

# **Lifestyle and Cultural Practices of the East Indian Community In Mumbai**

Visual Communication  
Special Project

Submitted in the partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the  
Master of Design degree in  
Visual Communication by  
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## **Approval Sheet**

The Visual Communication  
Special project entitled:

### **Lifestyle and Cultural Practices of the East Indian Community In Mumbai**

by Sherline Michael Pimenta  
is approved in the partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the Master of Design Degree in  
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Guide.....

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Internal examiner.....

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## **Acknowledgements**

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Most of all I would like to thank my parents and brother who have been reassuring, supporting and backing me throughout this project.

At the outset of this report I express my gratitude towards all the people who have helped me complete this project.



## Introduction

Whereever there is a settlement (society) it is bound to be effected by change on the micro or macro level sooner or later. This is caused due to a number of reasons and leaves some impact on that society. I have through this project tried to analyze effect of social change on the East Indian community keeping one aspect as my main issue of study i.e 'wedding ceremonies'

The research method i have used for this study is the ethnographic methodology wherein i went around talking to people and used an open ended questionnaire. Only after fully understanding the practices and observing them have i drawn my inferences in identifying the cause of change.

The East Indian community offers itself as an ideal subject matter for this kind of study as the changes are recent and on going at different levels.

### **The Need**

This kind of a study will help us understand the process of change in a community on the sociocultural level in a better way.

### **The Scope**

Studying one aspect of the society that has undergone change will help identify the reasons of change.

### **The Objective**

1) To try to relate to the process of change and try and identify the various stages.

### **Why marriage ceremonies:**

In order to get a holistic idea of the change in tradition, culture and lifestyle i concluded it is best to study those aspects in relation to a particular issue.

I had the option of studying the way festivals are celebrated, change in occupation, new educational trends etc. but I was looking for such an issue that was familiar enough for my sample group to relate to. After interviewing a couple of people I found they were very much interested in speaking about the wedding ceremonies.

And another reason being I could back up the 'marriage ceremonies issue with a lot of photographs and reconstruct the whole process. This helped me understand the scenario in a better way

## **Data collection**

This being a small and not so well known community and in order to get an idea of what material is available I went through various sources of information.

### **Data collected**

The data collected has been categorized under these main headings.

A) History

B) Origin

C) A little about the community

D) Marriage ceremonies

## Data collection

### Methodology

Besides reading on the subject, data collection also involved talking to people of different age groups and a study where cross checking was done to ensure the data collected was not personalized information but a commonly practiced one.

1. Visit to the Institute of Indian Culture (Andheri) to check on what type of study has been conducted in this area and the kind of information available.

2. Study of books:

Not many books have been published on this topic. So i looked through books that were connected with the East Indian community in one way or the other to get a feel of the community customs.

3. Study of web sites :

There are a few web sites on the topic but it does not give much information, browsing through It only made me aware how less know this community is.

This methodology helped me decide what information I want to give and what points to keep in mind while analyzing.

4. Interviews:

I spoke to elderly people who could provide me with information so i could rebuild the ceremony as it used to take place at one point of time. It was an open ended questionnaire method so i just let them talk and made notes of what could be useful. I also spoke to youngsters and took their view on the topic.

5. Visiting villages:

This gave me an insight as how the change has affected the community in different areas.

## **Brief History of Mumbai**

Believed to be part of Maghadan empire ruled by Emperor Ashoka in around 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.

In 1343 it passed into the hands of the Arab Sultan Of Gujrat, and the main island was called Al Omanis.

1508 Portuguese under Governor-General of India, Francis Almeida, drop anchor at Al Omanis, which they call Bom Bahia - the Good Bay.

1661 Portuguese princess Catherine of Braganza brings Bom Bahia to King Charles II of England as part of her marriage dowry.

1668 English king leases the Bom Bahia archipelago to the English East India Company.

The English corrupt the name to Bombay.

1720-1739 Marathas invade and annex most of the Portuguese enclaves in the Konkan except Goa and environments; by Luso-Maratha Agreements, the Portuguese retain also Damaõ and the territories of Dadra & Nagar-Haveli in the north Konkan. The local Lusitanised Konkani Christians forced to Maharashtrianize; Later become the 'East Indian.'

### **Origin of the East Indian community**

The Portuguese started preaching Christianity in north konkan region and were responsible for the large scale conversions in Vasai. Since the original Catholics of Vasai are all converts from the Samvedhi Brahmins, Somvanshi Shatriya – Panmali, Pathare and some other communities, culturally they share many things between them including their mother tongue.

Between 1570 and 1590 many Brahmin families were also converted. The newly converted community were given new Portuguese surnames. Portuguese words and prayers were adopted along with cultural influence. The Portuguese also helped this new community with farming techniques, boat building and carpentry.

## **Conversion to Christianity and Europeanization:**

It is believed that the Portuguese brought Christianity to the shores of North Konkan. The people living in these areas prior to conversion followed the Hindu faith this can be clearly seen in most traditions that they retained and are similar to the Maharashtrian system.

Apparently the conversion policy of the Portuguese was not merely to convert these people to Christianity but also extend the influence of their conception of civilization what they called 'kultur'.

The Portuguese imposed upon these converts Portuguese patronymics, initiated them into European dress, taught them Portuguese language and weaned them to a mode of living and thinking which conforms to their own customs.

To separate the Indian Christians from their own people as a distinct religious and cultural group, they were designated 'Portuguese Christians'.





### **Historical background of conversion to Christianity:**

The king of Portugal made no distinction between the Church and the State as he wanted to impose religious uniformity upon his Indian subjects, disregarding completely their religious sentiments, language, customs and traditions

Reformation of Indian Church: the primitive Indian Church which was seeped and soaked in Indian love and prejudice, Indian song and architecture, Indian thought and ceremonies was slowly transformed into a western institution.

Thus the converted Christians were given political and economic preference while those who refused to accept the new faith were harassed and suppressed. In course of time the harassment went to such an extent that Hindus were not allowed freedom to worship in public. This led to many Hindus leaving the mainland to take refuge under the Maharajas.

### **Other aspects towards Westernization:**

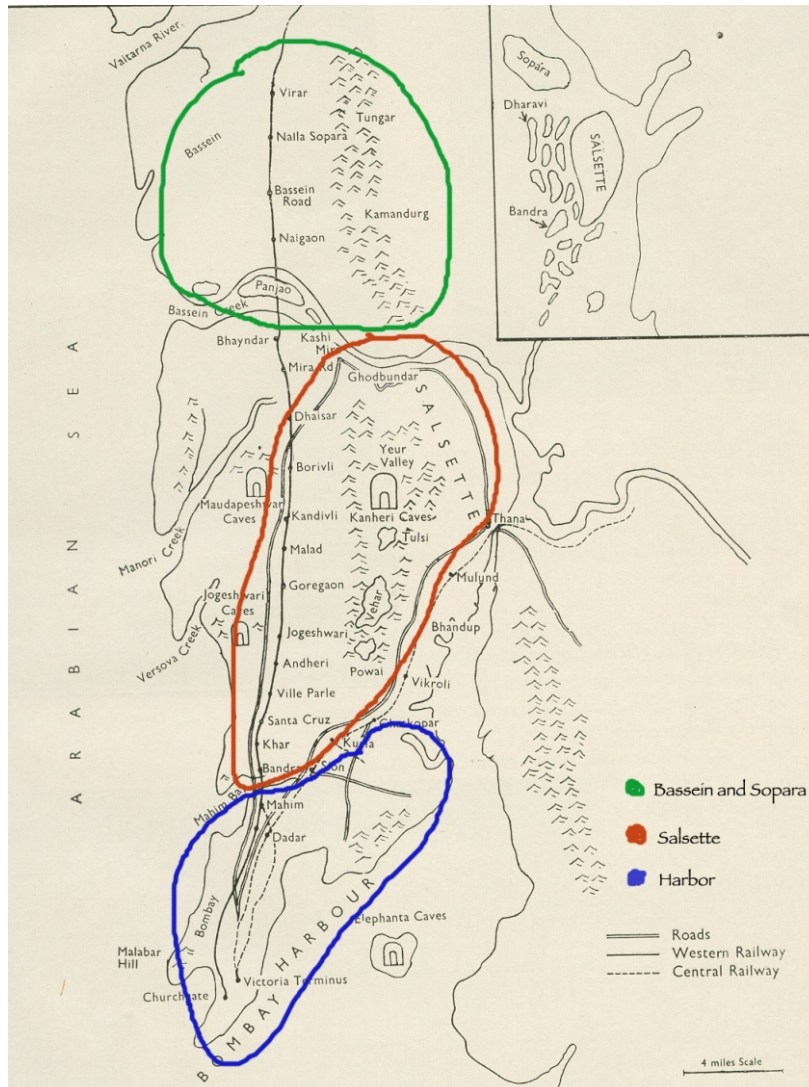
There were inter-marriages between the Portuguese and the Indian Christians. Education was imparted by the missionary priests under the guidance of the Jesuit fathers, thus the higher literary education, the greater was the tendency towards westernization.



### **Designated as 'East-Indians'**

The residents of North Konkan wanted to be a distinguished group, accordingly on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria, the Christians of North Konkan who were then known as 'Portuguese Christians' discarded the name and adopted the designation 'East-Indian'. By the adoption of the name they wanted to impress upon the British Government of Bombay that they were the earliest Roman Catholic subjects of the British Crown in this part of India

Another reason in taking up the title being in order to be distinguished from other Christian groups namely the Goan Christians and Mangalorean Christians who were immigrants in Bombay. Yet another important point in taking up the title was to convey to the East India Company its recognition of the economic benefits it had liberally bestowed upon them.



**Various lifestyles based on geographic Location:**  
**Geographical location:** The homeland of the East Indians is situated in North Konkan, comprising of Bassein, Salsette and Bombay.

The three areas are still separated from one another by creeks but railway bridges and causeways have supplied the necessary link. For sake of study I have divided the 3 areas into  
 City: Harbor area  
 Suburban: Salsette  
 Rural: Bassein, Sopara

This is done taking into consideration the educational, occupational and style of living of the group.





### **Marriage Ceremonies:**

The people of this small community are a fun loving group who are always on a lookout for an opportunity to have a get together and enjoy. Festivals and marriages provide a good reason to celebrate and strengthen family ties. This is also the area most people love talking about, the good old days being another favorite. Thus keeping this in mind I have chosen the 'marriage ceremony' as a the main focus area.

The fundamental doctrines of Catholic marriage i.e. the sacramental character, monogamous nature, indissolubility etc. is strictly observed by the East Indians.

There are certain practices that have to be carried out through the various ceremonies. I have tried and put together the entire traditional way of a marriage ceremony carried out ideally by the people of this community.

Marriage ceremonies are celebrated anytime of the year except 'Lent'. Traditionally the marriage ceremony lasts for four to five days. Marriages are solemnized mostly on Sunday. Mass weddings are common occurrence.

When the boy/girl has come of age the parents start looking for a good match. For this elders of the village are consulted or the godparents take responsibility. Once the match is made a day is set out for the sugar ceremony.

#### 1. Sugar ceremony (**Saakhar**):

The boys parents are approached with a formal proposal from the girls side. Sweets and flowers are presented to the boy's side. Once the boy formally gives his consent, sugar is distributed to everyone present. Sweets are given to be carried back to the girl's home.

A day is fixed when the groom's party is invited to the girls place to fix the engagement.

#### 2. Engagement ceremony (**Sonchine**):

The groom's party takes flowers and sweets to the brides place. His relatives but not his parents accompany the groom. The priest presides over the ceremony. Prayers are said and the rings exchanged. A special prayed 'Te Deum' is recited and the date for the marriage is fixed. Sweets are distributed and a parcel of sweets is sent to the parents of the groom.

#### 3. Reading of 'Bans' (**Chitti vachne**)

Marriages cannot take place without the reading of the 'bans' in the parish churches of the bride and groom on three consecutive Sundays.

An announcement is made in the church stating that: \_\_\_\_\_ bachelor son of MR. \_\_\_\_\_ & Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ residing at \_\_\_\_\_ intends to marry

\_\_\_\_\_ Spinster daughter of Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ and Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ residing at \_\_\_\_\_. If anyone knows of a reason why these two should not be wedded in holy matrimony they must go and speak to the concerned parish priest.

On these Sundays the couples wear new clothes and attend the church services followed by a general celebration at the respective residences.

On the first of these Sundays bride/groom goes to the houses of relatives and seeks their blessings he/she asks pardon for whatever wrong he/she might have done. After the first ban is read in the evening after the festivities are over the to be bride takes off all her jewellery and does not wear any of them until the day before the wedding.

#### 4. Invitations to the wedding: (**vanne**)

Personal invitations are considered a respectable way of inviting people to a marriage.

Each village has a particular day of the week assigned where people from other villages can come and invite. This is done so that it becomes easier for the invitee to find people at home where the invitation can be given. Similarly on the afore said day people in that village expect guests to visit them so they generally keep themselves free.

Extremely close relatives present the invitee with a blouse piece or some other gift when they come to give the invitation.

Generally it is the mother of the bride/groom dressed in traditional way who goes to give the invitations accompanied some relatives.



Relatives come together to help prepare for the wedding.

#### 5. Marriage preparation: (**varadachi tayari**)

Starts a week before the wedding day which is generally on a Sunday.

**Monday:** close relatives begin to arrive at the marriage house. Women begin to make ready the raw materials needed for the large amount of food to be cooked.

Rice is cleaned washed and pounded by the village women.

**Tuesday:** 'Papris' are made. This is basically papad made from the finely pounded rice. These are made and put out in the sun to dry they will be used on the day of the marriage.

**Wednesday:** 'Pola's' are made of pounded rice. Dry fish dishes are made on this day. Carrot, garlic, ginger etc are cut and made ready for making the 'wedding pickle' the next day.



**Relatives come to help prepare for the wedding feast.**

Women cleaning of garlic etc.



**Family members cooking delicious meals.**





Cutting of the pig meat.

**Thursday:** on this day the pandal (mandav) is erected by the village folk. It consists of a bamboo structure decorated with garlands of marigold flowers and mango leaves. Coconut palms are also used. The 'mandav' has 3 doors one in the center that is just at the entrance of the house and two on the opposite sides. These doors have banana trees tied to it and the trunk of the banana tree is cut and laid across the door at the entrance.

'Chunna' ceremony: one adult of the house accompanied by a number of youngsters goes round the village marking the houses with a 'cross' with chunna (lime). It is a sign that that household has been invited to the wedding.

The pickle is mixed and put in large jars that are sealed tightly to be opened on the day of the wedding.

**Friday:** the cutting of the pig is done on this day. A mixture of rice, wheat, dal etc. is ground and soaked overnight so that it is ready to prepare 'varaias' the next day.



Getting ready to go to church

.

### **Saturday:**

This day just before the wedding day is a very important day.

The day starts with the bride/groom going to church in the morning after which he/she will go to the respective godparents house to spend the day accompanied by the best man/ bridesmaid.

At the wedding house food is cooked for the next day.

In the evening the brother of the bride accompanied by few relatives and guests from go to the house of the godparents to get the groom/bride home.

He puts sugar in her mouth presents her with flowers to put in her hair. The bride puts on the jewellery and flowers and is brought back home under a red umbrella (satar) amid lots of rejoicing and dancing.

Putting on the bangles



The bangle ceremony: (**bangrya bharatan**)  
The bangle seller is called light green glass bangles are put on by the bride followed by all the women folk who put on new glass bangles.

Paying respects to the bangle seller.







Betel leaves, rice and coconut kept in a soop.



Green bangles for the bride



**Moya** ceremony: the barber is called. He is made to sit in the pandal. In a container (soopra) a few grains of rice and coconut are kept. The bride/groom is brought and made to sit before him. He proceeds to file her nails in case of groom shaving is done, amidst lots of singing of traditional songs. Her sisters and friends fan her fondly; elder family members take some money, circles it over the brides/grooms head and then deposit it in the soop. This is called the 'vovalni'. The money that is collected is given to the barber and so also the material in the soop.



vovalni







Male relatives get a shave as part of the 'Moya' ceremony.



Going to the well to fetch water.



'**Umbracha pani**' later in the night preparations are made to go and collect water for the bathing ritual on the wedding morn. A mixture of coconut milk and turmeric (sheer) is applied to the bride/groom. Mud pots (kara) and brass vessels are carried on the head to fetch the water from a well. In the pot mango leaves are placed and a coconut on top of it. The bridesmaid and the young girls carry these pots.

At the well the coconut is broken and distributed to all there. Flowers are thrown into the well. A fire is lit and a few 'papries' are roasted in eaten. Then they return to the home singing and dancing all the way. When they return again a little coconut milk and turmeric mixture is applied to the bride/groom.

Breaking of coconuts





Filling the pots with water









Wedding Day: (**varadacha dhees**) On this day the bride/groom wake up early in the morning and are taken in the pandal where the water that was brought the previous night is poured on her/him. Then she/he bathes with that water. Then she/he gets ready to go to church.





The bride puts on a white gown and the groom a suite. Then all present in the house bless the bride/groom.





Family and friends blessing the bride





The groom travels to the bride's parish church where he will wed her. Prayers are said and the party leaves the place. While leaving the house she throws a handful of rice overhead on reaching the door of the pandal and ( this custom is practiced mainly in Vasai) puts a few coin in the brass pot full of water that is held by one of the ladies of the house. The groom leaves for the parish church accompanied by his sister, the best man and a few other relatives. The best man carries a bouquet to be presented to the bride. A band party also accompanies the group to the parish church. The same band party accompanied by one or two people from the groom's side and the brother-in-law of the groom go to the house of the bride to get her to church.



At her place the groom's party is welcomed and the brother-in-law presents the bride with a pair of anklets. Then prayers are said, the bride is accompanied by her brother, bridesmaids and relatives to the church.





A few coins is putting a brass vessel.



The bride is taken to church accompanied by her brother.





At the church she is met by the best man who presents her with a bouquet of flowers. The brother gives away the bride to the groom, they then wait at the main door of the church where the priest comes to welcome them and take them in.







The priest welcomes them into the house of god and celebrates the nuptials.





The service starts the main event during the service is the saying of vows and exchange of rings, this is done in the presence of witnesses from either side.





After the ceremonies are over the position of the small spray of flowers that the groom wears is changed from the left side of the coat to the right side. The veil is lifted from the face of the bride by the bridesmaid.







After the marriage ceremony is over it is registered and signed by the couple and two witnesses from both side. The couple is now wed and congratulations are said. The couple now moves outside where family members extend their wishes and bless the newly wed couple.





The party then proceeds in a procession led by the band, through the village to the brides place. The grooms side people go back to the grooms home. Only the best man and one or two other persons from the groom's side go to the brides place.







The route taken is a long one that goes round the village. As the wedding party passes the relatives houses, they have to stop there. Chairs are put out for the couple to rest and the family congratulates the couple, they are offered snacks. Once this is done the procession continues, stopping wherever they have to till they reach the home of the bride.





On reaching the bride's home the couple have to wait at the entrance, they are greeted by women singing songs. Then the parents of the bride will come to the newlyweds by showering flower petals on them.



All family members greet the couple in this manner. After this is done the couple is allowed to enter and made to sit on special seats. They are then offered sugar and sweets. The groom's party is offered snacks and soft drinks, after which they return to the grooms place.







The bride and groom now cut the wedding cake together. A toast is raised to the health of the newly married couple and liquor and wine is drunk in small glasses called 'chownis'





The presentation ceremony now begins the guest's come forward and greet the couple, they congratulate them and present them with gifts. A through record is maintained of the gifts that have been given. All the while dancing and merrymaking continues. The bride and groom are encouraged to dance.



**“vermai’** ceremony: the mother of the bride is invited to her brothers house accompanied by a band. Here she is presented with a saree (pan) and flowers, which she puts on. Then a sweet is distributed 'patli halwa'. She is then brought to her home accompanied under a red umbrella by relatives and her brother. (This is held only in case of the 1<sup>st</sup> marriage in the family)

While the presentation ceremony is on (if it is the 1<sup>st</sup> wedding in the family) gifts are given in the form of sarees , blouse pieces and dress material to close relatives.







Lunch is served at about 1 o'clock. Either a long table is put up where about 20 people sit down to eat together or a buffet is laid out. Prayers are offered for the well being of the couple and the lunch session begins. After lunch the presentation and dancing continues.



In the evening people from the grooms side arrive with the Sara. The 'Sara' is a suitcase containing gifts for the bride, which is sent by the groom's family. It is carried by the groom's sister.





On the arrival of the 'Sara' four people (two from brides side and two from girls side) sit together to open and view the Sara suitcase.

The suitcase contains the following items.

A gold necklace with black beads tied to the locket or pendant (poth)

Padar

Bangles gold and light green glass bangles

2 sarees red and green

an umbrella

dry fruits

a handbag

chinella (pair of sandals)

pieces of sugarcane

bunch of bananas

pan and supari (betel leaves and betel nut)

gajra (flowers)



Each item from the suitcase is opened and show to everyone around.

Then the groom puts the 'poth' onto the bride's neck. Snacks and refreshments are offered to the groom's party. After saying goodbye to the family the bride tearfully leaves the house with the groom accompanied with the band.



Opening 'sara'





At the grooms house the couple is again made to wait at the entrance. The parents of the groom welcome the couple by singing songs and showering them with flowers followed by close relatives doing the same. Then the cake is cut and a toast is raised to the health of the young couple 'sukala'. Wine and liquor is drunk, snacks are served. The presentation ceremony starts. The groom's mother presents the new bride gifts called 'vovmook'. The bride's family gifts the bride a cupboard that is taken to the groom's home. Again there is a lot of merrymaking, dancing, singing etc.





Monday: the day after the marriage the couple wakes up early and goes to church. The bride wears the red saree (Sara saree), gold ornaments, flowers in her hair.

After the service the couple go to the house of the best man for lunch.

In the evening they return to the grooms home.

Or the couple is generally taken to some relative's place this is referred to as '**variyaavo**'

A party from the bride's house comes with the bride's brother to take the couple back to the bride's home. This party is called the '**passpatni**'. The women folk carry a 'vanti' this can consist of a cake, or dry fruits, or sweets to present at the groom's house. The bride is dressed in the red Sara saree and the couple is taken to the house of the bride under the red umbrella dancing to the accompaniment of a band.

On Tuesday

A grand feast is prepared by money subscribed by family and friends it is called 'ainch'. The bride wears the green saree and the couple returns by themselves to the groom's house. A sweet called 'gawla' 'atola' or 'letri' made of wheat is prepared. This marks the end of the wedding festivities.



Carrying 'vanti'

Monday: the day after the marriage the couple wakes up early and goes to church. The bride wears the red saree (Sara saree), gold ornaments, flowers in her hair. After the service the couple go to the house of the best man for lunch. In the evening they return to the grooms home. Or the couple is generally taken to some relative's place this is referred to as '**variyaavo**'

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Being welcomed at the brides home.

Greeting guests





Bride in traditional 9 yard saree



Bride in the 'sara saree'



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### Jewellery

The ornaments worn by the East Indian women are gifts received by them at the time of marriage. Although the way of draping the saree varies from place to place the jewellery more or less is very much similar.

Necklaces:

Fugdor: a choker type of necklace.

Poth: a slightly long necklace with a pendant and a few black beads attached to the pendant.

Surre / gop: a long gold chain.

Padar: chain made of long beads

fugdor





kapoti

Earrings: they have 3 pairs of earrings  
 Kapoti: it is cockle shaped and has a small gold chain that is fixed in the hair.  
 Karab: a floral shaped ring (no longer in use)  
 Mugri: these are worn at the top of the ears.  
 (No longer in use)



Mhoti bangree (big bangle)



#### Bangles:

Mothi bangri: a big gold bangle

Sutya bangrya: thin gold bangles in groups of 4 or 6.

Pathli bangrya: flat bangles.

Varadachya bangrya: light green glass bangles.

#### Rings:

Wedding ring: a gold round ring

Floral ring: a ring that matches the fugdor .







Anklets:  
Valai: a set of silver anklets.







Dress:

Women:

The women drape a nine yard saree. It has cheques or parallel horizontal lines. The padar is taken in a typical cross fashion. There are various types of draping style and also various types of sarees.

Types of sarees:

Sonkari,

Zareechi saree,

Korfua / kolfadar:

Kombrichye payn:

Kali lugri: actually dark blue in colour worn by widows.

Draping styles:

Ubhi lugrri

Arvi lugri

Footwear:

Chinelle: very similar to the 'rajasthani moji'

Men:

The mean used to wear a dhoti kind of cloth piece called 'surka' or 'langoti'

Kazak: is the black coat.

Kalsao: a full pant

Tipri kalsao: is another variety of patterned full pants.

Pardhem: socks

## Data collection

### Analysis

After speaking to people I realized that they were very much enthusiastic about the wedding customs and traditions. Although in today's times it is difficult to perform all the ceremonies in the prescribed way people have found new ways to keep them alive or at least they recall them. They spoke to me very passionately about the customs and were equally excited when I told them some facts that were not so well known. Keeping in mind that these people have lost a lot of tradition to modernization and westernization they try and hang on to what little they have.

Thus I have tried to build the whole sequence of events that occur from the time of sugar ceremony to the last day being Tuesday.

Keeping this as a basis or a focus area I have tried to analyse the amount of change happening overtime in this small community and also in what direction.

I have also tried to find the reason and determine the extent of change.

To help draw a conclusion I have divided the whole community into 3 sections.

City, suburb and rural. This is done on the geographical basis mainly because of the following reasons.

**The city** being a busy port and hub of activity developed at a much faster rate than the other areas. People in this area got the best education and other facilities that aided in the urbanization. They were the first people to get affected by westernization gave up the traditional occupation and took up service. Due to those reasons their economic condition also improved. These factors played a role in widening the gap and taking the people in that area away from tradition.

**Suburbs:** this area developed at a relatively slow phase. The people here are still in the process of getting urbanized and westernized. They still are in a phase where many are still continuing their traditional occupation at least on a part time basis. The impact of urbanization is a little lower. People have managed to change yet not change completely. There are some villages that have a look of a very old village but when one takes a closer look one knows that in fact it has. The education level is relatively on an average level.

Thus the economy is not very high, the population is mostly middle class. These people still follow the traditions of the marriage ceremony to a great extent. Another reason to the slow change was that education in these areas was imparted in the 'marathi' language as opposed to the 'english' education in the city.

**Rural area:**

This area is that one which has been the most slow to change. The people here still have stuck on to the traditional occupation but are venturing out in a big way. On the traditional front owing due to a comparatively lower economic status the people here do not observe so many ceremonies but yet try and do whatever little that can be managed.

Education is catching on and as more and more people are getting literate they get influenced by what the city folk are doing and so try to copy them.

So many of the folk from this area do not follow customs by labeling them as 'old fashioned'.

The modern way of the marriage ceremony:  
(suburb)

Once the couple is ready to get married there is a small engagement ceremony. The groom accompanied by the parents a few relatives and friends goes to the girls house. The ring ceremony takes place either with or without the presence of the priest. Prayers are said rings are exchanged and the date for the marriage is fixed. Sweets are distributed.

Bans are read in church which may not be celebrated. The groom/ bride goes to church and comes back and a little family celebration may take place.

Invitation cards are printed and either given personally or posted or emailed to the guests.

On the day before the marriage there is a bachealors / bridal shower party at the grooms / brides house. The marriage mostly happen on a Sunday or Saturday but it may also be held on any day of the week.

It takes place in the evening, and not necessarily at the parish of the bride.

After seeking blessing from the parents and relatives the bride/ groom leave to go to church in a decorated car.

The best man gives the boquet to the bride and the priest comes to welcome them.

The vows are said the rings exchanged.

On arrival at the reception recorded music is played and the bridal couple enters.

The wedding cake is cut, the toast raised to the health of the newly married couple and the guests. They then have a 'wedding march' after which the guests are asked to form a circle around the bridal couple who then have their first dance. All the guests are asked to join in. snacks and refreshments are served. Then the couple is greeted individually by the guests and are presented with gifts.

Dinner is served and the East Indian masala a group of songs (in the east Indian language) loved by the people of this community is played to which the whole group sways and dances. After all the festivities are over the couple leave on their honey moon either the same night or the next day.



On the basis of the above observation, keeping in mind that it has been the middle class or suburban people who have kept up tradition I have tried to observe the way marriages are performed today. The variation in a marriage ceremony today is based on several factors.

**Macro level:**

**Intercaste marriages:** A lot of intercaste marriages are happening today. Not only are people marrying into completely different caste like Punjabi, maharashtrain, Gujrati but also smaller subcastes like goan Christian and manglorians.

This leads the deterioration of the family traditions.

This trend again in turn is occouring due many reasons.

Firstly the girls in the community are highly educated and have a good job as compared to boys. They seek alliance from a party where the boy is in someway equal if not more educated or earning a higher salary.

Since the women have ventured out they come in contact with a lot of people, this did not occur before as the women would rarely go outside of her house or village.

Security: when a marriage is arranged what the girls parents are looking for is the security of their daughter. Since the boys in the east Indian

community do not have stable jobs. The parents are forced to look out of the community for a good alliance for their daughter.

**Westernization:** thanks to the coming of multiple television channels people are influenced by the western way of marriages and try to copy them. Thus we see new trends that formerly were never heard off for. Eg. The throwing of the bouquet . Using of confetti to welcome the couple etc.

**Urbanization:** there social changes taking place in society today due to urbanization. On the one hand where urbanization has offered a lot of comfort in our life one of the elements to pay the price heavily if tradition and customs. For eg. The umbracha pani ceremony due to pipeline water supply wells have been filled up. Due to heavy cutting down of trees there is a lack of finding mango leaves used for the auspicious ceremonies as finding a mango tree itself is a big problem.

**Education:**

Moving to English medium education from a vernacular education has opened new doors. The very fact that people have realized the importance of education today is a good sign but at the same time many traditional customs have been given up as they are considered superstitious or not required. People seem to have got educated but in a shallow way. They take the practice for how it is actually performed not at all understanding the underlying meaning and symbolic representation. For eg. The red umbrella that is held overhead. It is actually symbolic of protection to protect the bride and groom from dangers etc.

**Overseas travel Experience:** Due to lack of educational qualification most young men from this cast work on ships and are away from the family for long durations. As part of the job they visit new lands exposure to the foreign land and culture and they try to imitate them without understanding them.

**Industrialization:**

Due to the coming of the foreigners and taking over the land the ones to suffer were the farmers. Industries and mills sprung up and people gave up their traditional jobs to work in these factories. With industries came people from other states and

Reas. to make space for this extra bulk of people who needed space for settlements large farmlands and orchards were used. This spread up the process of congestion and the size of the living area decreased. Here again tradition was affected in the sense in the past there was ample of space to put up a pandal and houses could accommodate large number of guests. Thus the weddings could be celebrated for a number of days without one worrying about the accommodation factor.

**Economy:**

Due to many reasons the people gave up their traditional occupation and started working for factories mills etc. Here they were not at very high posts one of the reasons being they were not qualified enough. Thus there was always a struggle for survival and making ends meet. Their land was often grabbed by greedy builders and the older generation people who being uneducated were fooled into signing on agreements and deals without actually knowing what it stated. Having a large family to support and a small income job, the economic status of the family went low. Thus with the economic condition unstable having traditional marriages was out of question.

**Technology:**

With the introduction of technology where life was made simpler on one side tradition stood to lose on the other. For eg. Internet and telephones have affected the invitation giving tradition.

The wedding party no longer goes walking to church as automobiles are now used to transport the party.

The moya ceremony that was held in those times as the village had only one barber is also being given up as this is no longer required.

**Micro level:****Mumbai a cosmopolitan city**

One of the reasons why traditional ways have changes is that mumbai has no longer remained a village. Each day we see development happning all around. Ansestrol houses are razed to the ground to make way for sophisticated buildings and apartments.

Competetion has increased tremendously at all levels be it housing issues, business etc.

People are pouring in from various parts of India at a rapid rate. This has highly influenced the ways of the East Indian community. Due to this people are trying their best to come up with alternatives to keep some traditions alive. For eg. Umbracha pani ceremony: since there are no wells anymore water is brought form the house of a relative.

**Changing family pattern:**

The East Indian family that used to at one time to follow a joint family is now shifting to the neuclear family. The size of the family has also decreased. Now days we see families made up of parents and one or two children. There is now a generation gap created. The new generation has new ideas and think of tradition as old fashioned.

This is another reason that tradition is being given up. For eg. The throwing of rice over the pandal when the groom/bride leaves the house to go to church.

### **Family feuds**

Due to the westernization, urbanization etc and people of this community in not so good a financial state their only means of surviveing is by selling off ansestoral jewellery and property. Mumbai being a city the real istate rates are quite high and therefore in most families there are feuds over who gets how much share in the property. This has influenced the culture and traditions. People no longer come together as they used to let alone celebrating marriage functions together.

### **Time investment, Fast life and convinence:**

Todays fast paced life, difficulty in getting leave from workplace, raise in cost of living etc. are other factors that have forced people to minimize the traditional ways.

For eg. Food can easily be got on order so there is no need to start preparations 3 days in advance.



## Step by step Analysis of the customs

A step by step analysis of the change in traditional practices then and now and a discussion to the various cause that affected them.

The ceremony	Changes that have occurred	Alternatives or substitutes	Reason
1: 'sugar ceremony'	non existant today	_____	It was very important so that the family would get to know each other. These days since the young couple chose their own partners this formality is no longer required.
2: engagement	still followed today		
3: reading of bans:	still followed today		
4: Invitation	still followed today to a large extent but post and email too are being used in a large way.		

The ceremony	Changes that have occurred	Alternatives or substitutes	Reason
5: 4 days of Marriage preparations before the marriage day.	Followed to some extent even today at some places.	_____	These ceremonies were mainly held with the intention of getting the whole family together so that their interaction increases. This is no longer continued as there are a lot of problems today for eg. Space constraints etc.
6: Moya	Followed to some extent even today at some places.	Although the moya ceremony is not conducted fully. The coconut milk and turmeric is applied to the bride / groom and the 'vovalni ' is still done. With the money collected some extra food is bought for. Eg. Cake etc.	It is believed that this ceremony was held as there was just one barber in the entire village so he was called in order to serve all the guests and make them presentable for the wedding day. Today with the numerous beauty parlors and salons found in plenty this ceremony is no longer required.
7: Bangles	Followed to some extent even today at some places.	Bangles are bought and some elderly aunties put's it on the wrist of the bride.	In today's day and date where women have to go to offices they consider glass bangles an inconvenience therefore not many opt to wear them.




The ceremony	Changes that have occurred	Alternatives or substitutes	Reason
8: Umbracha Pain	Followed to some extent even today at some places.	The mud pot is symbolically carried to the house of a friend or relative or a place where the village people have made an arrangement to get water for this ceremony. Though this is a comparatively low key affair. The band is not there but songs are sung to the beat of the 'goomat'. The coconut is broken and distributed and holy water is mixed with the water and brought	There are very few wells left so it is becoming increasingly difficult to get the water needed.
9: Sara	Followed to some extent even today at some places.	_____	Though the sara is brought it is not opened in the traditional way as many halls have time restrictions and these ceremonies take a lot of time




The ceremony	Changes that have occurred	Alternatives or substitutes	Reason
10: Paspatri	Followed to some extent even today at some places very rarely.	Nowadays just two or three people go to bring the couple back. There is a small picnic	This is because either the couple leave for their honeymoon or people have a problem to get leave sanctioned.
11: Jewellery	Some items of jewellery are still followed. While some have become obsolete for eg. The 3 pairs of earrings and the anklets.	The jewellery patterns have been merged to form a new patterns.	New trends are emerging. Revival of the old patterns to be used in a new way.
12. Dress	We find some of the elder women still sporting the traditional saree but otherwise it is worn occasionally.	_____	It is too inconvenient for daily use.

























Macro level analysis  
city























factors responsible for change

 strong  
 moderate  
 weak























 major role  
 moderate  
 no role

	education	economy	media	westernization	urbanization	industrialization	technology	cosmopolitanization	change in family pattern	overseas travel experience
religious practice 										
Wedding customs 										

suburbs

religious practice 										
Wedding customs 										

rural areas

religious practice 										
Wedding customs 										

# marriage customs in the suburbs

## factors responsible for change

- major role
- moderate
- no role

	education	economy	media	westernization	urbanization	industrialization	technology	cosmopolitanization	change in family pattern	overseas travel experience
sugar ceremony	no role	moderate	major role	moderate	moderate	no role	no role	major role	no role	major role
engagement	major role	no role	major role	major role	major role	moderate	no role	no role	no role	major role
reading of bans	no role	no role	no role	major role	no role	no role	no role	no role	no role	no role
invitation	no role	major role	moderate	major role	major role	no role	major role	major role	major role	no role
4 days of preparation	major role	major role	major role	major role	major role	moderate	no role	moderate	major role	no role
moya	moderate	no role	no role	moderate	no role	no role	no role	no role	no role	no role

# marriage customs in the suburbs

- major role
- moderate
- no role

## factors responsible for change

	education	economy	media	westernization	urbanization	industrialization	technology	cosmopolitanization	change in family pattern	overseas travel experience
bangles	no role	no role	no role	major role	moderate	no role	no role	major role	no role	no role
umbracha pani	no role	moderate	no role	major role	major role	moderate	no role	major role	no role	moderate
sara	no role	no role	no role	major role	no role	no role	no role	no role	no role	no role
paspatni	no role	major role	no role	major role	major role	no role	major role	major role	major role	no role
jewellery	moderate	major role	major role	major role	major role	no role	no role	moderate	major role	major role
dress	major role	moderate	major role	major role	major role	major role	no role	major role	no role	moderate

## **Limitations**

Small community

Time constrains

Wide area to cover as the settlements are placed in different areas

Lack of people who know considerable facts about the community

Traditional 'Wedding ceremonies' are very rare today

Traditional Jewellery difficult to find

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### Interviews:

1. Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Jacinto
2. Mr. & Mrs. Crompton Tixera
3. Mr. Charlie Baptista
4. Mrs. Isebella D'Souza
5. Mrs. Faria D'Souza
6. Mr & Mrs. Anthony Pimenta
7. Mrs. Juleta Pimenta
8. Mrs. Tresa Pimenta
9. Mrs. Lousi Jacinto
10. Mr. & Mrs. Michael Pimenta