

THE EVOLUTION OF TRADITIONAL FASHION CULTURE IN INDIA: BALANCING HERITAGE AND MODERNITY

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Abstract

The traditional fashion culture in India is a vibrant manifestation of its diverse ethnicities, religions, and historical influences, encapsulated in garments like sarees, lehengas, and kurta-pajamas. These garments transcend mere functionality, serving as cultural symbols that communicate identity, emotions, and social status. Regional variations in styles, fabrics, and embellishments reflect local customs, with handloom textiles from Varanasi, vibrant bandhani from Gujarat, and silk sarees from Kanchipuram exemplifying this rich heritage (Deepshikha & Yammiyavar, 2019). However, the rise of contemporary fashion trends, particularly among youth, is reshaping preferences towards fusion wear that combines traditional and modern elements (K, 2024). This adaptation highlights an evolving identity that seeks to merge cultural heritage with global influences. Additionally, there is a growing emphasis on sustainability within the Indian fashion industry, as designers increasingly incorporate traditional crafts and sustainable materials into their collections (Brown & Vacca, 2022). This evolution in traditional fashion culture demonstrates resilience and adaptability, ensuring its relevance in a rapidly changing global context.

Keywords: *Traditional Fashion; India; Cultural Identity; Contemporary Trends*

Introduction

India's traditional fashion culture represents a complex interplay of history, ethnicity, and regional diversity. Traditional garments such as sarees, lehengas, and kurta-pajamas are not merely clothing but are laden with cultural significance and identity. Each region in India offers unique styles and textiles, such as the exquisite handloom textiles of Varanasi and the vibrant bandhani of Gujarat, which reflect local customs and traditions (Deepshikha & Yammiyavar, 2019). This paper explores the nuances of traditional fashion culture in India, the impact of contemporary trends, and the movement towards sustainability in fashion.

Cultural Significance of Traditional Textiles

Traditional textiles in India serve as vehicles of expression, conveying personality, emotions, and social status. These garments often play vital roles during festivals and weddings, symbolizing personal and familial identities. For example, the choice of attire during significant life events reinforces cultural ties and social interactions (Deepshikha & Yammiyavar, 2019). The cultural narratives woven into these textiles highlight their importance beyond mere aesthetics.

The Influence of Contemporary Fashion

As globalization and technology permeate everyday life, contemporary fashion trends increasingly influence Indian youth. The rise of social media has catalyzed a shift in preferences toward fusion wear that merges traditional and modern elements (K, 2024). This trend reflects a broader cultural evolution among Indian youth, who seek to maintain their cultural heritage while embracing global influences. The blend of styles not only rejuvenates traditional garments but also introduces innovative designs that appeal to younger consumers.

Sustainability in the Fashion Industry

The growing emphasis on sustainability is reshaping the Indian fashion landscape. Designers are increasingly integrating traditional crafts and sustainable materials into their collections, thereby supporting local artisans and preserving time-honored craftsmanship (Brown & Vacca, 2022). This movement aligns with global calls for ethical practices and environmental responsibility, making sustainability a key focus in the revival of traditional practices that face threats from mass production.

Conclusion

The traditional fashion culture in India is a dynamic entity characterized by its resilience and adaptability. While traditional garments maintain cultural significance, the influence of contemporary trends and sustainability initiatives is reshaping their relevance. As India navigates the complexities of modernity, its traditional fashion culture continues to evolve, ensuring its place within both the national identity and the global fashion narrative.

References

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