

Big, fat Indian weddings go eco-friendly

From opting for zero-waste ceremonies to using eco-friendly outfits and vegan makeup, these Indians are showing us the way to green weddings...

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Weddings mean elaborate, custom-made, dazzling outfits with expensive, traditional jewellery. Add to that the opulence that defines every aspect of a big, fat, Indian wedding. Right in the midst of all the hubbaloos surrounding weddings, is a small, but growing section of citizens, who are coming up with innovative ways of making their D-day eco-friendly. From insisting on using only eco-friendly fabrics for the wedding trousseau and opting for traditional hand-me-downs from their parents and grandparents for the various ceremonies to ensuring zero-waste celebrations, eco-conscious citizens are redefining weddings. Read on and take a cue...

Zero-waste weddings are a reality

Bengaluru-based green activist Vani Murthy ensured that her son's wedding ceremony was as eco-friendly as possible. "This required advanced planning in great detail. From e-invites to decorations at the venue, all the materials used were chosen on the basis of how much less trash each item would generate. For the décor, we used more of fabric and less fresh flowers. We did not use disposable cutlery, and favoured steel ones, instead. Even the plantain leaves that were used were sent out for composting later. Leftover food was quickly distributed to those in need. The return gifts that were given away to guests comprised steel straws, non-toxic toiletries, chemical-free makeup and organic clothing. Instead of synthetic cleaning agents, we had placed natural hand wash at the venue. Cloth napkins were used at the dining area, while we also had a drop-off box to collect used cloth that could be washed and reused," explains Vani.

Repurposing floral waste

Flowers that are considered an essential part of every wedding also lead to heaps of floral waste. Hyderabad-based fashion designer Shravan Kumar shares a tip that he noticed at a wedding held in his city. "The bride ensured that the flowers that were used as part of the decorations were repurposed as face and



Hyderabad-based couple, Susheel and Sharanya, donned a sherwani and lehenga made of natural fabrics and bamboo

Gaurav Hingne

hair packs for the wedding entourage," he explains. Vani chips in that sending these flowers for composting is another alternative that people can take up.

Fashion designers hail the environmentally-friendly move

Fashion designer Aneeth Arora, from Delhi, says, "Today, a small number of brides insist that the fabrics used in the making of their wedding garments are organic and cause less harm to the environment." Another fashion designer from the capital, Anavila Misra, chips in that organic and eco-friendly fabrics often make for more light and comfortable wear.

On the choice of fabrics, Kolkata-based designer Abhishek Dutta comments, "Traditional

silks can be replaced with 'ahimsa' silk, as the latter is more humane towards creatures producing silk vis-à-vis the traditional methodologies. Sustainable fashion is also more ethical and economical." Many brides also go the extra mile and insist on vegan choices and cruelty-free makeup products, share experts. "An NRI bride, who worked with us recently, shared that the makeup for her D-day was natural and organic," Anavila adds.

Spreading awareness among guests

While modern brides seem to be a conscious lot, they ensure that they create awareness among the guests, too. For instance, Hyderabad-based Sharanya Sridhar had a pottery and plantation drive at her wedding to

TOP GREEN WEDDING TRENDS

- Upcycling mother/grandmother's clothes
- Donating or handing down clothes after the wedding
- Using feed paper to make invitations
- Giving away bird feeders, vegan makeup and *tambulams* as gifts
- If time and space permit, taking guests for tree plantation or pottery drives to create awareness about the environment
- Repurposing floral waste as hair/face packs
- Reusing jewellery

NEW-AGE BRIDES STILL FIND HAND-ME-DOWNS APPEALING

A considerable number of brides are also keeping the ethical practice of hand-me-downs alive. For instance, 39-year-old Bengalurean, Kirat Sandhu, wanted to wear the lehenga that was worn by her grandmother and mother, at their respective weddings. "For my wedding, I chose a lehenga-and-choli pair that was worn by three generations before me — my mother, grandmother and great grandmother). Besides, the sentimental connect, I found the idea of reusing outfits also very appealing," she says.

BRIDAL WEAR PASSED DOWN FROM GENERATIONS



Thirty-nine-year-old Kirat Sandhu (top) from Bengaluru decided to wear the lehenga worn by her grandmother and then her mother (left), at her own wedding

A BRIDE IN HYDERABAD ENSURED THAT THE FLOWERS THAT WERE USED AS PART OF HER WEDDING DECORATIONS, WERE REPURPOSED AS FACE AND HAIR PACKS FOR THE WEDDING ENTOURAGE



— Shravan Kumar, Hyderabad-based designer

make guests aware of sustainable living. "Our invitations were made out of feed paper, which could be planted later. We also gave out bird feeders as take-away gifts for our guests. We had about 150 guests and creating awareness among them made a huge difference," says, Sharanya. She also chose to borrow jewellery from her friends for the wedding, instead of buying new accessories that she felt she would not wear again. To this, Vani adds, "Creating awareness helps. When people know better, they automatically do better."

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GUIDE TO GOING ETHICAL FOR YOUR D-DAY



Steel cutlery can be washed and reused instead of disposable cutlery that is wasteful as non-recyclable



Eco-friendly gifting for guests: Cloth clips, steel straws and cruelty-free makeup are gifting options that will spread awareness among guests about going eco-friendly

Instead of letting floral decor go to waste, they can be repurposed into hair and facepacks or even be sent for composting



>> Using banana leaves in place of disposable plates, can be an eco-friendly alternative, provided, the leaves are sent for composting

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