

The Changing Landscape Of Indian Wedding Photography In The Era Of Social Media

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Abstract:

Over the years, Indian wedding photography has undergone a gradual transformation, supported by observations, experiences, and research that provide evidence of this change. This essay explores the visual representation of wedding rituals throughout history and examines the impact of digital photography on the perception and execution of wedding photography in India. From bridal portraits to candid photography there has been a noticeable change in the preferences of couples and families when it comes to the type of photographs they desire. While traditional wedding photography was effective in capturing moments and preserving the special occasion with loved ones, it may have lacked a certain level of creativity. Social media also has a significant impact on stimulating the desire for diverse images, as these photos are not confined to albums but are shared worldwide across multiple platforms. Consequently, it is crucial to optimize them for various mediums to ensure they are presented in the most favorable manner. Destination weddings are increasing in popularity as more couples choose exotic locations to tie the knot. They provide a unique and enjoyable experience, allowing the couple and their guests to escape from their daily routines and revel in the celebration amidst breathtaking scenery. With the advancement of the country towards modernization and globalization, wedding trends have undergone a transformation, showcasing a seamless integration of age-old traditions and modern influences. Indian weddings are now experiencing a surge of innovative ideas and imaginative concepts, ranging from lavish themes to personalized touches. Pre-wedding photography, thematic photography, destination wedding, drone photography etc. are some of the most followed trends in photography especially popularized by social media platforms. The emergence of technology has revolutionized the process of organizing and participating in weddings in India. Through the utilization of social media platforms, wedding websites, and mobile applications, couples are able to simplify the planning of their weddings, communicate updates with guests, and develop interactive experiences. The live broadcasting of ceremonies enables individuals who are unable to physically attend to virtually partake in the festivities alongside family and friends. Additionally, the use of wedding hashtags, customized filters, and social media competitions has gained popularity as effective methods to involve guests and immortalize significant moments.

Keywords: Photography, Pre-wedding Photography, Trends, Destination Wedding, Social Media, Indian Wedding, Change.

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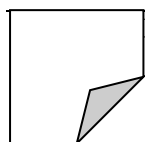
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I. Introduction:

Wedding photography plays a significant role in capturing the essence of a marriage ceremony. This study focuses on the importance of wedding photography in documenting the essence of a marriage ceremony. It aims to investigate the factors that impact preferences, choices, trends in this industry. The research seeks to exhibit valuable insights into the evolving trends of Indian wedding photography in the era of social media. (Sukumar et al., 2024)

Professional photographers have a profound impact on wedding ceremonies as they skillfully capture carefully crafted representations of 'reality' (Lewis,2010). Photographs play a crucial role as extensions of social witnessing, serving as essential validating components in the wedding ceremony. (Kendall, 2006).

Couples are focusing more on the photography, to gain popularity and remain relevant in the present times. The facilitator is the way advanced technology and media. Social media stands as the magnum opus in this regard. The shift in photography and the way people look at it is immense. Customised photography and the desire to look at certain self on the wedding day highlights the projection of self or self-presentation of people. Weddings today is more like tales from the fairyland, one certain inspiration is Bollywood. The bride and groom often assume remarkable roles, as the lavish sets reminiscent of Bollywood and the flourishing wedding culture in India are built upon extravagant, conspicuous, and flamboyant spending. Peer pressure is another factor. Wedding



photography has seen a paradigm shift in terms of the different types of photography, advanced technology, high-definition cameras etc more like a work of exhibition or display. The visibility in social media focuses on the changing social and cultural landscape. The alteration and amalgamation of rituals, borrowing of cultures or cultural imperialism clearly points out the same. Snapshots being shared on social networking sites also gives rise to ideas and how to experiment with it. Social media trends on photography are the new popular culture of this generation. The traditional or the vintage way of photography during weddings are mostly insignificant now. The paper albums now collect dust in the living room. Reduction of traditional ceremony is increasing and luxurious and modern elements have secured itself in the pedestal. Photography today has become a sought-after profession. The market of wedding industry along with the subset industries like photography, make up, flower vendors, dress designers, caterers are also stealing the limelight and increasing the business. Social media has become a special platform for all kinds of business small or big. Entrepreneurs are using this platform to showcase their skills, service and product to reach to the customers in a hassle-free way. The new way of advertisement is social media.

Wedding photography in the present times:

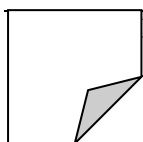
People are well aware of what they want in the form of wedding photography on their special day. Most couples hire professional photographer to their different events and plan accordingly with the photographer. A rapport building is done ahead of the wedding with the photographer so that a comfort zone is maintained on the wedding day with the photographer. The way of photography and poses have also evolved over the years. Looking at old wedding pictures, it gives the idea of a very controlled photography with the same "Pose", a shy bride and her groom standing straight looking into the camera whereas today every nuance of all the wedding vents are captures and video graphed in details. An array of photographs is shot to choose the best from them. Candid pictures, groom playing with the bride's hair photo poses have emerged with time. Photojournalistic pictures are in demand. Not much posing and candid photography remains the highlight. Multiple cameras and equipment are carried and a team of photographers come to the wedding venue for the shots. The viral trends on social media have heightened the desire to have those in reality in one's wedding. People are inspired and they follow these trends to remain relevant. Airbrushed pictures with not a single flaw or imperfections are the trendsetting feature of digital photography and technological advancements. (Noss)

Wedding videography has effectively utilized and even amplified these trends, serving as a cherished keepsake in commemorating this significant event. With the shift to digital media, photography, and videography, they now play a crucial role in modern weddings. This occasion brings together a large number of family members, making it essential to have high-quality wedding photography and for the bride and groom to work with a skilled wedding photographer. (Bezner, 2002)

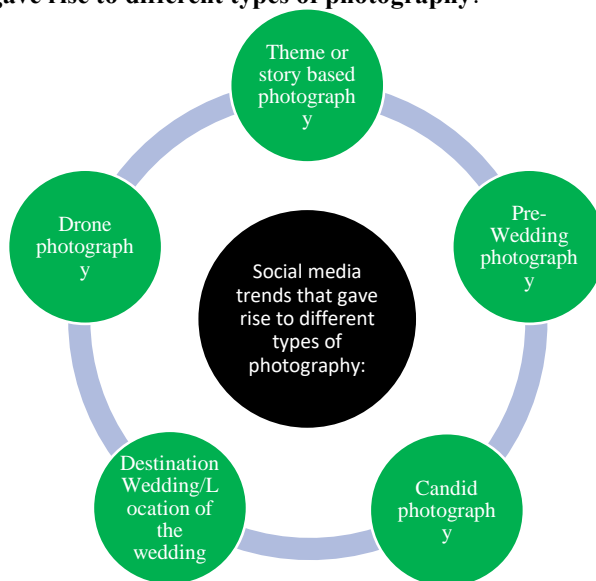
Contemporary wedding photography practices draw upon the traditions of journalistic and fashion photography, providing a fresh perspective on the portrayal of weddings in the context of the Indian middle-class. An interesting aspect of this evolving trend is the emphasis on sharing joy and expressing happiness through online platforms, where images from celebrity weddings coexist with those from ordinary individuals, creating a shared narrative on love. (Singh & Motwani, 2022)

Kohli in her article Consuming 'Candidness': Contemporary Wedding Photography Practices in India" talk about the impact of modernity on weddings which is quite significant, with the increased accessibility of cameras playing a major role. the presence of cameras at weddings has transformed the culture and behaviour surrounding these events. In the past, hiring a photographer was seen as a privilege and a symbol of wealth and status for the elite. The introduction of portable and user-friendly photographic equipment and technology has made wedding photographers ubiquitous.

The contemporary digital culture has brought in a lot of changes about how wedding photographers are being consumed in the weddings and they are also interconnected. In today's digital landscape, photographers have their portfolios and accounts online and promote their services through platforms like Facebook, Instagram, or personal websites. The advent of digital technology has significantly reshaped the way photos are viewed and shared. Clients now receive digitally edited, enhanced, and colour-corrected images from photographers in formats such as CDs, flash drives, or through Cloud storage. Many photographers utilize social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and websites to promote their work, interacting with their online followers by sharing updates on their upcoming wedding projects. The idea that their satisfaction is linked to the feedback and 'Likes' they receive on platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook highlights the significant role of wedding photos as cultural artifacts in today's digital age. Sharing wedding photos online with friends, family and colleagues defines on how people seek validation from others and endorse themselves. Most common trend during weddings that can be seen online is the use of hashtags with creative names of brides and grooms attached together and the most popular 'the countdown begins' to garner more reach. These hashtags help people to find each detail associated with the weddings. The cinematic way of presenting and documenting one's wedding is synonymous to creating memories through aesthetic visuals to last a lifetime.



Social media trends that gave rise to different types of photography:



Theme or story-based photography: The aesthetics of wedding photography have evolved with the use of social networking sites like Facebook and Instagram. This evolution has paved the way for non-traditional wedding themes, unconventional settings, and a heightened emphasis on personal style. Photographers are harnessing their artistic vision to challenge conventions and experiment with diverse concepts, thereby making weddings more distinctive and memorable. Couples are prioritizing storytelling in a personalized manner, utilizing visual imagery to recount their love story from its inception to the day of their nuptials. (Flytant, 2023)

Pre-Wedding photography: Weddings are considered a joyous occasion in Indian traditions. Parents start saving for their child's wedding from a young age. Nowadays, there is a growing trend of couples and families spending a significant amount of money on wedding photography to immortalize their special moments. The concept of pre-wedding shoots, which originated in Asia, is becoming increasingly popular. Engaged couples are choosing to have professional photos taken in unique locations before their wedding day. (Babu & Rao, 2017)

Middle-class Indians are increasingly captivated by pre-wedding videos, which have become a popular trend. These videos are carefully planned and executed, showcasing intricate designs, choreographed dance sequences, and occasionally extravagant sets reminiscent of those found in movies. (My news, 2023)

The surge of pre- and post-wedding shoots has been greatly influenced by social media. Platforms like Instagram and Facebook have made it easier for couples to find inspiration for their photo shoots and share their special moments with loved ones. The pressure to create visually appealing content for followers and friends has led to an increase in these shoots. Additionally, advancements in technology and creativity have played a significant role. Professional photographers and videographers now have access to state-of-the-art equipment, such as drones and high-quality cameras, allowing them to capture stunning footage and images. The availability of sophisticated editing software has also opened up endless possibilities for unique and innovative shoots. (Kumar, 2023)

Candid Photography: Documentary or candid wedding photography encapsulates the unfiltered and raw emotions as well as the unplanned instances of an Indian wedding, thereby capturing the genuine essence of the festivities. By narrating a tale through spontaneous interactions and preserving the lively and energetic ambiance, this style of photography ensures that the memories remain authentic and relatable for years to come. (Mullins, 2024). Candid photography plays a crucial role in capturing the numerous intricate elements of Indian weddings. Through candid photography, genuine and unforgettable wedding albums are crafted, showcasing these details in a natural and unposed manner. Candid photography plays a crucial role in capturing the numerous intricate elements of Indian weddings. Such as the henna or Mehendi designs adorning the bride's hands, the application of Haldi on the bride and the groom, the vibrant decorations, and the exquisite attire worn by the bride, groom, and their families. Through candid photography, genuine and unforgettable wedding albums are crafted, showcasing these details in a natural and unposed manner.

Destination wedding: Destination weddings in exotic locations are becoming increasingly popular, with couples exchanging vows in picturesque settings with unique cuisine and attire. This trend of hosting weddings away from home is on the rise, leading to a higher investment in nuptial celebrations. Wedding expenditure has been steadily increasing over the years. According to a report, around 5,000 destination weddings take place in foreign countries annually, costing approximately Rs 50,000 crore. Destination wedding also has contributed to

the Indian economy by boosting the tourism sector. (PTI, 2023). The global destination wedding market experienced a remarkable growth of 75 percent from 2017 to 2019, indicating a strong and thriving trend. India, known as the hub of religion, spirituality, and socio-culture, is renowned for its opulent and culturally significant weddings. These weddings evoke the rich heritage and traditions of the country. The current scenario reflects a dynamic shift in the wedding industry, encompassing various socio-economic classes and offering high-quality services and vendors. This diversity contributes to India's allure as a prime destination for tourism. (Mashooq & Kumar, 2022)

Drone photography: The integration of drones has emerged as a remarkable technological progress in the realm of wedding photography. These unmanned aerial vehicles present an unparalleled viewpoint, enabling the capture of awe-inspiring aerial photographs during wedding ceremonies and festivities. By providing couples with magnificent bird's-eye perspectives of their momentous day, drone photography has bestowed a cinematic essence upon wedding albums. From capturing panoramic images of majestic venues to immortalizing intimate moments beneath the vast expanse of the open sky, this innovation has truly revolutionized the art of documenting weddings. (Birdlens, 2023)

The extravagant weddings of the affluent and renowned people of the country have been widely discussed in public. These opulent celebrations, ranging from exchanging rings in a hot air balloon to the groom's grand entrance in a helicopter, have become commonplace. Nevertheless, a new trend has emerged among the middle class and those who are not financially well-off, which may potentially be deemed unlawful: the utilization of drones for aerial photography. (Jain, 2015)

Research Problem:

Amidst the social media revolution, wedding trends have seen a significant rise in popularity. While there has been extensive research on the impact of social media on various other areas, there has been limited exploration of the changing patterns of Indian wedding photography, which have been greatly influenced by social media. The research on this topic, which has become a crucial aspect of Indian weddings in recent years, remains scarce. Despite being a contemporary subject of great relevance, there is a lack of comprehensive literature and research in this area.

Research Aims And Objectives:

1. To Study the different trends of Indian wedding photography as popularised by Social Media
2. To study the changing pattern of wedding photography in present times

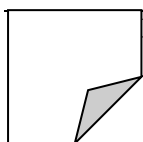
II. Research Methodology:

The researcher opted for a qualitative approach to investigate the changing trends in Indian wedding photography. This method allows for a deeper exploration of how individuals interact, behave, and perceive various aspects related to wedding photography. The study delves into the evolving landscape of Indian wedding photography, analysing shifts in patterns, styles, and the use of visuals. Additionally, the research examines the influence of new social media trends on wedding photography. Primary data was collected through interviews with wedding photographers, while secondary sources such as websites, blogs, academic journals, and research papers were extensively reviewed to ensure a thorough understanding of the research topic.

III. Literature Review:

Exploring the themes of memory and history in various ways reveals that the Internet has become a significant platform for curating visual experiences, memories, and emotions. The act of documenting and sharing one's life online has evolved into a process of constructing personal and collective memories. When it comes to wedding photographs, couples carefully choose how they want to present their lives on the internet, considering factors such as attire, venue, and appearance with the knowledge that these images may be shared online. Some couples feel social pressure to have "natural" and "candid" wedding photographs, assuming they will share these images with friends online. In response to these expectations, some couples admit to giving in to the pressure and hiring candid wedding photographers. (Kohli, 2023)

Instagram is the ultimate source of inspiration for engaged couples, offering a plethora of ideas for every aspect of their wedding. By following wedding photographers, planners, and vendors, couples can explore a world of bridal fashion, table decorations, and venue choices. The platform's vast collection of images allows couples to gather inspiration for both big and small details of their special day. Additionally, Instagram's search function and location-based features simplify the process of finding local vendors. By searching specific locations or using relevant hashtags, couples can connect with talented professionals who can bring their wedding vision to life, whether it's a florist specializing in stunning bouquets or a caterer renowned for culinary excellence. Instagram truly helps couples create an unforgettable wedding day. (The wedding school, 2024)



The digital revolution has rendered the era of film rolls and darkrooms obsolete, leading to significant changes in wedding photography. Photographers have adapted to the times by embracing digital technology, which has brought about increased efficiency and versatility. With the use of high-resolution sensors and advanced image processing techniques, the top wedding photographers are now able to capture images that are clearer and more vibrant. Additionally, the shift to digital has allowed for real-time previews, enabling photographers to make immediate adjustments and capture those fleeting, magical moments. AI technology has revolutionized the field of wedding photography by providing powerful tools that streamline the editing process, guaranteeing uniformity and elevating the aesthetic quality of the photos. With capabilities ranging from colour adjustments to facial detection, these smart algorithms play a crucial role in producing refined and sophisticated final images. (Birdlens, 2023)

Theoretical Framework:

The fundamental concept of the uses and gratifications theory posits that individuals actively select media content that satisfies their needs and ultimately results in gratification. This theory holds particular significance in the realm of social media. Hence, this study aims to employ the uses and gratifications theory to elucidate the reasons behind consumers' utilization of social media platforms, as well as the factors that influence their adoption of specific trends and subsequent feelings of gratification. (Whiting & Williams, 2013)

Social media serves as a means of communication that enables users to interact with a vast number of individuals worldwide, potentially reaching millions or even billions of people. The fundamental principle of the uses and gratifications theory posits that individuals actively seek out media platforms that cater to their specific needs and ultimately provide them with gratification. (Froget, et al., 2013)

In this study people are so fascinated by the trends in social media that they feel gratified and wants to use it in their real life. Social media has consumed people in such a way that it has become a part and parcel of their life.

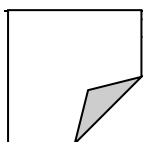
IV. Discussion And Analysis:

The study reveals a significant influence of social media usage on contemporary Indian weddings and its effect on wedding photography. Over time, there has been a shift in how individuals perceive and approach various aspects. Preferences and viewpoints have evolved. Today, opulence and grandeur are synonymous with weddings, particularly in the Indian context. Previously, Indian wedding narratives revolved around traditions, simplicity, family, and an intimate gathering among friends and relatives. However, in the age of social media and technological advancements, the landscape of Indian weddings has undergone a drastic transformation. From electronic invitations to professional event planners, there has been a noticeable decrease in the involvement of family and friends in the overall preparation process. Various teams and vendors now oversee every detail of the wedding.

Through interviews with both experienced and emerging wedding photographers, numerous insights have been gained regarding the shift in wedding trends and the evolution of wedding photography. In today's society, individuals are increasingly conscious of their appearance, leading them to enlist the services of makeup artists who can airbrush their looks to perfection for the photographs. People are now willing to invest substantial amounts of money in their wedding photography, which encompasses not only the main event but also pre-wedding and post-wedding shoots. The significance of visuals and aesthetics has become paramount in contemporary times. Couples are avidly following the footsteps of celebrities and embracing the latest trends, striving to replicate them in their own weddings. The creation of reels has emerged as the most popular phenomenon on the internet today. Regardless of the circumstances, individuals are actively seeking professional photographers to capture their special day, while simultaneously promoting themselves by sharing their wedding photos and videos on various social media platforms.

V. Conclusion:

After an in-depth study it can be concluded by saying that definitely the landscape of Indian wedding photography is changing. The social media trends are taking over people's lives. The modern wedding planning takes inspiration from social media. In the current age of technology, engaged couples are utilizing social media for a multitude of reasons, including seeking inspiration, engaging with vendors, and effectively managing their wedding planning process. Traditional photography has seen a shift towards modern photography. Old ways of getting ready for wedding like flipping through magazines for bridal inspiration or consulting elders of the families and friends for bridal attires, couples today rely on blogs, videos, social networking sites, websites etc. The digital exposure has paved a path for the modern generation. The trends of wedding photography are the highlights of a wedding in the current times. Pre-wedding photography being the most popular as made by social media.



Social media serves as a vast resource for wedding inspiration, enabling couples to explore a wide range of trends, colours, and themes from around the globe. The impact of social media on wedding trends is significant, as couples are often drawn to the beautiful photos and stories shared by others, inspiring them to incorporate similar ideas into their own celebrations. Whether opting for a rustic barn wedding or a whimsical beach ceremony, social media plays a key role in popularizing wedding trends. Moreover, social media facilitates connections between couples and industry professionals, such as wedding planners, photographers, and florists. Platforms like Facebook and Instagram allow couples to discover and follow vendors, providing insight into their work and aesthetic. This direct interaction not only helps couples make informed decisions but also cultivates a sense of trust and rapport. There is no doubt that social media has become a crucial tool in modern wedding planning. As social media platforms continue to evolve, they are set to completely transform the way weddings are planned, and the way photographs are taken providing innovative ways to create unforgettable and personalized experiences. (The wedding school, 2024)

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