

## Indian Weddings in Malta - impacts and perspectives

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<p>The idea behind this title is purely for my own interest, as I believe this could be a very beneficial niche market for the Maltese Tourism Industry. It all started due to the fact that the Institute was approached by a destination management company to assist in a huge up market Indian pre-wedding held on the island.</p> <p>This gave an opportunity to not just the students involved but also myself as a lecturer in such subjects, to experience a whole new approach to weddings and special events. The pre-wedding lasted for a total of three days, but the organisation and the planning behind it was something else. The involvement of various entities during this event was vast, which also gave rise to a huge influx of revenue being generated, thus helping the contribution to the Maltese economy. It has to be mentioned that the type of pre-wedding which occurred was a high-end wedding, where both families aided and assisted in the financial back up of the whole event. In fact, they not only brought their own chefs and cooks, but also had their own wedding planners, who were brought purposely to organise the pre-wedding according to their traditions and culture.</p> <p>This is also another aspect of the thesis. Due to the different caste system in India, the cultures and diets of each tribe various, and therefore with each and every event, food can also be a challenge. The high-end Indian (Brahma (Brahmin) community are used to a life of luxury and when such events occur on the island, they expect to be of the same standard, as they the events done back in India. The type of service accustomed by them is very high and therefore this would mean that the man power in these events would double in size, bringing more jobs to the industry.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> Destination weddings, Indian traditions, Indian weddings, Economic impact, Tourism, Malta	

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background on destination weddings

*What are destination weddings? Destination weddings in tourism industry are often placed under the term wedding tourism, which refers to international trips that are taken by tourists to either get married or celebrate their wedding (TII, 2009)*

Wedding tourism has lately gained quite a boost over the past decade and is documented as a significant market segment for particular destination to target. It is nowadays, a trend that couples who are preparing to get married are opting, for such an event outside their normal ambience and background. The reasons behind such a decision is varied, such as the frequency in international flights, having a unique wedding and other factors. In the view that a wedding is intended to be a once in a life time event, couples go overboard with expenses to make it as memorable as ever, and create their dream event. All of this is due to the changing norms within our societies, in order to have magnificent surroundings, a unique approach to the event, and the appeal of new market segments. There is more than just preparation for the wedding day itself. The wedding comprises in other aspects than just the ceremony and the reception. In the case of guests coming from abroad, there are things like travelling arrangements, catering for the guests, transportation and other factors that contribute to generate an economic impact on the various services provided. It means that all of the economic activities of hotels, restaurants, shops, tour guides, banks, entertainers and basically every job that has a direct or indirect impact on tourism is part of the tourism value chain (Durinec, 2013)

When planning a wedding, there are various factors involved which contributes to local economy in a number of ways, it has been recognized as a big opportunity for destinations promoting themselves in the international market. Primarily, couples generally use local goods and services, relying on vendors such as caterers, musicians and transportation specialists whose businesses are directly or indirectly connected to the wedding industry.

Secondly, weddings involve out-of-town guests who are, in essence, tourists during their stay (Daniels & Loveless, 2007) Instead of an individual, a couple or a family; destination weddings can bring groups with up to a couple of hundreds of visitors. Their expenditures on accommodation, food and beverage, transportation and entertainment bring profit into the region, thus embracing local economy.

Thirdly, couples may celebrate their newlywed status by organizing additional events. Studies show that one in three couples plan a group activity (e.g. a sightseeing tour) for their guests, along with the rehearsal dinner, the after-ceremony reception, and the next-day breakfast. (Durinec, 2013)

Part of the government national tourism policy consists in branding the Maltese islands as part of a Promise to deliver what was asked by the guest. In fact, efforts have been made in restoring number of cultural heritage attractions, and buildings in order to use them as diversify renting spaces for wedding ceremonies and reception areas. These venues have very high potential for introducing unique locations, that make the whole experience exclusive. Besides these venues portray to the guest, a glimpse of the immense history that the islands have to offer, besides all the breath-taking views. Up to few years there were only a few locations and venues that gave rise to such factors. To date, most of the cultural heritage places are open for events like wedding, which brings about quite a diversity of venues to choose from. All of this was possible after the accession of the Maltese islands in the EU (European Union), where a total of 120 million was made available in structural funds to the tourism industry until 2013. In 2007 Malta used 12 million in projects that are marked as tourism-related. Much of this funding is allocated to the restoration of historical and archaeological heritage. (Foxell, 2010) The vision of the current government is now focused more on the attraction of tourists from the distant markets include long established ones such as North America, Japan and Australia and more recent ones such as the BRIC markets which group Brazil, Russia, India and China. (Tourism, 2015)

### **1.1.1 Unique aspects of destination weddings**

The wedding destination industry help in contribution to the local economic development in a number of ways. The norm is, that the couple as a rule use local goods and services, depending on vendors such as florist, caterers, transportation etc. Such occurrences aid the local economy through the multiplier effect and generates more revenue as per the couple demands and wants. A second effect is that the couple would need to find accommodation for their guests, who are essentially tourist during their stay and finally the couple would also most probably use the destination as their honeymoon.

Different locations appeal to various couples as their ideal wedding destination. It all boils down what type of environment and ambience the client wants. The main element of the concept is to satisfy the wants and needs of the couple. However, it is also vital that the event needs also to justify the trip made by the couple and the guests. In this aspect, the Maltese islands are very fortunate, that the various locations and venues found around,

can be utilised in all types of seasons. Of course, this also depends mainly on the capacity of the wedding party itself. These locations should be of cultural significance to everyone concerned and also have strong, communicable imagery. Such events can also contribute significantly to international tourism competitiveness. (Getz, 1995) According to a report done by CNBC, people usually spend between 2 million rupees (€ 28,239.98 Euros) and 20 million rupees (€ 282,408.89 Euros) on three to five days of celebrations, and an estimated 10 million weddings take place every year. This makes it a € 2,824,057.80 billion Euro market, according to industry experts. Add expenditure on clothes, jewellery and match-making services, and the Indian marriage industry is estimated at a whopping € 37,652,432.96 billion Euros. (Gauri, 2015) The Indian wedding is getting bigger and fatter and the wedding planner presiding over it is now a key part. No longer the preserve of the super-rich, upper middle-class Indians are also looking to outsource their big day to professionals, from online planners to hands-on coordinators, who promise a glitch-free event. (Gauri, 2015)

Malta has only started tapping into such an industry. This is also due to the vision that the current government is also envisaging for the future of the Maltese tourism and hospitality sector. This one event had most of the Maltese hospitality operational services at the guest's disposal. This was only a pre-wedding which lasted three days and generated over a million euros to the local economy. However, since this event, Indian weddings in Malta have increased. In fact, this summer there were another two that took part in our beautiful Islands. The Island of Malta is situated in the heart of the Mediterranean where it is surrounded by magnificent scenery and blue skies. The Maltese Islands have a vast variety of venues, whether it is a romantic wedding on the beach with spectacular views of the sunset or a fairy tale wedding in one of our palaces these islands can offer or other unique locations. (Why Malta?, n.d.)

### **1.1.2 The impacts of wedding destinations**

These exclusive events give rise to three potential areas of economic development that relates to weddings: Visiting Friends and Relatives tourism (VFR), honeymoon travel and destination weddings. Information gathered by the Malta Tourism Authority in 2015 shows that 23.4% of the tourists came from Asia and the Pacific (UNWTO, 2016) out of which 169,732 visited friends and relatives (MTA, 2015). Historically, business did not take a keen interest in VFR tourism, as many believed it had very little economic value in comparison to other forms of tourism. (Seaton, 1997) This notion has changed over the years,

as studies have shown, that this form of tourism covers over 24% of the short term departures (Collins, 2002) Furthermore, for many destinations, VFR is the principal form of tourism and operates as a means of generating repeat visitation over time (Cave, 2004) VFR tourism is a common form of travel for all age groups and becomes increasingly important as individuals age (Collins, 2002) *Weddings gives relatives of the couple an excuse to travel and as families become less centralized, it is often very difficult for groups to get together for holiday gatherings, however weddings provide a motivation for travel.* (Daniels, 2007)

In the services that cover honeymoon travel as by today standards, there is accommodation, series and transportation included, which became a norm as back as the 1820's (Towner, 1985). However, before the honeymoon notion, the only form of travel was the Grand Tour which lasted between 1500 to 1820 (Fridgen, 1996) Innovation and technology have progressed quite a lot on all aspects from transportation to other services and allowed tourism to become more of a commercial business and opportunities for people to travel for pleasure and leisure. This has also allowed people to travel for longer period of times and opened up the doors to mass tourism. Today the honeymoon is a way of expressing the couple travelling together to launch their new life together. An American survey estimated that American couples spend over \$ 7 billion a year on honeymoon travel (Group, 2005) Honeymoon destinations favorites will differ by culture, generally based on the geographical proximity, even though this is not always the case, due to couples opt to visit more oriental places. In most cases the typical honeymoon destination would include some common features such as typically warm weather, a romantic image, shopping opportunities, water or beach activities and cultural or historic in nature.

The destination wedding occurs when a couple decides to hold their wedding in a location where neither of them resides (Daniels, M and Loveless, 2007) Generally such a destination is exotic and often merges with the honeymoon, also very commonly known as the weddingmoon, a term coined by Sandals Resort, which specializes in Caribbean destination weddings. According to the Fairchild Bridal Group, 86% of couples consider a destinations wedding, while on 16% actually have one. (Group, 2005) Couples tend to go for destination weddings for various reasons. One such reason could be having very intimate affairs with only their closest friends and families, since there are travel costs involved. Destination weddings are most of the time all inclusive, which streamlines the process planning. Last and least a destination wedding is a vacation for the couple and their guests, one that has to be memorable for everyone. The preparation and involvement of



such weddings are also taken into consideration from a financial aspect. It all depends upon the affordable budget of the couple.

### **1.1.3 Push and Pull factors of a destination**

The tourism aspect as a variety of activities and services that fall under the hospitality aspect of a destination. These areas are pushed forward by the various market forces to bring about the different economic conditions within the locality. Such services include aspects of the ease of accessibility to the host destination, e.g. airline routes and their schedules, the care and quality of other services delivered each day such as communication, social interaction and the customer contact. Tourism is a very significant contributor to the nation's wealth and that the reliance of our economy on tourism earnings is substantial are basic facts that had long been apprehended. (Mangion & Vella, 2000)

Successful pairing of the push and pull factors is vital when marketing destinations especially when it comes to the understanding and examining the motives behind the market segments, the designing of promotions and development of a destination. It is important for the destination, to find out what motivates the potential visitor to travel to a particular location, in order to be able to predict future results. Until recently, the main nationalities travelling to the Maltese Islands consisted in British, French, German and Italian tourists. However, with new strategies implemented by the local government, has brought out different markets, not only as visitors but also in utilising Malta as their wedding destination. According to Yoon and Uysal (2005), an integral approach can be used to study the relationship between the tourist motivation and push/pull motivations, satisfaction and destination and loyalty. The '*motivational construct model*' that was developed by them, showed that if tourism managers improve and sustain inflows, and put effort in achieving a high satisfaction in customer level, this would create a much more positive post purchase tourist behaviour. (Yoon & Uysal, 2005) Ultimately this would leave a positive effect on the competitiveness of the destination. Push and pull factors of tourist behaviour are somewhat two faces of the same coin and if marketers and tourism psychologists want to understand the motivational tools at play, those factors which are inherent to that particular place or event or activity, and trigger an affirmative choice response, need to be incorporated in the model (Goossens, 2000) Studies have portrayed the fact, it is not only the destination that attracts the tourist to visit, but also the number of activities provided while there (Lee, O'Leary, Lee, & Morrison, 2002), such as sight-seeing, skiing, fishing, swimming and underwater sports, which these are considered some of the packages form on the Maltese Islands. (Lofreda, 2015)

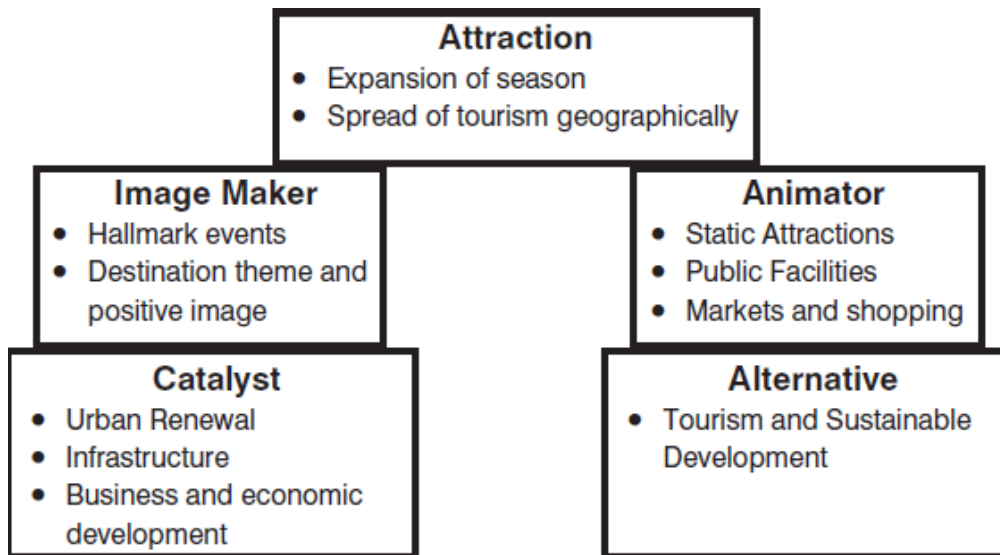


Figure 1. model demonstrating the potential benefits of event tourism (Getz 1991)

Of course, all of this entails that this will result in economic impacts such as benefits and cost to the local society. All the above areas interact with each other to make the destination much more appealing to the traveller, bringing about more revenue and visitors.

On the other hand, Crompton's model (Crompton, 1979) came up with similar ideas on the notion of what triggers tourist to travel to particular destinations. In his model, the push factors are driven by internal factors for which tourists are motivated to travel for their own needs. The push factors consist in what attracts the tourist towards the destination through their motivation. At a closer look, the push factors include, gaining knowledge about the world, escape from the daily life, and prestige in visiting a particular destination, as well as forming close bonds with family and friends, besides the rest of the factors mentioned by Yoon and Uysal. Crompton's focus was more on the push factors and the motivational needs of the traveller. The pull factors can be considered as factors influences the when, where and how people travel (Mill & Morrison, 1998) in relation to what attractions or attributes are found at the destination. In other words, what pulls travellers to a destination, is how much activities and fascinations it provides. However, Hunt (1975) argues a tourist area can influence the growing of a destination on the people's perceptions of images and beliefs, even more than tangible resources. As a result, positive perceptions on a destination will communicate better purchasing of the location itself, while negative images will scare the traveller away. A person's image of a location consists in the knowledge about the area, the feeling towards these attributes and the general behaviour in the area. These attributes allow the traveller in having their own opinion about the

destination, according to the tourist specific characteristic in relation to the image of the destination. This means that no single image is attributed to the specific area, but rather a series of factors that can and will influence the traveller visiting the particular destination. In particular, age, gender, nationality, frequency of visitation, and purpose of visit tend to influence visitors' decision-taking processes and their on-site evaluations of the place. (Beerli & Martin, 2004)

## **1.2 Justification of the study**

The main scope behind this research question is purely of my own interest. Indian weddings have just started to become popular recently, and the way these are organized, the traditions behind it and the economic revenue that is generated, has instilled curiosity in such a topic. The involvement of various entities during such events was vast, which also gave rise to a huge influx of revenue being generated, thus helping the contribution to the Maltese economy. It has to be mentioned that the type of wedding which occurred was a high-end wedding (Brahmin and Sikh clans), where both families aided and assisted in the financial back up of the whole event. In fact, they not only brought their own chefs and cooks, but also had their own wedding planners, who were brought purposely to organise the pre wedding according to their traditions and culture. Due to the different caste system in India, the cultures and diets of each tribe various, and therefore with each and every event, food can also be a challenge. The high-end Indian (Brahma (Brahmin) community are used to a life of luxury and when such events occur on the island, they expect to be of the same standard, as they the events done back in India. The type of service accustomed by them is very high and therefore this would mean that the man power in these events would double in size, bringing more jobs to the industry.

The Maltese islands have a unique selling point to such events, as it is versatile in style and potential customers and guests can find different locations for their experience, from palaces, sea side locations, magnificent views of the Grand Harbour and medieval cities. This is a quite unusual to find such locations in a limited space and at such short distance as well. This is an advantage to promote Malta in such a manner. Malta offers such unique locations that it would be a pity not to insert this as well in the picture, to make the whole experience more remarkable. The unique geographical position of the Maltese islands, makes the location in the middle of the Mediterranean an ideal strategic position to be able to cope with all sorts of tourists and visitors coming from all five continents. Also, the fact that the Maltese are renowned for our hospitality makes everything much easier for foreigners to come and get married here.

It is evident from the literature review conducted that there is very little or no information when it comes on the effects and impacts of Indian weddings on the local scene. This study is aimed to address this shortage and try to understand in what manner such events can become a standard market. This research is intended to analyse what little impacts exist locally. The findings will provide a clear insight of what services are needed and provided in order to produce such a high standard of hospitality services and operations and give a closer understanding of economic generated with such an event. This research will be very beneficial for future destination management companies, the Malta Tourism Authority and local weddings planners in giving an appreciative scenario in order to survive and other researchers who would like to further analyse this study.

### **1.3 Objectives and purpose**

The aim and purposes of this research are the following:

1. To identify the economic impacts of a high end Indian wedding, generally spreading over a period of seven days
2. To describe service the different religious aspects of the wedding- its tradition and cultural background, and to what extend this has an impact
3. To determine the various food specifications and symbolism in accordance to the caste religious beliefs
4. To identify to what measures organisers have to go to in order to meet the high demands expected by the customer in terms of the service given.

These objectives are the basis on which this study is conducted thus giving this research a deeper understanding of the problem at hand. For this purpose, all the references used are in the APA format within the Microsoft word.

### **1.4 Structure of the Thesis**

This chapter provides the background information of the study which leads to the research problem. It briefly analyses the problem in the literature and identifies the impact which the study seeks to address. The proposal of the study is explained into further detail how important these festivities are, and concluded this chapter on how such big events as Indian weddings can impact the local hospitality sector.

Chapter 2 looks at the literature review that helped in giving a clearer picture on the background of Indian weddings. Since direct literature was not found, the chapter was divided

into various sub chapters. In the first part the concept of consumption theory and how it relates to the extravagant standards of high end weddings was explored. The second part looked at the various implications needed to hold an Indian wedding in its full glory, custom and tradition. The third part combined the importance of food in accordance to the different religions found in India, as well as, the symbolism allocated between food and the wedding ceremony.

Chapter 3 explains the choice of methodology and methods adopted in this research based subject, on the analysis and objectives required. It explored the methodological position to be used and discovered the various research paradigms which lead to the choice of the data collection approach adopted. The qualitative strategy was used to interview the companies who are directly related in bringing such a market to Malta, and who are also responsible in organising all the relevant logistics for the event to be a success.

Chapter 4 presents the research findings of the qualitative data collected during the one to one interviews that were conducted. In this chapter, all questions asked are being analysed and compared with the two main organisations.

Chapter 5 presents the research conclusions which includes an evaluation of the study.

## 2 Literature Review

Malta and its islands are a unique case for a wedding destination. Lately statistics has shown that foreigner weddings are growing in demand as a location set on our beautiful shores. The ever-increasing numbers of tourists visiting are quite high of which the total arrival of in June 2016 is of 166,266 out of which 26,772 are non-EU and 12,224 and the main objective was to visit for events rather than business or holiday (Malta N. S., 2014). This accounts for quite a number of possible weddings happening locally. A total of 2,871 marriages were registered in Malta (51.7% Religious Marriages and 48.3% Civil Marriages). (Malta N. S., 2014) Several weddings held by foreigners are a combination of both, depends on their religious background.

### 2.1 The economic impacts of tourism in Malta

Tourism brings about lots of different changes and contributions with a locality. There are various areas that affect such occurrences, which in turn can be positive or a negative reference to the economies of scale. Tourism affects the country or the locality through several areas: social and cultural, political, environmental and economical. Tourism can be explained as a profitable income to a country. *Expenditure by incoming tourists has a major impact on the Maltese economy. It directly contributes about 12% to 15% to Malta's GDP (i.e. to Malta's economic value added), and has high multiplier effects in comparison with other forms of expenditure, in that tourist expenditure has a relatively low import content. It also generates indirect demand for many other goods and services including agricultural and manufactured goods, banking and transport. As a result, it creates considerable employment, not just in the hotel and catering establishments, but in the other sectors which benefit from tourist expenditure. Tourism also generates about 20% of foreign exchange inflows on trade in goods and services.* (Balzan, 2005) *The most important positive economic effects of tourism are to increase in budget revenues, production expansion, stimulation of investments, and improvement in the population's welfare. Among the negative effects of tourism, the most important impacts are inflation, financial leakage, infrastructure costs, and economic dependence. The main objective of this research is to compare economic impacts of tourism and suggest reducing negative impacts, as tourism is one of the main driving contributors of economy to gross domestic product of many developing countries.* (Kumar, Hussain, & Kannan, 2015) The position of Malta in the middle of the Mediterranean has made it possible for commerce and tourism to be available since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Apart from tourism, general trade, financial services and other industries have reached our shores, which make up the Maltese economy

today. These impacts influence other sectors within the hospitality industry that can be affected via direct, indirect and induced contribution.

The direct sector includes areas like accommodation, transportation, entertainment and attractions. The industries that are related directly comprise accommodation services, food and beverage services, retail trade, transportation, and cultural sports and recreational services. According to the report issued by the WORLD Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP in 2014 was €1,127.6 million (14.7% of GDP). This is forecast to rise by 4.0% to € 1,172.5 million Euros in 2015. However, in the latest reports indicated by the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) the actual contribution was that of €1,643.9 million. (Authority, Tourism 2016, 2015) This primarily reflects the economic activity generated by industries such as hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services (excluding commuter services). But it also includes, for example, the activities of the restaurant and leisure industries directly supported. (WTTC, 2015) The direct contribution reflects the total internal spending for a particular location by locals and non-residents for leisure and business purposes. This also includes the internal spending of the local government in recreational, and cultural services which can be linked to the visitors' services.

The 'indirect' contribution includes the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and jobs supported by: Travel & Tourism investment spending – an important aspect of both current and future activity that includes investment activity such as the purchase of new aircraft and construction of new hotels; Government 'collective' spending, which helps Travel & Tourism activity in many different ways as it is made on behalf of the 'community at large' – e.g. tourism marketing and promotion, aviation, administration, security services, resort area security services, resort area sanitation services, etc. The tourist expenditure per capita in 2015 was of €918 Euros. (Authority, Tourism 2016, 2015) Domestic purchases of goods and services by the sectors dealing directly with tourists - including, for example, purchases of food and cleaning services by hotels, of fuel and catering services by airlines, and IT services by travel agents (WTTC, 2015) The main expenditure contribution area is that of the food and beverage sector at 57.1%, of which 32.5% consist of restaurants expenses, followed by recreation at 16%. (Authority, Tourism 2016, 2015) While the 'induced' contribution measures the GDP and jobs supported by the spending of those who are directly or indirectly employed by the Travel & Tourism sector. This includes areas such as food and beverage, recreation, clothes, household's goods and housing. According to the report issued by the MTA, employment in accommodation (2014) was that of 5,638 full time and 3,575 part-time. In the food and beverage service areas there are

4,733 full time, while 6,279 part-timers. This indicates that travel and tourism generated 28,000 jobs directly in 2014 (16.0% of total employment) and was forecasted to grow by 2.2% in 2015 to 28,500 (16.3% of total employment). This includes employment by hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services (excluding commuter services). It also includes, for example, the activities of the restaurant and leisure industries directly supported by tourists (WTTC, 2015)

### **2.1.1 Promoting Malta as a wedding location**

The unique positioning of the Maltese islands in the middle of the Mediterranean, has put this wedding destination in a unique destination, filled with heritage and culture, due to the islands past history. The diverse historical happenings on the islands, has made it possible for the present locals to cater for all types of events and weddings; be it out door or in door, palaces, museums, fortifications, walled cities, gardens etc. With 7,000 years of history, the Maltese Islands are steeped in culture and heritage. The arts have always played a large role in Maltese culture and continue to do so with cultural events occurring frequently. (Authority, [www.vistmalta.com](http://www.vistmalta.com), 2012) Most of these heritage sites are also being restored thanks to the EU (European Union) funds where a total of €120 million was made available in structural funds to the tourism industry until 2013. In 2007 Malta used €12 million in projects that are marked as tourism-related. Much of this funding is allocated to the restoration of historical and archaeological heritage. (Foxell, 2010) It is usually more difficult and expensive to travel to islands, so special effort is needed to create a positive image and provide added value. Getz argues that such events can boost island tourism by emphasising unique resources and themes to make the island experience worth the cost and the effort. Such authentic attraction can be stressed through these special events where hosts meet guests on an equal basis. (Getz, 1995) In fact this is also part of the current local government vision where the following are some of the policies put in place for tourism:

- **Branding and Positioning Malta in the International Market Place**  
In the last couple of years MTA has identified Malta as becoming more and more a destination brand. So, the need is felt to reposition the marketing strategy from the status of an image to that of a brand. Enhancing the advertising to a brand, means that the destination has now become a promise towards its guests. The main notion behind this re branding is to focus more on the core values of the destination, which mainly consist of being unique, in the middle of the Mediterranean and all the cultural aspects and sights that surrounds it. Due to the strive to widen the



tourism sector globally, the promise and the quality delivered need to be above exceptional in order to compete with other destinations.

- **Attracting off-peak growth: the City-tourism dimension**  
The diverse variety of cultural tourism presented has not only made Malta unique from other competitors, but has also helped in reducing the negative effects of seasonality, by attracting tourists all months of the year. During the shoulder months (January –March) urban and cultural dimension take precedence over the summer coastal offer, as a consequence where the weather is mild in relation to strong winds and no sea is found. Such a phenomenon helps as ex pats are now also retiring in Malta, due to mild winter conditions. (Authority, National Tourism Policy 2015-2020, 2015)
- **Growing Malta's Core and Secondary Markets**  
Malta's core markets include Italy, Germany, Britain and France. Secondary markets have a good market share as well, such as Scandinavia, Spain, Russia, Ireland which are responsible to generate around 80% of Malta's tourism influx. (Authority, Tourism 2016, 2015) These markets benefit from various flight connections that range from cities and airports assist by a number of airports and airlines. This makes it easier for tourists to travel more. However, by widening the secondary markets, marks malt as a destination much easier.
- **Tapping into the BRIC and other Growth Markets**  
Attracting tourist from such market according to MTA is a long-term investment for Malta as a destination. This means that tourism related to these areas, will not be a short term but rather considered as a longer holiday period. Therefore, this means that marketing for this sector needs to clearly be defined for the development of the capacity of these markets concerned.
- **Reviewing Market Segmentation in line with contemporary consumer trends**  
Until now the market segmentation within the Maltese islands had always the elements designated by demographics, socio economic and motivational variables. MTA has moved away from the traditional areas of marketing such as sea, sun and culture, but rather is focusing more on the individualistic approach. For this reason, the marketing strategy and the potential target groups are quite diverse and consist of the following:

- Novelty seekers, travellers who want to explore new destinations
- Familiarity seekers, travellers who choose to return to known destination
- Culture enthusiasts, leisure travellers who want to experience culture and relaxed activities
- High sun seekers, travel to enjoy the sun and warm weather
- Active recreationists, those interested in sports related activities
- Romantic getaway seekers, groups of people traveling for weddings, honeymoons and romantic anniversaries
- Health and wellness seekers, people concerned in improving their health and well being
- English language learners, attracting long stay students in a specialised form of tuition
- Business travellers, such as MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and events), official business and private business visits all possess high prospects for further growth.

This division of markets relates most closely to the travel patterns and behaviour of typical visitors who seek our islands.

- Tour Operators, Independent Travellers and Online Media

The level of market within this sector is decreasing, however it will still impact in markets where customers are not willing to take risks in booking for their own holiday unaided. The more the web is providing information on such resources, tour operators are every so aiming to attract quantities of the independent travellers.

- The Cruise Market

Cruise line passengers are considered to be day trippers and therefore not accounted for as tourists. An estimated average spend of a cruise liner day tripper is of about 60 euro per person, so a total annual expenditure of 31 million is generated in this segment. (Authority, National Tourism Policy 2015-2020, 2015) This type of revenue is injected into the economy causing a wide range of operators and businesses to flourish. International trends indicate that satisfied cruise passengers are very likely to revisit a destination for a longer stay as tourists. The power of word of mouth recommendation is also an important factor in this regard. The case of the rapid growth of the Spanish tourism market to Malta following the

inclusion of Malta in Spanish cruise itineraries is a case in point. (Authority, National Tourism Policy 2015-2020, 2015)

- **Combating Seasonality through Events, Niche-markets and Clustering**  
Efforts are being made to widen the tourism sector to increase the global audience and the idea of branding and a promise to deliver within quality standards. The Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) has also identified the importance in tapping into other growing markets like the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China), besides North America, Japan and Australia. Such destination prove to be a challenge as travelling is of the long haul and most of the expense will focus on such matters. However, on the positive side, when attracting these type of markets, tourism will be on a much more high quality spending side and a longer stay. All in all parts of this tourism destination also includes the competitiveness of the location. This can be examined in at a national level through the AIDS model – Almost Ideal Demand System. This comprises in factors where the influence of the package changes the price of the destination.

### **2.1.2 Consumption theory as a means of economic impact**

Most of the above services are also sought after during certain events, like weddings. Last year in 2015 there were about 3,002 weddings in all. This comprised in 2,790 in Malta and 212 in Gozo, out of which 1,481 were civil marriages. So, the average crude rate of marriages per 1,000 persons is that of 7.0 (NSO, 2016) Since most of the services are used in weddings, it is bound that there will be quite a diversification of all the amenities needed. In fact, since this study focuses on the introduction of high end Indian weddings in Malta, these services are guaranteed to be used and in fact they were. According to Keynes, the current level of income that determines the consumption of an individual and also of society. (Supriya, n.d.) He stresses on the fact the amount of income determines the amount of consumption experienced by the client. He also argues that as income increases consumption increases but not by as much as the increase in income. In other words, marginal propensity to consume is less than one. Marginal propensity is the measure of how much consumption changes when income changes. In the case of high end-Indian weddings, this applies a lot, as apart the wedding takes place on seven consecutive days, it is also a show case of how much either party (bride or groom's family) posses. However, there are other theories that argue otherwise. Duesenberry has propounded that con-

sumption expenditure depends on income of an individual relative to incomes of others rather than the absolute size of his own income. (Supriya, n.d.) Other sociologists debate that there are three reasons for the consumption theory to be valid:

- Relative income theory of consumption
- Life cycle theory of consumption
- Permanent income theory of consumption

The relative income theory of consumption suggests that the relative income of an individual is as a determinant of his consumption, rather than his absolute income. This also depends not only on his current income but also on the income previously accumulated.

Duesenberry argues that the consumption of a person does not indicate his absolute income, but only emphasises his contribution to society and its distribution, thus having an effect on the multiplier effect within the community.

On the other hand, the life cycle theory of consumption put forward by Ando and Modigliani, suggests that the consumption in any period is not the function of current income of that period but of the whole lifetime expected income. This means that in a lifetime, an individual is assumed to plan a pattern of consumption expenditure based on expected income in their entire lifetime. It is further assumed that individual maintains a more or less constant or slightly increasing level of consumption (Supriya, n.d.). This theory has a slight set back, as it is assumed that the individual will borrow money from the parents or other individuals until becomes of working age. In reality, this theory does not really make sense, as life happens and no one can predict the amount of expenditure needed. Planning is good, but unexpected circumstances occur, which will influence the amount of consumption income forecasted. *According to Friedman, the permanent theory of consumption is determined by long-term expected income rather than current level of income. He argues that an individual who is paid or receives income only once a week, say on Friday, he would not concentrate his consumption on one day with zero consumption on all other days of the week. He argues that an individual would prefer a smooth consumption flow per day rather than plenty of consumption today and little consumption tomorrow. Thus, consumption in one day is not determined by income received on that particular day. Instead, it is determined by average daily income received for a period. This is on the line of life cycle hypothesis. Thus, according to him, people plan their consumption on the basis of expected average income over a long period which Friedman calls permanent income.* (Supriya, n.d.) Therefore this proves that everything is relative. In the case of high end Indian wedding, where the expected consumption is great, due to the religious tradition, it is

very much expected that marriages will bring about high levels of demands and expenditure.

## 2.2 Indian weddings in Europe

Destinations in Europe are becoming quite a trend for Indian weddings. According to Guinness book of records (2010) the most expensive wedding ever held was for an Indian couple, in France in 2006, with the total cost of € 73,418,987.58 million Euros. (Durinec, 2013) Such destinations include Vienna and Italy, where in Vienna a three-day event as part of the wedding and where expecting 1,000,800 guest and supporting staff like chefs etc. Most of these weddings occur around May/ June time. (Mihir, 2016) Other sources and cases also show the amount of money generated in such events, steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal spent the equivalent of €35,329,742.19 million on his daughter's wedding in France in 2004, including an engagement party at the Palace of Versailles. Visas for France were obtained for more than 1,000 guests, staff and entertainers. When the marriage of Mittal's niece was celebrated in 2013 in his city, Barcelona Mayor Xavier Trias said it would provide a boost to the economy. Reports said some guests spent more than €23,552.98 Euros on shopping and in top hotels. (Yojana, 2016) As with all other products, in wedding destinations, the main characteristics are found in intangibility and inseparability, meaning that the trust issue is vital from the customers view. This means that in these destination weddings, require a high level of quality and delivery to make up for the amounts of money being invested in the entire event. People's preferences and norms are ever changing and this gives a contribution to the wedding sector, as couples opt to have their wedding in places of beautiful weather where their special day would be memorable in a unique location (Breg J. R.) Another example of such lavish Indian weddings around Europe, is that of Rohan Mehta, where the expense for a three-day affair, contributed in a revenue of €13,177,904.04 million Euros in economic impacts in Florence. The number of guests invited to the wedding was about 500 people in 2015. The guests all stayed in the best hotels of the area and where pampered. (Newton, 2015)

Most Indian weddings have become exaggerated, as the rich people want to show off their wealth. *The most spectacular ceremonies – such as those of the hotelier Vikram Chatwal or the daughter of the steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal – have seen astonishing displays of opulence. Expensive gifts accompanying invitations, tonnes of imported flowers, top chefs flown in from New York or Tokyo and festivities spread across multiple cities have become almost commonplace.* (Berke, 2011) The middle class is also following suit, and Indian weddings would not be complete unless there is a variety of three different cuisines, north or south Indian, "continental" or European and a third, selected from Mexican,

Japanese and Chinese, or *chinjabi*, as the local version of the latter is known. (Berke, 2011). Just to make the wedding more extravagant, the trend is that the groom arrives in a helicopter, rather than the traditional, white horse or elephants even. This also applies to the bride's mode of transport. Such helicopter rides start from around €2,355.33 Euros. The Indian wedding sector has outgrown the local type of wedding into an overseas one. Of course, the cost of such weddings will be a high one, but with lots of benefits for the destination chosen. The idea behind the weddings is to be as innovative and unique in design and decor as much as possible. According to Ravish Kapoor, a wedding designer to Bollywood stars, even the design of the wedding invitation is set around the destination in itself. He also argues that the number of guests invited would be limited, according to the number of hotels and available beds found. These guests of course get the best treatment," *from travelling in private charter flights to staying in luxe properties or castles to eating Michelin-rated cuisines and experiencing Shakira-esque entertainment.*" (Kashyap, 2014) Indian wedding costs tend to be subjective as it all depends on the family. The cost of organising a wedding in Southeast Asia is similar to organising a wedding in India, the only difference being the addition of ticket prices. The cost of a European destination can be estimated by tripling the expenditure of a European holiday and multiplying the said figure by 400, says The Wedding Design Company's Mohan. Add to this the overheads of epicurean craftsmen, lens and video masters, makeup magicians, et al, to create a fantasy wedding for the ages (Kashyap, 2014)

### **2.2.1 Consumption theory brought to life in Indian Weddings**

Weddings in India, are a model of status symbol, where the size of the event and celebration equals to the wealth and hierarchy of the new groom's family, which is now enriches the bride's family. Marrying a daughter in India, is one of the most cost-effective activities within a family occurrences. If the family is not a wealthy one, it often brings about severe debt to the parents, which can lead to a very poor economic standard of living, as a consequence, especially if there are more than one daughter in the family. A huge part of the entire marriage costs are spent in the form of dowry, which is given to the bride, while the rest is spent on the marriage celebration itself. These types of celebrations are justified by the norms and traditions of the community, and the grandeur of the event is determined by the scale of other recent weddings within the community. Poor Indian families experience similar celebrations on this extravagant theme, to celebrate the fact that the daughter would have married into a good family. Clearly this indicates that wedding celebration is associated with social status and prestige. Anthropological studies designate that Indian concepts differ very much from the Western society. In India, locals are not just distinct by

their own accomplishment and character, but also by their acquaintances and circle of friends, the number of important people they know and the status and respect given to them by their social group (Bloch, Rao, & Desai, 2002)

Within the Indian culture, marriage is a source of mobility for the bride's family. This will affect the way the family is viewed by its peers, therefore, the need to celebrate this occasion with such a big impact. Such events will upgrade the status and the value of the family, while it will also gain access to higher social networking positions, as the family moves up the social ladder via these connections. So, when a family marries into a rich one, putting on a huge wedding celebration, gives the bride's family the opportunity to show off the new connection and their new in laws. In the Indian marriage market, there are several outlines on how the marriage system works:

1. Marriage is restricted to endogamous groups - the custom of marrying only within the limits of their sub caste
2. Marriage is patrilocal – brides leave their parents' home to live with their husbands.
3. Marriages are arranged for both grooms and brides by their parents
4. Marriage is considered final – few cases of separation, but no divorce.

### **2.2.2 Local wedding budgets vis a vis Indian budgets**

As a general insight to how weddings are planned here on the island, it is important to understand how such occurrences go about. First and foremost, the biggest part of the budget is allocated to the venues. The rental fees of these locations vary a lot, depending whether it is public property or a private establishment. Generally, the venue take about 40 – 60% of the total wedding budget. However, this is an estimate of what venues charge here in Malta:

- 50% of venues charge 40-60 €/person
- 20% of venues charge 60 - 70 €/person
- 20% of venues charge 70-80 €/person
- 10% of venues charge 80+/ person

These prices are charged as standard, but for more superior menus and beverages, prices will be more deflated. For example, if you have 50 guests you will most likely spend in the range of 2000- 3500 €. Then you need to add rental fees (if applicable) and over-time charges (if applicable). (Selvagi, 2015) Other things that need to be considered are the rental fees. Not every venue in Malta charges such a cost, however these still need to

be taken into perspective. Some of them will offer you exclusive use with 'price/person' package and some of them will apply a minimum consumption policy

Rental fees of Malta wedding venues:

25% of venues charge No rental fee but minimum consumption policy applies 25% of venues charge a rental fee of 500 - 1000 €

25% of venues charge a rental fee of 1000-2000 €

25% of venues charge a rental fee of 2500 - 4500 €

*Consumption policy means that a certain amount on food and drinks have to be spent in order to have the venue for exclusive use. This also means that you cannot have your wedding reception at the venue even if you cannot reach this amount, but you would not have exclusive use and other guests of the venue can be there. For this option, the customer would not go over price/person as venue cost. The range for minimum consumption fees is €1800 - 6000 euro depending on the venue. Some venues have more than one area so they charge different rental fees for different sections and different minimum consumption fees can apply for different areas (Selvagi, 2015)*

Venues in Malta also apply overtime charges after the stipulated 7-8 hours as per contract, almost 90% of these locations. Most of the time the rate would be that of 150 -200 €/hour overtime, while the exact number will often depending on number of guests. Mostly venues in Malta have in-house catering and some of them charge separately for overtime services. Charges are applied in most venues after 7 hours (70%) while in others (30%) will charge overtime service after 4-5 hours.

### **2.3 The Malta Indian Connection**

Malta has good diplomatic relations with India. It all started around the 1800 when both Malta and India, were under the influence of the British colony. In fact, in 1878, the British posted quite a number of Indian soldiers to Malta, thus bringing about the current local Indian community. The Maltese government encourages a lot of Indian trade business on the island, and therefore it is quite an exposure to promote the island as a wedding destination. Most of the traders found on Malta are part of the Sindhi community, and who are very active in their Hindu traditions and organise quite a lot of it locally such as the Holi, the festival of colours. This is a traditional festival that takes place on the day of the full moon of the Phaluga month (March) in India. It is a celebration that good omen has taken



over the bad omen in the beginning of spring time. The participants throw a variety of colourful powder in the air and paint themselves in different colours, to express the joy of freedom and colour in everyday life. An important aspect in this event, is that all the Indian people are meant to be equal on this particular day irrelevant of the caste system. The festival's message is to bring about love and peace. However, the Indian community in Malta keep quite a low profile, even though they are very good traders. (Falzon, 2011) India was one of the first countries to recognize independence of Malta in 1964 and established diplomatic relations with it in 1965. Although Malta is a small country, with population of 4.15 million, the island's accession to the EU on May 1, 2004, has brought about a shift in its global profile. With a view to bring its policies in line with EU positions, Malta has quit NAM (Non Aligned Movement) as well as G-77 (Group of 77) (Falzon, 2011)

However, Malta continues to attract a high degree of significance to the Commonwealth, and has hosted the CHOGM Summit in November 2005 and again in 2015. Malta also attains a considerable importance to the Mediterranean dimension, and is also a member of the 5+5 Dialogue. Even though some Maltese-Indians trace their roots in Malta to 1890s, the Indian community has remained small in numbers, mostly have obtained Maltese nationality. They are mostly engaged in business of textiles, and food industry. There are also some Indian students studying in Malta. Malta has extended full cooperation during the evacuation of Indians from Libya in 2011 and again in August 2014. (India M. o., n.d.) Malta first opened an Assistant High Commission of India in Malta in 1993, but was closed in 2001. On the other hand, Malta opened its High Commission in Delhi in July 2007 and since then has appointed a resident high commissioner. It also has Honorary Consuls in Mumbai and Chennai (India M. o., n.d.)

#### **2.4 The Indian weddings and traditions**

Indian weddings, also called 'Vivaah', are best known for the splendour, traditions, elegance, colours and almost carnival-type celebration associated with this sacred event. A wedding is the highest event in an Indian family, and it involves much expenditure and social commitments for the families of the bride and the groom. There are several stages in the occurrence, which is mainly attributed to the tradition and culture. There are exactly 13 stages within the wedding event: Pre-wedding rituals are key in Indian weddings. These are considered to bring about luck and good fortune for the upcoming wedding. Generally, these rituals last about a week, creating excitement and enthusiasm amongst relatives and close friends.

This consists of two areas the Pithi (good luck ceremony) and the Mehndi (colourful celebrations held by women only) which both different meaning on their own.

The Pithi ceremony is a ritual performed for good luck. As a norm, the bride and groom have separate pithi ceremonies at their respective family homes. Pithi is a paste made mainly of turmeric, chickpea flour and rose water. Family members and friends of the bride and groom apply the paste on the bride/groom's skin. This yellow paste is thought to brighten and even the skin tone and is applied on one of the days prior to the wedding ceremony. (Figure 2)



Figure 2. The Pithi ceremony - application of tumeric paste on bride (Kashyap, 2014)

This followed by the Mehndi, a colorful celebration is held the night before the wedding, which is habitually celebrated by the women on the bride's side of the family. Normally, a skilled mehndi artist or relative will apply henna paint, in complex designs to the hands and feet of the bride and other women in the family. These intricate designs symbolize joy, beauty, spiritual awakening and offering. The deeper the colour of the henna painting, the deeper the love of the groom towards the bride. Tradition has it, that once the bride arrives at the groom's house, she is not expected to do any housework until the henna fades. Guests create a festive atmosphere by dressing in bright colors, singing traditional wedding songs, and dancing to popular music. (Figure 3)



Figure 3. The Mehndi – henna illustrations on bride’s hand and feet (Kashyap, 2014)

The traditional wedding ceremony consists of a series of religious rituals that unite not only the bride and groom, but also their families. In the Indian culture, maintaining close ties with immediate and extended family is crucial. For most Indians, family plays a key role in making life decisions. The wedding ceremony begins with the arrival of the groom (Kashyap, 2014)

Baraat (The Groom’s Procession): Accompanied by his family and friends in a festive procession known as the baraat, the groom arrives at the entrance of the wedding venue on a horse or sometimes elephants. The procession comprises of his family and friends, singing and dancing around him to music generally played by a specialized dhol (large bass drum) player. The baraat is met by the bride’s family at the entrance to the wedding venue. (Figure 4)



Figure 4. Baarat – arrival of the groom (Kashyap, 2014)

The Milni, is the traditional meeting of the families. The bride's mother greets the groom with a welcoming ritual. Relatives of the bride and groom embrace and greet each other with garlands. The bride's family then escorts the groom to the mandap (a canopied altar) where the ceremony is performed. The mandap represents the home that the bride and groom will make together (Kashyap, 2014) (Figure 5)



Figure 5. Milni – meeting of the families (Kashyap, 2014)

Ganesh Puja (Prayer to Lord Ganesh): The ceremony commences with the worship of Lord Ganesh (the destroyer of all obstacles). The priest guides the groom and bride's parents in offering flowers, sweets and prayer to Lord Ganesh. (Figure 6)



Figure 6. Ganesh Puja – prayers to the gods (Kashyap, 2014)

Kanya Aagaman (Arrival of the Bride): The bride enters the hall and is escorted to the mandap by her maternal uncle and aunt, signifying that the bride's maternal side approves of the union. In other parts of India, the bride is escorted by her sisters, cousins and close female friends (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Kanya Aagaman – arrival of the bride (Kashyap, 2014)

Jai Mala (Exchange of Garlands): Once the bride approaches the mandap, the bride and groom exchange floral garlands, signifying their recognition of one another. (Figure 8)



Figure 8. Jai Mala – the exchange of the garlands (Kashyap, 2014)

Kanyadaan and Hasta Melap (Giving Away of the Bride): At this point, the bride's father pours sacred water in his daughter's hand and places her hand in the groom's hand, officially giving away his most precious gift to the groom. The groom's sister or cousin then ties the end of the groom's scarf to the bride's sari with betelnuts, copper coins and rice, symbolizing unity, prosperity and happiness. The knot represents the eternal bond of marriage (Kashyap, 2014) (Figure 9)



Figure 9. Kanyadaan and Hasta Melap – the giving away of the bride (Kashyap, 2014)

Vivah Havan (Lighting of the Sacred Fire): The priest then lights the sacred fire or Agni. Agni symbolizes the divine presence as a witness of the ceremony. Commitments made in the presence of Agni (the presence of God). (Figure 10)



Figure 10. Vivah Havan – lighting of the sacred fire (Kashyap, 2014)

Mangal Phera (Circling the Sacred Fire): The bride and groom walk around the sacred fire seven times keeping in mind the four aspirations in life: Dharma (duty to each other, family and God), Artha (prosperity), Karma (energy and passion) and Moksha (salvation). The bride, representing divine energy, leads the groom in the first three rounds, while the groom leads in the last four rounds, signifying balance and completeness. In some cultures, the bride and groom walk around the fire four times, with the bride leading in the first three rounds, and the groom leading in the final round. The bride's brother places rice grains in her hands after she completes each round to signify his pledge to always support and protect her in times of need. Once the couple has completed the four rounds, there's a race to see who will sit down first. It is said that whoever sits down first will rule the house (Kashyap, 2014) (Figure 11)



Figure 11. Mangal Phera - circling the Sacred Fire (Kashyap, 2014)

Saptapadi (The Seven Sacred Steps): Now the couple takes seven steps together, taking a sacred vow with each step:

1. Together we will live with respect for one another.
2. Together we will develop mental, physical and spiritual balance.
3. Together we will prosper, acquire wealth and share our accomplishments.
4. Together we will acquire happiness, harmony and knowledge through mutual love.
5. Together we will raise strong, virtuous children.
6. Together we will be faithful to one another and exercise self-restraint and longevity.
7. Together we will remain lifelong partners and achieve salvation.

When they return to their seats, the bride will move to sit on the groom's left side, taking the closest possible position to the groom's heart. The groom then offers the bride lifelong protection by placing a mangalsutra, or sacred necklace made of black and gold beads, around her neck and applying sindoor (red vermilion powder) on the crown of her forehead. These two offerings signify the bride's status as a married woman and the groom's devotion to the bride. The bride and groom also exchange rings at this time, feeding each other sweets. (Figure 12)





Figure 11. Saptapadi -The Seven Sacred Steps (Kashyap, 2014)

Finally, the Aashirvaad (Blessings for the Married Couple) Women from both families, whisper blessings into the bride's ear. The couple then bows down to the priest, their parents and elder relatives to receive their final blessings. The guests shower the newlywed couple with flowers and rice to wish them a long and happy marriage. (Figure 13)



Figure 13. Aashirvaad - Blessings for the Married Couple (Kashyap, 2014)

#### **2.4.1 Introduction of Indian Food at Weddings**

Indians love to eat and show off their food culture. A wedding is the ideal time to bring the best out the local traditions and culture. Each segment of India will have particular

food associated with it and therefore, caterers will have to be alter to what the client asks for. In North Indian Hindu weddings will usually have a Mughlai spread, which means lots of paneer, creamy curries, tandoori meat, and buttery naans. Meat dishes like butter chicken and lamb curry will feature, while Coastal Hindu Weddings, like Goan weddings or Fijian weddings will also include crab and fish curries. On the other hand, South Hindu wedding are all about vegetarianism. Rice is utilised more in their commodities. Traditionally, the plate of choice is a banana leaf and utensils are non-existent - it's all hands and appetite. Different rice dishes, like lemon rice and curd rice, in addition to daal, sabzi, dosa, idlis, feature in these types of weddings. Vegetarianism is a new phenomenon amongst the Hindus. When the caste system was enforced, it was more restricted to the lower classes, so the upper classes could have the meat all to themselves. In fact, in this modern day and age, the upper classes opt for the vegetarianism, while it is very rare to find such a concept in the lower classes.

In a typical Indian wedding, certain foods are a must, as part of the celebration. Finger food is mainly associated with such celebration, as their custom comprises, that food is eaten with fingers and no cutlery utensils to be used. Most of the items presented at these occasions, characterise refined street foods made more appealing to the taste and appearance. Typically, in the Mendhi occasion *chaat* foods are served, which means hot and sour. Such foods include:

- *Gol gappa* or *panipuru* – crisp puffs filled with spiced water that burst in your mouth giving refreshing sensations;
- Spicy *samosas* – broken into chunks and eaten with chutney;
- *Papoli* – crispy filled wafers with tangy tamarind and yoghurt;

Then at the wedding breakfast or reception, foods become more substantial and wholesome:

- *Bajra Khiehdi* – a brown lentil mush topped with brown palm sugar and butter, sweet and spicy in taste;
- *Paneer koftas* – fried cottage cheese dumplings in a creamy sauce of chickpeas flour, turmeric and yoghurt;
- Puffy *bathura bread*- which is eaten with chole or chickpeas cooked with *onion and ginger*;
- *Palak bathua saag* – a soft Rajasthan green vegetable dish, a typical dish from the western side of India

- Stuffed paratha bread and aloo gobi which is a vegetarian dish made with potatoes, cauliflower and Indian spices; popular in Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian and Nepali cuisines, together with chilli and coriander spiked lemon rice.

Tandoori ovens are also a must have in a typical Indian wedding. Generally, these are mainly used for the cooking of naan bread. The tandoori oven would be used on an oil drum. The naan dough is put on clay daubed dishes then put in the oven to cook. Part of the purpose of such amounts of food lies in the idea that left overs are distributed to the village where the wedding was held. (Clay, 2013)

#### **2.4.2 Food symbolism and etiquette in Indian weddings**

Indians commonly greet each other by grasping their own hands and slightly bowing. *Namaste* usually accompanies the greeting. This form of greeting literally means I bow to you, as a sign of deep respect, which carries a lot of meaning to Indians. While the western norm usually entails for two men or women to shake hands, it is not appropriate for a man and woman to do so in Indian culture. In India, waving the hand generally means no. Dining etiquette in India is very different from western mannerisms. It's perfectly acceptable, and usually the norm, to use your index and middle fingers as utensils. Hands should be washed before and after dining, and only the right hand should be used for eating purposes. Touching someone else's food, is considered impure, and even share food with others from the same plate. There is also the implication, as regards which area the bride and groom are coming from, as this will affect the quality and the type of food catered for during the marriage celebration. Sometimes men and women dine separately. Attire should be researched for the location of travel. Especially at religious temples and centers, dress customs are enforced. For example, shoes are not usually worn in temples, while guests are seated on *chatai's* or wooden planks during the wedding reception. Too much exposure of the skin is generally advised against for women. (Directory, 2016)

Food plays a vital role within the wedding ceremony. The coconut is usually used in the first encounter between the bride and groom. The bride and her father hold the coconut in their hands, and together they handed to the groom. This is considered a divine offering to bless the marriage. The coconut is a symbol of prosperity. Also, a paste of cumin seeds and brown sugar are crushed together and placed in a betel leaf. This leaf is then placed over the heads of the couple, whilst the priest narrates Vedic chants. This mixture represents the bitterness and sweetness of their married life. As

a norm in the Western civilisation, rice is thrown to the newlywed couple to symbolise fertility. In the Indian culture, rice represents sustenance, and guests are usually invited to the *mandap* (canopy) to throw sprinklings of turmeric coloured rice, as a blessing. To enhance this blessing, the priest often pours puffed rice into the sacred fire, dousing it with clarified butter. (Bramen, 2009)

According to tradition, the bride wears the *sari* or *lehenga* which is decorated with rich gold and silver embroidery. The *sari* or *lehenga* plays an important role and has various colours for the different Indian communities. The colours used for the occasion are considered lucky, and consist of red, yellow, green or white. The colour red is mostly used which also symbolises prosperity, fertility and *saubhagya* (marital bliss). The bride also wears very elaborate and beautiful ornaments made with gold and precious stones. The hair is plaited and enhanced and decorated with flowers and jewellery. In some parts of India, mainly in the North, the bride wears a *ghunghat* (veil), draped modestly over her hair, as a sign of respect to the gods worshipped and the elders present. (Gullapalli & Sagi) The groom wears the *dhoti* or *sherwani* which also has lots of detail embroidered clothes. Its colour is usually white, off-white or beige. In the Northern part of the country, the groom also wears a turban with white flowers tied in suspended strings called the *Sehra*. There are times where the groom also sports a sword as part of his attire. The southern weddings, both the bride and groom have a *kajal* (black) mark on their cheek, to ward off bad omen and the evil eye. Such information, clearly shows that Indian weddings is a very colourful affair. (Clay, 2013)

## **2.5 Theoretical Framework**

In order to conclude this research area, a theoretical framework is run to summarise all the above chapters. As it stands the current economic impact of tourism is doing quite well and in turn, its multiplied effect is reaching out to all kinds of services and operators. However, using the consumption theory stated in the previous chapters, it would be greatly beneficial to the Maltese islands and its locals, to attract more Indian weddings, due to their lavish and grandeur in supporting such events. From the few events, which have occurred in places such as Venice and Florence, clearly is a very good example of how the economic benefitted in those particular areas, where these Indian weddings took place. Since the consumption theory states that abundance of richness and wealth are showcased to mirror such a lifestyle, high-end Indian weddings fit perfectly into the picture, bringing about a lot of generated revenue and employment in turn. Of course, all of this needs to be aided by the local tourism authority

and the local government to promote Malta as a unique wedding destination, and to give the wow factor to its clients. Efforts are being done in bringing about more weddings of this stature, since there are bi-lateral agreements between Malta and Indian, through the Embassies. Certain Indian traditions are also being also taken by the local Maltese community like, the Holi, which is a festival of colours, an Indian tradition to celebrate spring. Nevertheless, the MTA has also started their own marketing campaign for the BRIC countries, and trying to tap into markets that for Malta are a bit unheard of. It seems that this promotion is having effect, due to a handful of Indian weddings are taken place. This is also bringing about new cultures and traditions to Malta. As a consequence, this is introducing various food requirements and traditions due to religious aspect. So, further knowledge is being sought and gained by the services providers to give the best possible service to the client and their guests, for an unforgettable experience. (Figure 14)

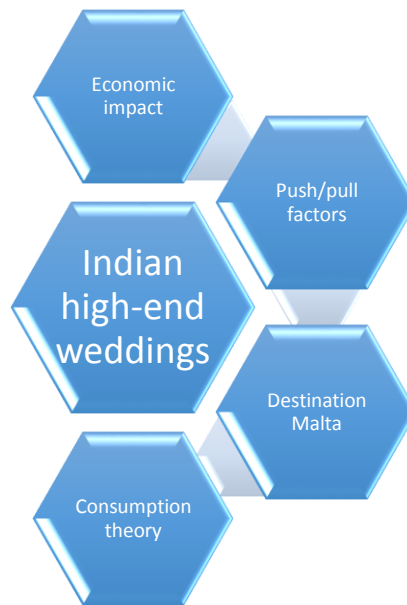


Figure 14. Theoretical Model for the literature review

### **3 Methodology**

#### **3.1 Formulating Research Design**

The main scope behind this research question is purely of my own interest. Indian weddings have just started to become popular recently, and the way these are organized, the traditions behind it and the economic revenue that is generated, has instilled curiosity in such a topic. The involvement of various entities during such events was vast, which also gave rise to a huge influx of revenue being generated, thus helping the contribution to the Maltese economy. This thesis is research based, as so far there is very little information with regards to how such events and weddings are effecting the local scene. Therefore, in order for me to be able to gather the information needed, the data analysis will be provided via qualitative research in the form of interviews with the two main companies in Malta that attract such a sector. Since qualitative research is mainly linked to interpretation, this is an ideal source as the impact of the event is subjective. The impact of Indian weddings in Malta is relatively new and is still being studied and therefore the results are still based on personal perspectives.

Qualitative research is a type of scientific research. By using this method, answers to my main question will be sought, collection of evidence via the interviews, and produces findings that were not determined in advance prior to the event. It will also help me to understand the research question from the perspective of the local population it involves. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of a particular population (International). Most of the information gathered will consist of a combination of exploratory, descriptive, explanatory and evaluative (Saunders M, 2016). The data collection techniques used, are based on a variety of methods which includes direct observations, structured interviews and questionnaires.

#### **3.2 Observations**

Observation, particularly participant observation, has been used in a variety of disciplines as a tool for collecting data about people, processes, and cultures in qualitative research. (Kawulich, 2005) Observation has been used in various studies both in anthropological and sociological studies. Qualitative methods of data collection, such as interviewing, observation, and document analysis, have been included under the umbrella term of "ethnographic methods" in recent years. (Kawulich, 2005) Marshall and Rossman (1989) define observation as the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social

setting chosen for study (Marshall, 1989) Observation is also the way to study people and activities in their natural settings. This type of method enables the researcher to observe the nonverbal expression of feelings, the interaction about amongst the subjects, their communication and time spent in activities. Direct observation can be useful in a number of ways. *The observer typically tries to become a participant in the context. However, direct observation does strive to be as unobtrusive as possible so as not to bias the observations. Second, direct observation suggests a more isolated perspective. The researcher is watching rather than taking part. Consequently, technology can be a useful part of direct observation. For instance, one can videotape the phenomenon or observe from behind one-way mirrors. Third, direct observation tends to be more focused than participant observation. The researcher is observing certain sampled situations or people rather than trying to become immersed in the entire context. Finally, direct observation tends not to take as long as participant observation.* (Trochim, 2006).

The observation session was done in some parts of the event itself, as well as, partly in the preparation of the event in the previous weeks. These observations will present more the human side of the event, behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals. Qualitative methods are also effective in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in the research are very much apparent as this affects most of the operation of the whole event in itself. The study was conducted in the natural environment, meaning, the researcher was observing the event in real life, and in no way influencing the outcome of the reflection. The data collected in this manner has more accuracy in reflecting real life behavior rather than contrived behavior. (Parasuraman, 1991) A contrived setting is one where the environment is created by the observer, which was not the situation in my case. The observation was also a disguised study, where the subjects or rather the people invited for the event, were not aware of being observed. Therefore, all reaction tends to be more natural and reflect the true reflection of their actions. The observation was conducted in an unstructured manner, where the researcher was not looking for specific facts or actions, but rather are capturing everything that occurs during the event.

### **3.3 Interviews**

Interviews especially face to face interviews has been a dominant technique in the field of qualitative research methods. *Due to the explosive growth of new communication forms, such as computer mediated communication (for example e-mail and chat boxes), other interview techniques can be introduced and used within the field of qualitative research.*

(Opdenakker, Advantages and Disadvantages of Four Interview Techniques in Qualitative Research , 2006) Face to face interviews are characterised by synchronous communication in time and place. This means that such an interview takes its cues from the body language and behavior, of the interviewee during questioning. A lot of extra information that can be added to the verbal answer of the interviewee on a question. The advantage of the face to face interview, is that the answers are more spontaneous, and are not reflected upon. Therefore, it would reflect more the genuine reaction to the question. However, the interviewer must concentrate much more on the questions to be asked and the answers given. This is also underlines, what the interviewee needs to communicate more upfront in terms of he/she is trying to get at, as well, make sure that the questions are being answered and not deviated.

In this case, the researcher will be recording the interview and then transcribe it as the general opinions in the findings. Taking notes during the interview is important for the following reasons: by making sure all questions have been answered, and in case of malfunctioning of the recorder. Interviewing is a source of getting participants to talk about their views, opinions, as well as gain knowledge. Using such data collection methods, aims to get quite diverse answers with regards to this subject. This data collection will give me a better perspective on how such an event impacts not just the Maltese islands, but also the people and the locations involved. The interviews are very limited, as only two local companies have invested in operating in these unique niche market. However, as an added value to these interviews, observation as mention earlier, help in gaining a more detailed approach in the operation and preparation of the event itself.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The data gather from the observations are based on a more unstructured style, in order to allow issue to emerge on their own, rather than being prompted. The only reason that the observations are unstructured, due to the occasions witnessed, were all different in their own right. However, a common factor was still detected, where it will be analysed later in the upcoming chapter. It was also done in this matter to differentiate between description and interpretation. The observations are much detailed in their descriptions, but then the interpretation, is to the discussion of the author to read on how these events can relate to the theoretical part of this study. Recording the authors thoughts and feelings about this experiences and observations will help to be reflexive about those being observed. These observations are done using a qualitative method, where detailed descriptions are used via, photos notes taken during the observations. This was partially due to the conditions



imposed by the wedding planner. The knowledge gained during these observations sessions, will be discussed in the final chapter, where certain patterns will emerge in conducting such events on the local scene.

In the interview section, since there was a limited amount of interviewees, similar patterns and relationships were sought in order to come up with conclusions. These patterns will be explored in findings to come up with a plausible and concrete notion. A comparative approach will be taken into consideration in order to remain open to all possible relationships within the data. This can also be slightly influenced by preexisting theory, empirical research and own experiences. Also by weighting the data gathered by both interviewees, who specialize in this sector, much better conclusions can be obtained and discussed further on how to improve on these matters. Explanations given during the interviews can be also backed up with the existing literature found during this study, as proof of what is being said. In this case, the interview data was collected and interpreted in way, where communication representation was gathered. Such data was not only giving details of the experiences themselves, but also as a, socially and culturally constructed device for creating shared understandings about these events. By contrast, discourse analysis recognizes speech not as a direct representation of human experience, but as an explicit linguistic tool constructed and shaped by numerous social or ideological influences. Discourse analysis strategies draw heavily upon theories developed in such fields as sociolinguistics and cognitive psychology to try to understand what is represented by the various ways in which people communicate ideas (Thorne, 2000) Such issues as reliability and validity are also relevant to the qualitative structure. Instead, the proof of the quality of the work might rested entirely on the reader's acceptance or rejection of the claims that are made. However, in the author's opinion, such issues are all back up by the observations witness during this study.

### **3.5 Ethical considerations**

Ethical standards prevent against the creation or misrepresenting of data and therefore, promote the search of knowledge and truth which is the primary goal of research. Ethical behavior is also critical for collaborative work because it encourages an environment of trust, accountability, and mutual respect among researchers (Univerisity, n.d.). An important aspect to ethical considerations in my research project is the issue of data protection and ethical issues. Using a solid ethical approach will contribute to: a sound starting point, a suitable and valid method, good and useful results and solid conclusions. The

three vital values of ethics include: informed consent, confidentiality and avoiding harm to do good.

First and foremost, it is vital, to make sure that all participants in interviews and questionnaires are informed about the purpose of the research and that this is going to be made public, as well as, understands the aims and objectives of the research. This also includes a question of vulnerability, especially if interviewing children or vulnerable adults, which is not the case for me. *This means that prospective research participants must be fully informed about the procedures and risks involved in research and must give their consent to participate* (Torchim, 2006).

As a researcher, attention needs to be prioritised so that the participants and interviewees, might not be in the risk of harm as a result in their participation. This can be done in both physical and psychological. In order to avoid such harm this research guarantees participants confidentiality and that all information will not be made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study. There is also the question of anonymity, which means that all the participants will remain anonymous throughout the study. As a researcher, the author needs to comply with the data protection act, and need to select which information can be recorded if of a sensitive nature. This is mostly to be included during the observation sessions, where names of companies and individuals will remain unidentified, as a disclosure to their privacy.

A vital factor this research will show that it is independent and impartial, and that there are no ulterior motives. This will indicate that the study is done on behalf of the researchers' curiosity for the subject and its effects on the local economy.

In the following chapter, all these observations and interviews are described to the true likeness as of their description.

## **4 Findings and Data Analysis**

### **4.1 Direct Observation**

In the observation sessions, the research had a passive role, purely in observational manner throughout which, the religious aspect and the tradition in Indian weddings, are transmitted within the ceremony. It was also noted, the huge amount of work goes that goes into giving such a high standard of operation, in delivering the guidelines expected by the host and their guests. Having said that, it needs to be kept in mind that such high-end clients and events expect to have delivered whatever it is required, mainly on demand. These high-end clients are used to get everything they ask for, due to power and having wealth, which is always a bonus. It is also imperative to note that due to the importance given in such events, wedding planners and the crew and caterers engaged for the event, all worked round the clock to have a successful and satisfying event for the client. The researcher's presence at the events, was purely to observe all the happenings and occurrences of the event, to gain more knowledge on the traditional aspect of the marriage ceremony and symbolism that surrounds it, as well as, to additionally confirm, the initial theory of consumption attributed to Indian weddings. Of course, all of this was done with the wedding planner's permission and approval. In this case, the observation was done on one weekend, as all the events were packed on three days, so flexibility was key due to the various times of the activities. These observations have a descriptive reflection, where the physical settings, and the sequence of the various events that took place. Most of the data collected is primary data, however, through the analysis, secondary data is also taken into consideration from the various occurrences observed.

#### **4.1.1 Mehndi Celebration**

As mentioned earlier, Indian weddings are full of symbolism and traditions. Part of the pre-wedding celebrations, is the Mehndi celebration, which is common to all sorts of weddings within the caste system in India, especially in Hindu and Muslim communities. In this ceremony, the Mehndi, which is a form of temporary tattoo made out of henna, is applied to the hands and feet of the bride and the groom, in an elaborate manner design on the bride, and a token design on groom. This forms part of a Sindhi wedding which falls under the Hindu Caste. Through this observation, the researcher learnt that the Mehndi is not only applied during weddings, but in other type of festivities like Karva Chaut, Teej, Diwali, Ramzan or any other festivals held in India. The Mehndi applied during this wedding was of a dark colour, indicating the deeper the love for the groom and mother in law, or so the traditions says. The author has also observed and learnt that the actual paste is done

throughout the ceremony and that it has medical properties. Application of Mehndi can prevent too much stress, because it cools the body and keeps the nerves from becoming tense. Reason being why Mehndi is applied on the hands and feet, which house nerve endings in the body. Originally in the olden times, the Mehndi began to be applied, to protect the couple and keep them healthy. The mixture applied during Indian weddings, is not just a plain paste of Mehndi powder and water, but there is also an infusion of eucalyptus oil, a bit of clove oil and a few drops of lemon are added. These oils not only help in darkening the colour of Mehndi on the body, but also enhance the benefits of Mehndi and make the paste highly medicinal. The smell emanating from this paste was relaxing in itself and brought about a lovely aroma, the beautiful rich colour and the health benefits that Mehndi lends act as a powerful aphrodisiac. The colour and smell remain for days, it boosts the romance in the initial days of wedding. During this Mehndi ceremony, the henna tattoo was applied a day earlier, which took 6 hours to decorate the bride's hands and feet. During the actual ceremony, a reenactment took place to symbolise the ritual.

The Mehndi ceremony integrates also the bond and tights with family members. The author observed that a family member (Aunt) applied the mixture on the palms and feet of the bride. The paste is transferred into a cone and the elaborate design are painted on the bride's body. This is done to the singing and playing to the traditional *dhol* (a beating drum with Indian rhythms). The *dhol* players, where also flown in for the event. The tattoo is also applied to every female member present at the ceremony, of course in not so much elaboration. The atmosphere was a festive one filled with joy, happiness and merriment. In fact, the bride's announcement of arrival at the Mehndi, was via loud *dhol* playing, followed by a procession of the bride's relatives, mainly ladies, escorting her to the center of the event area, for attention and admiration. As per tradition, the bride's Mehndi is done before then the groom's, and in the latter the bride's relatives also join in the celebration. On the other hand, also the groom was announced through loud *dhol* playing, and also by loud noises made by his male relatives. In this celebration being observed, both the bride and the groom had their Mehndi done together, the sister-in-law's played pranks on their future brother-in-law and tried to get some money from him as the tradition has it. The Mehndi ceremony is a reflection of the rich Indian culture, bringing together the knowledge of medicinal herbs with many lovely sentiments and beliefs. The result is a ceremony filled with fun and joy and the perfect precursor to the auspicious wedding day. This also included, mementos for the bride's female's relatives, which in this case consisted of a clutch bags and inside a personalized necklace. Such a celebration, also had the food and beverage aspect attached to it. Two long buffet tables where served, and the food was continuously replenished for 4 hours, all within the dietary requirements specified by the

client, for religious reasons. Food ranged from cold to hot items, each station manned by at least 3 chefs. No desserts were offered, but a candy cart was available for everyone to taste, of which some of the sweets, had the face of the bride imprinted on them. The party kept on going for a few more hours. All the guests were dressed accordingly in the proper Indian attire.

#### **4.1.2 Sangeet or Milni Ceremony**

The Sangeet or the Milni, is the celebration of the two families coming together, for the union of the children marriage. This forms part of the pre-wedding activities as well. It is part of the celebration is usually done after the Mehndi. The purpose of this ceremony is to relax and unwind a bit from the seriousness of the wedding preparations. This type of celebration is traditionally held in the beginning of the wedding week. The norm for this celebration consists in the women meeting days before, where they gather *dolaks* (a long piece of cloth) and spoons, then surround the bride and sing traditional folk songs and dance. The author has been told that the songs are usually sung to tease the bride for her upcoming wedding and married life. Some also refer to the hopes and dreams wished for the bride in her new role. The author was also advised that this celebration used to go on for days, but now it is held over one day or an evening, which was the case over here. This type of tradition is mainly observed in the Northern part of India, mainly the Punjabis and Gujaratis. The traditional Punjabi sangeet generally includes performances of Bhangra and singing of Gidda songs (typical songs of the area). However as observed in this study, the traditional sense of the ceremony has now evolved into pomp and show. Wedding planners are now designing the event to be more of an elaborate and extravagant affair. The wedding planner had to organise, together with other event management companies and choreographers to be involved in order to provide a seamless experience, as even the bride had a choreographed dance. Sometimes there is a set theme for the event. In another observation the author was allowed to participate, in this case the Milni (due to another type of caste system Hindu), the theme was Casino night, where the event included setting up of card game stands, where players used fake chips. Also, international entertainers were hired for the evening to give a performance, movable tables (dancers dressed as tables with food on them) were employed, and various artists, and audio visual companies were involved to give the atmosphere needed and required by the client.

As a norm, for the sangeet, a grand stage is usually set to have these grand performances. In another wedding observation the author studied, the venue was the biggest location in Malta, which is the Mediterranean Conference Centre. Most of the hall was re-

designed to accommodate this need. The bride's and groom's parents had a set to dance to. Several sets of uncle and aunties from each side also prepared a dance performance to popular Bollywood tunes. The sisters and brothers from each side, prepared a group dance and both the bride and groom also had prepared their own sets. DJs were hired to create an ambience where guest can dance their hearts out. Bollywood celebrities were hired to dance at the event. Both occasions had famous musicians and singers to present beautiful melodic performances. The attire used in the occasion is also second to the wedding day itself, normally a *trousseau* or a *lehenga*. The type of attire the bride and groom and the guests were wearing, was very expensive, around € 500 a dress weighing around 5/6 kgs each, especially the women. Of course, it has to be noted that the dresses and men clothes were all of the latest designers of Indo western outfits. The wedding planner looked after the whole event, right from providing the perfect venue, to selecting the choreographer and even arranging for celebrities to participate in performances. The planners managed every detail from food to song selection, from lighting to photography. All the bride and groom had to do is to show up and make themselves the star of the party.

#### **4.1.3 Pheras or Saptapadi**

The Pheras or the Saptapadi is the actual Hindu marriage ceremony, where in the Indian tradition, this is the passage to adulthood and that now you are responsible for another human being. The main focus of the whole ceremony are the 13 stages of the Vedic Hindu marriage, which enforce the seriousness of what a marriage entails through the various rituals and mantras. Every part of the ceremony is vital for its tradition and symbolism and cannot be done away with. The core focus is the Saptapadi (literal meaning: Sapta-Seven and Padi-Steps) where the bride and the groom utter the seven vows of the wedding, hence the marriage, all the while revolving around the sacred fire, seven times. The author was told that the solemnity of this ceremony is purely based on the Indian notion that marriages are made in heaven and once the marriage is honored, the two souls are joined for seven lifetimes. The seven vows are also seven promises which the bride and groom make to each other for a happy and prosperous married life. It was also explained, that the seven vows are perceived to be the heart of an ideal marriage to which Indians take very seriously. The actual Pheras consists in the walking around the fire seven times, whilst these vows are recited. The author was told that if these vows are not recited, a Hindu wedding would be incomplete. The ritual began with the sacred fire being lit up along with the Home puja (sacred shrine) done by the priest, who was also flown in purposely for the event. The corners of bride's saree and the groom's Uttariya (a sash) are tied in a sacred knot by the priest. The bride and the groom then

stood up for the commencement of the vows. The bride sat on the left hand side of the groom in front of the Pheras (the sacred shrine), then will change her position to the right once they are married. The author was made aware that the Pheras and the vows sanctifies the union and affords social recognition to the marriage. The ceremony took about one and a half hours, all done in Hindu. All the guests were dressed in very expensive sari's, mostly gold embroidered or had small crystals on them. During the marriage ceremony, refreshments were being offered, for guests to help themselves throughout the long ceremony.

The following is a description of what happens during the seven vows:

In the first vow the groom promises to be helpful and support his wife and children with money and love, while the bride promises to be a good house wife, cook and responsible for the household. The second vow recited by the groom indicates that both of them as a couple will protect the household and the children. The Bride replies that she will be by his side, supportive in courage and strength and will rejoice in his happiness, and that in return the groom will love only her. In the third vow, the groom wishes that they both grow in health, wealth and prosperity and that they try to give the best possible education for their children. The Bride responds that she will love only him and will be faithful to him till the rest of her life. During the fourth vow, declares that she has brought him sacredness in his life and that she now completes him. He also wishes to be blessed with obedient children. In return, she answers that she will shower him with joy and to try and please him in every way. Whilst reciting the fifth vow, the groom explains how she is his best friend and that she enriched his life, wishing her to be blessed by God. She responds that she will love him till death and that she will strive to live her life in accordance to his emotions in happiness, sadness and will trust and honour him. As the sixth vow approaches, the groom asks the bride whether after these six steps she promises to fill his life with happiness and joy. The bride promises that she will. The last vow is the union of the couple. The groom comments that now they are husband and wife and therefore now as one, while the bride responds that now she is his wife and will love and cherish him always. Each time the vows are proclaimed, the couple walks around the sacred fire, to enforce their promises.

After the ceremony, photographs with relatives were taken, and the bride and groom as a married couple, were escorted out under the mandap, which was being carried by male relatives to where the refreshments were being served. Later on that evening a gala dinner was organised, for the bride and groom to celebrate their first dinner together. This was also a very big occasion, where a huge party was catered for, and a buffet dinner was

served. All the food served, did not contain any cow's milk and any meat. The evening gala dinner also was a long ceremony as this lasted till 7 am of the next morning.

## 4.2 Interviews

The interview process was not very long, as the main companies that attract Indian weddings to Malta are limited to two, which are Dreemz Planners and Blue Marble Destinations. Both interviews were done face to face, and even though structured interviews were used, it was a very informal setting to the whole process. The following are the interviewees:

Dreemz Planners – Ms Mary Grace Lynch (MGL) Director

Blue Marble Destinations – Mr Clive Perry (CP) Director/Owner

The first question asked referred to *'In what way the culture that surrounds Malta applies to such niche markets?'* The aim of the question was to get background information of where the clients originate from and what part Malta plays in it. Both respondents had different opinions. MGL commented that the Indian cultures are very similar to that of the Maltese, that is very family oriented, and they find it easier to come here, as the locals can understand and empathise better with their needs and wants. The clients appreciate the good weather that Malta offers, since most of her clients come from the United Kingdom and the weather there is not so favourable for such occasions. On the other hand, CP had a complete different approach. He observed that Malta being part of the EU community, is an attraction in itself. This is due to the rich local culture that has been transcended by the various rulers that impacted Malta. This also makes Malta a good substitute to Venice and Florence, where most Indian weddings occur, which is also less expensive.

The next question is directed to *'How could the promotion of destination Malta be an asset to high-end weddings?'* The objective was to be conscious on what type of marketing is being done to encourage more of such events on the island. MGL reacted that MTA needs to help the local wedding planners in Malta to promote their services in India, as small companies, such as hers', becomes expensive to market. However, through the little promotion MGL has through her website and Facebook page, has attracted two high-end weddings this year. On the contrary CP, comments were very different. He perceived that flight connectivity is very handy, like the daily flights via London, Frankfurt, and Dubai etc. Malta is being promoted as a safe destination, which is a bonus for the local scene.



He also remarked that the Maltese are very welcoming and adapt to the client's requirements. In this business, it is very important to have someone understand fully the client's necessities. The size of the island has to also be taken into consideration, so if a client wishes to have various activities around the island, distances are very short to arrive from one place to another.

Another question focused on '*What could be done to attract more of such markets to our islands?*' The focus was to get comments from the wedding planner's point of view, to gather whether it is clear to them what the government and the local tourism authority are doing in terms of promotion. MGL observed that more promotion is needed though the Malta Tourism Authority, even though, within her small limited company, has various marketing procedures in place. CP detected that difficulty in this, is finding the *it* factor to make the islands more attractive to these markets and why to choose Malta, when compared to places like Italy. He thinks that one of the major problems is the tour operators and the agents, which set up package holidays, with various prices. These are in direct competition with us. Even though, with this particular type of market, the client's requirements are much more than what the tour operator or agent can offer. One main advantage, is that for travelling, most of the flights arrive in the afternoon, which makes it perfect for accommodation purposes, since rooms are ready for clients around that time. Ultimately, it is also up to the company or wedding planner to see what type of market the company wants to tackle and how to make it attractive to the client.

The fourth question raised the issue of '*What implications do these events pertain?*' The objectives mainly include how such events are operated and the level of demand applied. MGL stated that the impact left by such events is a positive one. The revenue generated during this event supplies lots of different operators. CP described this impact in more detail, to be specific in answering. He brought the examples about specific foods requirements, where on occasion, the Indian party brought with them 50 chefs in order to have the food as per their religion. The Jaine cuisine is completely vegetarian and also excludes onions, potatoes, brinjals (eggplants) and garlic. Another example is for the client to be able to drink and eat buffalo milk. It was an impossible task to bring such milk over, so special arrangements were made with the local milk producing company, Benna, to produce milk specifically for them at 50% fat. This also had to be tested and tried out before confirming its production by the client. Also, the fact that certain equipment had to be bought like 100 big pots and pans to cater for the cooking of foods.

The following question asked relates to *'How does the Indian traditions and religious aspect effect the event and in what way?'* The target answer, was aimed to how difficult certain Indian rituals can be for the locals to get involved in the ceremonies. MGL responded, that compared to the rest of the event, this part was taken care of by the client, since they brought their own priest with them. However, she had to make sure that all the necessary décor that the client asked for, had to be implemented and set in accordance to the rituals on the specific events. Agreeing on the same agendas, CP, argued that all his employees where very respectful about the various rituals. This also depends in what way and manner the dealings with the client occurred. The fact that in some aspects of the various events, there was the Maltese element incorporated, helped in giving a unique experience to the client. Of course, the fact that all the guests and staff were dressed up in accordance to the ceremonies requisites, helped out a lot.

The sixth question, communicates *'How important it is to apply and observe their cultural beliefs and background?'* The aim is to be aware how much wedding planners and other service providers react to other cultures. MGL insisted that it is very important to know their culture and have knowledge on the subject. Personally, she has done a lot of research and studied the subject area, so she knows what is expected of her, and can give her service above expectation. On the other hand, CP, stated that once you know their background and how to handle things, some of the aspects could be incorporated in original and unique ways of providing a service, maybe even giving a Maltese touch. One such example was when for breakfast the guests were given *pastizzi* (Maltese pastries) not using any eggs, due to their religious beliefs.

A very important question was asked as to *'How do you deal with such influential and powerful individuals?'* This question was purely aimed at the wedding planner and their working ethics. MGL laughingly, simple commented with lots of patience. A more detailed approach was given by CP, who said that every individual has his own character, and within a few moments, one needs to understand how to deal with them. It vital that the wedding planner is passionate about the product and the destination. Another essential aspect is to be yourself and to be honest, as well as, being on the alert at all times, with eyes wide open.

The eight question referred to *'How would events of such calibre effect the local economy?'* This is the main aim of the whole study to see the effects of these events. MGL witness that events of this level is a blessing for everyone and not just the wedding company.

Every service involved in the operations gains reputation and revenue from hotels, transportation companies, airline companies, audio-visual companies, photographers etc. When an Indian wedding takes place on the island, it has a very strong impact and millions are spent. CP, had more or less comments the same to input. He stated that a pre-wedding that occurred locally last year on a period of 3 days, brought a positive impact of 1.3 million euros, while on a second occasion being a conference of 2 days, brought a turnover of 1 million euros.

This next question relates to *'How can you relate in your own experience the event?'* This question was targeted to get a feel of the elaborate details and grandeur that go into the event. MGL commented, the best way is to show you. It is through observing one of her weddings that the author got the real implications of the rituals and the intricate elaboration that Indian weddings have. CP on the other hand, said that it learning experience which provides great satisfaction when results are positive. In fact, below is part of a testimonial of the pre wedding that occurred last year: *"I would like to express my gratitude to Blue Marble for handling this event, with all its demands and turning it into a smooth and seamless operation. A 3 day pre-wedding event from India is not easy activity to handle and very often presents ground handlers with unusual requests and challenges. The services provided by you and your team of professionals were excellent and truly helped in the delivery of a memorable visit"* (Shah, 2016).

The last question refers to *'What mind set goes behind the logistics that take place to organise such an event?'* The aim here was to get more information to see how things are done, and organised. MGL commented that this is a full-time job in itself. She argued that she has a lot of experience on this matter as she works also with a local Destination Management Company (DMC), where she has specialised in operations, which has helped her gaining experience in organised such events. CP on hand, voiced that one plans all he can, including contingency plan and then sit back and expect the unexpected. You have to be flexible and on the ball all the time.

#### **4.2 Analysis of observations and interviews**

The analysis of the above areas and very interlinked, so due to this, the findings will be argued all together. The interpretation of this analysis was mainly based on the richness and the fullness and on how much the researcher had enough opportunity to discover the subject in real life. There was very little contrast between what the interviewees argued, to the observations noted during this research. This analysis is basically targeted on images, words and interpretation of the author. The breakdown of this study was to recognise the

meanings in the data and to understand the social context in which everything took place and how it effects and impacts of the research question. This type of data analysis is a collection of results in a non-standardised way, which requires further rational investigation to come up with the final results. Through summarising these findings, the study can become more focused and direct in relation to the question asked in the beginning of the study. Below are the findings exemplified in better terms for the purpose of this study.

During the observations, a clear point emerged from all the activities occurring. Indian weddings happening in Malta, are mainly always of the upper class of the Caste system. The amount of money spent on small details to make a memorable event, is immense, to an unbelievable extent of money. It was also very clear that these marriages occur within the same rank of families. It is forbidden for a low-class family to marry within a high class one. This is the norm for the Indian society and cannot change. This was deduced through various ways that the event was associated with high-end families. First the amount of decorations and props used for the various activities, was something that could only be found in fairy tales. (Figure 14)

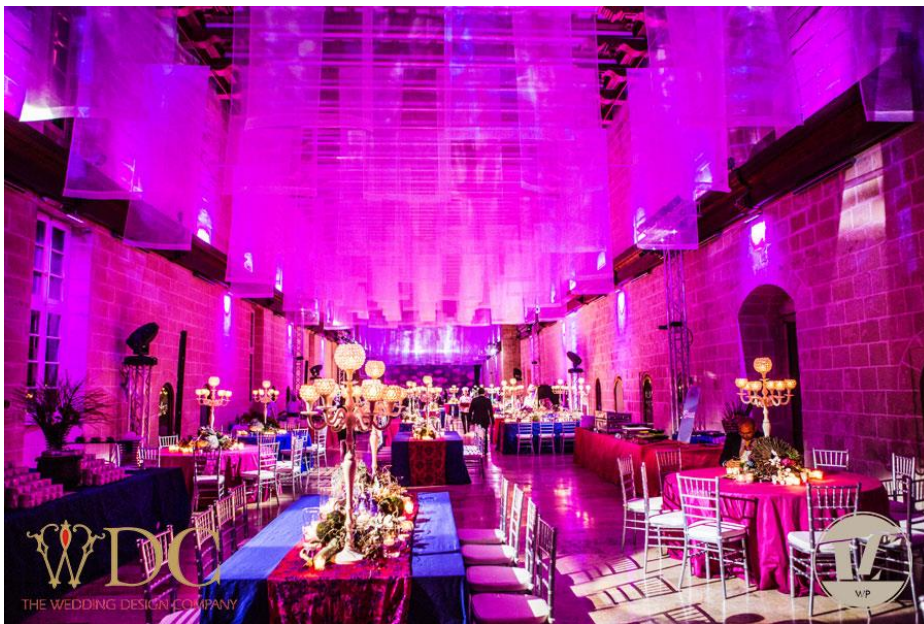


Figure 14. Indian pre-wedding at Mediterranean Conference Centre (Blue Marble Destination, 2016)

The locations chosen are transformed completely and are unrecognisable. The décor required by the client is a vast one, which sometimes necessitates to build special equipment and furniture needed to be used in Indian events, for a one-time occasion only. This

contributes directly to the unlimited budget that the client has, and for this the prices of such elaborate pieces of equipment will also be very expensive. (Figure 15)



Figure 15. Gala dinner for the pre-wedding at Palazzo Parisio, Naxxar (Blue Marble Destination, 2016)

The unlimited budget is also a reflection of the amount of guests attending the event. Mostly all of the guests would have most of their stay paid for by the bride's or groom's family. All of these guests require accommodation to stay in, and the hotels chosen for the occasion are best on the island. On the days of the event, the hotel is completely taken over by the guests and their needs. During these events, members in the laundry area had to be tripled solely, for members of staff to look after their saris', washed them, iron them and deliver them in their respective rooms. On all the various activities, throughout the Indian wedding, it was very noticeable, that guests had brought more than one outfit for the occasion. Each outfit was appropriate with the activity presented, but still looked expensive and not your everyday wear. (Figure 15) The elaborate detail on the sari's, the gold leaf and diamonds attached to them, makes the dresses heavy and also gives them a sense of extravagant and wealth. This also helps to complete the event and makes the 'show' more affluent.



Figure 15. Dress wear at the Sangeet (Blue Marble Destinations, 2016)

Such events leave also an effect on the workforce not only in the laundry, but in ever main area within a hotel, mainly the food and beverage department, food preparation, accommodation area and human resources. Both wedding planners have mention that the amount of human resources needed is quite massive. In the pre wedding held last year, 50 chefs were flown purposely to satisfy the requirements needed for their eating habits due to the Jain religion. During the event observed this year, it was also noted through detailed attention, and as well as, through speaking with some employees, that the number of staff was doubled to cater for such amounts of guests. These are very demanding customers, and in order to upkeep with their requirements, this was the only way to handle it. Besides the staff required at the hotel and locations where the events occur, other human resources are needed. Transportation was required at all times 24 hours a day, transfer services from airport to the hotel and vice versa, guests desk was set up in the hotels, so if any queries, can be dealt through the representative, professional chocolatiers flown from Belgium to cater the final event and so much more. To this aspect, the analysis of both the interviews and the observations, gave out a good picture of the impacts of Indian weddings in Malta.

## **5 Discussions and Conclusions**

### **5.1 Overview**

This chapter will discuss and summarise the information gathered through the interviews and observations. In effect, it provides a combination of the research findings and a discussion on the study results in relation to the research problem and objectives which are identified in Chapter 1. These are:

1. To identify the economic impacts of a high end Indian wedding, generally spreading over a period of seven days
2. To describe service the different religious aspects of the wedding- its tradition and cultural background, and to what extent this has an impact
3. To determine the various food specifications and symbolism in accordance to the caste religious beliefs
4. To identify to what measures organisers have to go to in order to meet the high demands expected by the customer in terms of the service given.

This chapter starts with discussing the findings for each objective mentioned above and it develops into how each aim impacts the local society. All of this is done to understand the value of this study.

#### **5.1.1 Economic impact**

In the study, a vital part consisted in acknowledge how would such high-end Indian weddings contribute economically locally. Through this research, it was stated that for the Maltese islands the expenditure contribution ranges from 12 – 15 % of the GDP. The number super rich Indians, living in India, is that of around 1%, which is translated to 22% of the Indian GDP (Saurabh, 2016). The interpretation of these figures, gives a very good feedback on the way such consumption is used. In fact studies have shown that Indians are they are amongst the biggest spenders abroad. According to Cox and King (Saurabh, 2016), Indians travelling for 3 to 4 days in Europe, mainly Italy or France spend around €1,318 Euros, while statistics gathered by MTA show an average of €918 per person. This means that Indian travellers spend much more during their vacations. This also aids in the contributions towards the local economy. The most expensive Indian wedding recorded in Europe was in 2006, in France, where € 73,418,987.58 million Euros were spent for about

1,000,800 guests, including also supporting staff like chefs, wedding planners, photographers etc. Such amounts of guests resulted to about €23,552.98 million Euros in shopping by the guests only. However, so far Malta is not attracting such huge numbers. Compared to a wedding held in 2015 in Florence for about 500 guests, where € 13,177,904 million Euros was spent, the pre-wedding held on 3 days for about the same number of guests € 1.3 million Euros was generated. This seems very little when compared to the above examples, but for Malta, that is very positive. It also needs to be kept in mind, that, Malta is in constant competition with places like Venice and Florence, where prices are very high, due to their grandeur and position as medieval cities. High-end Indian weddings is a relatively new concept, and it has been only in the past year and a half that the Maltese Islands are being considered as an alternative. Research also proved that such high-class society, would also need accommodation to match their needs and life style. So, in both the literature found, as well as, in the observations witnessed, the author can verify that such wealthy people, are accustomed to being pampered and looked after, as well as having all their requirements at arm's length.

### **5.1.2 Traditions and logistics impact**

Truth be told, Indian weddings are a challenge to service. The organiser has to be full aware of all the rituals involved within each and every step. First and foremost, it is the norm that Indian standard time means arriving an hour or two late for the event. This was clearly the case in the observations and this had an impact on the whole organisation of each and every event. Logistically this affected everyone involved in the service operation, as it meant everything was on delay mode. This also meant that organisers and service providers were all the time on tight deadlines between one event to another, to finish the setting up or the cooking of food according to the itinerary provided. On the other hand means that more money is charged to the client, as staff and service providers had more working hours than originally planned. So remuneration impact, is a positive in this regard. In India, as previously stated, due to the caste system, various religions are found. It is therefore imperative for all parties concerned in such events, to know the impacts of these religions on the services rendered. This also all ties back to the consumption theory, as the grander is each occasion is, the more wealthy the family is. This gives way for the family to display their wealth and their power within the society rank. In fact the organisers were asked to custom make certain decorations and props for each event, to make the whole experience more memorable for everyone, especially the bride and groom. This display of power is on behalf of both the bride and groom's families, since it is an arranged



marriage, or more likely a business deal, to become more known in the big tycoon societies. It is also due to these influential guests that organisers put up with these clients, as these will bring about more such events, if the occasion is a success. High-end Indian clients are very demanding and organisers as have been suggested during the interviews and witnesses during the observations, have to be very flexible and very energetic to keep up with impossible demands. Indian weddings are becoming more pleasurable to attend and every little detail of the event is choreographed, to resemble more a Bollywood movie.

### **5.1.3 Food symbolism and specifications**

The food is a selection of choices that emphasizes variety and novelty. Most of the Indian religions, are based on vegetarian food, which to the locals might be a bit of an issue. Such concepts to the local chefs, especially of those to a certain extreme, such as the Jaine religion, are unheard of and might find it difficult be able to cater for it. One the other hand, this gives a complete freehand for chefs to use their imagination, using the exotic, vivid colours and various textured items on the exhaustive menu. For once, it is not taste that is paramount; but gives one an opportunity to experience the exciting possibilities of innovative cuisine. It also gives chefs a means to explore other types of food, become knowledgeable on the food impacts due to culture, as well as, try new ways of cooking not just for the Indian guests, but also use these techniques in the local restaurants too. When very briefly, the author spoke to one of the chefs, he commented that were putting their best culinary efforts and skills to prepare this gastronomical feast of pleasure. It was also noted, that the caterers were also carefully selected to organize and cook the specialties and delicacies in accordance to the clients wishes and religion, therefore also giving great respect to the traditions and rituals of the client's background. Since the client had come beforehand to check out the location and venue, a tasting session of the sample menus was also organized, so the client could confirm with regards to the quality and standards of food, as per tradition and religion. Provision was also made for any other requirements such as dietary ones, as well as, for the non-Indian guests, who would also like to eat other things, such as meat, chicken etc.

## **5.2 Implications for future events**

After all the analysis and discussion, this research has shown, that Malta needs to take a competitive advantage in this market. It is clearly revealed, that the Maltese islands are relative cheap in price, compared to other places such as Venice and Florence, and therefore this explains, the huge variance in economic gain, in contrast with other such wed-

dings occurring around Europe. As part of the marketing strategy by both the wedding organisers, as well as, the local tourism authority, efforts need to be made in order to level up the standard of expenses, of course doing also justice to the services rendered. Since money travels from one hand to another, and through the multiplier effect, it supports lots of people, the author's suggestion is to have competitive prices for the services given, at par with such other locations, which cater for high-end Indian weddings. In this type of events, the multiplier effect plays a vital part in the local economy and helps generate more available income for everyone. The author also believes that since this is a new industry, locals, especially those working in the hospitality sector, should be made aware of the needs and wants of these high society clients. As the industry is picking up, it is of the utmost importance that service providers, are proficient enough in knowing how to deal and communicate in a manner that can be understood by the Indian client. Since it is quite clear, that people of such wealth and power have to be dealt with certain etiquettes and mannerisms, being qualified in this aspect will aid a lot in the proceedings of good negotiations and an excellent organised event.

As there is quite a limited awareness of the Indian culture, it is believed that further training, maybe by the local tourism authority, or by the wedding organisers themselves, should be given to all sorts of services that can benefit from these occasions. This will bring about more unity of the various sectors, when organising logistics for things such as transportation, accommodation, catering etc. It will also aid in becoming familiar in the traditions and culture that surrounds this clientele, which will bring about more empathy and understanding from both parties whilst contract negotiating of the events. This would also include skills such as learning more on the various religions found in India, and what is acceptable to eat for each region, mannerisms on how such client communicate with non-Indian personnel and various other options, which might assist during this period of the event. Once all the personnel involved, have the knowhow of these involvements, and the operation was of a complete success, the client can aid also in indirect marketing, for both the location and the organisation, through their business contacts. These influential people can also give a boost to the local economy by recommending Malta and its services to other people in their own ranks.

### 5.3 Limitations of the study

Overall the study has achieved its objectives. It provided an understanding of the huge economic revenue and service operations that goes into organising high-end Indian weddings, as well as, gave an insight of what the clientele looks for.

The research findings can be of value to the Hospitality management and Wedding organisers in view of competition and the changing dynamics of the high-end wedding market environment.

This study had some limitations;

1. One of the main limitations was the lack of literature available on the subject matter discuss in this study.
2. This study focused only on 2 such cases, which occurred during this study period. This was partially due only 2 companies focus on such markets and the limited amount of weddings found at the time. This creates a form of bias that may affect the research findings and results. It would be of great benefit if a larger spectrum of wedding organisers participating in this study since it would have improved the validity of the research.
3. The majority of the qualitative results is based mostly on the information gathered from observation. This may have influenced the results obtained, since it was mainly upon the authors 'interpretation.
4. The research was limited to collected qualitative data from participants which have an experience of organizing an event. It would have benefited the study if questioners would have been distributed to other event organizers.
5. The study is limited by the lack of analysis of the financial situations of the participating organisers of the research. Analysing the financial situation of such event can benefit the understanding of the various approaches to adopting financial effectiveness.
6. Observations were time consuming and getting a full picture of implementing such events for learning purpose, required attending more of such occasions.

7. Being able to make sense of the context of assessment in a limited amount of time with limited resources, may require some knowledge of the academic discipline and its culture

There is need for more in-depth research on the management, financial and marketing strategies that needs to be conducted. An interesting further study can consist in finding out, the reason why these weddings are taking place outside their point of origin. Why is such wealth not distributed back to the local areas within India, where there are such big contrasts in various social classes? Would this be related to the consumption theory, purely to show off the family's power, or is it due to other financial constraints and inflation related to such wealth. Why are high end weddings opting to choose Malta, as their wedding destination? Can it be due to being more affordable than other comparative locations? This study has explored the various impacts and perspectives that a high society affair can bring about. This study can be beneficial to the management of the hospitality companies for the appropriate development of marketing strategies and their effective implementation. The research findings and results may also be of interest to other researchers and other wedding organisers.

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## Appendix A – Interviews

### Dreemz planners Interview – Ms Marygrace Lynch

**1. In what ways does the culture surrounding Malta apply to these niche weddings?**

Their culture is similar to that of the Maltese, they are very family orientated, and they love our weather as most of these clients live in the UK

**2. How could the promotion of destination Malta be an assist to the high end Indian weddings?**

The MTA needs to help us promoting in India such cost is a vast one for a small company like ours, saying this I have 2 Indian weddings this year that are very high end

**3. What could be done to attract more of such markets to our island?**

We need more promotions via MTA, even though as a company have various marketing procedures in place

**4. What implications do these events pertain?**

They leave a very good impact on Malta as a country as us suppliers as revenue

**5. How important it is to apply and observe their cultural beliefs and background?**

It is very important, I have read a lot about their religions and culture to be able to give them exactly what they need

**6. How do you deal with such influential and powerful individuals?**

With a lot of patience

**7. How would events of such calibre effect the local economy?**

This makes it very strong, it is not just us as a wedding planner company that gain, but hotels, catering, transportation etc.

**8. How can you relate in the event in your own experience?**

The best way is to show you

**9. What mind-set goes behind the logistics take place to organise such an event?**

It is a full-time job in itself, I have a lot of experience as a person as I also work with a local DMC as I specialise in operations with has helped me today in organising such events

Interview questions – Blue marble planners- Mr Clive Perry

**1. In what ways does the culture surrounding Malta apply to these niche weddings?**

Malta as part of EU is an attraction itself... rich local culture, and provides a good substitute to Venice, Florence and we are an uncut diamond.

**2. How could the promotion of destination Malta be an assist to the high end Indian weddings?**

We have in common a language which is English, flight connectivity is very handy, daily flights via London Frankfurt, Dubai etc. It is very safe. We are welcoming and adapt to their requirements. It is important to have someone that understand the requirements. The size of the island is very handy due to events being held in various places on the same day. And transportation is very short distance.

**3. What could be done to attract more of such markets to our island?**

Difficulty is mainly finding what is attractive for these new markets and why Malta. One problem is when there are the tour operators or agent's that set up package holidays when prices can vary. The advantage is the travel time most of flights arrive in afternoon that makes it perfect for accommodation purpose for rooms to be ready in time. You try and find what the market you want to tackle and how to make it attractive to the client.

**4. What implications do these events pertain?**

Once the requirements are understood... like cuisine (Jain) bring in 50 chefs from India who are specialized in the cooking of it, or buffalo milk but due to not finding the product, arrangements were made with Benna to produce cow's milk at 50% fat and TESTED before confirming. Or like pots and pans, equipment bought and used purposely for what their requirements are.

**5. How does the Indian tradition and religious aspect effect the event? In what way?**

They are very respectful and depend on the client you deal with. More the Indian, Maltese tradition, where we are offering different things and culture to make their experience unique. The dressing up of an event and incorporating local tradition helps the event very well.

**6. How important it is to apply and observe their cultural beliefs and background?**

Culture offered to give them the Maltese aspect and be line with also their beliefs.  
(Like pastizzi without eggs, SINCE IS PART OF THEIR Jain religion)

**7. How do you deal with such influential and powerful individuals?**

Every individual has their own character and be able to understand how to deal with them. It is very important that you are passionate about the product and the country and also be yourself. You have to test the waters and have your eyes wide open.

**8. How would events of such calibre effect the local economy?**

One event returned 1.3 million and a second event a conference represent 1 million

**9. How can you relate the event in your own experience?**

Learning through experience which provides great satisfaction when the results are positive.

**10. What mind-set goes behind the logistics take place to organise such an event?**

Plan all you can and prepares and then sit back and expected the unexpected.  
You have to be flexible and on the ball all the time.