies, covering historical trends. This study also focuses on how shattered cultural identities affect mental health and how important education is to developing genuine intercultural empathy. Through a comprehensive examination of historical, social, and psychological aspects, this study makes the case for a complex approach to cultural identification that strikes a balance between the preservation of cultural variation and a sense of personal belonging and the necessity of global integration. This study focuses on how globalization promotes intercultural contacts while also endangering indigenous cultures and promoting homogenization. The study also examines how mental health identities are impacted by broken cultural norms and the vital role that education plays in promoting genuine intercultural understanding. Through a critical analysis of historical, sociological, and psychological elements, this book argues for a nuanced definition of cultural identity that balances the need for global integration with the preservation of cultural distinctiveness and individual belonging.

(Upadhyay Prashant , 2025) in his study “The sacred and the spatial: Cultural territoriality in India with special reference to the Char Dham pilgrimage” explores the complex relationship between sacred geography, ritual, and cultural territoriality in India, With a particular focus on the Char Dham pilgrimage circuit—Badrinath, Dwarka, Puri, and Rameswaram. The study examines how the idea of darshan (seeing), the custom of tirtha (holy crossing), and the accumulation of stories and regional cults have influenced the religious landscape of the Indian subcontinent, drawing on both ancient and modern study. The Char DhamYatra is examined as a prime illustration of the mapping of sacredness onto space, which promotes both individual transcendence and group identification. The pilgrimage to Char Dham is a powerful example of how ritual practice, sacred location, and mythological imagination come together to create cultural territory in India. The spiritual and spatial aspects of Indian civilization are continually reinforced by these travels, guaranteeing that the country is not only surveyed but also meaningfully inhabited. As a result, the Char DhamYatra continues to shape and preserve India's sacred territory for future generations while also serving as a journey of personal development and a group act of cultural recall.

Content Analysis- Content analysis is the process of examining the material or messages in a communication to determine what themes, concepts, or meanings are being conveyed.

Types Of Content Analysis-

Qualitative Content Analysis and Quantitative Content Analysis

Elements for Content Analysis of BageshwarDham Sarkar's Youtube Video-

1. Indian traditions and customs.
2. Clothing style
3. Sankrit mantra and religious Recitation
4. Morality and Family values
5. Visual components
6. Signs and Symbols

Indian Traditions and Customs- In the culture and customs of any family, region, or religion, marriage is the most significant event. BageshwarDham Sarkar SiddhPeeth Ashram primarily supports society and culture by organizing group marriages for disadvantaged and marginalized girls. In 2019, BageshwarDham Sarkar's Chief PanditDhirendra Krishna Shastri organized a group wedding in Village Garha, Chhatarpur, M.P. This group marriage is prepared culturally with full ceremonies and traditions in order to enable people discover their cultural identity. In order to celebrate the union, traditional Indian wedding customs and rituals including the Haldi, Mehendi, Varmala, and Phere ceremonies are

Clothing Style- Clothing Style: In order to comprehend and preserve cultural identity, clothing style and pattern are important. The history, customs, and way of life of a community are expressed through traditional clothing. Clothing style is a means of expressing cultural heritage. The saree, sherwani, lehanga-chunni, dhoti-kurta, and turban, for example, are symbols of Indian culture. Wearing such clothing helps ensure that cultural traditions are passed down through the generations. Many groups continue to dress traditionally for festivals, weddings, and cultural events in order to preserve their traditions and pass them on to future generations. Through their attire, people might show that they belong to a certain cultural, religious, or ethnic group. Different communities use distinctive fashion choices to express their identities.

Sankrit Mantra and Religious Recitation- Sankrit mantra and religious recitation: Chanting mantras and reciting sacred passages are essential during religious events, prayers, and ceremonies. Among the earliest Indian writings using Sanskrit mantras are the Vedas, Upanishads, and Bhagavad Gita. Religious recitation helps to preserve these sacred texts and ensures that customary knowledge is passed down from one generation to the next. These traditions let people connect to their spiritual heritage and enhance their ties to a particular religious and cultural tradition. Religious events, spiritual gatherings, and group chanting and recitation at temples are ways that people unite. This group interaction not only strengthens communal bonds but also creates a shared cultural experience that preserves cultural identity.

Morality and Family Values- Spiritual leaders give guidance on social responsibility and moral behavior. Topics like maintaining family harmony, refraining from bad behavior, and respecting cultural and religious values are often included in their lessons. Through religious education, rituals, and social gatherings, they transmit cultural beliefs and practices from one generation to the next. Spiritual organizations often emphasize the importance of family peace, respect for parents, and elder care. The values of obedience, accountability, and love that are emphasized in many spiritual discourses improve family bonds and social stability. Dhirendra Krishna Shastri,

the chief spiritual leader of BageshwarDham, gives speeches that emphasize commitment, moral conduct, and respect for family traditions.

Visual components- The visual atmosphere, which includes religious symbols, stage designs, and temple decorations, gives the spiritual conversation perspective. Spiritual centers visually enhance cultural identity by repeatedly depicting rituals, symbols, and customs. Particularly through digital media like YouTube, these visual components aid in spreading cultural ideas and beliefs to a larger audience. Spiritual meetings often feature visuals that depict traditional attire, ceremonial acts, and rituals. These components demonstrate the community's cultural identity and the preservation of customs.

Signs and Symbols- Throughout history, religious symbols have been associated with cultural and historical meanings. When these symbols are employed in spiritual discourses or rituals, they help maintain cultural identity and norms. Shared symbols bring people together within a community by fostering a common cultural understanding. When devotees can recognize and honour the same religious symbols, they feel more a part of the same spiritual and cultural legacy. One kind of nonverbal communication is through symbols and signs. For example, religious gestures, sacred symbols, or ceremonial objects might convey cultural values and spiritual truths without the need for spoken explanation.

Content Analysis / Data Interpretation -Cultural and religious customs are seen in a specific YouTube video of BageshwarDham Sarkar at the worldwide group girls' marriage in 2026. Content analysis is done on the main event of the group girls' marriage on February 15, 2026; the Haldi ceremony on February 13, 2026; the Mehendi ceremony on February 14, 2026; and the detailed information video of the international group girls' marriage on February 6, 2026.

Clothing Style- The selected videos all feature traditional Indian Hindu dress, including spiritual leaders, devotees, brides, and grooms. Men wear dhotis and kurtas, while women wear sarees. This is normal in Indian society. Foreign delegates, including ambassadors from eight countries, are dressed in their own traditional clothing.

Customs and rituals- Bageshwardham Sarkar shows customs exceptionally well in these videos from the International Group girls' wedding 2026. Haldi and Mehendi are two classic Indian Hindu wedding traditions. Haldi was applied on the Spiritual leaders, and 305 brides arrived at BageshwarDham on February 13, 2026, to worship the Mandap. Worshipping the Mandap indicates that the wedding festivities have begun.

Colours and Symbols-During Mandap worship and the Haldi ceremony, all brides, spiritual leaders, and devotees wore yellow clothing, symbolizing the color of Haldi and prosperity; during the Mehendi ceremony, all brides and devotees wore green clothing, symbolizing the color of Mehendi; and during the main wedding day event, all brides wore red and maroon clothing, while the grooms wore cream sherwanis with red and maroon turbans and jewelry. In Hindu custom, brides wear bindi, grooms wear golden tilak, and spiritual leaders wear tilak on their foreheads.

Religious and Sanskrit Chanting- During these ceremonies Sanskrit shloka were chanted. Mantra were chanted during mandapworship ,chaupai of ramcharitmanas and religious speech were given during the rituals of all ceremonies of International Group Girl's Marriage. Infact Chief of Bageshwar Dham sarkar always starts its speech with Sanskrit mantra such "RamayRambhadrarRamchandrayeVaidhse , RaghunathayeNathayeSitayahPatyeNamah" and "

SiyaRammay Sab Jag Jani , KarahuPranamJori jug Pani”. Such quotes grab listners’ attention and make them Itcurious to know the meaning and relevance of such quotes.

Speech, Dialogues and Music- Significantly, it has been noted that BageshwarDham's speeches, dialogues, and musical performances reflect their religious and cultural identities. It consists of songs and bhajan sung at wedding, Mehendi, and Haldi ceremonies. Each spiritual leader who attended to support the event gave a speech to advance moral, religious, and cultural ideals.

CONCLUSION-

The study's conclusions indicate that by organizing events and posting them on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and other social media platforms, spiritual centers significantly contribute to preserving cultural identity in the digital age. People are touched by multicultural societies in this global village, nevertheless it is crucial to comprehend and keep your cultural identity in this digital age by live in multicultural communities. Many people relocate from their native countries, and it can be difficult for these NRIs to maintain and re-establish their cultural identities. Spiritual organizations like BageshwarDhamSiddhPeeth Ashram use social media as a key medium to increase awareness of moral, cultural, and religious identities. According to the findings, these institutions use digital media to actively promote and defend conventional marriage values, social norms, and religious views. Through recurring themes such as community involvement, ritual purity, and moral responsibility, the videos form a narrative that connects cultural identity with spiritual and social duty. This study concludes that the gifts given to 305 bride and grooms, as well as the ceremonies and rituals performed by them, as well as the colour and style of their clothing, help the younger generation understand their cultural identity while using digital space in these multicultural societies.

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