

TRANSITION OF SRI LANKAN WEDDINGS: MODERNIZATION OF SRI LANKAN WEDDINGS AS A MARKET EVENT IN LINE WITH THE FALLACIOUS OF POSTMODERNISM

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The postmodern movement has had a significant impact on cultural practices and traditions around the world, including Sri Lankan weddings. Postmodernism emphasizes the importance of plurality, hybridity, imitation, achieving utopia, subjectivity, and self-reflexivity and challenges traditional notions of identity, power, and representation. Even though there were no big wedding ceremonies in the ancient period, the Sri Lankan wedding industry currently consists of bridal designers, beauticians, jewellery designers, photographers, cake designers, catering services and flower decorations. Moreover, there are unpopular organizational actors such as travel agents, luxury hotels, dancing choreographers, banks and money providers as well as wedding planners. Such a wide market concerning weddings appeared in the Sri Lankan context until the 19th century. In Sri Lanka, this has led to a complex and often contradictory transition of wedding customs and practices as individuals and communities negotiate the tension between preserving cultural heritage and embracing new and diverse influences. Thus, this study attempts to examine how wedding ceremonies have evolved as a market event aligned with the fallacies of postmodernism in contemporary Sri Lankan society. To explore the aforementioned purpose, the data were collected through semi-structured interviews and photo-elicitation techniques under the anti-positivistic research paradigm. Under the purposive sampling, two sets of samples were used. Namely, Sinhala Buddhist married couples who belong to three historical periods namely, early modernity, late modernity and postmodernity are used as the data sources for data generation. Further, data were generated from organizational actors who perform in the wedding industry. By adopting a postmodernism theory, this study fills the gap in the existing knowledge. The findings indicated that the socio-cultural event—wedding—has entered to a wider market today, especially with the influence of postmodern conditions. Customary practices associated with weddings have been intermingled with other cultures, and plurality and contextually are acknowledged. This evolution of the Sri Lankan wedding trend toward consumerism and individualism undermines the communal and social aspects of the wedding ceremony, which have traditionally been central to Sri Lankan weddings. In conclusion, the evolution of Sri Lankan weddings in the

context of postmodernism reflects a complex and often contradictory negotiation between tradition and innovation, identity and plurality, and globalization and cultural heritage. As such, it remains a site of ongoing debate and contestation within Sri Lankan society. This study paves the way for people to see how such a social event has become a market event and a lucrative platform to earn profit with the social transition.

Keywords: Modernism, Postmodernism, Postmodern Sri Lankan wedding, Postmodern wedding, Social transition, Wedding