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## SAYING ‘I DO’ WITH PANACHE!

India’s beauty lies in its diversity and this is reflected best in the various sartorial trends followed in weddings by different communities. This wedding season, **Bindu Gopal Rao** profiles the distinct sartorial marriage traditions of different cultures in the melting pot that is India.

### WEDDING VOWS

It is the season of weddings at this time of the year and as Bollywood leads the wedding brigade, it is certainly the flavour of the season.

Today, with modern couples looking beyond region and religion when they get married, there is a new culture of multiple wedding rituals as per the customs of the bride and the groom. Take for example actors Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh who had two ceremonies—Konkani and Sindhi—or Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas who had a Punjabi and Christian wedding. What this means is that the wedding apparel market has just got bigger and better and designers and apparel manufacturers are rethinking the wedding trousseau.

### CULTURE MIX

There are different wedding apparel requirements for Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Catholic, Parsi, Buddhist and Jewish weddings in India. “My 2018 collections Khushnoor, Husn-e-Adaa, and Rangrezz have hit the fashion market and are a trend across the globe with their mix of old-world charm and the new generation designs, making sure that Indian traditions are alive even in modern outfits. The collections blend global taste and Indian traditions. These designs are mostly inspired by Moroccan and Turkish art forms. You will see palace-inspired motifs, floral designs and geometrical patterns blended seamlessly into the designs. With fabrics ranging from brocade and raw silk to velvet, georgette, organza, appliqué,



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chiffon, soft silk and net, the collections caters to a wide range of requirements,” says designer Payal Keyal, who designs all types of wedding dresses as she get orders for different community weddings. Hindu weddings usually see a majestic sherwani, blended Indo-western kurta-pyjamas and ethnic *Jodhpuri* suits for the bridegroom. Precious embellishments are studded into the base of the bridegroom’s attire. Available both in simple cotton and splendid, royal raw silk, kurta-pyjamas are mostly preferred by the bridegrooms. “For Muslim weddings, there is a huge collection of traditional sherwanis or heavily embroidered kurtas with churidar-pyjamas. Western suit outfits as well as *bandhgalas* are most preferred,” aver Shyam Gupta and Ravi Gupta, Gargee Designer’s. Traditional Sikh grooms prefer wearing a kurta, generally white in colour, over which they don an achkan or a long overcoat. The achkan is often made of premium fabrics like silk or brocade. Nowadays, grooms also wear sherwanis over the kurta instead of a traditional achkan. The achkan or the sherwani is highly embellished with thread work, beadwork and even with precious stone settings at times. The groom pairs either the achkan or the sherwani with a churidar-pyjama, *mojris* and a colourful



turban. “For Catholic weddings, subtle looking suits are in these days. Trim fit suits paired with a tie ensure that the look is perfect. Bow ties are being preferred as well. Jewish weddings require plain formal suits paired with a hat or a shawl. Brightly coloured suits are also preferred by grooms these days,” add Shyam and Ravi.

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## IN VOGUE

In community-specific wedding wear, brides generally follow the preferred colour of the wedding attire and then they adopt the current fashion cuts and embroidery styling. Designers understand the personality, body type, skin complexion, current trends, colour preferences and decide the look accordingly. "It is not difficult to help the client decide on what will suit them the best as most of them have already done their homework before coming to us and hence they know exactly what they want and what they do not want. Today, more than trends followed by communities specifically, it is more of what is in trend as per the current fashion forecasts for various pre-wedding events like haldi, mehendi, cocktail, sangeet and the like that is guiding the choice," says Benita Vira Sahani, Co-founder, Studio Casa 9. As far as colours are concerned, red and pastel pink are heavily trending in the Hindu community, whereas pastel pinks are

catching on in Christian weddings. The traditional green still continues to trend in Muslim weddings, while the Sikh community has added various shades to their wedding outfits including pink, orange and red. Trends may come and go, but people prefer little to no change in the traditional wedding attire as they hold on to their religious traditions when they get married.

## MILLENNIAL WEDDINGS

Ideally in a South Indian wedding, a bride needs to shop for four to five new saris. This includes saris for the wedding day and the rituals. The preference generally is for silk, owing to the rich look it creates and the vibrant colours that reflect from it. Young brides are however becoming experimental with the colours and patterns, and silk saris are now seen with embroidery and zardozi work. People are going for designer blouses too with a lot of embellishments. "While we have our own designs, these days the millennials have a mind of their own. Some have a very specific requirement while others generally get inspired by what a celebrity is wearing. The challenge is in ensuring that the design and colour suits the client requirement. We share designs that we have created in different colour combinations too if the client is not particular. Our customised saris take 30-45 days to be woven," says Kavea Chavali, Co-founder, Kalaneca. Earlier, wedding wear was focused on luxury, but today it emphasises the culture and traditions. Most bridal couples are going back to their roots and experimenting by adding contemporary elements to what their parents wore in the bygone era. "Initially, it was all about being fashionable, but the contemporary era is all about being classy and stylish while staying traditional. Today's generation believes in preserving age-old cultures and traditions, as people have an emotional and sentimental connect with their religion, ancestral culture and traditions. Thus, the traditional clothing of communities is being revived and relaunched," says Sanjeev Mukhija, Founder, Breakbounc Streetwear.



## FEATURE

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### TREND CHECK

Wedding wear is now emphasising on comfort and confidence. Tuxedos and formal suits are always in vogue for any wedding from any community. "When we talk about today's wedding fashion trends, the wedding attire is getting more modern and contemporary. Keeping this in mind, I am aiming to revamp the vintage styles to suit the modern style without losing their elegance and grandeur," says Keyal. Modern to-be brides are becoming more innovative when choosing the final colour of the wedding outfit and even the style of the garment. Brides these days are not shying away from bold colours like blue and magenta. Aanchal Jiwrajka, Advisory Researcher, Stylus Innovation + Advisory avers, "Brides are opting for non-traditional hues, modern silhouettes and playful details. Pastel tones such as dusty rose have replaced the quintessential crimson for brides, offering a fresh spin; think Anushka Sharma's light pink wedding attire. Traditional blouses are also being replaced with blouses made of sheer, embroidered or shimmering fabrics. Meanwhile, ruffles and fringes fused into dupattas and saris are adding fun, Boomerang-worthy detail to traditional outfits." Pastels have largely taken over jewel tones this year for bridal wear, which has been a major shift in the Indian bridal market since the past few seasons. The dupattas have seen a revamp, with feathers and



### CHECKLIST

- **Hindu:** Embellished lehenga sets or traditional woven zari saris like *Kanjeevaram*, *Benarasi* brocade, *Bandhej*, *patola*, etc.
- **Muslim:** Sharara sets with heavy zardozi embroidery
- **Sikh:** Brightly coloured red or pink *Patiala* salwar suits with gold embroidery
- **Catholic:** White lacy floor-length gowns
- **Parsi:** Traditional white Chantilly lace sari
- **Buddhist:** White saris with limited embroidery
- **Jewish:** White embellished gowns.

tassels added for a more modern, eccentric flair, and the veil stands out as a statement piece mostly. This year was all about balancing the right amount of traditional garb with contemporary élan, something that has affected bridal wear across the country. Instagram shopping has become a huge trend, as the purchasing capacity of a person has increased and shifted gears. Celebrities and designers have influenced the consumer's mind with regards to a particular colour or style. People are willing to invest in a proper wedding sari and also in a bridesmaid's sari, a trend that has picked up big time over the last five years. The battle of the handloom and the powerloom continues, but people are now sitting up and recognising the power and the elegance of owning a handloom sari. Women are willing to experiment with newer brands that have a good presence on social media too. This makes them feel that they own an exclusive designer piece. After all, weddings are once in a lifetime and brides and grooms are certainly making the most of it, irrespective of their religion. ■