

# Evolution of Sacred Moments: Karnataka's Pre-wedding Photography in a Globalised Era

Deekshitha N. & Caroline T. Paul

## Abstract

This research explores Pre-wedding photography a new trend in contemporary times where couples shoot their photographs creatively in various locations. This paper specifically focuses on analyzing the pre-wedding photographs captured in Karnataka. The pre-wedding photographs collected from three different places, Udupi, Chikmagalur, and Mysore, were examined using qualitative visual analysis. All these photographs were captured in the last four years. The results show an integration of modern attire and historical landscapes in these photographs. The photos were uniquely captured in landscapes with historical and divine significance. Through these photographs, the couples wished to reflect their love and respect for their culture and tradition. Therefore the new trend of blending modern attire with traditional landscapes reflects the evolving nature of sanctity in Hindu weddings in Karnataka.

**Keywords:** Historical landscape; Pre-wedding Photography, Visual analysis.

## Introduction

The artistic endeavor involving the manipulation of light through the medium of a camera, predominantly utilizing digital sensors or traditional film for image generation, is known as photography, and the seminal moment in this discipline occurred in 1827 when Joseph Nicéphore Niépce, situated in France, successfully captured the inaugural permanent image (Cox). The advent of Eastman Kodak's "Kodachrome" film in the 1930s significantly contributed to the heightened popularity and accessibility of colour photography (Archambault). The historical trajectory of wedding photography attests to established sartorial norms from antiquity, which persisted until the 1930s. The ubiquity of stereotyped social imaging en-

duced until a confluence of factors, including the rapid proliferation of affordable and indispensable photographic equipment, evolving societal norms, and the ascent of less regimented photographic practices, gained widespread acceptance.

The pre-wedding photography genre encompasses capturing images before the matrimonial ceremony, serving the communicative purpose of signaling the impending union of a couple. Since its inception in 1996, pre-wedding photographs have evolved, engendering novel meanings within visual language. In the context of Karnataka, conventional attire for pre-wedding photography typically entails the bride adorned in a white saree and the groom attired in a white shirt, Lungi, and Peta. Nevertheless, pre-wedding photography has facilitated a departure from these conventions, allowing couples the latitude to immortalize their moments in trending and personally significant garments. This paradigm shift has introduced a novel cultural phenomenon in Karnataka, wherein the juxtaposition of traditional landscapes with contemporary attire becomes the focal point of visual representation. These landscapes have historical significance that reflects the evolving nature of Hindu weddings. Technological innovations, exemplified by the discerning application of filters, have played a pivotal role in facilitating this transformative trajectory. Each successive phase in the evolution of pre-wedding imagery begets novel connotations, inextricably entwined with the forces of globalization and the evolving lifestyle of the Hindu community in Karnataka.

This research will assess the reason behind the incorporation of modern attire and historical landscapes of Karnataka in pre-wedding photography. It also examines the influence of technology on the unique expression of love. Therefore this paper analyzes the blending of modernity with traditional landscapes and the influence of technology on the evolving trends in pre-wedding photography of Karnataka.

The article by Charles Lewis focuses on the idea of photography and describes that photos are not just moments of reality that are captured instead, photographs allow us to interpret reality in a particular social and cultural context. Explicitly focusing on weddings, the article says consumerist and patriarchal ideologies frame formal wedding photographs. It argues strongly that such ideologies arise from the producer and consumer (Lewis). An article by Athira BK says that wedding scenes and performances of bridehood have changed in India over time. It focuses on the role played by digital media in reifying and circulating these images. The ideology of consumption also has an impact on this process. Therefore, it

highlights how the media represents these changing bridal performances (BK, Athira). An article by Lukito et al. focuses on the visual signs in pre-wedding photographs. These visual signs create certain unconventional codes that further create unconventional myths about pre-wedding photographs. Hence, this article studies unconventional codes and myths created in pre-wedding photography. An article by Kishore Babu and Narasimha Rao says that pre-wedding photography has become a new trend in India. This study has conducted research in Andhra Pradesh and interviewed 200 newly engaged individuals. It focuses on understanding the perceptions of engaged couples on pre-wedding photo shoots. The results show that most couples consider pre-wedding photos memorable (Babu and Rao). An article by Fenna et al. focuses on the concept of co-occupation. It tries to study co-occupation in the late life of the couples. The data was collected from one older couple who participated in a 2-year longitudinal study. They chose a few photographs and attributed specific meanings to them creating a couple photo story. They also gave interviews describing their memories and experiences. Therefore, the results show that meaningful co-occupation helps to maintain both individual and couple identities. This was beautifully depicted in their couple photo story.

Dinata et al's literature review, discusses the hyperrealism, visualization of wedding photography, commercialization of the natural environment, and wedding photography's importance. Dinata et al. studied pre-wedding photography in Bali, Indonesia, and argued that these images are not just about beauty but also about creating the best version of themselves. Noyan's article analyzes how wedding photos are a visual record of socio-economic status, cultural norms/phenomena, and technological inventions in Turkey. Dinata et al. also considered the commercialization of natural environments such as Balangan Beach in view of the emerging pre-wedding photography trend that has moved beyond its aesthetic facet and has become a commodity with business implications. Ruchatz's article studies the relevance of the photographs of weddings, stressing that the production of photocopying in weddings does not only mean a small element of the ceremony but it is in the essence to make and keep memories. The previously mentioned articles explore such ideas as wedding photography, themes, myth construction, couple tales, hyperreality, and socio-cultural meanings of those pictures. Until now, there is still little exploration of pre-wedding photography in Karnataka. Therefore, this study becomes the research gap. Therefore, this paper will focus on contemporary pre-wedding photography in Karnataka, particularly regarding the historical significance of the locations where pre-wedding photographs

are captured.

### **Thesis Statement**

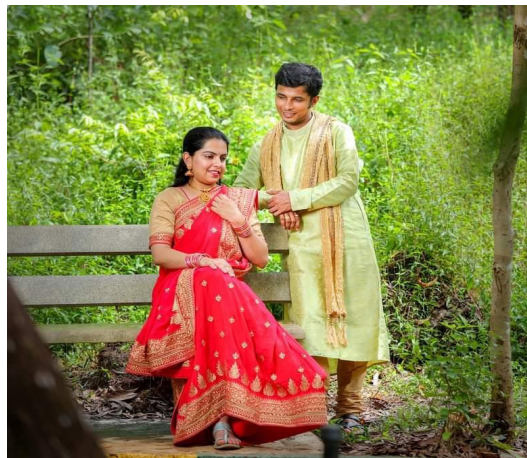
Contemporary pre-wedding photographs captured in Karnataka incorporate modern attire and historical landscapes reflecting the evolving nature of sanctity in Hindu weddings in a globalized world.

### **Methodology**

This research paper adopts a qualitative visual analysis. It aims to visually analyze the themes and elements in contemporary pre-wedding photographs from Karnataka. The photographs were collected from Udupi, Chikmagalur, and Mysore with the couple's consent. All the photographs were captured in the last 4 years. This research looks into the significance of the location in which the photographs were captured. It reflects the new trend of blending modern attire with traditional landscapes in pre-wedding photography. The photographs represent the evolving nature of sacred Hindu weddings in Karnataka. Therefore, the paper employs a mixed method by conducting a visual analysis of the photographs and historical research to examine the significance of the locations in which the photographs were captured.

### **Result and Discussion**

#### **Udupi**



**Fig 1**

This pre-wedding photo was captured in 2019 in Salumarada Thimakka Tree Park in Udupi district, Karnataka. Udupi is known for Lord Krishna's temple. It is also famous for its food and beaches. Many tourists and devotees visit this place to enjoy the scenic beauty and get the blessings of lord Krishna. Udupi Sri Krishna temple is a very old architecture built in the 13th century by Madvacharya. This temple is considered very powerful and attracts many devotees. (Shedbalkar et.al). This particular picture was captured in a park named after Salumarada Thimaka, an environmentalist. This park has many trees and greenery, giving it the look of a mini forest. The couple are placed in a beautiful pose with greenery in the background. The contrasting colour combination of their attire enhances the beauty of this picture. This picture gives a small narrative by depicting them as a beautiful couple immersed in love and lost themselves in the midst of greenery. The background is captured naturally without any graphics. Technology has aided in adding a quotation to the photograph that expresses their love creatively. Therefore along with the pose, the photograph captures the scenic beauty of Salamarada Thimaka Tree Park (Hande).



**Fig 2**

This photograph was captured near Malpe beach, Udupi. Tourists who visit Udupi usually visit this place to enjoy the beach's scenic beauty. The couple have enhanced this beauty by capturing the photograph against the night sky. The contrasting colour combination of their attire and the background gives a filmy look to the picture. The beach setting is captured

naturally. A small addition of graphics is made to the sky to make the photograph more attractive. The couple posed romantically by walking beside the striking waves that hit the shore. This pose reflects their unconditional love similar to the never-ending water flow. Technology has aided in capturing this moment with perfect clarity. The couple started their journey with the blessings of Lord Krishna in Udupi. Therefore, these two pictures capture Udupi's divinity and scenic beauty in their pre-wedding photographs.

### Chikmagalur

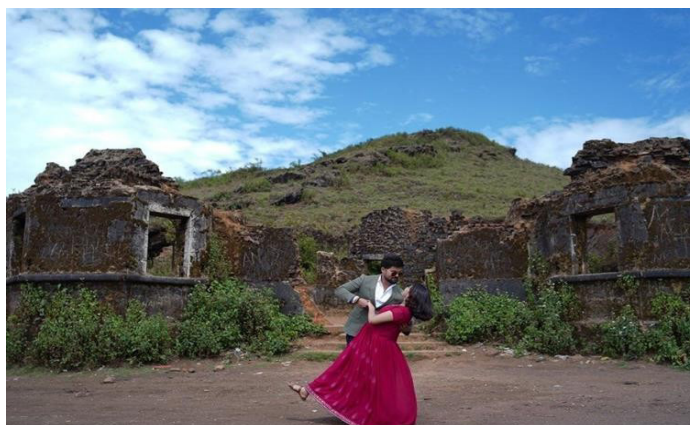


Fig 3

This pre-wedding photograph was captured in 2022 in Seethalayanagiri, a mountain peak in the Chikmagalur district of Karnataka. This place is known for its beautiful green forests and mountains. The Hills of Chikmagalur are part of the Western Ghats. This photo was shot in Seethalayanagiri. It is one of the top tourist places at an altitude of 5000 feet. Tourists will get the best scenic view from this place. This place is named after an old temple named Seethala Mallikarjuna Swamy temple. The word 'Seetha' in Kannada refers to 'Damp'. The Shivalinga in this temple is always surrounded by water (Trawell.in). This picture was captured near an old building on Seethalayanagiri. This setting is captured as it is without any addition of graphics. The couples are placed at the center with an intimate pose. The evolving social norms allow them to have eye contact and express their love in a gracious way. The contrasting colour combination of their attire also beautifies the photograph. The couples are placed in perfect correlation with the background. The colour combination, beau-

tiful pose, and background are captured with extreme clarity. Therefore along with the pose, the photo also captures the beauty and grandeur of Seethalayanigiri in the background.



Fig 4

This picture is also captured in Seethalayanagiri, Chikmagalur. Here, the background captures the scenic beauty of Seethalayanagiri. It is captured naturally without adding any graphics. The evolving social norms have allowed the couple to give an intimate pose. The couple are dressed in modern attire. The bride is wearing a beautiful gown, and the groom is wearing a suit. Their attire and the background's contrasting colors make the picture attractive. Technology and cameras have aided in capturing the background and the couple in perfect position, which gives the look of a beautiful scene in a film. This technique of capturing pre-wedding photographs in places of historical significance and divinity shows the purity of the Hindu wedding tradition in Karnataka. The couple also wishes to get divine blessings from these places along with the photographs. Hence, these two pictures were captured in Seethalayanagiri of Karnataka, known for its scenic beauty and sanctity.

## Hunsur



Fig 5

This pre-wedding photograph was captured in 2023 in Hunsur, a locale renowned for its commerce in tobacco and timber, mainly teak. Hunsur is a city in the Mysore district, of Karnataka. Hunsur Teak is globally acclaimed for its exceptional quality and resilience (Namma Mysuru). Hunsur also houses the Gadige Kendaganeswara Temple, meticulously constructed in the 17th century by Sri Guru Kendaganneshwara Swamy. A devout Shiva adherent, Sri Guru Kendaganneshwaraswamy hailed from the Shiggavi district of Haveri. He lived during the reign of the Mysore Wodeyars. Upon arriving in Gaddige, he embraced the ascetic life and built a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. Before the advent of automobiles, the town was historically known as 'Gaadi Palya,' signifying a 'resting station for bullock carts' (DHNS and DHNS). The selection of Hunsur, a town known for its historical and commercial significance, as the backdrop for this pre-wedding photograph, highlights the interplay between tradition and modernity in contemporary Hindu wedding practices. It also underscores the enduring relevance of cultural heritage and its incorporation into modern wedding rituals.

The couple's natural and relaxed poses in the photograph suggest a departure from traditional formality and a shift towards more personalized and intimate portrayals of love and commitment. The modern attire worn by the couple, while coordinating in color, exemplifies the evolving sartorial norms in Hindu weddings, reflecting a move away from strict adherence to traditional dress codes. The use of digital filters to enhance the vibrancy of the landscape and attire in the photograph demonstrates the influence of technology on contemporary wedding photography and its ability to create visually appealing imagery.





Fig 6

The Hunsur pre-wedding portrait uses contrasting colours, in which the couple is dressed in red and blue, which has made the photograph more appealing. The lack of digital filters in the image makes the natural beauty of the landscape more emphasized, stressing the couple's connection with the surrounding world and the latest tendency in contemporary wedding photography towards authenticity. A music video-type of shot camera angle used here showcases the integration of cinematic approaches into wedding photography depicting the influence of popular society's visual narrative. The couple's clothing provides a contrast to the light-colored environment. This serves to stress the couple as the main focus of the photograph. Photography's integration into the wedding ritual emphasizes its transformative function for creating and sharing memories, thus making it a necessary part of modern wedding celebrations. Couples in contemporary wedding photos are free and creative.

This illustrates how love and commitment photos are becoming personalised and expressive. The photographer's part in the taking of the pre-wedding photos is the same as a film director with the couple acting as a screenplay and playing the parts of love and relationships, stressing the collaborative nature of fabricating idealised depictions of love and relationships. These photographs have the ability to evoke strong emotions about love and marriage while still drifting from real to ideal looks, thus showing the power of photography in constructing and influencing love and marriage stories.

## Conclusion

Pre-wedding photography is one of the evolving categories in the field of photography. They allow the couple to dress in modern attire and pose uniquely. This paper examines this trend in Karnataka by visually analyzing the pre-wedding photographs collected from Udupi, Chikmagalur, and Hunsur. The uniqueness of these photographs is that they are shot in historical landscapes. This has led to the integration of modern attire and historical landscapes in pre-wedding photographs. Technology has aided this transformation by capturing pictures with the best filters and extreme clarity. This method of capturing pictures in historical and divine landscapes adds grandeur to the photographs. The purpose behind following this trend is that Hindu weddings are considered very sacred and this notion is maintained by performing various rituals. The modern couples also respect and embrace this tradition. Hence by capturing pre-wedding photographs in historical landscapes, they reflect that the divinity and sanctity of marriage are always held up even in the globalized era. The photographs capture the landscape's history, divinity, and long-lived traditions. Through this photograph, the couple also aims to get the divine and ancestral blessings of the historical place. These photographs deserve this importance because a wedding is an auspicious occasion in one's life and capturing the tradition and culture of the place where the individuals live makes the photographs very special. Over time these photographs become part of the history associated with that place. Therefore this paper gives a detailed analysis on integrating modern attire and historical landscapes in the pre-wedding photography of Karnataka. Through this, it reflects the evolving nature of sanctity in Hindu weddings in a globalized era.

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