



## Survival and Growth in the Indian Wedding Industry: Insights from Industry Professionals

Aarav Mehta

Neerja Modi School, Rajasthan, India

[aarav312009@gmail.com](mailto:aarav312009@gmail.com)

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### **Abstract**

The Indian wedding industry has surfaced as a significant segment of the service economy. It is driven by cultural importance, rising consumer expenditure, and increasing professionalization. Despite its scale and social relevance, limited qualitative research examines how industry professionals interpret resilience and growth in this sector. This study attempts to explore the factors impacting survival and success in the Indian wedding industry through semi-structured interviews with seven experienced planners and vendors based in Rajasthan, India. The interview data were thematically analyzed to identify patterns shaping industry practices. Findings reveal that trust-based market dynamics are central to the industry, while experience and reputation strongly influence vendor selection due to the high financial and emotional stakes associated with weddings. Despite economic pressures such as inflation and rising operational costs, wedding expenditure remains resilient, reflecting households' prioritization of celebratory spending. The study also highlights essential professional and entrepreneurial competencies including communication, creativity, crisis management, and physical endurance for effective service delivery and client satisfaction. Moreover, technology and social media have reshaped the entire planning processes and client expectations. The interest in sustainable practices is gradually increasing, particularly among younger clients, though adoption remains uneven. The study overall depicts an industry that balances tradition and modernity, where adaptability, credibility, and innovation drive sustained growth. By capturing practitioner-led insights, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of service-sector dynamics in culturally embedded markets, offering implications for vendors, policymakers, and scholars that are interested in the intersection of economic, social, and cultural factors in event management.

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurial Competencies; India, Service Economy; Social Media; Wedding Industry*

### **1. Introduction**

The event sector is a rapidly expanding field that combines education, business administration, and technology to enhance the organization of a wide variety of events. This field includes activities from

cultural and social celebrations to large-scale business conferences or exhibitions. Due to increasing competition and consumer expectations, this sector has witnessed a boost in usage of technological innovations to improve customer experience and overall efficiency. This sector in India has expanded from ₹10.79 lakh crore in 2024 to an estimated ₹24.04 lakh crore by 2030, illustrating the increasing demand and the high employment rates this industry is creating, thereby making a substantial contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product. The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, announced that in 2024 India's structured live events sector grew by 15%, producing an additional ₹13 billion in revenue, marking one of the fastest growth rates in India's overall media and entertainment field (Choudhary et al., 2025).

The integration of technology and education is crucial for advancing the event industry. Innovations such as augmented reality and virtual reality are transforming the conventional approach to event planning, improving efficiency and enhancing client experience (Bisht & Bhatt, 2025). However, excessive reliance on technology can reduce personalized touch that is provided by planners making it a challenge to balance innovation and human expertise. Effective event management continues to demand expertise, patience, and strong communication abilities, emphasizing the use of project management techniques to guarantee successful implementation.

Within the event management industry, the wedding sector has shown a rapid increase. The Indian wedding sector is presently worth more than ₹100,000 crore and is growing at a yearly pace of 25-30%. Online platforms like WeddingWire and WedMe Good simplify event planning and simultaneously also provide personalized experiences corresponding to the client's needs (Kulshreshtha & Webster, 2024). Research indicates that this expansion is primarily driven by rising disposable incomes and changing social norms with the issue of class, who perceive weddings as a chance to display their affluence and social standing (Kar & Tiwari, 2023). The Indian wedding industry is expected to rival the US wedding market, which is valued at \$50 billion. Average wedding costs range from ₹5 lakh to ₹5 crore, reflecting the industry's intensity. The concept of destination weddings has become very prevalent in recent years, where the event planners play a huge role in handling each and everything related to the wedding.

However, during the pandemic, the service sector faced a significant downfall, and in particular, the wedding industry was totally wiped out, as people cancelled their marriages, destination weddings could not take place, and people feared the virus. The post-pandemic period led to a major shift in how weddings were celebrated in India. Particularly, the wedding industry in Rajasthan, which intertwines cultural heritage with modern trends, also faced several economic problems, as there was low employment in this industry, people had less disposable income, and thus, consumer spending reduced by a huge percentage. Eventually, as the situation got better, the industry boomed again because of its rich history and architectural beauty, particularly including its forts and palaces.

The rise of social media has changed the consumer perceptions and expectations of weddings, influencing trends and decision-making processes. Digital marketing strategies are utilized by wedding planners to reach a broader audience, resulting in high competitiveness in the market. Against this background of rapid growth and structural change, the Indian wedding industry reflects a complex professional landscape shaped by trust-based market dynamics, evolving consumer spending behavior, skill-intensive service delivery, and emerging sustainability concerns. While the sector continues to indicate resilience amid economic pressures, success within this industry appears to depend not only on financial capacity but also on the learnings and experiences of the people involved in this sector. Despite its economic significance and cultural prominence, there is very limited qualitative research examining how industry professionals themselves interpret and respond to these evolving challenges. This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the lived experiences and perspectives of wedding industry professionals, particularly in Rajasthan. The study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the

structural and behavioral forces shaping the contemporary Indian wedding industry. The next section elaborates on the review of literature in this field.

## **2. Literature Review**

An extensive review of literature has been conducted to understand the research on event management, particularly in the wedding industry. A study conducted in 2023 examined how wedding planners strategized and recovered from the difficulties imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, with a particular focus on the entrepreneurial skills that created the ability to be resilient and consistent. The research was conducted for South Africa by employing a qualitative approach to capture detailed perspectives and real-life experiences of industrialists. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with thirteen female wedding entrepreneurs. The interviews were carried out electronically via online voice calls. Participants were chosen by variation sampling to ensure a variety of experiences are discovered within the wedding sector. The findings of the study suggest that effective communication and creativity are most essential to survive post-pandemic conditions. Wedding planners emphasized the need to enhance their services, communicate effectively and fluently with clients, and innovate and modify themselves. Word-of-mouth promotion and social media platforms turned out as the most efficient marketing methods, leading to reduced opportunities for interpersonal interactions. Moreover, another key growth strategy was identified as developing a unique style and making use of existing resources to expand into complementary services to increase the chances of survival and profitability in the long run. Competition within the industry fostered learning and professional development and hence seen positively. The research highlights the crucial role of entrepreneurial and problem-solving skills, that assist wedding planners in sustaining businesses during periods of crisis (Bornman & Steenkamp, 2023).

Another study attempted to understand the marketing strategies that are utilized by wedding planners. The main objectives of the research were to examine how marketing styles, content quality, and particular marketing strategies impact visibility and success in this industry. The research highlights the use of Instagram as a primary advertising platform due to its strong visual focus and ability to promote interpersonal relations with consumers, thus making it a prominent social media platform. Moreover, the findings depict that effective marketing requires a clear and well-defined strategy supported by qualitative and visually attractive content. Elements such as simplicity and consistency were identified as most important in building trust and developing emotional connections with consumers. The study included an algorithmic classification of firms, illustrating that wedding planners who invested in content quality and strategic planning achieved higher levels of engagement and overall success. This shows the increasing importance of data-driven digital marketing in this industry (BANDEL, 2023).

Furthermore, other studies examine the structure, growth, and difficulties of the Indian wedding industry, particularly focusing on its use of social media. The primary goal of the study is to assess the need for a dedicated social platform, as the industry is highly fragmented and unorganized, which is undesirable in the economy. Despite being valued at approximately USD 40 billion annually and experiencing an estimated growth rate of 20 percent per year, quantification is not very reliable due to widespread cash-based transactions and the lack of formal systems. The data was collected by a qualitative approach grounded in an interpretivist philosophy and guided by the Research Onion framework. It was collected through semi-structured interviews with six wedding planners and service providers based in Ahmedabad. The findings of the research suggest a clear contradiction within the sector: while Indian weddings contribute significantly to national economic activity and GDP, poor coordination limits transparency and credibility and leads to operational inefficiency. This study also indicates a growing trend towards modernization and personalization and how destination weddings are being encouraged and desired by consumers. It stated that a centralized digital platform could greatly facilitate collaboration and decision-making within the industry (Maheshwari, 2018).

Further, another global study analyzed the economic consequences of extravagant Indian weddings, with the primary objective of finding whether their benefits prevail over the negative impacts. The research addresses multiple economic dimensions, including employment opportunities, market forces such as demand and supply, and GDP contribution using a qualitative approach based on the analysis of existing literature and secondary data across various cities. The findings demonstrate that Indian weddings have a huge positive impact on the national economy, as they boost significant factors that are highly desirable in the economy. Weddings incorporate an abundance of sectors and contribute meaningfully to GDP growth while supporting livelihoods for both skilled and informal workers. On the other hand, the study also acknowledges adverse outcomes, such as increased income inequality and financial burden on families, and environmental degradation, which leads to creation of a wide gap between the haves and have-nots. However, the overall economic benefits are believed to outweigh these negative effects. The research suggests the need for more sustainable and socially responsible practices to mitigate long-term environmental and social costs (Agarwal, 2024).

Another study based on an environmental perspective investigated the use of sustainable methods within the wedding planning industry through an analysis of Green with Envy Events. The primary objective of the study is to examine whether sustainable wedding services are both environmentally friendly and relatively cost-effective compared to traditional alternatives. The research focuses on using eco-friendly materials and services, which may assist in enabling long-term efficiency and lower carbon emissions as well. It depends on qualitative analysis of secondary data gathered from online journals and industry literature. Moreover, the findings suggest that sustainable wedding planning can be both elegant and engaging while maintaining eco-friendliness. The study further highlights that Green with Envy Events incorporates sustainable strategies into its offerings regardless of client demand, reflecting a strong organizational commitment to minimizing the negative impacts of wedding planning. This instinctive approach portrays sustainability not as a niche preference but as a major operational principle. Overall, the research concludes that sustainable wedding services are both eco-friendly and economically viable, bolstering their relevance in the growing wedding industry (Roth, 2013).

### **3. Methodology**

This section elaborates on the objectives of study, research design, data collection procedures and study population. It also discusses the analytical framework of the study.

#### **3.1 Objectives of the study**

1. To understand the factors that influence vendor success and decision-making in the Indian wedding industry.
2. To examine the challenges faced by vendors in navigating economic, operational, and market conditions.

#### **3.2 Research design**

This research adopts a qualitative design, which helped in capturing the perceptions, experiences, and barriers faced by professionals in the wedding industry while adopting sustainable materials. A semi-structured interview approach was utilized to ensure structure and flexibility. It allowed participants to express their personal perspectives freely while maintaining consistency across responses at the same time. Semi-structured interviews are specifically suitable for this research, as they allow us to obtain detailed, experience-based insights that may be overlooked by quantitative studies.

### **3.3 Study population**

The target group included vendors such as wedding planners, caterers, venue planners, and designers. These professionals were selected because they are directly involved in service selection, project management, and sustainability-related decision-making. Each of these participants has had a minimum of 5-6 years of experience in the event sector, which ensures informed and practical perspectives.

### **3.4 Sampling Method**

For this study, purposive sampling was adopted, which would help select individuals who could provide the most relevant insights into sustainable wedding practices. The sample size included a total of 7 professionals who were interviewed for this study. This number allowed for a diverse range of viewpoints while keeping the data manageable for detailed qualitative analysis.

### **3.5 Data collection**

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, each lasting between 10 and 15 minutes. The interviews were conducted either in person or online depending on participant availability throughout the months of July-October 2025. All of the participants were informed of the research purpose. The interview questions covered topics such as evolving trends in event choices, adoption and performance of such sustainable materials, client demand and awareness amongst consumers, economic and regulatory influences, barriers to wider adoption, and how to overcome these factors which demotivate consumers from adopting sustainable construction materials; exploring individual opinions on the role of government support, consumer attitude, and potential changes required to encourage usage of sustainable practices in construction.

### **3.6 Analytical Framework**

The data has been analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring ideas and relationships amongst responses. First it began with reading and familiarizing ourselves with all interview transcripts and generating initial codes based on related patterns in responses. Secondly, the codes were grouped into broader themes. It was followed with reviewing and refining themes for clarity and consistency. The themes were then interpreted and analyzed in relation to the research objectives and compared with insights from the literature review.

### **3.7 Ethical considerations**

Ethical guidelines were followed throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to the interview. Participation was voluntary, and individuals were free to withdraw at any point. The collected data was stored securely and used strictly for academic purposes.

## **4. Results and Findings**

The thematic analysis of interviews with the wedding industry professionals revealed five themes that together explain how growth and survival is navigated in this highly trust based, culturally immersed and rapidly professionalizing market. This section elaborates on the themes that explain long term industry dynamics within the Rajasthan wedding ecosystem.

#### 4.1 Experience, Reputation, and Trust-Based Market Dynamics

Across all interviews, it became clear that experience and reputation are key factors of success in this industry. Vendors consistently highlighted that clients favor well-known names due to the high risk and the one-time nature of weddings. A respondent with 25 years of experience noted that clients often look for vendors with established credibility, pointing out that there are *"fewer venues, and people want to hire experienced individuals because they have a brand and reputation in the market."* Similarly, another respondent supported this notion, stating that *"reputation is the biggest barrier"* for newcomers since weddings demand a high degree of trust and reliability. A decorator explained that newcomers encounter difficulties because *"established decorators already have strong vendor relationships and preferred venue partnerships."* Reputation is regarded as a critical factor. Overall, the interviews suggest that reputation acts as both a competitive edge for established vendors and a hindrance for new workers in the wedding market. It works as an informal entry barrier within the wedding industry. Vendors with established credibility enjoy higher bargaining power while new entrants face significant barriers in building trust despite innovation or skills.

#### 4.2 Economic Uncertainty and Adaptive Vendor Strategies

Considering the current economic situation where there is high inflation and increasing expenses, all participants indicated that spending on weddings has stayed robust and it continues to increase exponentially in many cases. The interviews expressed the common perception that although *"economic conditions are worsening,"* people are still willing and able to spend more as incomes are also rising, thus incentivizing people to enjoy more leisure activities and showcase their grand lifestyle. This suggests that weddings remain relatively income-elastic, with families prioritizing celebration led spending despite rising economic pressures. At the same time, other respondents acknowledged that inflation has significantly impacted on the cost structures. One of the planners mentioned that inflation impacts *"decor, travel, and venue costs,"* necessitating tighter pricing strategies and the renegotiation of vendor contracts. Similarly, another interview showed that during periods of economic slowdowns, clients often tend to reduce expenditures such as limiting large floral installations and instead opt for minimal decor to control expenses. Overall, wedding related spending behavior seems resilient, the findings indicate that vendors are required to adjust their pricing models and service offerings to sustain themselves in the market and earn profits in the long run.

#### 4.3 Skill Intensity, Emotional Labor, and Professional Endurance

Insights from each interview depict the importance of entrepreneurial and professional skills which extends beyond technical execution in order to stay competitive in this industry. Participants highlighted the need for core work ethics such as *"communication, discipline, and patience"* for managing clients and ensuring smooth event execution. These foundational traits were complemented by specialized skills, like attention to detail, crisis management, and communication, showcasing the multidimensional nature of wedding related work which includes need for both interpersonal and operational abilities. Moreover, a creative and managerial perspective was also highlighted in the interviews. A decorator emphasized the importance of creativity and strong leadership, particularly when realizing a couple's vision within financial constraints. This reinforces the need for a combination of creative problem-solving skills and team management along with decision making under pressure for success. The interviews also mentioned the physical demands of the industry, with one of the respondents stating that *"you have to be physically fit."* This highlights the demanding working conditions linked with long hours, tight schedules and high emotional stakes. Overall, the findings shed light on the balance that wedding professionals must have between technical skills, emotional intelligence, and physical stamina. Collectively, these factors and features reveal that the wedding industry requires a diverse skill set, including communication,

innovation, and creation. Professional endurance turns out to be a critical component for long term success in the wedding industry.

#### 4.4 Sustainability as a Negotiated and Uneven Practice

Sustainability emerged as a recurring theme across all interviews, although respondents noted that these options remain limited and not very profound in the market. Interviews stated that “*there are not many sustainable services provided,*” yet people are actively trying to indulge into eco-friendly practices and sustainable materials in their weddings. One of the respondents suggested that there should be more workshops to inspire and motivate both vendors and consumers, suggesting a need for education and awareness along with nudges to encourage wider adoption. One of the respondents quoted “*Sustainable alternatives such as recycled decor items and digital invitations can be used!*” The planner noted that these options are especially appealing to younger, environmentally conscious clients, though some families still prefer traditional materials. Further, similar ideas list sustainable decor materials like “*fabric drapes, LED lighting, artificial botanical elements, and reusable stage structures.*” However, the respondent also pointed out that some families hesitate, associating grandeur with “*real flowers and heavy décor.*” These perspectives indicate that sustainability in wedding industry is not a conventional practice yet but rather a negotiated outcome defined by preferences of clients, cultural expectations and cost considerations. While sustainability is extremely valued, it is transitioning from an emerging trend to a widespread practice. Greater awareness, accessibility, and client education may accelerate this shift and help us to transform our economy into a greener one.

#### 4.5 Technology, Social Media, and Shifting Client–Vendor Dynamics

The interviews revealed increasing significance of technology and social media in shaping wedding planning and how social media platforms serve as functional tools for inspiration and validation. Industrialists perceive that platforms such as Instagram and Pinterest now act as the primary source for clients, without any direct assistance. In one of the interviews, it was stated that “*Clients rarely come in with a blank slate anymore; they arrive with saved posts, reels, and mood boards that already define their expectations,*” illustrating how social media has pre-structured decision-making and planning. Venue managers also stated that aestheticism on digital platforms has also become an integral factor in venue selection. This showcases how technology has shifted the dynamics of this industry, thus enabling consumers to design preferences independently. Another interview remarked that “*technology has reduced miscommunication significantly, as visual references and instant feedback streamline approvals.*” However, interviewees acknowledged that constant exposure to online content surges expectations and heightens the pressure of performance on the vendors. Overall, the interviews suggest that technology and social media function as new-era instruments in wedding planning which enhances accessibility and efficiency, while simultaneously transforming power dynamics and competitive pressures within the wedding industry.

### 5. Discussion

The analysis of the interviews with wedding industry professionals revealed five key themes that together explain the dynamics of the Indian wedding industry. First, experience and reputation were frequently determined as the strongest factors of success, as clients preferred renowned vendors due to the high-risk and one-time nature of weddings. This finding underscores the trust-based structure of the market, where newcomers face significant barriers despite possessing skills or innovative capabilities. Reputation thus functions as an informal governance mechanism, shaping access, credibility, and bargaining power within the industry. Despite economic challenges such as inflation and rising costs, expenditure on weddings is still highly income-elastic, as families tend to prioritize celebrations;

depicting that weddings occupy a distinct consumption category driven by social and cultural imperatives. However, vendors are compelled to adjust to revised pricing strategies, altered contracts, and relatively cheaper decor. These findings highlight the adaptive resilience of the sector, where demand remains robust but operational pressures intensify.

Moreover, the study further emphasizes the need for complex combination of skills. The skills pivotal for success are excellent creativity and business management and strong communication abilities, discipline, patience, and even physical fitness. Given the emotional intensity and logistical complexity of weddings, even minor errors can significantly damage client satisfaction and vendor reputation. This highlights the challenging and complex nature of wedding planning. Sustainability in weddings emerged as an important dimension in the industry. It has become a growing attraction, specifically among younger clients, but adoption continues to remain limited due to barriers to entry and traditional demands for lavish decor. While attraction to eco-friendly materials, digital invitations, and reusable decor is gradually increasing, people still need more awareness and pragmatic workshops for this change to happen. Lastly, the study observed that technology and social media have started to play an important role in wedding planning as clients are aware of the latest trends and designs, which uplifts their expectations, resulting in more extravagant weddings, but interviews also noted that it has caused an extra burden on the vendors as consumer expectations have risen very significantly.

Additionally, the key themes are extremely significant considering the one-time and high stakes nature of weddings. The reputational outcomes are closely tied to the execution of services in this industry. The study conducted states that communication skills and discipline are some of the many important factors that are necessary for people working in this industry, as one mistake may lead to a disaster, resulting in client dissatisfaction and lowering the firm's reputation. More importantly, the vendor preference is continuously professionalizing, yet it is still majorly impacted by social networks and trustworthiness. Vendors claim technological advancement and online wedding planning platforms are gradually reiterating workflows, although full adoption remains inconsistent. Growing consumer expectations are also encouraging vendors to innovate and provide more personalized outcomes. These findings illustrate a sector equalizing tradition and modernity, where economic adaptability, increasing client demands, and sustainability goals are transforming long-term business operations. Collectively, the findings of the study depict an industry which requires balancing tradition and modernity, in which long-term business practices are reshaped with economic adaptability, evolving client demands, and emerging sustainability considerations.

Other studies, such as on customer experience and brand awareness in the wedding industry in Jakarta (Melati et al., 2018), also highlight similar responses to this study. It reflects that brand awareness had a positive impact on customer satisfaction. In this study, a quantitative approach was used, and data was collected from 200 respondents through a structured questionnaire. Similarly, another study (Fadila, 2018) mentions that effective communication is desirable in this industry, and the observations and interviews suggest that client testimonials are used to build reputation and trust.

However, the findings of this study are in contrast with a few studies. A study was conducted on labor migrants (Kakhkharov & Ahunov, 2021), which highlighted that they spent a small percentage of their income on weddings as the economic conditions got worse with time. The study used nationally representative survey data and propensity score matching to evaluate the effect of labor migrants on households' wedding expenditures. Moreover, researchers have also stated that sustainable and eco-friendly materials (Kwon, 2017) in weddings lead to dissatisfaction, and these methods are not very popular among consumers. This study did a consumer survey, which comprised 198 Korean females who gave their reviews on eco-friendly dresses. The research highlights a complex challenge: that awareness of sustainability exists, but practical implementation is limited in nature, suggesting an eventual decline of sustainable practices in weddings.

## Conclusion

The study examined the integral factors that are vital for the growth of the Indian wedding industry by employing a qualitative research design. The study aimed to collect industry professionals' perspectives and comprehend their experiences in order to accumulate the data in the best possible way. It ensured transparent and reliable results based on modern trends that intersect with traditional ideologies within this wedding paradigm. The findings highlight that experience and reputation play a significant role in terms of vendor selection and the success by operating as an informal barrier in high stake, trust driven market. Economic conditions like inflation and rising costs impact vendor strategies majorly while consumption remains largely income elastic as families continue to prioritize celebratory spending. The study further highlights that wedding industry requires an intensive skill set comprising of communication, creativity, leadership, emotional intelligence and physical stamina. Moreover, while sustainability is valued increasingly, adoption remains limited due to cultural expectations and limited market readiness. The transition towards greener practices is gradual and not immediate.

From an economic perspective, the findings showcase how the wedding industry contributes to the economy in terms of employment, the circular flow of income, and the overall economic growth. Despite adverse economic conditions, consumer spending increases exponentially every year, and as the wedding sector is interconnected with various industries, this sustains demand across multiple fields, including decor, logistics, and even digital services. Its resilience amid adverse economic conditions underscores its role as a stabilizing force within the service economy. Additionally, the eventual shift and need to incorporate sustainable methods and practices forecast long-term efficiency and reduced negative externalities. This could support socially and economically desirable sustainable development goals and help to stabilize the economy.

Despite the contributions, this study is also subject to certain limitations. Small sample size and regional focus can reduce the generalizability of findings. Qualitative interviews may also introduce subjectivity. Future research can adopt a mixed-method approach to research consumer-side perspectives and strengthen empirical accuracy. It can also explore how government policies influence the wedding industry. As the Indian wedding industry continues to professionalize and adapt to changing economic, cultural, and technological conditions, this study offers valuable insights for industry.

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