

IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON PREFERENCE FOR BRIDAL WEAR

Suman Pant & Alis

Faculty of Home Science, Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan, India

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ABSTRACT

Costume is one of the most important symbolic components of the wedding. Indian wedding dresses reveal the richness and diversity of Indian tradition and culture. Varying from sarees in Hindu marriages, to salwar suits in Punjabi marriages, to lehenga- choli in Gujarati and Rajasthani marriages, to gharara/sharara in Muslim marriages and to Gowns in Christian Weddings, one can see a variety in the ways in which an Indian bride gets dressed. An attempt was made to find out various factors that have influenced selection of bridal costume. A sample of 450 respondents was selected for survey in Muzaffarnagar and nearby villages. Data was collected Through interview schedule. Significant association between preference for bridal dress and age, locale and education of respondents was found.

KEYWORDS: *Consumer Demographics, Bridal Dress*

INTRODUCTION

Studies have shown that demographics play a key role in consumer behavior because many of the behaviors displayed are directly related to demographic classifications such as age, education, income, and occupation. These demographic variables directly influence consumption patterns and habits because they affect the individual himself/herself, in addition to other attributes.

Bridal wear is a huge retail industry nowadays. Indian retailers and marketers do need to find out as much as they can about their customers in order to identify their needs, how they behave, what influences them to make a decision to buy and what processes they follow when selecting a product/service.

It is a fact that product customization is the need of the hour. To fulfill consumer's need for bridal costume, it is essential to analyze the impact of demographic variables on preference for bridal wear. Data on consumer buying behavior with the indication of demand preference will be useful for garment manufacturers in planning strategies, in making policies for a specific market segment, for designers and boutique owners in designing and construction of bridal wear.

The present paper presents findings related to the impact of selected consumer demographics on a purchase of bridal wear.

METHODOLOGY

As the present study is descriptive in nature, a field survey was considered most appropriate for collecting data to find out changing trends in bridal costume.

The present study was conducted in Muzaffarnagar and three nearby villages. These places were selected due to the ease of accessibility to the researcher.

All the married females comprised a population of the study. As it is impossible to study each individual, the sample was selected. Non-probability sampling technique was used. Attempt was made to get as much spread as possible in the age, caste & communities, income, education level. Total 450 respondents were selected for the purpose of survey-200 respondents from a rural area and 250 respondents from the urban area.

Interview method was used for data collection. A specially designed brief structured interview schedule was prepared for the collection of data. Close-ended and open-ended questions were formed. Data was personally collected by the investigator through interview schedule. Observation method was also used to find out the change in bridal costumes.

Data were classified and tabulated. For clarity and better understanding, descriptive statistics like frequency and percentage were applied. Chi-square was applied to know the association between selected variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

To find out changing trend in a bridal dress, first, an attempt was made to know the traditional bridal dress of respondents. Then bridal dress worn by the respondents in their wedding was determined. The result is presented below-

Age

Influence of age on changing trend of bridal wear has been presented below

Table 1: Opinion of Respondents of Different Age Groups about Traditional Bridal Dress

Age Group (Years)	Sari	Lehanga	Salwar Suit	Sharara	Any Other
18-29(n=75)	20(26.66%)	20 (26.66%)	10 (13.33%)	25 (33.33%)	-
29-40(n=150)	50 (33.33%)	15 (10%)	35 (23.33%)	50 (33.33%)	-
40-60 (n=175)	60 (34.28%)	30 (17.74%)	15 (8.57%)	70 (40%)	-
Above 60(n=50)	20 (40%)	10 (20%)	15 (30%)	5 (10%)	-

Table 1 shows the views of respondents of different age groups about their traditional bridal dress i.e. what is their traditional bridal dress. 33.33% respondents in the 18-29 yrs age group said that sharara is their traditional bridal dress. On the other hand, 26.66% respondents said that sari is their traditional bridal dress while a similar percentage mentioned lehanga. Salwar suit is the traditional bridal dress of only 13.33 % respondents.

According to 33.33% respondents in 29-40 years age group, sari, and sharara is their traditional bridal dress followed by salwar suit which is the traditional dress of 23.33% respondents. Lehanga is the traditional bridal dress of 10% respondents.

Sharara is a traditional bridal dress of 40 % respondents in 40-60 years age group followed by sari (34.28%). Lehanga is the traditional bridal dress of some respondents whereas salwar suit is of very few respondents in this age group.

Sari is the traditional bridal dress of the highest percentage of (40 %) respondents of above 60 years age. Salwar suit is of 30% respondents. Lehanga and sharara respectively are next in order as the traditional bridal dress.

Overall it can be said that among different bridal wears, sari is main traditional bridal dress of above 60 year age group and sharara of 40-60 year age group. Salwar suit is of above 60 year age group; lehenga is main traditional bridal dress of 18-29 year age group,

Table 2: Bridal Dress Worn By Respondents of Different Age Groups

Age Group (Years)	Sari	Lehenga	Salwar Suit	Sharara	Any Other
18-29 (n=75)	-	66 (88%)	-	-	9 (12%)
29-40 (n=150)	39 (26%)	10 (6.66%)	27 (18%)	52 (34.66%)	22 (14.66%)
40-60 (n=175)	79 (45.44%)	-	30 (17.14%)	66 (37.71%)	-
Above 60 (n=50)	26 (52%)	09 (18%)	05 (10%)	10 (20%)	-

Chi-square - 351.63, df 12, p<0.00

Table 4 delineates bridal dress worn by respondents of different age groups in their wedding. It is clear that majority of the respondents in the age group of 18-29 years wore lehenga in their wedding. None of them wore a sari, salwar suit and sharara. Thus it can be said that the preference for the bridal dress has shifted towards lehenga in this age group. 12% respondents wore a gown which indicates the change in the past trend for bridal wear.

It was found that sharara was a main bridal dress of 29-40 years age group (34.66%). Less number of respondents of this age group wore sari, lehenga and salwar suit. The gown was worn by 14.66% respondents. This a change in preference for the bridal dress is also seen in this group.

Sari was the main bridal dress of a maximum number of respondents in 40-60 years age group. This is followed by sharara. None of them wore lehenga although it was the traditional bridal dress of 17.74% respondents. Use of salwar suit as a bridal dress is also higher in this group.

Majority of respondents of above 60 years age group wore a sari in their wedding. Few respondents wore sharara, lehenga and salwar suit.

Overall it can be concluded that sari was worn by most of the respondents of above 40 years age in their wedding. The number of respondents preferring Lehenga increased, mainly by respondents of 18-29 years while that of salwar suit decreased which was worn by some respondents of 29-40 and 40-60 year age groups. Sharara was preferred as the bridal dress by respondents of 29-60 years.

Caste and Community

People of various castes and communities live in India. There is variation in their costumes. What is their traditional bridal wear was first determined and then bridal dress worn by them was ascertained. Result is given below-

Table 3: Traditional Bridal Dress of Respondents of Different Castes & Communities

Caste & Community	Sari	Lehenga	Salwar Suit	Sharara	Any Other
Hindu	-	-	-	-	-
Brahmin (n=25)	25 (100%)	-	-	-	-
Bania (n=25)	25 (100%)	-	-	-	-
Rajput (n=25)	25 (100%)	-	-	-	-
Jat (n=75)	-	75 (100%)	-	-	-
Other (n=25)	25 (100%)	-	-	-	-
Muslim (n=150)	-	-	-	150 (100%)	-
Sikh (n=75)	-	-	75 (100%)	-	-
Christian (n=50)	50 (100%)	-	-	-	-

Table 3 indicates the opinion of respondents of different caste and communities about their traditional bridal dress. According to a majority of Hindus, their traditional bridal dress is a sari, the only exception being Jat community whose traditional bridal dress is lehenga. Muslim respondents opined that their traditional bridal dress is sharara. Sikhs' bridal dress is salwar suit and Christians' bridal dress is sari.

Table 4: Bridal Dress Worn By Respondents of Different Castes & Communities

Caste & Community	Sari	Lehenga	Salwar Suit	Sharara	Any Other
Hindu	-	-	-	-	-
Brahmin (n=25)	15(60%)	10(40%)	-	-	-
Bania (n=25)	16(64%)	09(36%)	-	-	-
Rajput (n=25)	16(64%)	09(36%)	-	-	-
Jat (n=75)	57(76%)	18(24%)	-	-	-
Other (n=25)	21(84%)	04(16%)	-	-	-
Muslim (n=150)	-	22(14.66%)	-	128(85.33%)	-
Sikh (n=75)	-	13(17.33%)	62(82.66%)	-	-
Christian(n=50)	19(38%)	-	-	-	31(62%)

Table 4 shows a bridal dress worn by respondents of different castes and communities in their wedding. Change in a trend of bridal dress is observed clearly. Among Hindu community, about 36 % to 40% Brahmin, Bania, and Rajput respondents wore lehenga in their marriage through their traditional bridal dress is sari. On the other hand, 76% Jat wore sari though lehenga is their traditional bridal dress. Although Muslims' traditional bridal dress is sharara and that of Sikhs is salwar suit, 14.66% Muslims and 17.33% Sikhs preferred lehenga in their marriage. Findings reveal that 62% of Christians wore gown although their bridal dress is sari. Thus respondents of all the communities exhibited the change in bridal dress.

Locale

Locale whether rural or urban, also affects costumes of people. Effect of locale on the bridal dress was determined which has been presented below-

Table 5: Opinion of Respondents of Different Locale about Their Traditional Bridal Dress

Locale	Sari	Lehenga	Salwar Suit	Sharara	Any other
Rural (n=200)	50 (25%)	50 (25%)	25 (12.5%)	75 (37.5%)	-
Urban (n=250)	100 (40%)	25 (10%)	50 (20%)	75 (30%)	-

The opinion of respondents belonging to different locale regarding the traditional bridal dress is presented in Table 5. Data reveals that sharara is a traditional bridal dress according to 37.5% rural respondents which are highest in a rural area. Sari and lehenga are the traditional bridal dress of 25% rural respondents followed by salwar suit (12.5%). According to 40% urban female, their traditional bridal dress is sari while 30% urban female said that it is sharara. Salwar suit is the traditional bridal dress of 20% and lehenga of 10% female respondents only.

Table 6: Bridal Dress Worn By Respondents of Different Locale

Locale	Sari	Lehenga	Salwar Suit	Sharara	Any Other
Rural (n=200)	52 (26%)	45 (22.5%)	12 (6%)	91(45%)	-
Urban (N=250)	92 (36.8%)	40 (16%)	50 (20%)	37 (14.8%)	31(12.4%)

Chi-square - 83.49, df - 4, p< 0.0

Bridal dress worn by respondents of different locale is shown in Table 6. Influence of locale on changing trend for a bridal dress is also found. Increase in a number of rural respondents is observed who wore sharara in their wedding. Marginal increase in preference for sari as the wedding dress is also seen. On the contrary, a slight decrease in preference for lehenga and fifty percent decrease in preference for salwar suit by rural respondents are found.

So far as urban respondents are concerned, a decrease in the percentage of respondents for preference for sari as a bridal dress is found whereas the increase in preference for lehenga is observed. Similarly, the significant decrease in the percentage of an urban female for sharara as a bridal dress is seen. It is to be noted that the gown was only worn by urban females in their wedding. These are the major changes in bridal dress locale wise.

Since $p < 0.0$, a null hypothesis is rejected and it is inferred that there is the significant association between preference for bridal dress and locale of the respondents.

Socio-Economic Status

Table 7: Opinion of Respondents of Different Socio-Economic Status about Traditional Bridal Dress

Socio-Economic Status	Sari	Lehenga	Salwar Suit	Sharara	Any other
High (n=120)	40 (33.33%)	10 (8.33%)	20 (16.66%)	50 (41.66%)	-
Upper Middle (n=200)	50 (25%)	55(27.5%)	45 (22.5%)	50 (25%)	-
Lower Middle (n=130)	60 (46.15%)	10 (7.69%)	10 (7.69%)	50 (38.46%)	

Table 8: Bridal Dress Worn By Respondents of Different Socio-Economic Status

Socio-Economic Status	Sari	Lehenga	Salwar suit	Sharara	Any other
High (n=120)	31(25.88%)	25(20.83%)	21 (17.5%)	35(29.16%)	08 (6.66%)
Upper Middle (n=200)	67 (33.5%)	29(14.5%)	24 (12%)	68 (34%)	12(6%)
Lower Middle (n=130)	46 (35.38%)	31(23.84%)	17 (13.07%)	25 (19.23%)	11(8.46%)

Chi square-14.49, df - 8, $p < 0.06$

Impact of socio-economic status on the bridal dress can be accessed from the data given in Tables 7 and 8. Although 33.33% respondents of high socio-economic status said that their bridal dress is sari (Table 9) but only 25.88% wore a sari in their wedding (Table 10). Thus preference for sari by high status group respondents decreased. On the other hand, the preference for lehenga increased. Preference for salwar suit increased but very slightly while preference for sharara decreased considerably among high-income group females.

In upper middle socio-economic group, reverse trend is observed. Preference of respondents of upper middle group for sari as bridal dress increased but preference for lehenga and salwar suit decreased. Higher percentage of females belonging to upper middle group wore sharara in their wedding though comparatively lower percentage of them had opined that their traditional bridal dress is sharara.

Respondents of lower middle socio-economic group showed trend similar to high income group. Higher percentage of them wore lehenga and salwar suit though sari and sharara were their main traditional bridal dresses. It is found that preference for lehenga, salwar suit and gown increased in this income group. In each group, few respondents also wore gown in their wedding.

As p is more than 0.05, significant association between socio-economic status of respondents and preference for bridal dress is not found.

Education

Table 9: Opinion of Respondents of Different Education Level about Traditional Bridal Dress

Education	Sari	Lehenga	Salwar Suit	Sharara	Any other
Senior Secondary & below (n=200)	45 (22.5%)	45 (22.5%)	35 (17.5%)	75 (37.5%)	-
Undergraduate (n=150)	65 (43.33%)	20 (13.33%)	20 (13.33%)	45 (30%)	-
Postgraduate & above (n=100)	40 (40%)	10 (10%)	20 (20%)	30 (30%)	-

Table 9 shows views of respondents of different education level about the traditional bridal dress. Sharara is the main traditional bridal dress followed by sari, lehenga and salwar suit respectively for respondents with senior secondary and below education. Sari is a main traditional bridal dress of undergraduates and postgraduate respondents, followed by sharara. In comparison, salwar suit and lehenga are the traditional bridal dress of fewer respondents.

Table 10: Bridal Dress Worn By Respondents of Different Education Level

Education	Sari	Lehenga	Salwar suit	Sharara	Any other
Senior Secondary & below (n=200)	73 (36.5%)	31 (15.50%)	24 (12%)	72 (36%)	-
Undergraduate (n=150)	42 (28%)	29 (19.33%)	20 (13.33%)	42 (28%)	17 (11.33%)
Postgraduate & above (n=100)	29 (29%)	25 (25%)	18 (18%)	14 (14%)	14 (14%)

Chi-square - 44.06, df - 8, $p < 0.00$

It is clear from the Table 10 that as the education level of female respondents increased, preference for sari decreased while preference for lehenga increased. Preference for salwar suit and sharara also decreased with increase in education level. More number of undergraduate and postgraduate respondents preferred gown in their wedding. Value of $p < 0.00$ indicates that the preference for a bridal dress is dependent on education level.

CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that consumer demographics affect the selection of bridal wear. Sari was the most popular outfit for wedding for a older respondents. However, lehenga is the wedding ensemble for the younger generation. Noticeable decrease in the use of sharara as wedding dress was found. Gown was not the traditional bridal dress of the respondents of the study but brides have started wearing it in their wedding. Thus the change in preference for a bridal dress is seen.

Respondents of all the communities exhibited a change in bridal dress. Few Muslims and Sikhs preferred lehenga in their marriage. Most of the Christians who live in the city preferred gown for the wedding. Hindu respondents also showed a changing trend in the wedding dress.

Influence of locale on changing trend for a bridal dress was also found. Significant decrease in the number of rural respondents for salwar suit and urban respondents for sharara was found.

An significant association between income and preference for a bridal dress is not found while the significant association between education and the bridal dress was found. As the education level of female respondents increased, preference for a sari, salwar suit and sharara decreased while preference for lehenga increased.

It is important for designers of bridal wear and manufacturers that before developing new styles, it is essential to take into account consumer demographics of a particular market segment. As the younger generation is fashion conscious, they need innovative designs.

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