

Sustainable Destination Weddings: How Consumer Perception Shapes Demand For Eco-Friendly Practices.

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Abstract

Destination weddings have gained significant popularity, with couples choosing unique and scenic locations for their special day. Wedding tourism in India has emerged as a thriving industry, attracting couples from across the world to celebrate their special day in the country's most picturesque and culturally rich destinations. Known for its grand and elaborate wedding traditions, India offers a unique blend of heritage, luxury, and hospitality, making it a top choice for destination weddings. From royal palaces in Rajasthan to serene beaches in Goa and Kerala, the country provides a diverse range of venues that cater to different themes and preferences. This study analyzes key trends, preferences, and challenges associated with destination weddings, along with the growing emphasis on eco-friendly wedding practices. The research is based on a survey of 300 respondents, focusing on aspects such as the type of wedding destinations, factors influencing the choice of location, major challenges in organizing a destination wedding, and sustainable wedding elements. Findings indicate that temple/traditional weddings are the most preferred (27%), followed by palace/royal weddings (18%). Cost, cultural significance, and venue ambiance are the primary factors influencing wedding destination choices. High costs and travel logistics are identified as the biggest challenges. Additionally, the study highlights a positive attitude toward eco-friendly wedding practices, with a notable preference for sustainable catering (22.67%) and zero-waste initiatives (21.33%). The research underscores the need for greater promotion of sustainable wedding options by governments and tourism boards, as 54% of respondents agree or strongly agree with such initiatives. The findings provide insights into the evolving wedding industry and the growing demand for sustainability in event planning.

Keywords: Destination Weddings, Wedding Preferences, Sustainable Weddings, Eco-Friendly Wedding Practices, Wedding Challenges, Wedding Tourism.

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I. Introduction To Wedding Tourism In India

In recent years, the global wedding tourism industry has witnessed a growing shift towards sustainability, as couples increasingly seek eco-friendly options for their destination weddings. Sustainable destination weddings integrate environmentally responsible practices such as minimizing waste, using locally sourced materials, reducing carbon footprints, and supporting local communities. This shift is driven not only by environmental concerns but also by evolving consumer values and preferences. Consumers today are more conscious of the ecological and social impact of their choices, influencing demand for sustainable wedding services. However, while the concept of green weddings is gaining momentum, consumer perceptions play a crucial role in shaping the extent to which these practices are adopted within the industry. Understanding how couples and wedding planners perceive and prioritize sustainability in destination weddings is essential for businesses and policymakers aiming to promote eco-friendly initiatives. This research explores the factors influencing consumer perception of sustainable wedding tourism and examines how these perceptions drive demand for eco-friendly practices, ultimately shaping the future of the industry.

Wedding tourism in India has emerged as a thriving industry, attracting couples from across the world to celebrate their special day in the country's most picturesque and culturally rich destinations. Known for its grand and elaborate wedding traditions, India offers a unique blend of heritage, luxury, and hospitality, making it a top choice for destination weddings. From royal palaces in Rajasthan to serene beaches in Goa and Kerala, the country provides a diverse range of venues that cater to different themes and preferences.

II. Review Of Literature

- Sustainable destination weddings have emerged as a significant trend in the tourism industry, driven by growing environmental awareness and changing consumer preferences. This section reviews existing literature on sustainable tourism, eco-friendly wedding practices, and consumer perception, highlighting key factors influencing demand for sustainability in wedding tourism.
- Sustainable tourism emphasizes minimizing negative environmental, social, and economic impacts while promoting conservation and cultural appreciation (UNWTO, 2020). Destination weddings, which involve travel to exotic or culturally rich locations, often lead to high resource consumption and carbon emissions (Gössling & Peeters, 2015). However, integrating sustainability into wedding tourism can mitigate these effects by encouraging responsible tourism behavior, using eco-friendly venues, and supporting local businesses (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018).
- Sustainable wedding practices include waste reduction, energy efficiency, locally sourced catering, eco-conscious décor, and ethical sourcing of wedding attire (Bohdanowicz, 2019). Venues offering green certifications and sustainable event planning services are increasingly in demand (Jones & Lockwood, 2021). Furthermore, initiatives such as carbon offset programs and eco-friendly accommodations contribute to sustainable wedding tourism (Weaver, 2020).
- Consumer perception plays a crucial role in shaping the adoption of sustainable practices in wedding tourism. Studies suggest that couples are more likely to choose eco-friendly wedding options when they perceive them as aligning with personal values, affordability, and convenience (Han et al., 2019). However, some consumers perceive sustainable weddings as costly or limiting in terms of luxury and aesthetic appeal (Smith & Font, 2022). The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) has been widely used to analyze consumer attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in adopting sustainable wedding choices.
- Several factors influence consumer demand for sustainable wedding tourism, including environmental awareness, social influence, and marketing efforts (Wang et al., 2021). Social media and online platforms play a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions, as eco-conscious wedding trends gain visibility through digital marketing and influencer endorsements (Kim & Hall, 2020). Additionally, government regulations, certifications, and incentives for eco-friendly businesses impact the availability and appeal of sustainable wedding options (Buckley, 2018).

Research Gap and Future Directions

While existing research has explored general sustainability in tourism and consumer behavior, studies specifically focused on consumer perceptions of sustainable destination weddings remain limited. Further research is needed to assess regional differences in consumer attitudes, the role of cultural factors in sustainable wedding planning, and the long-term impact of eco-friendly wedding tourism on local economies and ecosystems.

The literature suggests that consumer perception is a key driver in the demand for sustainable wedding tourism. Although there is growing interest in eco-friendly weddings, barriers such as cost concerns, lack of awareness, and perceived inconvenience hinder widespread adoption. By addressing these challenges and promoting the benefits of sustainable destination weddings, stakeholders can encourage greater participation in eco-conscious wedding tourism, ensuring a balance between environmental responsibility and consumer satisfaction.

Objectives

1. Assess the level of awareness among couples and wedding planners regarding sustainable and eco-friendly wedding practices in destination tourism.
2. Examine the factors that shape consumer attitudes toward sustainable destination weddings, including environmental consciousness, cost perception, social influence, and cultural values.
3. Investigate how consumer perception of sustainability affects their choices in selecting wedding venues, vendors, and services.

III. Methodology

Research Design

The study employs a quantitative research design to analyze trends and preferences regarding destination weddings, challenges in organizing them, and the role of eco-friendly practices. A structured survey was conducted to gather primary data from participants who have either attended or planned a destination wedding.

Data Collection Method

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire distributed to 300 respondents. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and multiple-choice questions to ensure clarity and ease of response. The survey focused on key aspects such as wedding destination preferences, factors influencing choices, challenges faced, and sustainability practices.

Sampling Method

A purposive sampling method was used to select respondents who had experience with destination weddings, either as attendees or planners. This method ensured that the responses were relevant to the research objectives.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequency distribution and percentage analysis were employed to interpret the responses and present findings in a structured manner. The results were tabulated to provide a clear and comparative understanding of the trends and preferences related to destination weddings.

IV. Analysis And Discussion

The findings of this research highlight the critical role of consumer perception in shaping demand for sustainable practices in destination weddings. The analysis reveals that while there is a growing awareness of eco-friendly wedding options, actual adoption depends on several key factors, including perceived cost, convenience, social influence, and personal values.

Table No: 1 Analysis on Destination Wedding attended or planned

Destination Wedding attended or planned		
Particulars	Responses	%
Yes	220	73.33
No	80	26.67
Total	300	100

(Source: Primary)

The data indicates that a significant majority of respondents (73.33%) have either attended or planned a destination wedding, while 26.67% have not. This suggests that destination weddings are a popular trend, with nearly three out of four people having direct experience with them. The high percentage of participation reflects the growing appeal of destination weddings, likely driven by factors such as unique venues, cultural experiences, and the desire for intimate yet grand celebrations. On the other hand, the 26.67% who have not attended or planned such weddings may indicate barriers such as cost, travel constraints, or personal preferences for traditional ceremonies. Overall, the data supports the increasing demand for wedding tourism, highlighting its importance as a thriving segment in the hospitality and tourism industry.

Table No: 2 Analysis on Type of Wedding Destination

Type of Wedding Destination		
Particulars	Responses	%
Beach Wedding	44	14.67
Palace/Royal Wedding	54	18.00
Hill Station Wedding	42	14.00
Temple/Traditional Wedding	81	27.00
Eco-Friendly/Nature Wedding	54	18.00
Cruise Wedding	25	8.33
Total	300	100

(Source: Primary)

The data reveals diverse preferences for wedding destinations, with **Temple/Traditional Weddings** being the most popular choice (27%). This suggests that many couples prefer culturally and spiritually significant locations, emphasizing tradition and heritage in their wedding celebrations. **Palace/Royal Weddings** and **Eco-Friendly/Nature Weddings** are equally favored (18% each), indicating a strong interest in luxurious, heritage-rich settings as well as environmentally conscious celebrations. The popularity of palace weddings highlights India's appeal as a royal wedding destination, while the eco-friendly option reflects growing awareness of sustainable wedding practices. **Beach Weddings (14.67%)** and **Hill Station Weddings (14%)** are also well-received, showcasing a preference for scenic, nature-inspired backdrops. These options are particularly attractive for couples looking for a serene and picturesque environment. **Cruise Weddings (8.33%)**

have the least preference, possibly due to higher costs, limited accessibility, and logistical challenges. However, they still hold a niche appeal for couples seeking a unique and exclusive wedding experience.

Overall, the data indicates that while traditional and cultural wedding settings remain dominant, there is a growing inclination toward luxury, nature-based, and eco-conscious wedding tourism.

Table No: 3 Analysis on Choice of a Wedding Destination

Choice of a Wedding Destination		
Particulars	Responses	%
Cost	42	14
Venue Ambience & Scenery	62	20.67
Cultural & Traditional Significance	84	28
Hospitality & Services	54	18
Accessibility & Travel Convenience	58	19.33
Total	300	100

(Source: Primary)

The data indicates that the most influential factor in choosing a wedding destination is **Cultural & Traditional Significance (28%)**. This suggests that many couples prioritize heritage, religious importance, and traditional values when selecting their wedding venue, reinforcing the popularity of temple and royal palace weddings. **Venue Ambience & Scenery (20.67%)** ranks second, highlighting the importance of aesthetic appeal and picturesque locations. Couples often prefer destinations that offer breathtaking landscapes and unique backdrops for their special day. **Accessibility & Travel Convenience (19.33%)** and **Hospitality & Services (18%)** are also key considerations. The ease of travel for guests and the quality of accommodation and event management services play a crucial role in decision-making, especially for large-scale destination weddings. **Cost (14%)** is the least influential factor in the selection process. This indicates that couples and families are often willing to invest significantly in creating a memorable wedding experience, prioritizing ambience, cultural value, and convenience over budget constraints.

Overall, the findings suggest that wedding tourism thrives on a blend of tradition, aesthetics, and convenience, with affordability being a secondary concern for many.

Table No: 4 Analysis on Biggest Challenges in Organizing a Destination Wedding

Biggest Challenges in Organizing a Destination Wedding		
Particulars	Responses	%
High Costs	80	26.67
Travel & Logistics Issues	74	24.67
Cultural/Legal Restrictions	54	18
Guest Attendance Issues	34	11.33
Unpredictable Weather	58	19.33
Total	300	100

(Source: Primary)

The data highlights that **High Costs (26.67%)** are the most significant challenge in organizing a destination wedding. This suggests that expenses related to venue booking, travel, accommodation, and event management can be a major concern for couples and families, making affordability a key factor in wedding planning decisions. **Travel & Logistics Issues (24.67%)** are the second biggest challenge, indicating that organizing transportation, managing guest arrivals, and coordinating event schedules in a remote location can be complex and demanding. **Unpredictable Weather (19.33%)** is also a notable concern, especially for outdoor weddings at beaches, hill stations, and nature-based venues. Sudden weather changes can disrupt ceremonies and require contingency planning. **Cultural/Legal Restrictions (18%)** pose another challenge, especially when couples choose destinations with strict marriage laws, permit requirements, or cultural sensitivities. These restrictions may limit venue choices or require additional legal procedures. **Guest Attendance Issues (11.33%)** are the least significant challenge, suggesting that while some guests may find it difficult to travel, most couples and families are able to manage attendance effectively.

Overall, the data indicates that financial, logistical, and environmental factors are the biggest hurdles in planning a destination wedding, requiring careful budgeting, planning, and flexibility to ensure a smooth and successful event.

Table No: 5 Analysis on Promotion by Governments and Tourism Boards for eco-friendly wedding

Promotion by Governments and Tourism Boards for eco-friendly wedding		
Particulars	Responses	%
Strongly Agree	75	25
Agree	87	29

Neutral	68	22.67
Disagree	25	8.33
Strongly Disagree	45	15
Total	300	100

(Source: Primary)

The data indicates that a majority of respondents support government and tourism board initiatives to promote eco-friendly weddings. **29% "Agree" and 25% "Strongly Agree"** that authorities should actively encourage sustainable wedding tourism. This suggests a growing awareness and willingness to adopt eco-conscious practices if supported by policies, incentives, or infrastructure improvements. **22.67% remain "Neutral"**, indicating that while they do not oppose such initiatives, they may need more information or clarity on the benefits and feasibility of sustainable wedding tourism. On the other hand, **15% "Strongly Disagree" and 8.33% "Disagree"**, showing resistance to government involvement in wedding tourism. This could stem from concerns about potential restrictions, additional costs, or a belief that sustainability should be an individual or private-sector responsibility.

Overall, the data suggests that there is strong support for eco-friendly wedding tourism initiatives, but awareness campaigns and incentive programs may be necessary to convince the neutral and opposing segments. Governments and tourism boards could play a key role in making sustainable wedding tourism more accessible, cost-effective, and attractive for couples and event planners.

Table No: 6 Analysis on Eco-Friendly Wedding Practices

Eco-Friendly Wedding Practices		
Particulars	Responses	%
Eco-friendly décor (biodegradable, reusable materials)	35	11.67
Sustainable catering (organic, locally sourced food)	68	22.67
Green venues (eco-resorts, outdoor settings)	35	11.67
Zero-waste weddings (minimal plastic use, composting)	64	21.33
Carbon offsetting (tree planting, eco-friendly travel)	54	18.00
Renting or upcycling wedding attire	44	14.67
Total	300	100

(Source: Primary)

The data highlights the most preferred eco-friendly wedding practices, indicating the growing awareness and adoption of sustainable wedding tourism. **Sustainable Catering (22.67%)** is the most favored practice, showing that couples and planners prioritize organic, locally sourced food. This choice not only supports local farmers but also reduces the carbon footprint associated with food transportation and processing. **Zero-Waste Weddings (21.33%)** is the second most popular practice, reflecting an increasing commitment to minimizing plastic use, composting, and reducing event-related waste. This trend suggests that more couples are conscious of the environmental impact of large gatherings. **Carbon Offsetting (18%)** ranks third, demonstrating a willingness to adopt eco-friendly travel options, plant trees, and take steps to neutralize the carbon footprint of wedding-related activities. **Renting or Upcycling Wedding Attire (14.67%)** is gaining traction as an alternative to fast fashion, promoting ethical and sustainable choices for bridal and groom wear. **Eco-Friendly Décor (11.67%) and Green Venues (11.67%)** have relatively lower adoption, possibly due to limited availability or higher costs associated with eco-resorts and sustainable decoration materials.

Key Takeaways:

- Sustainable food choices and waste reduction are top priorities in eco-friendly weddings.
- Travel-related carbon emissions are a significant concern, encouraging carbon offsetting initiatives.
- While sustainable attire and venues are gaining attention, they may require greater promotion and affordability to become main stream.

Overall, the data indicates a positive shift towards eco-conscious wedding tourism, with a need for more awareness and accessibility of green wedding practices.

Table No: 7 Analysis on Sustainable Wedding Elements

Sustainable Wedding Elements		
Particulars	Responses	%
Venue sustainability (energy-efficient, eco-friendly architecture)	86	28.67
Plastic-free and zero-waste policies	56	18.67
Locally sourced and organic catering	65	21.67
Ethical wedding attire and jewelry	58	19.33
Carbon-neutral transportation options	35	11.67
Total	300	100

(Source: Primary)

The data highlights key elements that contribute to sustainable wedding tourism, with **Venue Sustainability (28.67%)** emerging as the most important factor. This suggests that couples and planners prioritize eco-friendly venues that incorporate energy efficiency, sustainable materials, and environmentally responsible infrastructure. **Locally Sourced and Organic Catering (21.67%)** ranks second, indicating a preference for food that supports local farmers and reduces the environmental impact of long-distance transportation. This aligns with the broader trend of sustainability in the hospitality industry. **Ethical Wedding Attire and Jewelry (19.33%)** is also a significant concern, showing that many couples are opting for ethically sourced, fair-trade, or upcycled fashion and accessories instead of mass-produced or environmentally harmful alternatives. **Plastic-Free and Zero-Waste Policies (18.67%)** are a priority for many respondents, reflecting increased awareness about minimizing waste, reducing plastic use, and ensuring eco-conscious event management. **Carbon-Neutral Transportation Options (11.67%)** rank the lowest, indicating that while sustainability is a key concern, fewer people prioritize eco-friendly travel options, possibly due to the challenges of implementing carbon-neutral transportation for wedding guests.

Key Takeaways:

- **Eco-friendly wedding venues** are the top priority, showing a demand for sustainable event spaces.
- **Food sourcing, waste reduction, and ethical fashion** are significant but secondary concerns.
- **Carbon-neutral transportation** remains a lower priority, suggesting the need for better awareness and incentives for sustainable travel options in wedding tourism.

Overall, the findings indicate that while sustainable wedding practices are gaining importance, certain aspects—such as transportation and waste management—may require greater promotion and accessibility to encourage widespread adoption.

Table No: 8 Factors Influencing the Sustainable Wedding Tourism

	Destination Wedding attended or planned	Type of Wedding Destination	Choice of a Wedding Destination	Biggest Challenges in Organizing a Destination Wedding	Promotion by Governments and Tourism Boards for eco-friendly wedding	Eco-Friendly Wedding Practices	Sustainable Wedding Elements
TOTAL	300	300	300	300	300	300	300
AVERAGE	150	50	60	60.00	60.00	50	60
SD	98.99	18.54	15.36	18.11	24.84	14.3	18.34
COV	0.66	0.37	0.26	0.30	0.41	0.29	0.31

(Source: Primary)

The statistical analysis provides insights into the trends and variability of responses across different aspects of destination weddings. Key metrics such as **Average (Mean)**, **Standard Deviation (SD)**, and **Coefficient of Variation (COV)** help in understanding the central tendency and dispersion of responses.

1. Total Responses

Each category had **300 responses**, ensuring a balanced dataset and reliable insights.

2. Average (Mean) Interpretation

- The highest average response (150) is for **Destination Wedding Attended or Planned**, indicating that a significant portion of people have participated in or organized such weddings.
- The lowest average response (50) is for **Type of Wedding Destination** and **Eco-Friendly Wedding Practices**, suggesting that preferences for specific wedding types and eco-friendly measures vary widely among respondents.
- **Choice of a Wedding Destination (60)**, **Biggest Challenges (60)**, **Government Promotion for Eco-Friendly Weddings (60)**, and **Sustainable Wedding Elements (60)** have similar averages, indicating that these factors hold moderate significance for most respondents.

3. Standard Deviation (SD) Interpretation

- **Destination Wedding attended or Planned (98.99)** has the highest standard deviation, indicating a high variation in responses—some respondents have strong exposure to destination weddings, while others do not.
- The lowest SD is for **Eco-Friendly Wedding Practices (14.3)**, meaning responses are relatively consistent in this category.
- Moderate SD values for **Choice of Wedding Destination (15.36)**, **Sustainable Wedding Elements (18.34)**, and **Biggest Challenges (18.11)** indicate some variation in preferences and challenges faced.

4. Coefficient of Variation (COV) Interpretation

COV measures the relative variability in responses (lower values indicate more consistency).

- **Choice of Wedding Destination (0.26)** and **Eco-Friendly Wedding Practices (0.29)** has the lowest COV, indicating consistent preferences across respondents.
- **Destination Wedding Attended or Planned (0.66)** has the highest COV, confirming that experiences with destination weddings differ significantly among individuals.
- **Promotion by Governments (0.41)** shows a moderate level of variation, suggesting differing opinions on the role of authorities in promoting eco-friendly wedding tourism.

Key Insights:

- **Destination weddings are widely experienced**, but participation levels vary significantly.
- **Wedding destination choices and eco-friendly practices have more consistent preferences**, suggesting established trends.
- **Challenges in planning and sustainability factors show moderate variability**, indicating diverse opinions on their importance.
- **Government promotion for eco-friendly weddings has mixed support**, requiring targeted awareness efforts.

V. Conclusion:

Wedding tourism has become a booming segment of the global tourism industry, with couples increasingly opting for destination weddings over traditional hometown ceremonies.

Wedding tourism in India is a rapidly growing industry, contributing significantly to the economy and strengthening the country's position as a top global wedding destination. With its unique blend of tradition, luxury, and hospitality, India continues to attract couples looking for a grand and memorable wedding experience.

Sustainability in wedding tourism is no longer just an option but a necessity. As the industry grows, adopting eco-friendly practices can help preserve natural resources, reduce waste, and support local communities. Couples, wedding planners, and tourism stakeholders must collaborate to make weddings both memorable and environmentally responsible. By integrating sustainability, wedding tourism can continue to flourish while ensuring that future generations can enjoy the beauty of these destinations.

The data highlights **the growing importance of sustainable wedding tourism while revealing variability in participation, preferences, and challenges**. Efforts to promote eco-friendly wedding practices should **focus on reducing logistical barriers, increasing awareness, and offering incentives** to encourage wider adoption.

The study concludes that consumer perception plays a pivotal role in shaping the demand for sustainable practices in destination weddings. While awareness of eco-friendly options is increasing, factors such as perceived cost, luxury expectations, social influence, and marketing effectiveness significantly impact consumer decision-making. To enhance adoption, wedding tourism businesses must address common misconceptions about sustainable weddings, improve affordability and accessibility, and leverage marketing strategies that highlight the aesthetic and experiential value of green weddings.

Moreover, policymakers and industry stakeholders should collaborate to establish standardized guidelines, incentives, and awareness campaigns that promote sustainability in wedding tourism. By aligning consumer preferences with responsible tourism practices, the wedding industry can contribute to environmental conservation while maintaining the uniqueness and charm of destination weddings. Ultimately, fostering a shift in consumer attitudes toward sustainability will be key to the future growth of eco-friendly wedding tourism.

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