

If it's not on Facebook, it never happened

So you planned the perfect wedding, the perfect dress, the absolute best venue, and guess what, you did not go over your budget on anything. Then, your trendy wedding planner or Gen Z cousin (a barely eighteen minnow if you will) pops the prospect of a wedding hashtag. And there you go pouring over the right hashtag of #XwedsY or #TheNewMrsB2018! You did not even spend this much time colour co-ordinating gaye holud costumes and dance routines, and all this for a digital imprint, that may or may not get lost in the infinite cyber sphere, along with all the others from this season.

The 'art' (and in cases madness) that is digital photography in a wedding is not complete until it gets an Album on Facebook, or Instagram. It is a strange phenomenon, where your sixty-year-old uncle, who couldn't rotate a pdf, even if his life depended on it, is snapping away with his fruit/cosmic branded smartphone with filters. Can't blame him though, he's probably making up for all the photos he missed of his own wedding!

Yet, this is the reality; if your wedding photos and videos are not on the social networks, it kind of never happened. And what's more, this 'odd' trend is not budging one bit, but snowballing into something of a nuisance.

On one hand, you have guests taking and posting photos left, right and centre, and on the other hand, you have wedding planners and other family members forcibly 'requesting' to use the right hashtag before posting anything.

Odds are you may even have seen invitation cards specifically mentioning to not share or post anything until a specific date. The worst part of it is if you have not been photographed in the group photos at least seven to eight times, you were not even there!

Your thoughtful gift, the great menu that you can recall months later, even the time you spent selecting an outfit in the 'requested colour' are irrelevant, only because you chose to stay a bit away from the flashlights.

Time and again, you have to wonder, was there a meeting, an announcement or an e-mail lost in your spam



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And who draws the line for what is rude and what is proper? There may be events where you can wave your ten-foot selfie stick and get applauded for it. And there will be weddings when just even peeking at your phone will be frowned upon.

As for the soon-to-be Mr and Mrs, what's one more stress, right? Why not go all out and compete with your friend who got married last month for the number of 'shares' and 'likes' you get — finally, you have numbers to speak for all your efforts! Maybe this is what Lorde foresaw when she sang 'Everyone's competing for a love they won't receive.'

Everything that continues for an overwhelming amount of time, in the end, either gets buried as a never to be resurrected style, or an immortal statement. Chances are this is the proverbial crux where everyone is trying to discover what to do with the unlimited possibilities that the digital sphere uncovers every alternate hour. Till we can pass this crux, brace yourself once more for waves upon waves of photos and check-ins for the next few months!

But remember, don't cheapen your memories doing what EVERYONE is doing.

By Iris Farina

Photo: Prito Reza, Wedding Diary Bangladesh



Bengalis and their obsession with marriage

The degree of obsession we Bengali folks have with the aspect of marriage, especially involving those of women in our society, is maddening, disturbing and excruciating, especially from the point of view of a 20-something "eligible" bachelorette.

I'm tired of hearing people (read relatives) badger me to get married right after finishing my undergraduate studies.

I'm tired of explaining to people that I would like to prioritise my career before I get married.

I'm tired of reasoning with people that I plan to see myself as a master's degree holder from some reputed foreign university before I step into a wedding ensemble.

However, the tendency to make a fuss over matrimony is not only confined to the spheres of the older generation. Most of us have been guilty of attempting to persuade our amigos in relationships to tie the knot or constantly asking them when they intend to, even at the expense of getting on their nerves in the process.

This sort of obsession prevails largely because our society views marriage as a solution to whatever dilemma a female could possibly face. If a girl's family is trapped in a financial crisis, apparently getting her married works as an 'effective policy tool' to counter such a situation. If a person is struggling with academics, then finding her a husband is supposed to act as a buffer between potential unemployment and means of survival.

The most nonsensical and baseless of all the stereotypes is that of expecting a girl to get married once she reaches her early twenties regardless of whether she is employed, educated, and most importantly, interested! This obsession borders on asking parents for bio data/pictures, 'volunteering' to hunt down a groom every time you encounter these overenthusiastic so-called matchmakers, and so on and so forth.

Speaking from personal experience at a lunch gathering at a close relative's place, where, from the time the food was served, till the moment for bidding goodbye, I was hounded by people, constantly pestering me to get married, which cemented my perception that in our society, once you reach a certain age, people fail to acknowledge your significance beyond anything that screams marriage.

As much as I have immense faith in the institution of marriage I strongly believe it should not dominate or overpower a person's existence, but rather, coexist in equal measure with all the various other tenets in life.

Marriage cannot be the be all and end all of a person's existence. Rather, it should be contemplated as a personal choice to be implemented when an individual is willingly prepared to embrace the responsibilities generated by the advent of matrimony. Moreover, I personally feel that at the end of the day, it's the relationship in all its intrinsic forms that really matters. If the foundation of the bond that you share with your significant other is strong, then creating a ruckus out of such matters is pretty much meaningless or redundant. I know quite a few couples whose togetherness spans beyond five years without having entered the marriage bandwagon.

Marriage is supposed to be a perpetual journey dictated by strong compatibility and shared goals and ambitions, linking two individuals in a bond of togetherness. It should have zero correlation with factors such as age and societal norms. Keeping these in mind, I truly hope our society's aunts and grandmothers will finally stop obsessing over the aspect of marriage.

By Mehnaz Tabassum Khaleel