

# RAAJASEE

JEWELERS

IN INDIA BY

K A Y<sup>®</sup>  
J E W E L E R S

By Addison Lewis, Becca Lancaster, Derek Lao, Josefina Jaramillo, and Mariam Al Essa



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This marketing plan offers an overview of how Kay Jewelers, the American diamond jewelry brand, will be entering in the Indian market as a sub brand called *Raajasee*- meaning ‘royalty’ in Hindu- as research has shown the preference of Indians to buy Indian-made jewelry. *Raajasee* will be targeting Indian women from upper class families, ages 18 – 30, who wish to get married. The brand will specialize in high quality, diamond bridal jewelry typically worn in Indian weddings. *Raajasee* will position itself as the highest quality diamond jewelry brand available for wedding pieces, with the customer service and ongoing warranties that make the customer feel as though they are royal in every aspect but title. The superior customer service and quality of *Raajasee*’s materials will allow the brand to price itself with value-based pricing, 5% higher than that of its comparable competitors. *Raajasee* will employ infamous Bollywood actress Sonam Kapoor to promote the brand, as well as running print and television ads featuring her in staple brand pieces such as the “Praacheen” necklace. These decisions, made on behalf of *Raajasee*, have been based off of five interviews with local Indians within and outside our target market, as well as collective secondary research.

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## SECTION 1 - CURRENT MARKET ENVIRONMENT

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### 1.1 - CULTURE

Jewelry is an integral part of Indian society, and for the women of India jewelry holds the utmost importance in terms of aesthetics. Indian women consider jewelry favorably, and most females in India treasure jewelry because it gives them a sense of significance as jewelry is considered a form of feminine beauty and symbol of esteem. Traditionally, women wear ornaments of silver, gold, diamond, and copper because of its association with wealth, prosperity, and power.

There is a long-running tradition of presenting jewelry during Indian weddings (*IBEF*). The ornaments used in the country vary from one religion to another, but they are mainly used to enhance aesthetics or for devotional purposes. For example, someone of the Christian faith might be comfortable wearing a ring during the wedding ceremony, whereas someone of the Hindu faith may not (*Interview 1*). In India, one can find wedding jewelry for nearly all parts of the body, such as the nose, neck, ankles, hair parting, waist, and fingers. One of the most essential jewels worn by brides in India consist of the necklace and the “Maang Tikka”, a head piece used to part the hair and identify the bride (*Interview 1*). Additionally, the bride wears a set of earrings, waistband, bangles, and a nose ring that is used to represent her virginity (*Cultural India, Figure 1*). After the wedding ceremony, families may share their “Ashirwad”, which translates into blessings through the exchange of gifts. Usually, the bride is given gold or diamond jewelry by the groom’s family (*Manhattan Bride*), and commonly jewelry is passed down from the mother in law to the bride (*Interview 3*). Additionally, Indians may buy jewelry from a family owned local store or a relative as opposed to a foreign brand, due to the collectivist culture.

Indians consider jewelry the perfect adornment, and diamond and gold jewelry are the most popular because they are associated with kings and queens (*Singh*). However, the jewelry market depends

on regional tastes since each region has a unique tradition and culture that is reflected in their preferred designs (*Interview 4*).

## **1.2 - ECONOMY**

According to the World Bank, India is the third largest economy in the world in terms of purchasing parity (*The World Bank*). It is also the country experiencing fastest economic growth (*IBEF*). It has a GDP of 2.6 trillion USD and has sustained an average GDP percentage growth of approximately 7 percent with a projected growth of 7.3 percent in the 2018-2019 period (*The World Bank, IBEF*). The gem and jewelry industry comprises 7 percent of the GDP, and Figure 5 illustrates various positive trends of the growth rates imports and exports in the gem and jewelry industry are experiencing. Data captured by the Central Intelligence Agency's World Factbook places India's labor force at approximately 521.9 million and estimates that 10.8 million jobs were created in just 2017 (*CIA World Factbook, IBEF*). As a result, GDP per capita has seen a steady increase, moving from \$6,400 in 2015 to an estimated \$7,200 in 2017 (*CIA World Factbook*). This is an important indicator as India works to lift its citizens out of poverty and the middle class expands. The 2011 Census of India reports that there are over 10 million single women between the ages of 20 and 29 living in urban regions of India (*Census Commissioner of India*).

## **1.3 - POLITICS & LAW**

With Gems and Jewelry being one of the fastest growing sectors in the Indian economy, there have been many alterations in laws and in trade regulations. The government now allows 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the sector, meaning that foreign companies can own up to 100% equity of a company in India through the automatic government approval route (*"Gems and Jewellery Industry In India"*). This allows for outside companies to either own local Indian firms or create and invest in their own, and also for the exploration and mining of all minerals other than diamonds and precious stones (gold and silver). The government has allowed up to 74% of FDI for exploration and mining of diamonds and precious stones (*"Indian Jewellery Industry"*).

The government has taken many steps to boost the growth of the sector. They have lowered the import duty on platinum, abolished import duty on polished diamonds, exempted rough semi-precious stones to increase exports, and labeled the cutting and polishing of gems and jewelry as manufacturing for the purposes exemption from the Income Tax Act. The Foreign Trade Policy has exempted service tax on services in relation to exports. The policy has also reduced the transaction cost for the diamonds sector by incorporating the testing facility at the International Diamond Laboratory in Dubai (*“Indian Jewellery Industry”*).

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has also recently revised the standard on gold hallmarking, marking gold jewelry with BIS in order to ensure the purity and quality. This is mandatory for all companies and persons in the gem and jewelry sector in India.

#### **1.4 - KEY COMPETITORS**

The three closest competitors to *Raajasee* will be Tanishq, Bhima, and Kalyan Jewellers. The companies’ target market and positioning puts them in direct competition with our business. Based on their websites, all three competitors seem to also target soon-to-be-married females in the upper-middle class ages 18-30 by positioning themselves as brands who make women look and feel beautiful. On its website Tanishq states: “At Tanishq...we are a brand that has the distinct honour of being coveted by Indian women” (*“Brand Story”*).

The competitors offer an array of products. Their jewelry pieces include bracelets, bangles, chains, earrings, necklaces, rings, and nose rings for holidays and more casual fashion occasions. Meanwhile, their wedding jewelry mainly features traditional ornate Indian wedding jewelry as opposed to simple Western style jewelry (*Interview 4*). Bhima’s products are very gold-centric while Kalyan’s and Tanishq’s jewelry uses more diamonds (*Bhima, Kalyan, Tanishq*). These products are all priced at levels considered too expensive for lower class individuals; however, their pricing spans both low budget and

high budget clients in the middle class. Lastly, all three companies have some form of e-commerce integrated into their websites to allow clients to purchase their jewelry both in store and online.

## SECTION 2 - SWOT ANALYSIS

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### 2.1 - STRENGTHS

The key strengths of the company are experience in the industry, access to advance marketing tools, experienced marketing teams, robust financial standing, experienced sales force, and reputation in the jewelry market. The company's access to technology has ensured that the company understands the unique demands of every market before it makes an entry, and it has mastered the art of advertisement through various media mediums such as print, television, direct mail, catalog, and telephone marketing (*Kay*). Kay Jewelers financial standing allows them to provide a lifetime diamond guarantee, which has lead to its tradition of building strong customer relationships and pristine reputation. These facts, coupled with good inventory management will boost its chances of success.

### 2.2 - WEAKNESSES

One of our principal weaknesses is our lack of brand awareness in India (*Kay*). Because recognition of *Raajasee* as an American company could pose as a potential barrier to the entry into the traditional Indian wedding gem and jewelry industry, the company will downplay its American roots and present itself as *Raajasee*, as opposed to Kay Jewelers. This means that as new entrants in this industry we have to truly emphasize the expertise in traditional Indian jewelry of *Raajasee*'s designers.

### 2.3 - OPPORTUNITIES

Many of *Raajasee*'s opportunities lie in shifting trends in the Indian jewelry industry and increasing disposable income in India. As shown in Figure 3, consumers purchased gold dominant jewelry; however, platinum and diamond jewelry have seen much higher growth rates of over 30% (*Ghosal*). Experts see this as more of a trend shift rather than simply a fad because of the widespread

adoption of the western lifestyle in India (“*Gems and Jewellery...*”, *Interview 4*). This is an opportunity for *Raajasee* as it can be one of the first large companies specializing in this growing trend.

According to Euromonitor International and Figure 2, per capita income of Indians is expected to grow to exponentially due to economic expansion (“*Income and Expenditure: India*”). This is a good sign for the *Raajasee* because it could translate to greater demand for more expensive diamond jewelry, thus leading to higher sales.

## **2.4 - THREATS**

One of the key threats is that China remains the biggest market for fine jewellery with sales reaching USD \$86.3 billion by the end of 2017- expected to reach USD \$92 billion by the end of this year (“*India To Overtake US...*”). While the gem and jewelry sector in India is steadily growing into one of the main sectors in the country’s consumer market, the allowance of 100% FDI into the sector may cause some concern for a large chinese company to enter into the market as a new competitor.

Another threat is that the gems and jewelry market in India is home to more than 300,000 players, with the majority being small players (“*Gems and Jewellery...*”). This may make it difficult to enter the market and immediately generate revenue. It may also slow the process of gathering a loyal consumer base for our products and company due to the many local businesses who may already have loyal customers.

## **SECTION 3 - SHORT TERM & LONG TERM OBJECTIVES**

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By the end of its first year in India *Raajasee* hopes to set up five stores in the five richest Indian cities Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Bangalore and Hyderabad respectively (Santosh), as well as create ongoing contracts with local Indian diamond, gold and silver miners, and officially launch the five stores in June.



In *Raajasee*'s second year, the goal will be to increase its market share of the Indian wedding jewelry industry to 5%. Additionally, there will be a short term goal of achieving 85% positive customer feedback, with intention of accepting customer feedback for continued improvement.

By the 5<sup>th</sup> year, *Raajasee* intends to increase its market share to 9%, have 93% positive customer feedback, premier its Spring collection at the Mumbai Indian Bridal Fashion Week -one of the top four fashion events held in India every year (Now Times), and feature one complete set of *Raajasee* wedding jewelry in a movie starring Sonam Kapoor- a famous Bollywood actress known for her fashion sense and marriage to Anand Ahuja (Mohanty). An example of the type of movie *Raajasee* would feature itself in with Ms.Kapoor would be her upcoming film "Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga".

## SECTION 4 - MARKETING STRATEGY

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### 4.1 - POSITIONING

To the Indian bride who wants elite, high quality diamond wedding jewelry, *Raajasee* is the jeweler that gives you the mystique of highly coveted diamond bridal jewelry. That is because *Raajasee* can be trusted to source the finest quality diamonds from world-renowned Indian miners for its pieces. *Raajasee* does more than sell diamonds; *Raajasee* transforms brides from simple girls to majestic queens enveloped in diamonds as rare and perfect as the women who wear them. Devoted to providing brides a glamorous lifestyle long after the wedding has ended, owners of *Raajasee* jewelry will find themselves apart of an elite group who are royal in every aspect but title.

### 4.2 - PRODUCT STRATEGY

Our product strategy is to present the *Raajasee* brand as jewelry fit for royalty. We want to evoke tradition and heritage but always channeling the vibrancy of the 21st century bride through our designs, so that our brides feel like queens when they wear our pieces. Every piece will be designed and handcrafted out of the finest metals and intricately embellished with the highest quality diamonds and carefully

selected precious gems. We want our pieces to complement each other, with ultimate goal of elevating the bride. Most of our collection will be either filled or plated in yellow gold, following traditional wedding jewelry, but select pieces will be available in white gold and platinum, giving the bride the option of more subtle and wearable pieces.

The collection will include necklaces and bangles that are perfect for layering, following the current wedding fashion trends, but bold enough to be worn alone if preferred. Earrings will be crafted in the traditional chandelier style and will be fashioned to accompany and enhance its corresponding necklace. The collection will feature an array of maang tikkis (the traditional hair-part headpiece), naths (nose rings), mangalsutras, and rings.

#### **4.3 - PRICING STRATEGY**

For our pricing our products, we have chosen to use a value-based pricing strategy. We believe our products have a higher value than those of our competitors. Our diamonds, unique gems, and precious metals are of the best quality, made with care and precision. Our company and employees are dedicated to not only making jewelry to perfection, but to making our customers feel as perfect as they can be.

Because *Raajasee* offers lifetime free repairs after customers purchase any of our products, we value our services and products higher than those of our competitors. Thus, we price our products 5% higher on average than our top competitors in the gem and jewellery sector. On average, our competitors' price a 1 carat diamond between 313,717.40 - 418,289.86 Indian Rupees (INR), while we price a 1 carat diamond between 329,403.27 - 439,204.36 INR ("*Rings*").

#### **4.4 - DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY**

Our distribution strategy will be based on direct selective distribution. Once the final pieces of jewelry are crafted in our design studio, they will be transported to *Raajasee* stores to be directly sold to our clients. Furthermore, we will be selective in terms of where we will open stores and offer our pieces. *Raajasee* will strategically focus on opening stores only in areas with high concentrations of young

upper-middle class unmarried couples like Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad, and Kolkata (*Haritas*). Doing so will not only ensure that we are not physically close to competitors, but it will also help us minimize operational costs while maximizing our exposure to our target audience. Lastly, as of our current plans, we will exclusively sell our pieces through *Raajasee* store fronts and not third party retailers in order to have full control of the customer experience.

#### **4.5 - MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

The primary goal of the *Raajasee*'s communication strategy is to instill the idea that if Indian bachelors want to make their fiances happy, the best gift will be *Raajasee* jewelry. This message will be delivered in India's richest cities: Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad, and Kolkata and will be targeted to the upper class soon-to-be-married couples.

The first part of the plan is to enlist Sonam Kapoor as a spokesperson for *Raajasee*. Initially, Sonam will appear with our "Praacheen" necklace, which translates to antique necklace, at public events such as award ceremonies or high profile parties. She will then eventually be featured in a TV commercial where she is gifted this necklace. The next step will be to present the actress on billboards in India's richest cities. Billboards will depict Sonam wearing *Raajasee* jewelry, accompanied by the quote, "*Raajasee*, the trace of eternity every woman seeks". This quote will serve as the slogan of the entire advertising campaign. Employing Sonam Kapoor also allows *Raajasee* to engage her husband, the famous Indian businessman Anand Ahuja, and their presence at company events such as charity events and new product releases will be publicized. The Indian people, characterized by a significant devotion to their film industry, will be likely to accept the iconic image of Sonam wearing *Raajasee* jewelry.

Finally, the print ad features a traditional Indian bride, wearing our set of "Praacheen" necklace, earrings, and "Maang Tikka". We chose this picture because of the "Dupatta", which is a traditional wedding scarf, on top of her head that symbolizes a crown. The ad re-states our quote in Hindi. Overall, we want our customers to sense the importance of making our brides feel like Queens. As a result, not

only will wealthy Indian males desire to gift *Raajasee* jewelry, but women will also desire to wear its jewelry.

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## **APPENDIX**

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### **TARGET PERSONA**

**Name:** Priya (प्रिया) Thandan

**Age:** 22

**City/Country of Residence:** Mumbai, India

**Relationship Status:** In a serious relationship about to be engaged

**Occupation:** Interior Designer, recent graduate from London School of Design

**Annual Salary:** ₹4,881,240.00/year (USD\$70,000)

**Favorite Food:** her mother's Rogan Josh

**Favorite Hobby:** shopping, running, going out dancing.

**Favorite Stores:** BIBA

**Life Motto:** "Choose with no regret"

**Family Size:** 1 mother, 1 father, 2 older brothers (24, 27), and 1 younger sister (19).

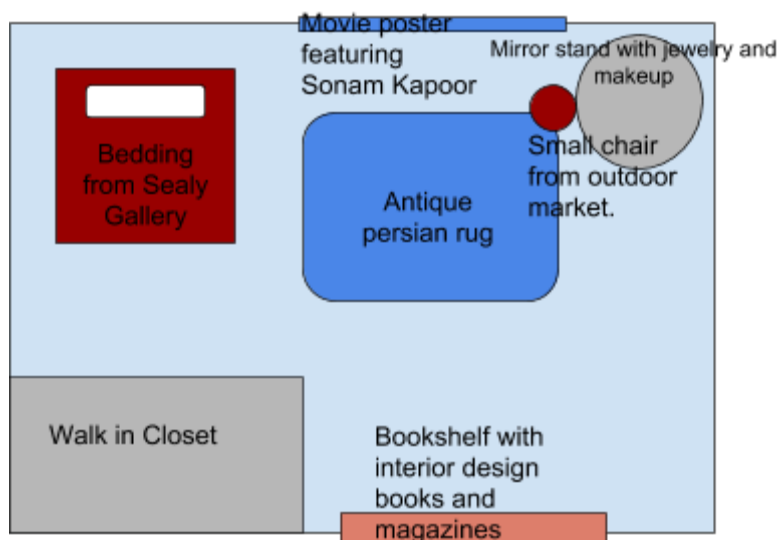
**Family Occupations:** Father works in finance and has recently become CEO of his company, mother work in healthcare, brothers work for father's finance company

**Notable Family Background:** Her mother helped start a non-profit that provided general health care to children under the age of 12 in Mumbai.

**Religion:** Hindu

**Future Aspirations:** To grow her interior design client base, help her mother with her non-profit, and to eventually get married and have a family.

**Fashion style:** professional, conservative, clean cut lines, high end and good quality clothing.



## PICTURES/FIGURES





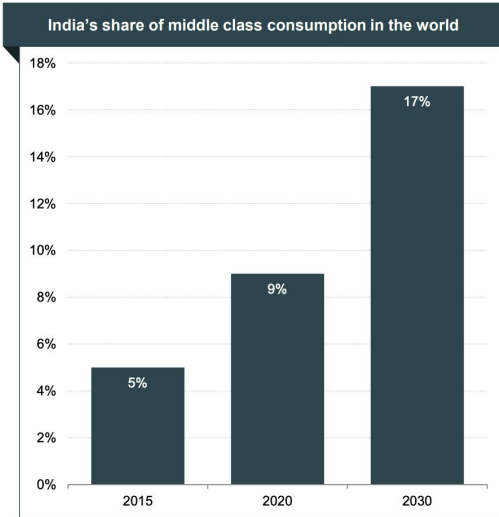


Figure 2

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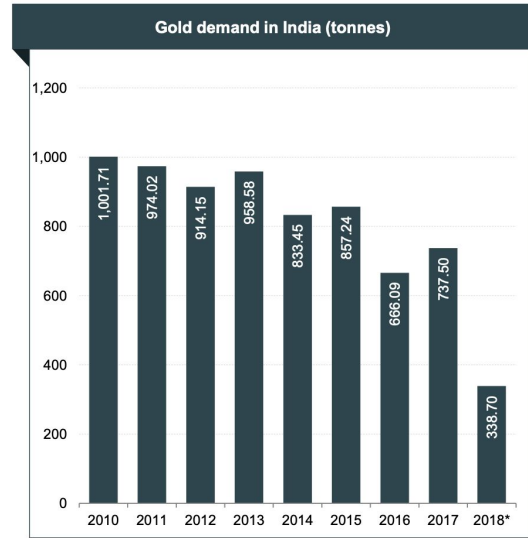
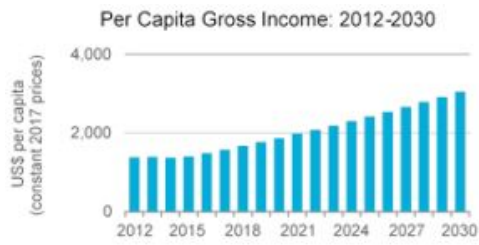


Figure 3

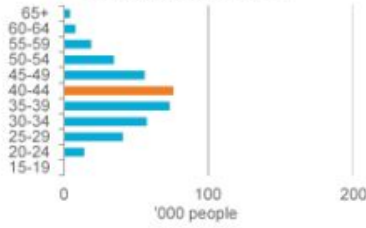


INDIANS AGED 35-39 ENJOYED THE HIGHEST AVERAGE GROSS INCOME IN 2017 AT US\$2,678

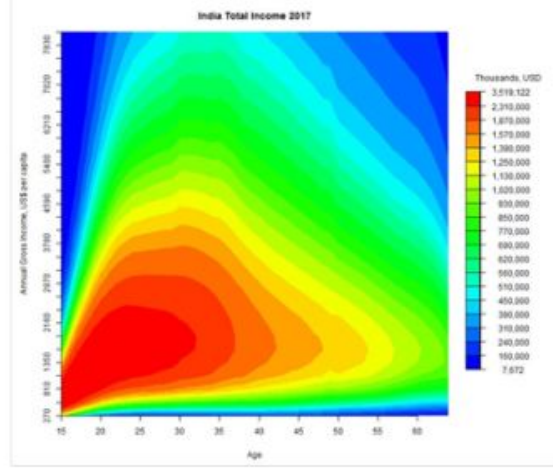
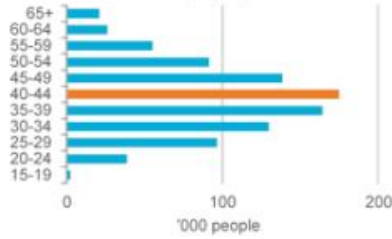


TAX AND SOCIAL SECURITY CONTRIBUTIONS TOOK UP 2.4% OF GROSS INCOME IN 2017

**Population with an Annual Gross Income over US\$250,000 (constant) by Age: 2017**



**Population with an Annual Gross Income over US\$250,000 (constant) by Age: 2030**



**Figure 4**



**Sector Composition**



Sector	Percentage
Cut and Polished diamonds	72.6%
Gold jewellery	24.9%
Gold medallions and coins	6.0%
Coloured gemstones	10.4%
Silver jewellery	4.4%
Pearls and Synthetic Stones	0.7%
Rough diamonds	1.3%
Others	29.6%

- Cut and Polished diamonds
- Gold jewellery
- Gold medallions and coins
- Coloured gemstones
- Silver jewellery
- Pearls and Synthetic Stones
- Rough diamonds
- Others

Figure 5

## INTERVIEW 1

*Interviewer: Rebecca Lancaster*

*Interviewee: Prianka Highfield*

*Age: 32*

*Occupation: Director of Operations to Barnhart, Van Dyke & Millard*

*Country of Residence: 0 years - 3 years Mumbai, India : 3 years - current California*

**How old were you when you left India?**

I was three when I left. I don't remember much of my time actually living there, but I visit my family there often.

**How often?**

Usually once a year.

**That's wonderful. How long have you lived in the United States?**

I moved to California when I was three and have lived here ever since. Probably around thirty years.

**What is your experience with marriage in India?**

I got married in America but from experience it usually lasts about 3-4 days. And depending on what type of family you come from (lower or higher in the social class) some people have an arranged marriage.

**What types of gifts are exchanged between families for a marriage in India? What type of gifts do the fiances gift each other?**

The father of the bride pays for the wedding and offers the husbands family Dowry. It could be anywhere from money, property or some other kind of gift.

**Are there any symbols of marriage in India?**

In the Hindu culture women sometimes wear a mangalsutra or a sindoor.

**How do people make others aware that they are married/engaged in India?**

They tell them or people are invited to the wedding

**Do people wear rings in India?**

Depends on what religion you are. Hindus do not, Christians do. But the new generation of Hindus sometimes wear rings. It just depends on what they prefer and personal style.

**If yes, why do people wear rings?**

I wear a ring, because I'm married. But like I said, I was married in America, so it was customary to do so. In India they sometimes wear one on their ring finger (left hand) during their engagement.

**What type of metal would you want your 'dream' ring to be made out of? What type of gem would you want it to include?**

I always liked white gold with diamonds

**Would you buy your daughter and son the same ring? If no, what would be the differences between the two rings?**

They can buy their own rings

**What types of wedding/marriage traditions exist in India?**

If you google Hindu weddings they go more into detail on it. It usually consists of swami's and a holy fire. (She didn't seem to want to go into detail about this one)

- Online: "In the center of the mandap, or wedding altar, a fire is kindled. A Hindu marriage is a sacrament, not a contract. To signify the viability of the ceremony, fire is kept as a witness and offerings are made. The bride's brother gives three fistfuls of puffed rice to the bride as a wish for his sister's happy marriage. Each time, the bride offers the rice to the fire. This offering is known as a *homam*."

(<https://www.brides.com/story/hindu-wedding-ceremony>)

**How do people propose marriage in India?**

Depending on if it's an arranged marriage they talk to the father and mother first. Otherwise, you don't really propose to the girl, you just talk about getting married and then tell your parents when you decide. Also, people don't generally date in India unless they are fairly serious. If a guy formally asks a girl out on a date that's sort of it. It's not a two step process.

**Do Indians typically show off their wealth or are they conservative about it?**

If they come from a well to do family then they do show off their wealth.

**How do the poor celebrate marriage vs the rich?**

Depends on what religion they are. Every religion celebrates things differently. In the Hindu custom it's the same as the wealthy but not as extravagant.

## INTERVIEW 2

*Interviewer: Josefina Jaramillo*

*Interviewee: Vijayraj Patel*

*Age: 21*

*Occupation: Student*

*Country of Residence: Valsad, India*

**Let's just begin with the basics. How old are you?**

I am 21

**Where were you born and where did you grow up?**

I grew up in a small town in the western part of India Valsad in the state of Gujarat.

**How long have you been living outside of India?**

Just the past three years that I've been here in USD, so I've spent 18 years of my life back home.

**How close would you say that you and your family follow traditions in India? What do you mean by traditions? I don't know if for you tradition would mean something closely tied to religion or just well established practices in India.**

Oh okay. I would say we do partake in a majority of the traditional activities. Maybe not necessarily all the stereotypical traditions associated with Indians. We don't follow those, but we do celebrate most holidays and religious festivals, because we have a good amount of those. It's a lot of fun so we do indulge in all of those.

**This might be weird because I understand you're not married, but in regards to marriage, what is your take on marriage in India. Its spooky! Why spooky?!**

Because most of it works with arranged marriages. People getting married do have a say now, but they are married at very young ages. Like I have friends who are getting married and it's so weird. Yeah, but my family is pretty chill about it and have left everything completely up to me.

**What type of wedding or ceremony traditions exist in India? What are some of them, because I understand the list can be quite extensive?**

What usually happens is that it's not just the two individuals getting married, but rather both of the families so it's a very complex process. First the families meet, the people that are married

meet, then an engagement date is set. Then the engagement happens and in about a year, the wedding ceremony take place. The wedding itself is elaborate and can take up to weeks because there's many rituals that go into it. There's dances. It's very elaborate and on top of that people try to make it as extravagant as possible. My dad always talks about how he is going to make my wedding so extravagant. He keeps saying that he's going to have three wedding for me. Its crazy, extensive, elaborate and extravagant. Lots of great food, lots of music and dance.

**That sounds like so much fun! You mentioned that more than just the individuals marrying, the families “marry” too. Is there a specific way in which this proposal happens?**

So it works in different ways. The people getting married can bring it up and see what its like for the families. Its almost like “family facilitated” dating. So parents can say, “Hey this girl is really cool, you should go out with her and see what its like.” Then if it goes well, they would continue to formalize it and go ahead with an engagement.

**Are any gifts exchanged between the families?**

A lot! A lot. There are several. Within the families there are gift exchanges as well. For example, on the day before the wedding, both the groom and the bride would receive a gift on behalf of their respective maternal uncle. Everyone in the family has certain thing they need to do during a wedding, and gift exchanges are everywhere.

**What type of gifts would these be?**

They are pretty elaborate. It can be gold jewelry, fine clothing, accessories and perfumes. All sorts of things.

**Do fiancés interchange gifts as well?**

Yes. During the engagement, there are gift exchanges and during the wedding as well. I think the wedding attire for the bride is supposed to be a gift from the groom. And it tends to be a very ornate and extravagant saree.

**Are there symbols of marriage in India?**

Traditionally there are a couple. If a couple is married, the woman would typically have a manga sutra, which is a specific necklace. They also have the bindi on the forehead, but many times unmarried women wear them too. The manga sutra is definitely the biggest now, but it's becoming obsolete. I would say however, that some people now have engagement rings. But they are still all over the place. Some people wear them and others don't care for them.



**Are these marriage traditions and weddings different amongst the different social castes?**

Not necessarily different castes. Different states do have different traditions. And of course it also depends on the different religions people observe. In the Hindu tradition, the wedding traditions have a lot to do with the last names of the families.

**You mentioned some people do wear engagement rings. What type of rings are they? Are they like the classic Western style engagement rings?**

Yes. Diamond rings, platinum bands. All of that. Indians like to spend on jewelry. Indian women have so much jewelry. They are fond of jewelry. Especially gold. Its worn during festivals and special occasions so you would see big sets of gold.

**On what occasions, other than weddings, would a person buy jewelry for themselves of somebody else?**

There are several occasions. Simple gold chains and necklaces are very common. Many times, if it's a close relative we would gift golden necklaces. They are given to newborn babies for their naming ceremony and things like that. Golden wristbands. Gold everywhere. During weddings, many of the gifts are gold jewelry. People tend to buy gold during festivals just because people think of gold as an investment too. There's also special festivals in which we worship the goddess of wealth and gold is purchased and used during those days.

**So you would say festivals are tightly correlated with spending habits of people in India?**

Yes. It's more of a seasonal demand in that sense. Even for weddings. They follow the lunar calendar so they would typically happen during a specific time of the year.

**What perception do you think people in India have of American products and American companies?**

I would say it depends on the company.

**To wrap things up, how do you people would react to an American jewelry company in India?**

I would say it depends on the style of the jewelry you sell. Indian jewelry has a distinctive style to it. Especially jewelry that women buy for weddings and other traditions. If there's a lot of intricate craft work in the pieces, they would seek an established knowledgeable jeweler that knows how to work those styles. I would say however, that many people are skeptical and hesitant when buy jewelry from Indian vendors for fear of counterfeit gold. I believe people

would be more trusting of a well-known American brand. If the styles are adapted to the Indian fashion, I think it could take off.

### **INTERVIEW 3**

*Interviewer: Mariam Al-Essa*

*Interviewee: Yajush Sharma*

*Age: 50's*

*Occupation: Restaurant Owner*

*Country of Residence: United States of America*

**How long have you been living in the U.S?**

23 years

**What comes to your mind when I say marriage in India?**

“gaana”(songs) a big function

**How big?**

At least a 4-5 day wedding

**How do people propose marriage in India?**

Before marriage I saw my wife outside for like 10 minutes. My parents said there is One girl very good for you so come with us to take a look. Nowadays it's different but in my time I go with my parents and take a look at her in the living room where she brings tea and stuff.

**Is that the traditional way?**

Yeah nowadays it's dating, this and that, so many things but in our time marriage was different, 100% successful rate. Divorce rate was Zero. Thirty years ago there was Zero divorce. And most important, every husband/wife have some kind of problem but when husband and wife have problem we don't go to the courts, we go to the parents, it's a family matter so we decide in the family, why you go outside?

**How do you know if someone is married in India?**

There are some symbols like red color in the hair, the dot, the “mangalsutra” (necklace),and the “bichuwa” ring for the toe. All for the woman.

**Are the toe rings popular?**

Very popular

**What about hand rings?**

These rings are new tradition. The “mangalsutra” was the real tradition.

**What type of ring is it usually?**

At least minimum Gold, but if you have money diamond or expensive diamond

**Are you saying that diamond is mainly for the wealthy?**

Yeah for the wealthy, the lower category cannot afford that.

**What is the ideal gift for a spouse?**

That depends man to man but for the wife its jewelry. All the ladies love the jewelry right? And nose ring with diamond or gold, earring or necklace. Most of the time I buy diamond necklace or something from America to take back to India.

**How come?**

The authenticity and quality here is better in America. Gold in India is good, because in our family all the ornaments are 22 carat, 24 carat but not 8 carot, no one has that in India.

**Going back to the toe ring, do unmarried individuals still wear it?**

No, for fashion they can wear it but it’s not usual. They usually wear bangles, gold or plastic.

**How about hand rings? Are they popular?**

Oh yeah, everybody has that but different kinds. Somebody has silver, somebody has gold rings. Everybody has at least one ring.

**What comes to your mind when I say diamond?**

In my mind it’s a necklace or I have One diamond ring that is beautiful, I just remember that.

**Do Indians typically show off their wealth or are they conservative about it?**

No they are conservative about it. There are lower category, middle category, upper category, and upper upper category. Everyone in the middle to upper category has One Kilo of Gold in every house. My grandmother’s (Dad’s mom) jewelry goes to my mom, and then her jewelry goes to my wife, which equates more than 3 kg or something. Suppose my daughter will get married, these 2/3 necklaces, bangles, 4/5 rings, earrings to match the necklace, so it’s a whole set we will give her.

## INTERVIEW 4

*Interviewer: Derek Lao*

*Interviewee: Vijayraj Patel*

*Age: 21*

*Occupation: Student*

*Country of Residence: Valsad, India*

**Where are you from originally?**

Well, I'm from India. I come from a small town call Valsad.

**Is that close to any big cities in India?**

It falls in the middle of Surat and Mumbai, which are pretty big cities. Mumbai is about 3-4 hours away. Surat is the biggest diamond hub in India and the 3<sup>rd</sup> biggest in the world.

**In Indian culture, what does marriage symbolize?**

So, in India, it's not just the marriage of two people. It's the marriage of two families and it's a very elaborate system. Complex rituals and a lot of festivities, a lot of gift exchanges.

**What kinds of gifts do these include?**

Usually not something capital, like cars and property, but tons of jewelry, diamond, gold, and clothes.

**If I were to live in India, and I wanted to propose to this girl, how would I go about that?**

In India, marriage proposal works a bit differently because a lot of people still get married through the arranged marriage system, so the families usually get in contact. But for the engagement ceremony, rings are usually exchanged.

**With India being such a big diamond hub, is there a more dominant influence of diamond or gold in Indian culture?**

Gold has more cultural importance. It mainly stems from Hindu tradition, as well. There are a lot of cases in which gold is used for ritualistic practices as well. It's used in worship and stuff, but diamonds are more of a prosperity symbol. With the country developing, people want to show off their wealth and pomp, so they buy diamonds.

**Is there a certain age demographic that prefers to wear jewelry?**

Pretty much all ages wear jewelry. I have a lot of jewelry myself, so everyone wears jewelry. If people don't wear something on a day to day basis, they would have something for special occasions.

**What are some special occasions when people would wear jewelry?**

All festivals, especially major festivals

**What are some big festivals in India?**

Diwali. Diwali isn't just a single day, but it's a week long thing. There's also a brother sister festival called Raksha Bandhan and people exchange gold jewelry and stuff there too. People are always looking for excuses to give gifts. It's considered culturally or socially mandatory to exchange certain gifts. But festivals especially starting from August to early December, a lot of festivals are stacked during this time. There are some in Spring too, around April or March.

**If you were to be married already, how do you let others know you are married?**

Women usually have a certain kind of necklace, usually gold. It's made of a particular design and that symbolizes marriage. Married women also like to wear really thick bangles around their wrist. Gold, thick bangles.

**What about men?**

Wedding rings are gaining popularity. They are definitely exchanged during the ceremony, but I haven't seen many men wear them day to day. Even women don't place that much emphasis on wearing wedding rings.

**I've notice that jewelry is mainly more for fashion than tradition in America, is India the same?**

So, there are certain kinds of jewelry that have meaning. There is a particular sect, for example, that wear wooden beads as a necklace that hold a traditional meaning, but now they make it with gold. The basic aim is to show your prosperity.

**This may be a little generalizing, but would you say Indian culture is more flashy or conservative if they have wealth?**

That depends on the part of India that you're in. From what I know, East India like Bengal, they are very simplistic. They would rather not show off their wealth. Whereas if you look at Northwest Punjab, pomp and show is the thing. Even in my state, they show it too.

**Does it just depend on the big city versus a rural town?**

No, it's just that the culture is so different. You can see stark differences in preferences, cultures, tradition of each state and within each state too. For this particular question I cannot place it in a particular spot for you. The diamond hub in India is about two hours away from where I live.

**Do you know anyone in that industry?**

Yeah. If you ever want to come explore let me know! Another important thing you might want to know is that diamonds, jewels like rubies and emeralds are all used with gold. If you look at traditionally designed Indian necklaces, they are going to be very elaborate. Like this thick and covered in diamonds and gems.

**Does Indian culture take a preference of white diamonds over colored gems like rubies and emeralds?**

Yeah there is a generally good mix of all types of diamonds and gems used in jewelry. There is specifically a distinct influence of gold and silver.

**Are there any big brand names of jewelry that sell jewelry in India today?**

There is one which has stores throughout India. It's called Tanishq. It's a tartar enterprise. And there is another big brand that is a family name. They are pretty prominent too.

**Do they usually sell more ornate and intricate pieces or more simple pieces?**

They sell more ornate pieces. If you go with simpler pieces, I don't think they will be that successful in India. You would only have a small market for simple pieces like that.

**Do people usually get custom pieces or premade designs in India?**

It definitely varies between individuals but there are definitely people who get custom pieces designed for themselves. There are also a lot of people who also buy premade designs. I can see mainly lower income people buying premade designs.

**I'm interested in how arranged marriage works. How much do you know about that?**

A lot. Nowadays it's much more lenient. It's more like a formalized dating or parent facilitated dating. So my parents would say, "I heard about this girl. She's well educated and she seems to be doing well. Do you want to meet her? Are you interested?" Then you talk and see if you like her. Then the families meet and there is there is an elaborate ceremony. And then you all decide if you

want to go through with the engagement. There is a big engagement ceremony and then after the engagement ceremony, there is a big wedding.

**What if there is no connection between the two couples? Is it still something the family tries to push?**

That is still very dependent on the state you are in and the socio-economic status of the family. For people in my area, they are chill. If you don't like it then don't do it. My grandmother is always finding girls for me and trying to get me interested, but my parents tell her to let me decide for myself. So you see there is a difference between generations.

**What other marriage and wedding traditions are there aside from gift giving?**

There are distinct rituals that have to happen at a certain time before the wedding and during the wedding. All family members have roles during the rituals. For example, the groom's maternal uncle is supposed to bring him a bunch of gifts. A caravan of gifts including gold, jewelry, and clothes. Everything has a ritualistic function. Two days before the wedding there is a ceremony involving turmeric. People exchange gifts during that time too. The groom starts far away from the place of the wedding along with all of his guests. Then, the groom has a fancy ride like a horse, elephant, car, chariot. They dance all the way from the starting point, which can be a couple miles away. It causes a bunch of traffic. Everyone dances in front of the groom and it slowly progresses toward the venue. It's a big show.

**What does a bride usually wear on her wedding day? And the groom too?**

These answers are all from a Hindu perspective and it can vary from state to state. Brides usually wear very heavily decorated, heavily handcrafted red saree or red lehenga. She will also have a bunch of jewelry on her. Red and gold is the common color in weddings. Grooms usually wear a sherwani. It's like a long shirt. It's not as ornate as the bride but it is ornate. You will see very heavy embroidery, beads, stitched with gold strings and some have it studded with other gems as well, and a turban. People usually like to have a pin on the turban which is usually made with gold and gems too.

**Have you ever experienced or seen any gay or lesbian marriage or non traditional marriage?**

It was just decriminalized a couple weeks ago. It was a law passed by the British in the 1800s and it just carried on. I'm hoping to see something in the future.



**Even if it is illegal to get married, do you still see gay or lesbian couples?**

Growing up I haven't seen anything like that. At least not public display of it.

**On the fashion side of jewelry, if it's not for a wedding ceremony, what would you usually see people wear on a day to day basis?**

They wear necklaces called mangalsutra. That is a simplistic design that women would wear on a day to day basis. It also shows that they are married.

## INTERVIEW 5

*Interviewer: Addison Lewis*

*Interviewee: Aryaman Madireddy*

*Age: 21*

*Occupation: Student*

*Country of Residence: United States of America*

**How old are you and how long have you been in the U.S.?**

I am 21 and I've been in the States for around 10 years I'd say. I came for school and college.

**You go to UCSD, right?**

Yeah, Finance and accounting major.

**Where are you from originally?**

I'm from the city of Pune.

**What is your experience with marriage in India?**

I personally don't have any experience with marriage, I am only 21 and came to the states when I was about 10, man.

**Okay then, what do you think of when you think of marriage in India?**

Well I guess I think of big parties. They usually go on for 3-5 days. Now that I am thinking about it I went to my cousins when I was about 6 but I don't remember much.

**I know you don't remember much but what do you remember from it then?**

Well I know it was arranged, mainly cause most marriages in India are arranged... not so much anymore I guess as back then but still a large amount. It is a family gathering where they kind of just get to know each other better and party and stuff, because most of the time in arranged marriages they husband and wife barely know each other.

**Do you know if gifts are exchanged during these weddings? If so, what types of gifts?**

Oh yeah, for sure there are gifts exchanged. I am pretty sure that's like half of what goes on. I know that not only the groom and bride give each other things, but the people within each family give each other stuff too. I think it all depends on the scenario, but

the brides' dad usually pays for it. The rest of the gifts can be like fancy clothing or fancy jewelry and what not, maybe even land back in the day.

**Are there any symbols of marriage in India, such as rings or anything else?**

Well the actual wedding itself. I think the rest depends on the family and people. I know my parents wear rings, but that's cause they are Christian and moved to the states for a while before I was born. I think other religions can choose to wear a ring or not. I think sometimes women wear some sort of special necklace (manga sutra).

**How do people make others aware that they are married/engaged?**

A ring if they have one, or just tell people. Most married people are together a lot or have kids so you can just tell.

**What image does jewelry portray in India?**

Jewelry shows wealth just like everywhere else. The bigger the diamond or the fancier looking, the wealthier people think you are.

**So, are diamond rings and diamonds in general big in India?**

Yeah man, everyone loves diamonds! I mean, I don't know if they are super common or anything, but everyone loves diamonds!

**What type of metal would you want your 'dream' ring to be made out of? What type of gem would you want it to include?**

I'm assuming you mean, like, to buy for my future wife?

**Yeah, what would you want to buy for your wife in the future?**

A diamond ring if I can, hopefully a big one too! Maybe some gold or silver with it.

**How do people propose marriage in India?**

Well for arranged marriages it's mainly through the parents and family setting it up. Otherwise it is the same as in the states, I think.

**Is India a materialistic culture?**

It can be, especially more today. Back when my parents were married I do not think so. Like everyone gets gifts and stuff so kind of, but I think it's more about the family and the wedding.

**I mean more in general, not really focused on the weddings here.**

Oh, then yeah. Today India is way more materialistic than it used to be. I think most places are materialistic in today's world, it all depends on where you are from and certain areas within those places. If you have the money to be materialistic and you are not the most religious people in the world, then yeah, you probably will be to a certain extent.

**So off that, do Indians typically show off their wealth or are they conservative about it?**

Yeah, if they have the money too, or come from a wealthier family then they will probably show it off. I think based on a person's religion or social class is what makes them more conservative or not, but from what I can tell if you got it you are going to probably show it.