

Beyond Rituals: Negotiations of Identity Through Attire in An Intercultural Wedding

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Abstract

In India, marriages are traditionally seen as an alliance between families, the modeling units of society. This study explores the impact of intercultural weddings on the idea of identity negotiation and performance. Taking the authors' weddings as critical case studies, an autoethnographic exploration of the role of attire in communicating multiple dimensions of identity is conducted. The lived experiences of negotiating societal and intercultural norms as holders of female bodies are thickly described, as Clifford Geertz suggests, to analyse how the brides feel burdened and liberated during various phases, occupying different spaces, throughout the pre-wedding and wedding procedures, particularly through their attire. Negotiations to challenge the established *padhathi* (customs) in order to resist patriarchal expectations are recognized. Failures of such resistance reveal the dimensions of oppression as well as suppression of self-expression. Liminal spaces of liberation were also revealed where agency was afforded by the brides. Collaborative multiple method autoethnography as a method helped the authors navigate these lived experiences through multiple dimensions by allowing for a multimethod approach for analysis which blended performance theory, material culture, and visual studies.

Keywords: Attire, Autoethnography, Intercultural Wedding, Identity, Societal Norms