

## **COLONIAL INFLUENCES ON SRI LANKAN WEDDING RITUALS: EXAMINING THE SHAPING OF TRADITIONAL CUSTOMS DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD**

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This research explored the profound influence of colonialism on Sri Lankan wedding rituals during the colonial period. The study investigated how the arrival of various colonial powers namely the Portuguese, Dutch, and British, significantly impacted the traditional customs and practices associated with weddings in Sri Lanka. Research question is How did colonial powers influence and shape traditional Sri Lankan wedding rituals during the colonial period, and what were the resulting transformations and adaptations made by the indigenous communities in response to these influences? By examining historical records, anthropological studies, and cultural narratives, this research shed light on the complex dynamics between indigenous wedding traditions and the colonial forces that shaped and transformed them. The study used a multidisciplinary approach with qualitative research methods as the methodology and analyzing historical records and primary sources to explore the impacts of colonialism on Sri Lankan wedding rituals. It delved into the historical context of colonial rule and its effects on social, cultural, and religious aspects of weddings, uncovering specific colonial influences on pre-existing customs and the emergence of new practices. The research investigated the interplay between indigenous Sri Lankan traditions and cultural assimilation processes imposed by the colonizers. It explored how colonial powers controlled local customs, promoting their practices and introducing new elements into traditional weddings. For an example British colonial influence introduced Western customs to Sri Lankan weddings, including the use of white wedding dresses for brides, replacing traditional Sarees. Not only that, the study also examined how Sri Lankans negotiated, resisted, and adapted to colonial influences, leading to the evolution and hybridization of wedding rituals over time. Colonialism profoundly impacted Sri Lankan wedding rituals, reshaping customs and introducing new elements. Communities adapted, creating hybridized ceremonies blending indigenous and foreign elements, like European attire and practices.

**Keywords:** Colonial Period, Colonial Influence, Traditional Customs of Sri Lanka, Wedding Rituals.

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