



New Media, Changing Rituals, and Impact on Married Couples with Special Reference to Assamese Weddings

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Abstract

Our daily lives have been significantly impacted by modern technology, particularly new media. There are both positive and negative repercussions, and because we are digitally dependent, we are more open and conscious of a variety of events that have been occurring in our life for some time. Various cultural rituals are observed by new media consumers related to marriages, and some of these rituals have been significantly followed while others have been completely eliminated. Cultural hegemony of various cultures is being upgraded and flourished in the minds of couples by various new media handles, thereby altering society's attitude towards wedding

rituals. With regard to Assamese weddings, how sangeet ceremonies have been added, and how bride and grooms are under immense pressure to organise sangeet ceremonies by looking at their friends' images that have been uploaded to their various social media accounts. Various couples have also been seen undertaking pre-wedding shootings and hire professional videographers / photographers for which they chose specific venues, which are later uploaded in various digital platforms. Bachelorette party is also seen as a ritual these days. Couples nowadays commonly create a hashtag shortly after being engaged, and hashtags are frequently used to capture the entire process. This is done to keep their friends, family, and visitors informed if they are unable to attend the wedding. This study will explore how new media and specially Facebook is influencing the rituals of a marriage and how married couples, or the would-be couples are under pressurised because of the new media for following or not following various wedding rituals. To study the changing rituals because of Facebook, a survey will be conducted followed by help taken from the primary and secondary sources. The study aims to investigate how couples are personalizing their wedding rituals and doing away with old customs. As a whole, the paper will focus on the elements that influence new media and altering rituals, as well as their impact on married couples.

Keywords: New media, Married couples, Rituals, Hegemony, Assamese Weddings.

Introduction

A wedding is one of the auspicious rituals that many cultures of the world consistently share. A ritual that is found in almost every single society. Leslie Baxter and Dawn O. Bracewaite explain that marriage is a ritual A voluntary, structured and cultural norm-based communication event that pays homage. What is considered sacred to create and recreate the identity of a couple or family. Weddings are patterned in the sense that most ceremonies have models or a wide range of scripts follow. Weddings are guided by cultural norms. In short, culture influences wedding expectations. The ritual and the marriage of the couple continue. That means they worship something sacred A wedding is a collection of relationships, families, religions, marriages, and more. Social system. Weddings include the identities of individuals and newlyweds. Weddings are not something a couple can do alone-they are sociable in nature. Weddings normally take place in the context of social interactions within a network of relationships.

Wedding Rituals

When we talk about weddings in India, weddings in India are more than just rituals. Hindu weddings in India are more than just ceremonies. It is a luxury celebration and a beautiful union of the two souls. Marriage is a gathering of two families, celebrating an eternal bond. Hindu weddings are so colourful that they are attracting the attention of people all over the world. Hindu weddings, usually characterized by their magnificent features, feature multi-page invitations, numerous guests, and a luxurious feast. Each Hindu wedding ceremony symbolizes something unique, and each ritual has a meaning behind it. Even at Saatphas (Seven rounds), each round proposes a vow to be taken by the bride and groom. The ritual is so elaborate that Hindu weddings usually last until 3 AM. With dances at sangeet and baraat, stunningly beautiful mandap, elaborate robes, mehendi, haldi, jata chhupai till the emotional vidai, Hindu weddings are a powerful and emotional sight. In addition to the rituals that take place on the day of the wedding, there are many other rituals that are part of a Hindu wedding that takes place a few days before the actual wedding.

New Media, Changing Rituals and Impact on Married Couples

The impact of social media is widespread. It has changed the way people spend their vacation. It has changed the way we look for jobs. Marriage plans have also changed over the years. There are significant differences between today's ideal wedding as well as the ideal wedding of the pre-social era. Obviously, wedding costs were affected as well. Now it's not difficult to understand the role that social media plays. Prior to social media, wedding planning was done on weekends and after work. The couple flipped through magazines, visited places to wear black ties and dresses, went to sample caterers, explored potential venues, and planned their reception when they weren't busy with anything else. Wedding plans were waiting when they were busy with other things. I can't wait for my wedding plan anymore. Now it's a phone. Bride and groom can keep browser tabs open on Instagram and Pinterest pages full of wedding ideas. The wedding planner can be accessed from the messaging app. All of this makes it very easy to add another element to your wedding or reception to make it "perfect."

Endless rituals, elaborate rituals, hundreds and even thousands of guests. Weddings in India are world-famous for their luxury, and greater than the celebration of life. However, over time, the basic structure of Indian weddings has undergone a paradigm shift. But today, newlyweds are ready to share their wedding day not only with their loved ones but with others

around the world. Social media plays an active role here. Social media is pressing us to show only the best of our lives. This effort for perfection also affects our mental health. We do our best only when it comes to relationships, careers, vacations, weddings and honeymoons. Looking up is an unrealistic ideal, as the bride and groom do not see the shortcomings or frustrations of others. There is pressure to find the perfect cake, book the perfect venue, and agree to the biggest reception explosion as the ring continues. Couples often struggle to choose the ideal hashtag to promote their wedding. There is also the DIY(Do it Yourself) pressure of sites like Pinterest, where one can choose the perfect flowers, decorations, and spreads. Snapchat only offers wedding filters. With constant exposure and pressure, the stress of it all can be very real and detrimental to the couple.

In a country known for luxury and bigger weddings, social media plays a supporting role in perfecting D-day without complications. There was a time when brides were just flipping through magazines, watching film scenes, shows looking for ideas that would lead to their dream wedding, but social media is now taking up that space. The bride puts too much pressure on herself to pin the perfect outfit on Pinterest and share d day photos on Instagram and Facebook. Social media enhances the wedding planning process, making it much easier to find and discover brands, venues, make-up artists, hair stylists, wedding dress designers, asking brides, brides 'mothers, grooms' mothers. I'm applying pressure. Perfect for their wedding day. Currently, there are more than 20 reality TV wedding shows that focus on how wedding planners create elaborate weddings and how brides decide to find the perfect wedding dress. Shows like "Say Yes to The Dress", Bridezillas, Band Baajaa and Bride. According to an article in The Free Press Journal where the ace Indian Fashion Designer stated that because of Exposure to global trends in social media it manages to put real pressure on those hosting weddings. Bride and groom, and close relatives who feel this increasing pressure to compete in a particular way.

With the advent of the new media, it plays a significant role in our everyday lives, especially when it comes to weddings, which are celebrated in a grand manner in this country. People feel the pressure to create a 'picture perfect' D-day because they have become more dependent on digital technology. There is no shortage of wedding trends to explore when planning. From creative dessert spreads to elaborate photo booths, modern weddings are full of fun breaks from tradition. A hype is created as soon as the couple announces that they are engaged and one of these new trends

is wedding hashtags. Many couples are advised to use custom wedding hashtags when posting to social media during celebrations, as guests want to share your big day. Hashtags are usually a pun or creative twist on a couple's name. Every social media account displays hashtags along with photos, videos, and reels. The hashtags are also used in the wedding invitations as well. In fact, a separate Facebook account or page is now created in order to post visuals related to their wedding. Due to such shows and various designers taking their designers to Instagram and blogs it becomes difficult for the designers. Creating something special for brides who are exposed to world trends and "The first thing a girl (bride) says is that she wants something different. It's safe to say that social media has had the greatest impact on weddings, but it's important to understand that what's posted online isn't something you see every time, and it's people who create social trends.

Several Insta pages and websites are currently promoting newlyweds, grooms, and men's disturbers, which are displayed in a successful way to convince brides and grooms to give gifts to their cousins and friends. These gifts are customized according to the couple's demand. Bridesmaid gifts are a way to thank you for being part of your wedding. Similarly, guest are also given customized gifts, messages along with sweets to the guest who were part of couple's special day.

Wedding photos aren't just about poses and smiles. Unlike before, photographers have come up with innovative ways to perfect a wedding album. If you want to take a pre-wedding photo a couple of months before your wedding, you need to know the photographer in advance. So you can be completely relaxed in front of the camera and be yourself. It can help your photographer discover your best angle and position to make your wedding day photo stand out. In addition, pre-wedding photography can be considered a rehearsal photography session to prepare for a big day. Pre wedding shoots are now also seen in the assamese weddings as well were couples hire professionals. This is often endorsed by the famous songs sung by Assam's industry singers or songs from Hindi Cinema.

There is also a ceremony known as "Kalire Ceremony" which are often seen amongst the North Indians, but now even other communities also follow this ritual. The ceremony often takes place ahead of the wedding. Those who attend a Christian wedding may feel déjà vu at the moment of Kalire Ceremony. They will undoubtedly associate the scene with the tradition of throwing bridesmaids (and brothers) among bridesmaids and

blessing them with the bliss of marriage. Here the bride turns and throws a bouquet at the designated enthusiastic junta. The lucky one with the bouquet has some of the bride's luck and is believed to be in the next line to get married. Many ceremonies, often shared on digital media from accounts, often hold the hearts of couples trying to get married. They try to create new trends and share them across different platforms, including some rituals that were not previously part of the wedding.

Over the years the cost of the weddings have risen drastically, each and every ceremonies are celebrated larger than life. Events like Sangeet almost always have a Bollywood atmosphere, awards ceremonies, and can be seen at Assam's wedding. Earlier women folk would sit together and sing using traditional musical instruments, now along with that sangeet function is organised and only ladies were allowed to attend. Nowadays participants are no longer restricted. Sangeet today is celebrated by both bride and groom's family together in a common place. The performance is held on a big stage. The choreographer teaches cool dance moves throughout the procession of relatives. Relatives occur in pairs or groups. Generally, the bride and groom's parents have a set. Some of them even hire DJs to create an atmosphere where guests can dance to their heart's content. Some hire musicians, while actors perform at their ceremonies.

According to an article in Vogue written by Nupur Saryaiya, where Kainaz Sethna, co-founder of Mumbai-based firm Seven Step had stated that how a popular platform Instagram has changed the way we record the most important moments of our lives. So it is no coincidence that the role of social media platforms in wedding planning has also changed. Nearly a billion Instagram users include tons of inspiring wedding photos, custom wedding hashtags. She also stated that this platform is a double-edged sword. New media has also influenced creative concepts and experiences, including minimalist yet surreal decor, Instagram-worthy fusion dishes, and the virtual presence of the entire wedding through trailers, movies and documentaries, among other things. The path used to influence can be a major source of unnecessary stress and pressure to throw a perfect celebration. Many couples getting married today have been exposed to marital assaults on social media for more than a decade. Not only does this create a sense of pressure to have a grand wedding, but it also gives them time to dream big. Social media has made weddings more glamorous. Social media directly impacts the overall cost and luxury of these special events. And as more and more "generation of social networks" grow, this

trend will only increase.

Study Gap

Research has been done on how the new media has managed to instil dread of luxury among various couples who are getting married or are already married, and ever since they began to incorporate ceremonies and rituals that were previously not included. When it comes to the presence of digital media, platforms like Facebook have played a significant influence. Such medium can occasionally influence a couple's wedding-day decisions and even have an impact on the entire wedding process. The medium has also played a significant part in influencing people to follow a perfect picturesque and popular wedding. As a result, it is critical to understand the elements that encourage couples to follow the trends that are being discussed on social media. Therefore, it has been observed that no research has been done on how new media and ceremonial changes and its impact on the couples, especially in the context of weddings in Assam. Hence, the researcher in this study tries to observe the impact of social media specially the Facebook on married couples and their take on changing rituals because of the new medi

Research Question

- Is the Facebook changing the wedding rituals in Assamese weddings?
- How are the married couples impacted by Facebook posts on rituals related to weddings?
- What are the factors influencing the change in Assamese weddings?
- Are couples under pressure to adopt to new trends of rituals because of Facebook?

Research Objective

- Understanding how new media is changing Assamese weddings trends
- To study if Facebook posts are influencing couples adopt new rituals during weddings
- To analyze the factors influencing changes in Assamese weddings.
- To understand if couples are pressurized to perform certain rituals during weddings which was not Important before.

Review of Literature

"How Indian weddings have evolved in the last decade" written by Nupur Saryaiya . It had noted how digital media had been able to influence and put undue pressure on the couple to organize a picture-perfect party. This on article *" Shaadi Squad tells us why social media is important for wedding planning in 2019"* written by LathaSunadh mentioned how trending hashtags to boomerangs to drone shots, social media is now a huge driver of marriages. Which are helping creating virtual memories by expressing real emotions is the age of Instagram stories and Facebook videos. The author also stated that In today's digital age, couples have a burning desire to share this important milestone in their relationships with others. This can come in the form of an Instagram Live or Facebook post and is often very sentimental. Moreover, this trend has captured all Indians, from the wealthy to the middle class. Nowadays Wedding photographers and filmmakers are now well thought out and carefully selected mostly by seeing their previous works. Earlier All wedding albums looked exactly the same, surrounded by cliché poses and boring shots. Those images could not capture the essence. The strangeness of tradition, the moment of an intimate groom, the honest enjoyment and much more. Also today's couples want to document everything and proudly share it on their social media profiles. That's probably why wedding coverage has evolved so much. Includes teaser, trailer, and finally a wedding movie. And of course, beautiful pre-wedding photo shoots in exotic locations and jointly agreed hashtags to help you find event posts on social media. In an article written by Andrew Arnold titled *"How Social Media Has Transformed The Idea And Costs Of The Ideal Wedding"* Before social media, wedding planning was done on weekends or after work. The couple browsed several articles, film scenes, couples visiting places to pick up a suit and dresses, checking out available locations and planning decorations accordingly, and seeking appointments during off-peak hours or when the couple is free from their respective work. Earlier one had to wait for the plans to be excited but now everything is done over the phone. The bride and groom can open a browser tab to Instagram and Pinterest pages full of wedding ideas or follow pages specifically made for wedding occasions. The wedding / event planner are available through the messaging applications which are available on their websites along with their several social media handles. All of this makes it much easier to add one more element to your wedding or reception to make it "perfect". Recently an article in Outlook titled *"The Emerging Trend Of Planning Weddings Digitally With Shaadi Wish"* .Created by Anvir Shergill

and Divyata Shergill, ShaadiWish is India's most daring online wedding planning portal, strategically helping future couples and families plan their weddings online and wedding agencies create a digital marketplace for work. Thanks to the reliability and hard work of digital wedding planning platforms like ShaadiWish, potential couples can plan their wedding at the push of a button.

Methodology

To complete the study, the researcher here sought help using both primary and secondary methods. The main method used was survey method. The method here not only helped to collect required data but also to complete the investigation. The survey was created in google form for an easy distribution online. These were Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Gmail and Messenger. Robson (2002) defines it as: —The theoretical, political and philosophical background of social research and its impact on research practices and use of specific research methods. According to Morvaridi (2005) The main methods of social science and humanities are research methodologies quantitative and qualitative research. Researchers have gathered 100 samples of those who have been married for about five years. The respondents participating in this study residing will be from Guwahati, Assam. This study helped to find out how the married people faced the pressure to include certain rituals which were newly added just to be part of the on-going social trends. The goal of the study is to find out how couples are personalising their wedding ceremonies and abandoning old traditions. The study will concentrate on the factors that influence new media and changing rituals, as well as their impact on married couples as a whole.

Data Analysis

The survey was conducted in Guwahati based on the opinions of 100 married people. Out of these, 39% are 26-30, 27% are 18-25, 19% are 31-35, and the remaining 15% are 36- 40-year-old profession including lawyers, professors, research scientists, engineers, graphic designers, doctors, housewives, entrepreneurs, chefs, optometrists, fashion designers and journalists as shown below

4-5 years, 21% for 1-2 years, and the remaining 5% and 1% in 2-3 years and 3-4 years, respectively.

2. Ideal time spend on Social Media everyday?

100 responses



Fig 3

As shown in fig. 3 has been found that 28% of respondents spend 2-3 hours on social media, 21% 1-2 hours, 19% 3-4 hours, 17% 4 hours or more, 13% 0-1-hour, rest 1% 2-4 hours, 1-3 hours respectively.

3. Social media handle accessed the most

100 responses

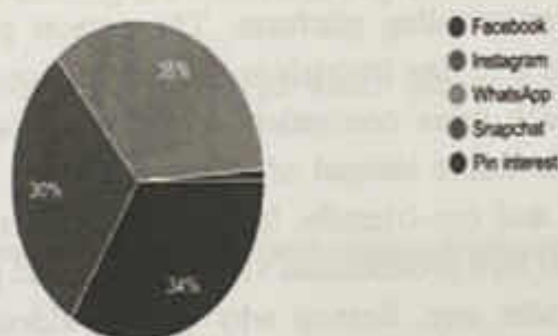


Fig 4

The study found that 34% of respondents are regular Facebook users, 35% use WhatsApp most often, 30% use Instagram, and the remaining 1% are pin interests. These are social media platforms that are very strongly

Age
100 responses



Fig 1

As shown in fig. 2, it has been found that out of the 100 respondents, 67% were women and 33% were men. All respondents are married. Out of the 100 respondents, 42% have been married for less than a year, 31% for 4-5 years, 21% for 1-2 years, and the remaining 5% and 1% in 2-3 years and 3-4 years, respectively

1. How long have you been married?
100 responses

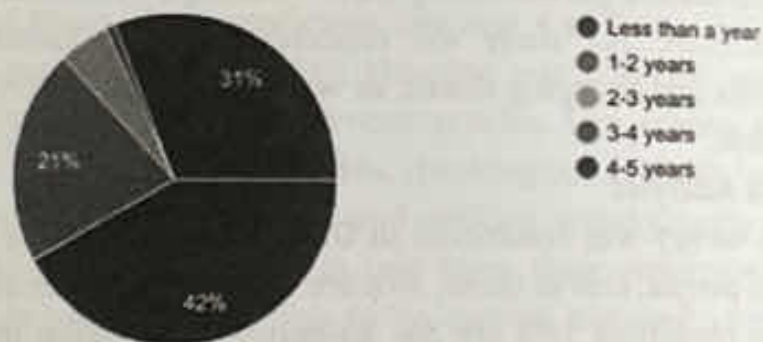


Fig 2

As shown in fig. 2, it has been found that out of the 100 respondents, 67% were women and 33% were men. All respondents are married. Out of the 100 respondents, 42% have been married for less than a year, 31% for

recognized by the respondents showed in fig 4.

4. During your wedding did you ever check post related to wedding rituals?
100 responses

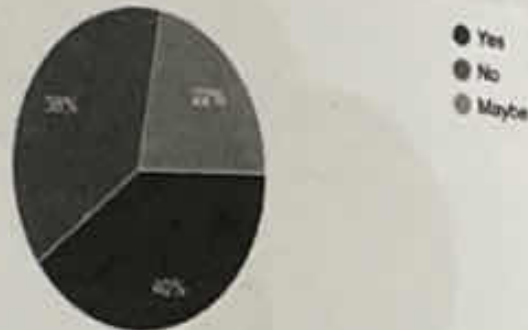


Fig 5

On being questioned about checking of posts related to wedding rituals 40% of respondents agreed that they used to see some posts directly or indirectly related to ideas that could be incorporated into a marriage or wedding. However, 38% did not mention any of the social media platforms, and the remaining 22% don't know if they've come across images, articles, ideas, videos, connected to weddings and marriages (Fig 5)

As represented in fig.6 below, the study found 62% of respondents sent their wedding invitations virtual while the remaining 38% did not use media as the invitation sending platform. The reason people use the virtual method to send wedding invitations is convenience and security. Needless to say, it is much more convenient to order invitations online from the comfort of your home instead of going to a store. Cost, personalization, RSVP tracking and eco-friendly. It was found that majority (82%) of the respondents did hire professional videographer and photographer rest 18% did not have hire any. Reason why people videographers and With a responsible and sincere photographer/ Videographer documenting your event, you can save energy, stress, and time. One can complete the work faster. The snapshots would be better. Having snapshots that tell the tale one can make more money in the long run than having them taken costs.

6. Did you hire a professional video / photographer for your wedding?
130 responses



● Yes
● No

Wedding cards send virtually as well?



● Yes
● No

Fig 6 and Fig 7

As showed in the diagram below (Fig. 8), it was found that 78% of photos and videos were shared on various digital media platforms, while 22% did not share on any social platforms. Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook are among the most popular platforms for sharing photos and videos. Couples share videos and photos for three main reasons: to provide others with valuable and exciting content, to show others a sense of who they are, and to strengthen and nourish their relationships because it makes them feel more connected to their partners. Internet users appreciate exchanging information if it helps them maintain existing relationships. Sharing information online can help people stay connected and establish connections. Since there is so much content in our lives and so many people to share it with, sharing is a beneficial way for users to manage their information.

The study found that on being asked which platform they prefer for sharing their posts

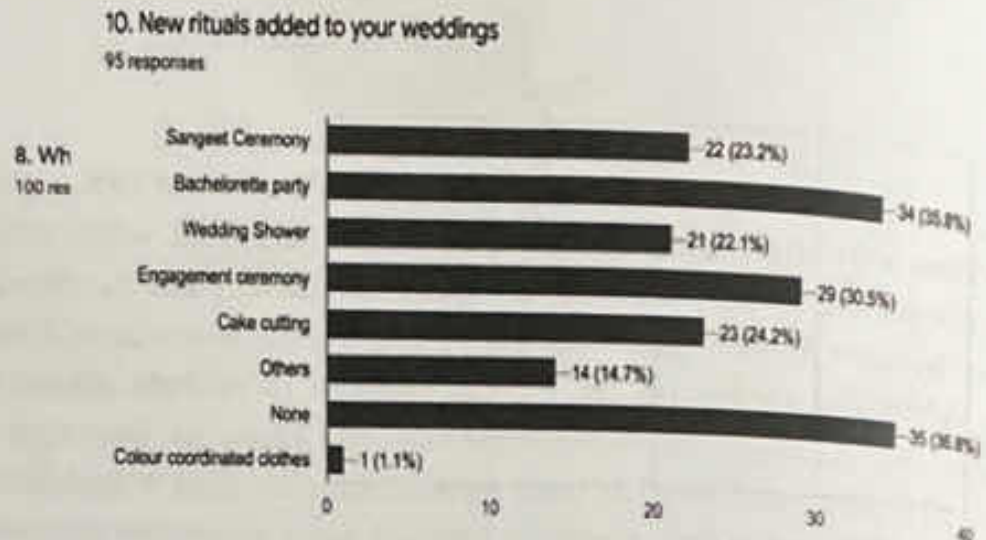
7. Did you share your photos and videos on your digital media platform?
100 responses



● Yes
● No

Enter Caption

be it pictures or videos, 69 percent out of 100% said they would share on Facebook, 51 percent out of 100% said they would share on Instagram, and 69 percent out of 100% said they would share on WhatsApp. The remaining 7 percent and 4 percent out of 100 said they would share on Snapchat and Pinterest, respectively is represented in the graph below (graph 1).



Graph 1

Through the data interpretations the diagram below (Fig. 9) represents that maximum (58%) respondents agreed that they did not add additional ceremonies to the wedding rites, while 29 percent agreed, and the remaining 13 percent were unsure.

12. Did your peers have a countdown till the date of your wedding?
100 responses



11. Did you use hashtags to promote your wedding?
100 responses



From the data interpreted and represented in the below) it was found that 23.2 percent included a sangeet ceremony, 35.8% included a bachelorette party, 22.1 percent included a bridal shower, 30.5 percent included an engagement ceremony, and 24.2 percent included cake cutting. Other traditions were added by 14.7 percent and 36.8 percent of couples, respectively, while 1% added colour coordinated clothing, in which partners wore similar tones throughout their wedding ceremony.

It was found that majority(65%) of the respondents did not use hashtags as a countdown till date. Around 26% did use hashtags (#) rest 9% were not sure whether they have used it ahead of their wedding or D Day. Using a hashtag, on the other hand, makes it simpler to find them on numerous social media sites. Furthermore, your hashtag allows you to view photos as soon as they are posted by visitors, rather than having to wait 6-8 weeks for your photographer to return the photos or hunting down guests to see if there are any extra photos you want and then waiting for them to email them to you. The diagram given represents the data interpreted about using of hashtags in weddings.

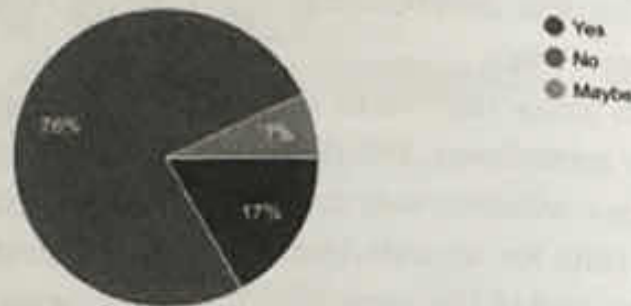
The diagram below represents that majority of respondents (42%) used the trend of the countdown, 38% didn't use the trend, and 20% aren't sure or cannot remember whether they had the counting of days or not. Counting the remaining time for an anticipated event is something people do very often. Somehow, seeing the remaining time decreasing and seeing that it is decreasing gives us a positive feeling. It makes us feel as if we're getting close to what we're hoping for.

From the data interpreted and the diagram ,it was found that majority (76%) of the respondents did not add rituals because it was mentioned on Facebook, by their family and friends, 17% agree rest of 7% are unsure. It is seen that Couples, and brides, in particular, start using Facebook, Pinterest earlier than any other wedding site when they're in the planning mode. Over time, they move into decision-making mode and start to build a collection of images on Pinterest that will define their wedding.

According to some respondents, social media does have a huge impact on our decision-making. A large part of it comes from the peer pressure of making one's presence felt on social media, or else one risks becoming irrelevant. To keep up with "trends", we end up spending money on things that aren't so important. According to another, exposure to trends on social media leads to new wedding rituals that may serve as a catalyst, but are not entirely responsible. For example, some couples have given away plants

as return gifts, but it hasn't caught on much. The new media has become a platform where we can see and adopt new cultures and ceremonies, according to some sections. Also, making your special day more special by including rituals is no harm, and it does not harm to have a positive outlook on social media. People tend to mimic what they see on social media platforms at a certain level. However, for some people it may not be the same for them, it also depends on their personality. A lot of recent weddings are affected by social media, causing financial and mental hardship to the couple and their family. Lastly, maybe it is due to peer pressure, we can blame digitization at times, but when it comes to wedding costs, it should not be based on such things, it cannot be justified at all, and couples can adjust their wedding costs accordingly.

13. Did you add these rituals because others mentioned about it on Facebook?
100 responses



Majority of the respondents felt that It is up to us whether to include or not include the rituals. Again, if including them makes you feel happy and special, then everyone should choose their happiness. The pressure is only felt by those who put more emphasis on showing off than their happiness. In spite of this, some believe some might and some might not be based on how they react to the queries of including the new rituals in the event, as these are trending rituals which is why in one way or other things will be brought forward to the individual. Some stated that they had seen these posts on Facebook, so they wanted them in their wedding, too. However, when you look back on it, these new rituals do not seem to make much difference when you look back at how things were.

Conclusion

To summarise, the majority of respondents believe that while contemporary technology, particularly new media, has had a substantial influence on our lives, there has been little impact of new media on Changing Rituals and Impact Married Couples with special reference to Assamese weddings. Although some rituals were always part of the wedding, they were presented or done with a traditional touch. Some Rituals like Bachelorette party, bridal shower, sangeet ceremony, engagement ceremony, cake cutting, and so on, were seen now being included both traditional and modern touch. Social media has a significant influence on our decision-making. A major part of it stems from the peer pressure to have a social media presence or risk becoming irrelevant. We spend money on things that aren't as vital in order to stay up with "trends." According to another, exposure to social media trends leads to new wedding traditions, which may or may not be totally responsible. Making your big day even more unique by integrating traditions is also a good idea, as is maintaining a positive attitude on social media. At some level, people prefer to imitate what they see on social networking networks. For other people, though, it may not be the same; it also relies on their personality. Social media has impacted many recent weddings, creating financial and mental strain for the couple and their families. Finally, sometimes it is due to peer pressure, and we can sometimes blame digitalization, but wedding expenses should not be dependent on such factors; they cannot be justified, and couples should alter their wedding expenditures appropriately. The majority of those polled said that whether or not to incorporate rituals is up to us. Again, everyone should pick their happiness if involving them makes them happy and special. The pressure is only felt by individuals who value their appearance over their pleasure. Some said they saw similar posts on Facebook and wanted them in their wedding as well. Regardless, others feel that some might, and some might not be dependent on how they react to questions about integrating new rituals in the event, since they are trendy rituals, and so things will be pushed forward to the individual in some way.

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