

Couples say I do with a difference

By *editor*

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The big fat Indian wedding probably cannot get bigger. But for many young couples it's not just about flamboyance, exclusive trousseau and over-the-top decorations, but some of them want to make the day count by doing their bit of charity.

Be it for street children, helpless women or animal rights, couples tying the knot are making sure that they give it back to the society by donating either money or gifts collected on their wedding day.

Some couples encourage their guests to donate the gifts they had set aside for them. Chintan and Monika Siriya also did the same. Their wedding e-invite said, "Do not waste money in buying gifts or bouquets; you have an opportunity to change many lives."

Chintan, an IT professional, says, "Only a lavish wedding is not what we had wanted. We wanted to do something for the less fortunate. So

we had two boxes — one for a blood donation society and another for animal rights society — that we had put for our guests to put in the wedding gifts."

They also managed to raise some money for the city NGO Goonj. "And they are not the only couple," says Meenakshi Gupta, spokesperson, Goonj. She continues, "About five years back couples donating on their wedding wasn't even heard of. But recently, many couples who want to share happiness of the biggest day of their lives with the less fortunate have approached us. Instead of just spending money on their wedding, they are also keeping something aside for those who need it more."

Tanya Alag, coordinator-resource mobilisation from Salaam Baalak Trust, says that young couples also come to spend some valuable time with the children. "While their life is changing for good, they also want to make some difference and bring smiles on the faces of children living in the Trust. Be it wedding, marriage anniversary or a birth of a child more and more youngsters want to share their happiness with kids at the Trust," she adds.

Couples opting for charity also want to inspire others. Says Monika Sirika, "Many of my friends were inspired by our charity idea and later on did the same on their wedding." Raghav HV, who will be marrying his fiancée, Preeti, on December 9, is also trying to do the same. "On our wedding website, we have not just requested our guests to donate gifts for the social organisations but also tried to inspire more couples to do the same," says Raghav, who insists that wedding is an ideal platform to spread across the message of charity.

"On the big day of wedding, I believe this should be our way of giving back. It's the little things that make all the difference," he adds.



[1]

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